

# Primary Information for Parents Booklet - 2021



**The closing date to  
make an application  
is 15 January 2021**



**Staffordshire  
County Council**

# Message from the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities



## Welcome to Staffordshire's Information for Parents Booklet

Choosing a school is a big decision; because a good education is one of the best investments we can ever make in life. It lays the foundations for a happy, healthy and prosperous future. A good education is about much more than exam results, it's about having the right skills for work and for life.

As a parent, you are your child's biggest champion. You know them best, so to help you choose their school we've pulled together this booklet of important information and an explanation of the admissions process.

To support you to make an informed preference please use the '[Search and Compare Schools](#)' facility available online.

All you need to do is type your town, postcode or the school you're interested in and, at a glance, you can compare the schools in your area before you apply.

Staffordshire's website contains information on:

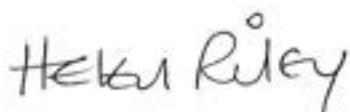
- school performance results
- the views of other parents on your local schools
- where the jobs will be in the future
- the different learning routes
- what to look for when you visit a school

We work hard to ensure that as many of you as possible get the school of your preference, and the great majority do. For families who applied to start school in September 2020, 94% got their first preference school, with 99% getting 1 of their top 3 preferred schools.

This is the start of a very exciting journey and you have a vital role to play in getting the very best education for your child by supporting and challenging their school with the opportunities they offer. Think big. They've got a bright future ahead of them.

If you need further advice or support with any of the information shared in this booklet, please contact the School Admissions and Transport Service - details can be found on [page 3](#).

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Riley". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Helen Riley  
Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

# Important dates in the admissions process

<b>Autumn Term 2020</b>	Information on how to apply will be available in primary schools.
<b>1 November 2020</b>	The online application service will open.
<b>15 January 2021</b>	Closing date for receipt of completed applications. Applications received after this date will be considered in line with the 'late application' process.
<b>Spring Term 2021</b>	Applications are processed and information is shared between schools and neighbouring local authorities.
<b>16 April 2021</b>	Offer of a school place. Online applicants will receive an email. Others will receive the offer in writing, posted 2nd class on this date.
<b>Summer Term 2021</b>	Admission appeals heard by independent appeal panel.

## Contacts for School Admissions and Transport Service

### Address for correspondence

Staffordshire County Council  
 School Admissions and Transport Service  
 2, Staffordshire Place  
 Tipping Street  
 Stafford ST16 2DH

**Website:** [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/admissions)

**Email:** [admissions@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@staffordshire.gov.uk)

**Email:** [transport.entitlement@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:transport.entitlement@staffordshire.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 0300 111 8007 Customer Contact Centre (select option for 'School Admissions and Transport')

## Important points to remember

- You **must** apply by 15 January 2021.
- You must make an application, even if you have an elder child attending your preferred school.
- You are **strongly** advised to make more than one preference. Failure to do so could have repercussions in terms of the distance your child is required to travel to school.
- Attendance in the **nursery class** does **not** give any priority for admission into reception class.
- All applications are considered at the same time. Priority is **not** given to those who put the school first, or on a 'first come first served' basis.
- List the schools in the order that you would most prefer them, and not the order you think you might get them.
- **The order** in which you list the schools is **only used** if you can be offered more than one school. In this case, you will be offered whichever of those schools is ranked highest on your application.
- **Be realistic** about the schools you apply for. It is recommended that you include your catchment school as one of your preferences, as otherwise you will not be considered for a place.
- **Understand** the admission arrangements for each of your preferences. This will enable you to assess what order of priority will be given for each preference.
- Consider how your child will get to school. You can check if your child is entitled funded travel [online](#).
- You **may be required** to provide additional information or submit a supplementary form, if you are applying for a foundation, voluntary aided school, or academy.
- It is **your responsibility** to provide any supportive information with your application e.g. baptismal certificate or medical evidence. The local authority will not seek to obtain this information on your behalf even if you refer to it within your application.

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**We would prefer to receive your application online.**

Guidance on how to make an application and access to the online service can be found [here](#).

# Applying online

## It's quick, easy and safe.

As a Staffordshire resident you can make your application online between 1 November 2020 and 15 January 2021 using Staffordshire's online application service.

[www.staffordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/admissions)

The benefits of applying online are:

- We email your offer on the 16 April 2021 - so there's no need to wait for a letter in the post.
- The service is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week up to the closing date of 15 January 2021
- It is quick and easy to do
- The system is secure so that your information is protected
- You will get email confirmation that your application has been submitted

If you are not a resident of Staffordshire, use the online service for the local authority where you live.

**Over 90% of applications for 2020 admissions were made online**

*"It's easier doing it online than it ever is filling out a form by hand"*



*"Very smooth and easy process"*

If you have any queries about the online school application process or any other aspect of the admissions process please email the School Admissions and Transport Service on:

[admissions@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@staffordshire.gov.uk)

*"Very user friendly and quick to complete"*

# Section 1

## Making an Application

### When can my child start school?

Your child can start school full-time in a reception class in the September of the academic year in which they become five. For September 2021 admission, dates of birth normally fall between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017. Your child can start school part-time until they reach compulsory school age if you wish.

The date your child starts school could also be later in the academic year. In this case we encourage you to discuss this with the headteacher of the preferred or allocated school.

### Summer Born Children (dates of birth between 01 April & 31 August)

Parents who choose not to send their child to school until they have reached compulsory school age, where this would ordinarily mean entry into Year 1, have the right to apply for admission into Reception. Please note that a space cannot be kept available in the correct chronological age group for a year if you choose not to admit your child at the normal age of entry. Any such application will need to be made in line with the closing date for Reception admissions for the appropriate year (usually 15 January preceding admission) supported by information that outlines why the child should not be admitted into Year 1, alongside children within the correct chronological year group.

### Who can apply?

Anyone with parental responsibility for a child. We expect separated parents to agree on school places before you make an application. We may request evidence from you that this is the case. We cannot intervene in disputes between parents over school applications. You must resolve these privately.

### How do I apply?

- online at [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/admissions). Applicants who apply this way will receive their decision on 16 April 2021 by email.
- By post: complete the [paper application form](#) available from our website. Applicants who apply this way will receive their decision after the offer date by 2nd class post.

If you wish to make more than 3 preferences, please email: [admissions@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@staffordshire.gov.uk) with the details of your additional preferences.

### When is the closing date?

You must apply for a school place for your child between 1 November 2020 and 15 January 2021 (the closing date). Applications received after the closing date may only be considered after those applications that were received on time and may result in your child not being admitted to one of your preferred schools. .

### I have already put my child's name down at the school I want, do I still have to apply?

Yes. The school will have made a note of your interest for your child to start at the school, and this will have been used by them to provide you with information on how to apply for a place. However, this does not mean that you have applied – **you must still make an official application by either applying online, or on the paper application form.**

### My child already attends the nursery class at my preferred school, will I still have to apply, and will my child be given priority?

Attendance in the nursery class does not give any priority for admission into reception class. Your application will be considered with everyone else that applies for your preferred school and places will be allocated in strict accordance with the relevant admission arrangements – **you must still make an official application by either applying online, or on the paper application form.**

### I already have an older child attending my preferred school, do I still have to apply?

You must still make an application for your preferred school regardless of whether or not you have an elder child at the school. Available places are then allocated using the [relevant admission arrangements](#). Please note that there is no guarantee that a younger sibling will obtain a place at the same school as an elder sibling.

### **My child is in Year 2 at an Infant school in Staffordshire, what do I need to do?**

You must still make an application regardless of whether or not you have an elder child at the school. Available places are then allocated using the [relevant admission arrangements](#). Please note that there is no guarantee that a younger sibling will obtain a place at the same school as an elder sibling.

### **My child is in Year 2 at an Infant school in Staffordshire, what do I need to do?**

You need to apply (either online, or by completing the application form) before the closing date. Even if you would prefer your child to attend the affiliated junior school, you **must** still make an application.

### **Do I have to name my catchment school?**

Your child will not be considered for a place at your catchment area school unless it is named as one of your preferred schools in your application.

### **Will I need to provide any additional information?**

Some Staffordshire academies, foundation schools or voluntary aided schools may ask you to provide additional information or submit a [supplementary form](#).

For schools outside Staffordshire, this information can be obtained from the [relevant local authority](#) and you must complete any additional or supplementary information in line with any deadlines that they specify.

Please note: If you wish to provide evidence to support an application on medical grounds or other exceptional circumstances you must obtain the necessary evidence as specified within the [admission arrangements](#). We will not seek to obtain this information on your behalf, even if you refer to it in your application.

Please email or post any additional information directly to the [admissions team](#) marked clearly with:

- The name of the child
- The school requiring the information
- Whether the application was made online or by other means

If you have been asked for a baptismal certificate, please send a copy to the school admissions team.

### **Where can I find the local authority and school Dfe number I need to complete the paper application form?**

If you choose to apply using the paper application the school Dfe number that you will need can be found on the [online school search facility](#). Details of DfE numbers for other local authorities will be published in their version of this booklet.

### **Is it possible for my child to start in Reception earlier than they should?**

Parents may seek to apply for their child's admission to school outside of their normal age group, for example if the child is exceptionally gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the parents of summer born children may choose not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted outside of their normal age group to Reception rather than Year 1.

These parents will need to make an application alongside children applying at the normal age and should explain why it is in the child's best interest to be admitted outside of their normal age. This may include information such as professional evidence as to why this is the case and why an exception should be made in the case of the child. A decision as to whether this is an appropriate course of action will be made by the Local Authority (for community and voluntary controlled schools) or governing body/trust (for voluntary aided foundation and academies) who will take into account the circumstances of the case and views of the headteacher. Parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular year group.

# Section 2

## Allocation of School Places

### How are places allocated?

Staffordshire County Council does not operate a first preference first or first come first served policy – this is in accordance with the law. This means that every school listed in your application will be considered separately and fairly against the individual [school's admission arrangements](#).

If you can be offered a place at more than one preferred school against the admission arrangements, a place will be allocated at your highest preferred school. If a place cannot be offered at any of your preferred schools, a place will be allocated at a school where places are still available..

It is **strongly recommended** that you name three different schools to increase your chances of securing a school that is acceptable to you.

### Where can I find details of how places have been allocated in previous years?

Information is available in the summaries of admission to primary schools which can be found under [useful links](#). This information is provided as a guide only and is not intended to identify how likely it is that a child will get a place in future years.

### How can I find out the catchment school for a certain address?

You can check the catchment school for your address using the [school search facility online](#), but remember [not all schools operate a catchment area](#) within their admission arrangements.

Your nearest school may not be your catchment area school.

Please note there is no guaranteed admission to your catchment area school. Allocations will be dependent on the availability of spaces in the relevant year group.

Catchment areas are also subject to review and may alter from year to year.

### How many places are available at each school

Each school has a published admission number (PAN), which is the maximum number of pupils that the school can admit taking into account the accommodation and resources available. Each school's published admissions number can be found in the school information detailed on the [online school search facility](#).

# Section 3

## The Admissions Process

### Which schools can I apply for?

When making your application, **you must name all the schools**, where you wish your child to be considered for a place in order of preference. This includes any academy, foundation, voluntary aided schools, and any schools outside of Staffordshire as we coordinate the admissions process with [neighbouring authorities](#).

### Can I apply for a non-catchment area school?

You have the right to express a preference for any school. However, you should be aware of the potential implications of your child attending a non-catchment area school. You should be aware of the possible difficulties that may arise when he/she transfers to the next stage of education (i.e. secondary school), as the allocation of places to all secondary schools is administered in line with the [relevant admission arrangements](#) **and not by reference to the primary school previously attended.**

Consequently, children attending a non-catchment area primary school may move in a different direction from other children attending the same primary school. Before deciding to apply for a non-catchment area school you should also give careful consideration to how your child will get to school. School transport will not normally be provided by the local authority. Please see the [travel assistance policy](#) for further details.

### How many schools can I apply for?

You are able to name up to three schools in your application and if you wish to apply for more you should let the [School Admissions Team](#) know. No extra weighting is given for the number of times you include a school on your form.

The majority of parents and carers in Staffordshire get one of their preferred schools. You must consider the possibility of not getting one of your school preferences. Particularly if your preference is for a school that is not within your catchment area.

### If I name the same school three times will this give me a better chance of being allocated a place?

No. Places will be allocated in strict accordance with the [admission arrangements](#) for the school concerned. If you name a school three times, you are wasting two preferences, as each school is only considered once as part of your application.

### What happens if I change my preferences after I have submitted my application?

When you apply using the online service you will be able to change your preferences up to the closing date. **Please remember to resubmit your application, otherwise the changes will not be registered.**

If you apply using the paper form, your school preferences may be changed by writing or emailing the [School Admissions Team](#) by the closing date.

If you wish to change your preferences to include schools not previously named or wish to change your preferences after the offer day you will need to email [admissions@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@staffordshire.gov.uk), your application will be administered in line with the late applications process.

### Is the process different if my child has a Statement of Special Educational Need or EHCP?

For children with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP), discussions about starting school will have already taken place during the assessment or the previous annual review so that if the pupil requires a special school or unit placement there is time to plan the for admission.

If parents wish to appeal against the school named in their child's statement, the appeal will need to be submitted to the Special Needs and Disability Tribunal. Details of how to contact the tribunal are available from the SEN team.

Applications for admission to school on behalf of children with SEN but without statements will be treated in the same way as all other applications. Applications for admission will be considered against the school's admission arrangements. An application may not be refused solely because the school considers it is unable to cater for the child's educational needs or because the child does not have an EHCP or is being assessed for one. It is also unacceptable for a school to refuse to admit a child thought to be potentially disruptive or who exhibits challenging behaviour on the grounds that the pupil ought to be assessed for SEN.

### **Who should I contact if I have any queries about the admissions process?**

Please contact the School Admissions Team.

The Staffordshire website contains useful information and may answer some of your queries.

### **What is the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme?**

The scheme sets out how the local authority co-ordinates its admission arrangements. The purpose of the scheme is to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, each pupil living within Staffordshire who has applied for a school place during the normal admission round receives only one offer of a place for a school within Staffordshire.

### **What is Infant Class Size Legislation?**

There is Government legislation that requires local authorities to ensure that no infant class will contain more than 30 pupils if there is only one fully qualified teacher available for that class. Infant classes are Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. Parents should be aware that there is no guarantee of a place at any school where infant class size legislation applies.

### **Will I need to provide proof of my home address?**

The local authority may undertake a home visit without prior notice to verify a child's home address. If a school is offered on the basis of an address that is subsequently found to be different from a child's normal and permanent home address, then that place is likely to be withdrawn.

### **What if I am moving home?**

If a child's home address changes during the admissions process it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the School Admissions Team immediately.

If you are applying for a community or voluntary controlled school, and you can provide satisfactory evidence of a new home address (e.g. a solicitor's letter confirming a completion date) by 12 March 2021, we will take that information into consideration when deciding on the offer of a school place. Please note that an 'intention to move' will not be used when allocating places at oversubscribed schools.

For all other schools (academies, foundation, voluntary aided) it will be for the governing body/trust to decide if the evidence provided will be accepted.

# Section 4

## Additional Information - including waiting lists, appeals process, and admissions out of year

### How do I put my child's name on a waiting list if my application is unsuccessful?

Unsuccessful applicants will be automatically placed on a waiting list ranked in line with the relevant [admission arrangements](#) and not based on the date their application was received. There will be a period of two weeks after the national offer date whereby available places will not be reallocated. If places become available after this date they will be offered to the child at the top of the waiting list. Waiting lists will be kept until the end of the autumn term of admission (31 December).

Where a school is affected by infant class size legislation apply, the waiting list will operate until the cohort leaves Year 2.

Inclusion on a school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available at the preferred school.

A child's position on a waiting list is not fixed and is subject to change during the year i.e. they can go up or down the list since each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the relevant [admission arrangements](#).

Children who are subject to a direction by a local authority to admit or who are allocated to a school in accordance with the [Fair Access Protocol](#) will take precedence over those on the waiting list.

### What can I do if I am unhappy with the school offer made?

If you have not been offered a place at one of your preferred schools, you have a statutory [right of appeal](#) to an independent panel.

### Can I apply again for the same school if my application is unsuccessful in September?

It is not the council's policy to consider repeat applications in the same academic year unless there have been significant and material changes in the circumstances, of the parent, child or school.

If you have evidence that this is the case you need to provide the details to the [School Admissions Team](#) outlining the significant material changes and providing evidence for consideration.

### Will my appeal be successful?

If your child has been refused a place at your preferred school due to the legislation regarding infant class sizes, there are only very limited circumstances in which your appeal will be successful. The guidance sent out with the appeal form will provide further information.

### What if my appeal is unsuccessful?

The decision of an independent appeal panel is final and binding on the local authority, parents and the school. If your appeal is unsuccessful you may wish to contact Staffordshire County Council who will be able to advise you as to which schools have places available, in addition to the school place that you have already been offered.

### Admissions During the School Year i.e. In Year Admissions

The council does not co-ordinate in-year admission applications. Parents and carers can apply for a place for their child at any time to any school. The council collates information of where places may be available but applications should be made directly to the school on an in year application form. Schools must inform the council of all applications received and their outcome to allow the council to keep up to date figures of availability of places. If refusing an application, the admission authority (such as academies and aided schools or the council for community and controlled schools) must inform the council and advise parents of their right to appeal against the refusal.

# Section 5

## Other useful information and contacts

### **SENDIASS Staffordshire Family Partnership –**

Information, advice and support about education, health and social care issues for parents and carers of children and young people aged 0 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities.

### **Special Educational Needs - Education, health and care plans (EHC)**

have replaced the old 'statement of special educational need'. Education, health and social care professionals work together with parents. You can address all your children's needs in one process. The system is much easier and quicker. You now have the power to control personal budgets for your children with profound health and learning needs

**Contracted School Transport –** for information on school transport in your area and seat availability under the Temporary Vacant Seat Scheme.

**Public Transport –** for information relating to public transport.

**Ofsted School Inspection Reports –** Ofsted is the inspectorate for children and learners in England.

**School Meals –** Staffordshire Catering Service is the school meal provider for Staffordshire schools. You can find menus and see how we are promoting a healthy lifestyle to our young customers.

**Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education –** for information and advice about admissions to Church of England Voluntary Aided Schools.

**Archdiocese of Birmingham Diocesan Education Service –** for information and advice about admissions to Voluntary Aided Catholic Primary Schools.

**Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service –** for information and advice about admissions to Voluntary Aided Catholic Primary Schools.

**Parent Teacher Association (PTA) –** for information on starting or joining a PTA.

**Parental Responsibility (PR) –** for admissions purposes, an individual can only apply for a school place if they have parental responsibility for the child named on the application form.

**The Schools Guide** gives you lots of information to help you choose a school.

The **Department for Education** is the government site for education. The site also provides parents with the facility to **search schools** in England and view school performance, characteristics and spend per pupil data. The **Independent Schools Council** exists to promote choice, diversity and excellence in education, the development of talent at all levels of ability and the widening of opportunity for children from all backgrounds to achieve their potential. The **Advisory Centre for Education** is an independent charity which has been helping parents for over 40 years when problems arise with their children's education during compulsory school years.

Office of the Schools Adjudicator - The main functions of the office of the school adjudicator are as follows:

- to determine objections to admission arrangements
- to resolve disputes where there is local disagreement on statutory proposals for school reorganisation or on the transfer and disposal of non playing field land and assets.
- to decide on competitions for new schools where the local authority has entered the competition with its own proposals.
- to decide on requests to vary determined admission arrangements.
- to determine appeals from schools against a direction from the local authority to admit a particular pupil.

**The Local government and social care ombudsman** looks at complaints about councils and some other authorities, including education admissions appeal panels.

**Get the right school** is a public interest site focused on getting your child into the school of your choice.

Note: Staffordshire County Council is not responsible for the content of external web sites.

# Appendix 1

## Definition of a Baptised Catholic

To establish clarity, consistency and fairness in the application of Criteria of Admission in Catholic Schools in accordance with the Trust Deed of the Archdiocese of Birmingham, it is necessary to define the description of a "Baptised Catholic" for the benefit of parents who are making applications and for governors who formulate and apply the criteria for admissions.

A "Baptised Catholic" is one who:

- Has been baptised into full communion (Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 837) with the Catholic Church by the Rites of Baptism of one of the various ritual Churches in communion with the See of Rome (i.e. Latin Rite, Byzantine Rite, Coptic, Syriac, etc, Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1203). Written evidence of this baptism can be obtained by recourse to the Baptismal Registers of the church in which the baptism took place (Cf. Code of Canon Law, 877 & 878).

Or

- Has been validly baptised in a separated ecclesial community and subsequently received into full communion with the Catholic Church by the Right of Reception of Baptised Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church. Written evidence of their baptism and reception into full communion with the Catholic Church can be obtained by recourse to the Register of Receptions, or in some cases, a sub-section of the Baptismal Registers of the church in which the Rite of Reception took place (Cf. Rite of Christian Initiation, 399).

### Written Evidence of Baptism

The Governing Bodies of Catholic schools will require written evidence in the form of a Certificate of Baptism or Certificate of Reception before applications for school places can be considered for categories of "Baptised Catholics". A Certificate of Baptism or Reception is to include: the full name, date of birth, date of baptism or reception, and parent(s) name(s). The certificate must also show that it is copied from the records kept by the place of baptism or reception.

Those who would have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism for a good reason, may still be considered as baptised Catholics but only after they have been referred to their parish priest who, after consulting the Vicar General, will decide how the question of baptism is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church.

Those who would be considered to have good reason for not obtaining written evidence would include those who cannot contact the place of baptism due to persecution or fear, the destruction of the church and the original records, or where baptism was administered validly but not in the Parish church where records are kept.

Governors may request extra supporting evidence when the written documents that are produced do not clarify the fact that a person was baptised or received into the Catholic Church, (i.e. where the name and address of the Church is not on the certificate or where the name of the Church does not state whether it is a Catholic Church or not).