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Guidance

Information on obtaining a school place in England when relocating after leaving hotel/serviced accommodation

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Applies to England

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Introduction

You will have received, or shortly will receive information that you will need to vacate your hotel/serviced accommodation in the coming months.

If you have children who are aged 4 to 16 it is likely that they already go to school where you live now. When you leave hotel/serviced accommodation you will either stay in the area when you find your own accommodation or move to another area to find work and accommodation.

You do not have to move your children from their current school when you move but, if you move out of the area where you currently live, it may not be practical for your children to continue to go to the same school. In such cases, you will need to look for a new school for your children.

This advice explains how to apply for a new school and what you will need to think about. It divides into three sections:

- Section 1 - is for all children up to the age of 16
- Section 2 – is for children who, on 1st September 2024, will be aged 4 or 11 [\[footnote 1\]](#);
- Section 3 – has more general information on finding a school place

If your child is currently in school and will need to change to a new school when you move, Section 1 is most relevant to you.

Section 1: Finding a new school place when you leave hotel/serviced accommodation

If your child is currently in school, you will need to quickly obtain a new school if you move away

from the area when you leave hotel /serviced accommodation. This is what we call an 'in-year application'.

We strongly recommend that you start to look for a new school before you move out of your hotel /serviced accommodation – and apply as early as possible - as this is likely to speed up the process once you do move.

You can find your new council by typing the postcode of your new home address into the field on this webpage: <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

Telephone or email the council admissions team for advice. The council will let you know the earliest you can apply and whether you apply directly to the council or to whether you must apply to the schools instead. Schools cannot reserve places ahead of your move, but they can receive and process applications in the term before you move.

Although some schools will have places available throughout the year, your choice of school is likely to be limited. This is because some of the most popular schools will already be full when you are applying for an in-year place. The council should advise you of which schools have spaces.

Where your child has severe special educational needs, once you are about to leave hotel/serviced accommodation and know where you are moving to, make contact with the Special Educational Needs Team in the new council area who will be able to advise on the next steps forward.

You can usually find contacts for the relevant team in each council through an internet search.

Section 2: Obtaining a school place if, on 1st September 2024, your children will be aged 4 or 11

- 15 January 2024 – is the closing date for submitting applications for 4 year olds to begin primary or infant school in September 2024
- 31 October 2023 – is the closing date for submitting applications for 11 year olds to begin secondary school in September 2024

The council which you live in will process applications for these children.

On its 'school admissions' or 'schools' page each council website will explain how you can apply for a school place.

You apply for places to your home council on the common application form which it will publish on the 'school admissions' or 'schools' section of its website.

You can set out at least 3 choices of school on the form and apply for schools in the council area to which you are moving, and you can also apply for schools in neighbouring council areas on the same form.

You can express a preference for any school but, in general, the closer a school is to your home, the better chance you have of being offered a place there. However, this is not the case with every school. Searching for the school on the internet and looking at its published admission arrangements should help you to see whether your child is likely to be offered a place. Your home council will offer you the highest available preference from your list of chosen schools. It will email or write to you on the national offer date.

The national offer dates are:

- 16 April 2024 - reception places for children aged 4 in September 2024
- 1 March 2024 - year 7 places for children aged 11 in September 2024

If you cannot be offered any of your preferred schools, the council will normally offer your children a place at the nearest school to your home which has vacancies.

Section 3: General information on school admissions

How places are allocated

Each school has a limited number of places available. If there are more applications than there are places available, the school admission authority must apply its published admission arrangements in order to determine which children will be offered a place. Some children will not be offered their parents' preferred place in these circumstances.

Information [admission authorities](#) may request before offering a school place

School admission authorities may ask for evidence of your address with your application. This is important because some schools prioritise places for children who live close to the school (called 'catchment areas') and the distance from home to school is also often used as a way to determine who is offered a place if two or more children are tied for the last place a school can offer.

However, if you don't have any evidence of your address the admission authority must still process your application. This might give your child a lower priority for admission if home address plays an important role in the admission arrangements of the school for which you are applying.

Schools with a religious designation may prioritise places for children with a religion. Admission authorities for these schools may ask you to complete a supplementary application form to ascertain whether you are a member of a relevant faith group so they can prioritise places for children based on their faith.

Common measures of faith membership and practice are baptism into the faith (commonly used in Roman Catholic schools) or attendance at church, temple, mosque or synagogue - depending on the faith designation of schools.

An admission authority cannot ask you for personal information about your child or family during the admissions process, such as the child's school record, passport or other immigration papers. The only exceptions to this rule are:

- where the child is in the care of a council or has previously been in care, the admission authority for the school can ask for evidence of this. These children receive top priority for admission to every school; or
- evidence that the family practises a relevant religion or is a member of a relevant religious group, for admission to a school with a religious designation; or
- whether the child is eligible for the pupil premium because the family is on a low income, if the school prioritises such children for admission

Schools may ask for evidence of your child's date of birth once a place is offered but cannot refuse a place just because you hold no proof.

What to do if you are not offered a place at the school that you want

In some cases, you might not be offered a place at your chosen school.

If you are refused a place, you can ask the admission authority for the school to place your child on the school's waiting list if it has one. A waiting list will rank children in accordance with the school's published admission arrangements rather than the date the application was received. This means that your child can move up or down the waiting list over time.

You should never refuse a place at another school just because your child is on a waiting list: if your child is offered a place later at the school where he/she is on the waiting list you will be able to switch schools at that time. You can also appeal against any refusal to offer your child a place at a

school.

Whenever you are refused a place, the admission authority for the school must offer an appeal and tell you how to appeal. The appeal panel is independent of the school.

[Guidance for parents on the appeals process is set out here](#). You can ask someone to represent you at the appeal or you can present your own case. The appeal will consider whether the admission authority was right to refuse your child a place and whether your reasons for needing that place outweigh the admission authority's reasons for refusing. If the panel upholds your appeal, the school must admit your child.

Appeals can be held virtually (by Teams or Zoom etc.) as well as in person.

Choosing a school

There are a number of resources which parents can use to help them choose a school.

You can search for schools near your home by going to: '[Get information about schools](#)'. You can filter your search by distance from your address and also by type of school.

Each council also publishes an admissions guide on its website, listing all local schools.

You may find it useful to compare the performance of the schools you are considering by looking on the [compare school performance website](#). The progress 8 score measures how far children progress across 8 subjects between entering and leaving a secondary school. The progress score in reading, writing and maths is a similar measure for primary schools.

If you want to look at this in more detail, all but the very newest schools will have an [Ofsted inspection report](#).

Applying for a sixth-form place

Sixth-form study is normally undertaken by young people aged 16 and over. Post-16 study will be offered by:

- some schools;
- 16-19 academies;
- sixth-form colleges; or

- colleges of further education.

The [National Careers Service website](#) sets out which post-16 courses are offered by individual schools and colleges. If your children are already studying a post-16 course they do not have to move to another school or college just because you are moving out of the area, so long as they are able to travel to the college or school sixth-form.

Councils rarely take a direct role in allocating sixth-form places (places for young people aged 16 but under 19). Some councils will, however, advise parents about schools with vacancies in their sixth-forms. You can therefore contact your council to discuss where vacancies might exist. Remember though, that a school sixth form is only one type of provider of post-16 education.

The [‘Get information about schools’](#) website will show you which local schools provide for young people aged 16-18. You should then search on their websites for how to apply and for any deadlines for applications.

Most places will be allocated before the start of the school year. The same will normally apply to sixth-form colleges and 16-19 academies, but colleges of further education are likely to offer places throughout the year, depending on course availability.

Types of state-funded school

There is a wide range of state-funded schools in England. What they all have in common is that they will deliver a broad and balanced education for your children, although the small number of University Technical Colleges (UTCs) and Studio Schools will offer a more vocationally-oriented education, mainly for children aged 14 and over.

The 163 grammar schools are secondary schools which will offer an education targeted towards only the most academically able children. Your children will need to pass a test to be considered for admission. These are administered by the admission authority for the individual school, or the council. Not every area has a grammar school.

The most common form of secondary school (nearly 3,100) are comprehensive. They educate children of all abilities. Every one of the (just under 17,000) primary schools educate children of all abilities.

Some schools can also have a religious designation and may prioritise children of their faith or many faiths above other children for admission. You will need to check their websites.

School Admission Authorities

Whilst applications for reception and year 7 made by the closing dates set out above are made to the council, in-year applications in most areas should be made directly to the admission authority. These are:

Type	Admission authority
Community School (nearly 5,900 schools)	The council, contact details on their website.
Foundation School (nearly 700 schools)	The governing body, contact details on the school's website
Voluntary Controlled School (over 1,600 schools)	The council, contact details on their website.
Voluntary Aided School (over 2,500 schools)	The governing body, contact details on the school's website
Academy School (nearly 9,000 schools)	The academy trust, contact details on the school's website
Free School (nearly 500 schools)	The academy trust, contact details on the school's website
Studio School (over 20 schools)	The academy trust, contact details on the school's website
UTC (nearly 50 schools)	The academy trust, contact details on the school's website

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1. Check with the council for the area you are moving to. Although the most common transfer ages are 4 and 11 a small number of schools have entry points at ages 7, 9, 12, 13 or 14. The council will normally process your application where they do. [↪](#)

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