

[Home](#) ▾ [Education, training and skills](#) ▾ [Inspections and performance of education providers](#)  
▾ [Inspection and performance of schools](#) ▾ [Inspection of independent schools](#)  
▾ [Independent schools: applications, changes and closures](#)



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# Independent school applications, material changes and closures

Published 30 October 2025

**Applies to England**

# Pre-registration applications approved

To open an independent school in England, applicants must [complete a registration process](#) with the Department for Education (DfE).

Applicants must demonstrate they are likely to meet the [Independent School Standards](#) once registered.

This table shows the number of independent schools registered by DfE between the years 2020 and 2024.

[Change to chart view](#)

| Year | Number of independent schools registered |
|------|--|
| 2024 | 105                                      |
| 2023 | 92                                       |
| 2022 | 79                                       |
| 2021 | 99                                       |
| 2020 | 82                                       |

# Material change applications approved

Before making any substantial changes to their registered details, independent schools must [submit a material change request to DfE](#) and obtain prior approval from, the Secretary of State for Education. This requirement applies to any significant alteration, including changes in:

- school address
- age range of pupils
- the maximum number of pupils

This table shows the number of material change applications that DfE approved between the years 2020 and 2024.

[Change to chart view](#)

| Year | Number of material change applications approved |
|------|---|
| 2024 | 309   |
| 2023 | 466   |
| 2022 | 351   |
| 2021 | 280   |
| 2020 | 320   |

## Independent school closures

When an independent school decides to close voluntarily, it must notify DfE, so that its details can be removed from the Register of Independent Schools.

This table shows the number of independent schools that DfE removed from the Register of Independent Schools between the years 2020 and 2024 as a result of voluntary closure and regulatory and enforcement action.

[Change to chart view](#)

| Year | Number of independent schools closed |
|------|--------------------------------------|
|------|--------------------------------------|

2024 58

2023 85

2022 63

2021 66

2020 63

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