

School Managed Application for in year admission to a school (SMA) – Guidance Notes

Guidance notes

You can make an in-year application if your child needs to join a school outside the normal admissions round.

Please use these notes to help you complete the School Managed in year Application form (SMA).

You should also visit [the admissions section of our website](#) to read the information on in-year transfers before completing the form.

Which schools can you apply for using the SMA form?

You can use the SMA form to apply for academies and foundation, free, trust and voluntary aided schools which manage their own admissions. A list of the schools which use the SMA form is available from [the admissions section of our website](#). You can only express a preference for one school on each form, but you can submit an application for as many of these schools as you wish.

Surrey's community and voluntary controlled schools and some academies and foundation, free, trust and voluntary aided schools use a Centrally Managed Application form (CMA). You can express a preference for up to three schools on the CMA form.

You can check how to apply for in year admission to a particular school and access the appropriate application form by looking at our [online schools directory](#).

If you wish to apply for schools outside Surrey, you should contact either the school or the local authority where the school is situated to find out how to apply.

How long will it take to process your application?

Schools should aim to process applications within a maximum of 15 school days of receiving a fully completed application form. Most schools will be unable to process applications during a school holiday. Failure to complete the application fully or to attach evidence is likely to result in a delay in processing your application.

When is it appropriate to apply for in year admission to a new school?

If you need a school place for a child who is moving into Surrey or because of a house move within Surrey where your child cannot continue at their existing school, it is reasonable to apply for a place at a new school.

However, if your child is already at a local school, we encourage you to think carefully before applying for a place at a new school. Please bear in mind that other schools may be full and the upheaval of changing school may damage your child's progress. Before applying for a new school, please discuss the reasons with your child's current school to try to resolve any issues with them. We discourage unnecessary school transfers because this can be disruptive to a child's education and therefore might not be in your child's best interests. Please also bear in mind that other schools may be full, and secondary schools may not offer the same subjects that your child is currently studying.

If you wish to apply for a change of school, we will ask you to confirm the reasons.

When processing your application, the school may contact your child's current school so they might discuss your reasons for applying for a new school and whether it might be possible for them to resolve any difficulties your child may be having. They may also liaise with other services, including any that have been involved with your child.

You should not withdraw your child from their current school until you have secured an alternative school place.

A school cannot ask you to withdraw your child from school or take your child off the school roll without your permission or without first knowing that your child has a new school place. However, where a school believes a change of school may be in your child's best interests, the Headteacher can discuss arranging a managed move to another school or a referral to alternative education provision, with you.

Guidance on completing the SMA form

Please make sure that you complete all sections of the form fully and **sign the declaration**. If you leave any of the questions unanswered or if you do not provide supporting information, it is likely to cause a delay in your application.

These notes should help you with some of the questions on the form. If you are unsure of the answer to any of the questions, please contact Surrey's Admissions team on 0300 200 1004 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm) or visit [the admissions section of our website](#), or contact the school direct.

1a) Does the child have a current Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)?

- If the child has a current EHCP you should not complete the SMA form. Instead, you should contact the Special Educational Needs & Disability team for the local authority in which the child lives, for details on changing school.
- If the child has special educational needs and disability but does not have a current EHCP, you should answer 'No' to this question and continue completing the form.

1b) Is the child currently in the care of a local authority?

If the child is in local authority care (e.g. foster care), you should not complete this form. Instead, the child's social worker should complete the separate form, 'Child in care application for in year admission to school', which they can request by emailing schooladmissions@surreycc.gov.uk. By law, children in care receive higher priority for admission to school, so it is important that the social worker completes the correct application form.

1c) Has the child previously been in care and did they leave care through adoption, a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order or were they child adopted from state care outside England?

If the child was previously looked after but left care through adoption, a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order or if they were adopted from state care outside England, you must indicate this on the application form and provide supporting evidence from their social worker. By law, children who were previously looked after (included those adopted from state care outside England) receive higher priority for admission to school and it is therefore important that this is declared on the application form.

1d) From what date is a school place required?

Please tell us the date that you need a school place.

If a place is offered and accepted, the school will arrange to admit your child as soon as possible, normally within 10 school days of you formally accepting the place. If it is not possible for your child to take up the place within 10 school days, for example because they are not yet living in the area, the school can agree a later start date.

Alternatively, you may have good reason for wishing to defer your child's start date, such as where they are due to take exams at another school. In such cases a school may agree to defer the start date, but the maximum deferral period is usually four weeks.

Where your child is available to take up a school place straightaway and there is no good reason for deferring their start date, they must start on the date provided by the school. The place may be withdrawn if they do not start then.

2 Child's details

Please complete the child's details fully in sections 2a) to g).

2f) Child's home address

Please write the child's full home address including the postcode.

The child's home address excludes any business or childminder's address and must be the child's normal place of residence, usually the parent's address. It also excludes any relative's address unless the child lives at that address as their normal place of residence. Where the child is subject to a child arrangements order and that order stipulates that the child will live with one parent/carer more than the other, the address to be used will be the one where the child is expected to live for the **majority of the time**. For other children, the address to be used will be the address where the child lives the majority of the time. In cases where the child spends an equal time between their parents/carers, it will be up to the parents/carers to agree which address to use. Where a child spends their time equally between their parents/carers and they cannot agree on who should make the application, we will accept an application from the parent/carer who is registered for child benefit. If neither parent/carer is registered for child benefit, we will accept the application from the parent/carer whose address is registered with the child's current school.

We will not generally accept a temporary address if the main carer of the child still possesses or rents a property that has previously been used as a home address, nor will we accept a temporary address if we believe it has been used solely or mainly to obtain a school place when an alternative address is still available to that child.

To ensure fairness to all children applying for a school place, we reserve the right to check details submitted by parents/guardians against council and school records. Documentary evidence confirming address details must be provided with the form.

Any offer based on where the child lives is conditional on the child being resident at the declared address on the date an offer is made. You must tell us if the child moves address after you have made your application. Any offer of a school place made on the basis of false information may be withdrawn.

2g) Future address

If the child is due to change their address in the near future, please provide details of the future address and the date that the child is expected to be living there (answer as DD/MM/YYYY).

Children in the United Kingdom on a temporary visit are not generally entitled to receive state education. Exceptions may apply to children who have the right of abode in the United Kingdom, but normally only if they are expected to remain in the United Kingdom for more than three months.

When making an application for a school place, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child has a right, under their visa entry conditions, to study at a school and that they will not be contravening the conditions of any visa or United Kingdom immigration law if they take up the school place.

Section 3 - Current/previous school**3a) Current or previous school**

Please confirm the name of the child's current or previous school and the dates of attendance.

3b) Was the child's previous school outside England?

If the child's previous school was outside England, please provide further details, including the country that your child was last educated in.

Section 4 - Additional details**4a) Year group**

Please confirm which year group you are applying for your child to attend.

4b) Application Reason

Please select the relevant option from the list to let us know your reason for applying for a school place.

4c) Are you applying for a school place for more than one child from a multiple birth, or other children as part of the same family unit?

In order to best support families who are making an application for more than one child, please indicate if you are making an application for any other children who are part of the same family. **However, you will still need to complete a separate application for each child.**

5. School preference

You can only name one school on the SMA form.

If you wish to apply for other schools, you must complete a separate application form.

If you wish to apply under a school's exceptional social or medical criterion where it applies, you must indicate this in section 5 and provide additional information and professional written evidence to support your case. Please also complete the school's supplementary form (where this applies).

If you wish to apply for staff priority where it applies, please provide the name of the member of staff and the name of the school where they work. Please also complete the school's supplementary form (where this applies).

In order to be considered for sibling priority where it applies, you must provide details of any siblings for whom you wish to claim sibling priority.

You can include reasons for naming a preference, but you are not required to do so.

6. Fair access admissions

The local authority must ensure that Surrey children who are vulnerable, and those without a school place who are unsuccessful in securing a place through the in-year admissions process, are found a suitable school place quickly. So that the local authority might establish the most appropriate placement for each child if this applies, please answer questions 6a) to 6m) accurately and honestly. If you answer yes to any of the questions in this section, please provide evidence.

Section 7 - Applicant details

Please complete your details in sections 7a) to k).

If you do not have parental responsibility for the child and the child is not under the care of a local authority, please supply a letter from someone with parental responsibility to explain the circumstances and why the child lives with you, or a copy of the official documentation that indicates that you have the right to make an application for a school place for the child.

Parental responsibility is defined by the Children Act 1989 and amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002. For children born prior to 1 December 2003, the child's natural mother acquired parental responsibility automatically at birth. The child's natural father only acquired parental responsibility if he was married to the mother at the time of birth or if they married subsequently.

For children born since 1 December 2003, a child's natural father will also have parental responsibility if he jointly registered as the child's natural father following the child's birth.

Other people who do not have automatic parental responsibility, including step-parents, grandparents and other close relatives, can obtain parental responsibility by seeking a parental responsibility legal agreement, obtained with the consent of all persons with parental responsibility or by a court order, or when a child is placed with them for legal adoption.

If you are a distant relative or not related at all to the child, it is likely that you are a private foster parent. In law this means you must tell your local authority you are caring for the child and also you must tell the child's parents (or the person with parental responsibility) about the application for a school place and obtain their permission.

Gov.uk has [further information regarding parental rights and responsibilities](#).

If you are a member of His Majesty's (HM) Armed Forces with a confirmed posting to the area or a Crown Servant returning from overseas, please attach supporting documents to evidence this, such as a posting order or a letter from the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office.

Section 8 - Additional contact details

If you wish to authorise us to discuss your application for a school place with someone else, please complete their details under the 'Additional contact'. However, you must remember to tell us if, at any time, you no longer wish us to discuss your application with this person. Please note that only the applicant can make any changes to this application, or accept or decline any offer of a school place.

Section 9 - Proof of address

You must attach at least two documents with your application form, one from each of the lists on the form, as proof of address. Please note that your application will be incomplete without proof of address.

Section 10 - Declaration of applicant

Please read the declaration before completing your name and signing and dating the form.

Section 11. Important - Next steps

(a) Returning your SMA form

Before returning your form, please check that you have provided the following evidence, as appropriate:

- ☐ If the child has previously been in care, confirmation that they left care through adoption, a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order.
- ☐ Confirmation of the child's home address.
- ☐ If you are applying for exceptional social/medical priority, appropriate professional evidence to support your case.
- ☐ If you do not have parental responsibility for the child, a letter from the child's parent explaining the circumstances and authorising you to act on their behalf.

(b) Returning any supplementary forms

If the school needs a supplementary information form in addition to the application form to provide the school with extra information relevant to its admissions criteria:

- ☐ Check if the school you have named in Section 5 requires a supplementary information form by checking the local authority's online schools directory at www.surreycc.gov.uk/schoolsdirectory or by checking the school's website
- ☐ If a supplementary information form is required, you must send it to the address on the supplementary information form

You must then send the completed form and supporting information to the school that you have named in Section 5 of the form.