

Primary and secondary admissions prospectus

Introduction to applying for a school place

According to the [School Admissions Code \(1 September 2021\)](#), we are responsible for coordinating all applications for school places from Stockton-on-Tees residents.

If you are a resident of Stockton-on-Tees, you need to apply for a school place using our Common Application Form on [the Citizen Portal](#) even if your preferred school is in another Borough.

It is important that you submit your application for a school place before the closing date so that your application will be considered fairly.

Apply for a primary school place

Most children start primary school in the September after their fourth birthday. This means they will turn 5 during their first school year.

You can learn more about the school starting age on [the GOV.UK website](#).

Applications to start primary school in September 2022

If you have not yet applied for a Reception place for your child to start in September 2022, then you **must contact us** and we will send you an In-Year Application to complete and return to School Admissions.

[Contact us](#) if you have any questions or if you have not applied for a place for your child.

Applications to start primary school in September 2023

If your child was born between 1 September 2018 and 31 August 2019, he or she will start primary school in September 2023.

You can ask to [delay your place](#) until September 2024 if your child was born between April and August.

Please note the application round for your child to start primary school in September 2023 has now closed (15 January 2023). You can still view the Citizen Portal but you cannot make any changes to your application. If you have not done so already, you can still apply using a late application form.

[Make a late application for a primary school place 2023](#) >

As part of your application, you will be able to select up to [3 preferred schools](#). We recommend that you choose 3 different schools in your preferences to give you the best chance of being offered a place at one of your preferred schools. If you are unsure which 3 schools to choose, arrange visits to individual schools to help you decide before the applications open. School contact details are available on [our find schools page](#). Please note to improve your chances of securing your child's preferred school place you have until the **15 January 2023** to apply, any applications received after this date will be deemed 'late' and processed after **all** those applications received 'on time'.

[Visit the Preferences page to learn more about choosing a school.](#)

Children born between April and August (summer born)

If your child was born between April to August there are some options available to you as noted below:

Deferred entry

You have a right to defer your child's entry to school until the start of term beginning immediately after your child has reached compulsory school age. However, places cannot be deferred beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made.

If you are considering applying for deferred entry, you should think about what implications this will have on your child and discuss your child's situation with relevant professionals. You may want to think about possible benefits of keeping your child in the early setting and balance these against the possible difficulties of your child joining an

established group of children in a school reception class part way through the school year.

If you wish to defer your child's entry, when you are offered a school place for your child you must discuss their start date directly with the school.

When your summer-born child can start school

Parents of summer-born children (born between 1 April and 31 August) may request that they start reception a year later. This is called **delayed** admission. This is an important decision, and a number of factors need to be taken into consideration.

[Read the government guidance about school admissions for summer-born children.](#)

If you would like to apply for delayed admission you **must** still make an on-time school place application (where possible) and indicate on the form your wishes to delay your child's admission at the same time. We would recommend that you include your catchment or nearest school as one of your preferences.

In this situation, the school admission authority (this could still be LA or the Trust if the school preferred is an Academy) is responsible for making the decision on which year group a child should be admitted to even though it is you, the parent, who has taken the decision to delay their child's start at school. Paragraph 2.17A of the Code requires an admission authority to make a decision about which of **reception or year 1** the child is admitted to on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned. The Code requires admission authorities to make decisions in the best interests of the child in any circumstances where the parent requests admissions outside the child's normal age group - this includes instances where the application is made outside of the authority's published deadlines.

Alternatively, by delaying your child's start until the September after their 5th birthday, you could still make an in-year application for a year 1 place for your child that year. In that case your child would miss reception year and be taught in their normal year group.

There is no statutory barrier to children being admitted outside their normal age group, but you **do not** have the right to insist that your child is admitted to a particular age group. This decision is for the admission authority - whether that is the Local Authority or the School/Academy Trust.

Parental requests to multiple admissions authorities

An admission authority is not required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. We would therefore encourage parents to make a request for an outside normal year group place at each school to which they intend to apply for a place. It is possible that different admission authorities may come to different conclusions and do so for good reasons. It is also possible that different head teachers who work for the same admission authority may disagree. Some schools may be more equipped than others to support a particular summer born child's needs if he or she starts school before compulsory school age.

Moving children to their normal age group

Once a child has been admitted to a school it is for the **headteacher to decide** how best to educate them. In some cases, it may be appropriate for a child who has been admitted out of their normal age group to be moved to their normal age group, but in others it will not. Any decision to move a child to a different age group should be based on sound educational reasons and made by the headteacher in consultation with the parents. In some primary schools, of course, children are educated in mixed age classes.

The decision making process

Step 1	Parent contacts either a school or the LA School Admissions team directly and requests a delayed entry for their child into their chronological year group due to being a 'Summer born' child (date of birth 1 April to 31 August). The contacted school must inform the LA School Admissions team as soon as possible.
Step 2	The LA School Admissions team informs parent of the process and issues Department for Education advice note to ensure the parent completely understand the process and implications of the decision to request a delayed entry for their child. Parent also advised that they must submit an on-time application, where possible, listing their preferred school(s) and encouraged to visit all schools. Read government guidance about school admissions for summer-born children.
Step 3	Parent submits a main round application. Subject to the school(s) listed, the LA School Admissions team will either

	<p>arrange a 'panel' meeting with the headteacher(s) of the school(s) listed within the application (only if community maintained schools listed). If the school(s) are academies, the application and request will be sent to the admission authority / headteacher of the academy school(s) listed to consider request separately.</p>
<p>Step 4a</p>	<p>LA School Admissions Team facilitated panel meeting takes place to consider request with preference schools.</p>
<p>Step 4b</p>	<p>Admission authority school(s) holds a panel meeting to consider request with preference school(s).</p>
<p>Step 5a</p>	<p>Where a parent's request for the delayed start has not been agreed, a letter will be issued giving the reasons for their decision and to explain the next steps, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you are not required to send your child to school until the child reaches compulsory school age • it is then for you to confirm/decline this offer and if accepting the offer, to discuss any further arrangements with the school concerned (such as part-time attendance initially or deferring entry later in the school year) if you decide to send your child to school and not delay • refuse it and make an in-year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday
<p>Step 5b</p>	<p>Where a parent's application for the delayed start is agreed, a letter will be issued to explain next steps, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parent withdraws their application for the normal age group before a place is offered • parent must make a new application for a school place during the main admissions round the following year <p>This does not guarantee a place in a particular school in the next school year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • this decision does not bind any other admissions authorities and so the parent will need to apply separately for education out of year group to any other schools

- the parent will need to re-apply for education out of year group ahead of moving to a new school, for example transition to secondary schools

We would advise you to begin conversations with these schools early and to apply for outside year group education when the child's original year group would be applying to transition to a new school.

Step 6

Parents whose request for delayed entry is refused have no statutory right to appeal this decision.

If a parent is unhappy with the way a local authority or maintained school has handled their complaint, the parent may then refer their complaint to the [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#).

If a parent is unhappy with the way an academy has handled their complaint, they may [complain to the Education and Skills Funding Agency](#).

If your child was born between April and August 2019

If your child was born between April and August 2019 and you want to delay their start date until September 2024, you need to complete an application for September 2023 and let us know in your application that you would like to delay.

[Read the government guidance about school admissions for summer-born children](#).

Apply for a secondary school place

Applications to start secondary school in September 2022

If you have not yet applied for a Y7 place for your child to start in September 2022, then you **must contact us** and we will send you an in-year application to complete and return to School Admissions.

[Contact us](#) if you have any questions or if you have not applied for a place for your child.

Applications to start secondary school in September 2023

If your child was born between 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012, he or she will start school in September 2023.

Please note the application round for your child to start secondary school in September 2023 has now closed (31 October 2022). You can still view the Citizen Portal but you cannot make any changes to your application. If you have not done so already, you can still apply using a late application form.

Make a late application for a secondary school place 2023 >

As part of your application, you can choose up to [4 preferred schools](#). We recommend that you choose 4 different schools to give you the best chance of being offered a place at one of your preferred schools.

[Visit the Preference page to learn more about choosing a school.](#)

If you have any queries please email the School Admissions Team on school.admissions@stockton.gov.uk

Admissions policies

School places are allocated according to the admission criteria set out by admissions authorities.

We are the admissions authority for:

- community schools
- voluntary-controlled schools

Read our admissions policy for 2020 to 2023 >

We are not the admissions authority for:

- voluntary-aided schools
- academies

- free schools

These school set their own admissions policies. You should be available to view on the school's website. You can also request a hard copy of the admissions policy by [contacting the school](#).

Admissions zones

Our admissions zones policy gives every school in the Borough a defined area.

Our admissions zones are designed so that most postcodes in Stockton-on-Tees are "in-zone" for at least one community school and one faith school.

We cannot guarantee to meet your preferences for a school within your admission zone if the school is full.

Your preferences

You can choose several preferences as part of your application, 3 for primary schools and 4 for secondary schools. We recommend that you use all the preferences available. You can list any school in the Borough as one of your preferences, even if your address is not in that school's admission zone.

Only naming one school as a preference or listing the same school multiple times does not increase your chances of being offered a place at that school.

If your child has a sibling at one of the schools you are applying to, make sure to tell us this as part of your application.

You can learn more about schools in the Borough by arranging visits to primary schools or attending secondary school open evenings.

Change your preferences

You can change your preferences up until the closing date. We will only accept a request to change your preferences after the closing date if your circumstances have changed - for example, if you have moved house.

Online applications

If you applied online, you can edit your application and resubmit it any time before the closing date.

Paper applications

If you have sent us a paper application, [email or write to](#) the School Admissions team to change your preferences.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All mainstream schools provide resources for children with special educational needs (SEN) and every school will have a special educational needs coordinator who has specific responsibility for pupils with SEN. The majority of children who have special educational needs have their needs met within local mainstream schools and receive additional resources where necessary through SEN Support.

Statemented pupils or pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

If your child has an EHCP, you will receive a school preferences form from the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Service. If your child's EHCP states specialist provision and you express a preference for this type of school, your child will be given priority for a specialist school place.

In all cases, the SEND and Inclusion Service will consult with your preferred schools to make sure the schools would be able to meet your child's needs.

Appeals process

If your child has a EHCP and you are not satisfied with the school place that the local authority has determined for your child you will be able to appeal to the special educational needs and disability tribunal. You will be given details about the appeal procedure when your child is issued with an amended EHCP identifying the allocated secondary school.

Advice

[Contact the SEND and Inclusion Service for support >](#)

Children of service personnel or Crown servants

The following information only applies to community and voluntary-controlled schools.

Voluntary-aided, academics and free schools may have different policies related to families of service personnel. Admissions policies are usually available on school websites.

We will consider applications from families of service personnel on an individual basis.

We will try to offer your child a place in advance of your family arriving if:

- we receive your application before the closing date
- you can provide an official letter declaring your relocation date and a unit postal address or quartering area address

If your move into the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees is not related to a military posting, we will treat your application as normal and can only consider an address as your main residence if you can prove that you already live in the property.

Children arriving in the UK from abroad

[Contact us](#) - or your own local authority if you live outside of the Borough - if your child is arriving into the UK from abroad and you want to apply for a school place in Stockton-on-Tees.

Visit the government web page on [school admission applications from overseas children](#), which provides advice on:

- eligibility to enter the country to access a school
- requirements for admission authorities in processing applications (i.e. requirements within the School Admissions Code and the law)
- advice on processing applications made from those living outside England but returning to live in England

Shared custody

If you share parental responsibility for a child, you should agree between you who is responsible for completing an application for a school place. If your child lives between two addresses, you should use their home address as directed by the Court or the address at which they spend most of the school week (Monday to Friday).

Your address

We use a parent's or legal carer's permanent residence when processing an application. If you have two addresses, we will use the

address at which you actually live to determine your school admission zone.

If we find that you have given an address which is not yours, such as that of a childminder or a family member, we can withdraw your offer of a school place.

Providing proof of address

We may need to confirm you are living in the property you have listed as your main residence. We will request this either in writing if you completed a paper application or by email if you applied online.

If you have two addresses, we will ask you to prove that you normally live in the one you have told us is your main residence. We will also ask for evidence of how you are using your other to confirm that you do not live there.

You need to provide 3 documents from Section A, but we may accept 2 documents from section A and 1 from Section B if you can show that you have extreme difficulty in proving your main residence.

We will review applications on a case-by-case basis. [Contact us](#) if you cannot provide any of the documents stated below as we may accept other proof of address.

Documents required to prove that an address is your main residence - Section A

Document	Conditions
Solicitor's letter confirming purchase of property	
Current council tax bill in your name	Must be supplied if you are the council taxpayer and must be for the current financial year
Tenancy agreement signed by all parties for a minimum of 6 months	Must be current and include the pages that show the names of the tenants. If this is a new address, you must supply a letter from a solicitor confirming exchange of contracts.

Document	Conditions
A utility bill (gas or electricity)	Must be in your name, showing usage at the application address within the last 3 months.
Benefit or Universal Credit letter	Must be for the current financial year
Child Benefit letter	Must be for the current financial year. All pages of the letter should include the home address and child's name. You can request a confirmation letter from HMRC even if you receive payment.
Child Tax Credit letter	Must be for the current year. Please copy all pages of the letter.
Letter from your GP confirming the child's name	Must not be more than 12 months old.

Documents required to prove that an address is your main residence - Section B

Document	Conditions
Income support	Must be for the current financial year
TV licence	Must be for the current year
Driving licence	Must be current

Documents required to prove that an address is a previous or second property

Document	Conditions
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Solicitor's letter
confirming sale of
property

A rental agreement
from the letting agent
stating that the house
is now for let

Must be current and include the pages
that show your name and the name of the
letting agent

A tenancy agreement
signed by all parties for
a minimum of 6
months

Must be current and include the pages
that show the names of the tenants. If
this is a new address you must supply a
letter from a solicitor showing exchange
of contracts

Moving house

If you are moving to a new house and you want to apply for a school whose admission zone covers your new address, you need to provide proof that you have already moved and you are living in the new property.

If you can prove that you have moved after the application closing date but before we have allocated places, we will process your application based on your new address.

If you are moving into the admission zone of a school that is usually or likely to be oversubscribed, it may not be possible for us to offer you a place in that school even though your new property is in the school's admission zone.

Temporary accommodation

We will only consider a temporary address for use in your application in exceptional circumstances. Otherwise, we will use the address at which you were living before the temporary move took place.

Late applications

Submitting your application late reduces your chances of being offered a place at one of your preferred schools. We will consider it after we have processed all the forms we received on time.


Your form will be classed as late if we receive it after the closing date.

If we have not received your application, we will send you letter to remind you to apply 2 weeks before the closing date. Contact us if you receive the letter and you are sure that you have already applied.

We will class your application as being on time if:

- circumstances out of your control prevented you from applying before the deadline and you can provide evidence to show us what those circumstances were
- you move into the Stockton-on-Tees area or if you move to a different area with the Borough after the closing date but before we have allocated places

Please note the application round for your child to start secondary school in September 2023 has now closed (31 October 2022). You can still view the Citizen Portal but you cannot make any changes to your application. If you have not done so already, you can still apply using a late application form.

Make a late application for a secondary school place 2023 

Please note the application round for your child to start primary school in September 2023 has now closed (15 January 2023). You can still view the Citizen Portal but you cannot make any changes to your application. If you have not done so already, you can still apply using a late application form.

[Make a late application for a primary school place 2023](#)

[Contact us](#) if you have not yet applied for a Reception or Y7 place for your child to start in September 2022. We will send you an in-year application to complete and return to School Admissions. We can help with any questions or if you have not applied for a place for your child.

Receiving your offer

We will try to offer you a place at one of your preference schools.

The offer is made on National Offer Day (1 March for secondary schools or 16 April for primary schools) or the next working day if the National Offer Day falls on a weekend or bank holiday, in the year your child will start school.

You will receive your offer of a place by post or email (if you agreed to being contacted by email when you applied online).

The letter or email will explain what you need to do next.

If you have applied and you have not received your offer within 7 days of the National Offer Day, [contact us](#).

If it has not been possible for us to offer you a place at one of your preferred schools, you have [the right to appeal](#).

Allocating places

Once we receive your application, we go through several steps to make sure we allocate places fairly. As a local authority, we are responsible for managing the coordination of all applications to make sure that no child receives more than one offer.

If you have applied for a place at a voluntary-aided, academy or free school, we will send your application to that school. We will only share the details that they need to process the application.

If you have applied for a school outside of the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council area, we will pass on your application to the local authority which maintains those schools. They will then send your applications to any voluntary-aided, academies or free schools that you have applied for.

Schools are never informed which position they have in your preferences. They only receive the information they need to process your application.

If you have applied for a church place, schools may send you an additional form to determine whether you meet their criteria.

The admissions authority for each school then decides which pupils will be offered a place based on their admissions criteria.

Once the admissions authorities have decided which pupils they want to offer places to, they inform us of their decision. We then use your preferences to determine which offer to give to you.

If you have been offered a place at more than one of your preferred schools, we will offer you your highest preference and release the other offers to other pupils.

Appeal a school place decision

You can only submit an appeal if you have received a formal letter of refusal. If you would like to appeal decisions made by more than one school, you need to submit a separate appeal for each school.

Before submitting your appeal, read the admissions arrangements for the school you would like to appeal to. If the school is a voluntary-aided, academy or free school this information will be on their website. If the school is a community school or voluntary-controlled, read our [school admissions arrangements](#). This will help you to understand how places are allocated and may help you to build a case for your appeal.

If you are not sure whether an appeal is the right option for you, you can also [speak to one of our admissions team](#) to discuss other options that are available to you.

You can seek advice on your appeal from the [Advisory Centre for Education](#).

[Submit your appeal >](#)

Admissions appeal timetable 2023

Main round admissions appeals for secondary school

Appeals forms must be received by late March 2023 and appeals will be heard during May and June 2023.

Main round admissions appeals for primary school

Appeals forms must be received by late May 2023 and appeals will be heard during June and July 2023.

Late main round appeals

You may submit a late appeal form after the deadline date, but your appeal may not be heard in advance of the new academic year for September 2023.

What happens after you submit your appeal

You will attend a formal hearing before an independent panel.

The appeal process allows the admission authority to explain why your child was refused a place at your preferred school. You will explain why

you believe your child should get a place at that school.

You can learn more about the appeal process and how panels reach decision on [the government website on school admissions appeals](#).

Waiting lists

If we cannot offer you a place at your first or second preference, we will automatically place your child on a waiting list for your preferred schools until the end of the Autumn term. [Contact us](#) if you want your child to remain on the waiting list after this date.

Academies, free schools and voluntary-aided schools are responsible for their own waiting lists. If you want to know whether your child has been placed on their waiting list or request that your child be added to that list, you need to contact the school after the National Offer Day.

Waiting lists are ranked according to over subscription criteria.

Fair Access Protocol

Every local authority is required to have a Fair Access Protocol. This ensures that, outside of the main primary and secondary admissions rounds, children who do not have a school place are placed in a suitable school as quickly as possible.

All schools, academies and free schools have agreed to participate in the protocol which means that they are sometimes required to admit more children than their published admission limit even if they are already considered to be full.

Neighbouring local authorities

You can find information about admissions arrangements in other our neighbouring local authorities by visiting their websites:

- [School admissions - Darlington Borough Council](#)
- [School admissions - Durham County Council](#)
- [School admissions - Hartlepool Borough Council](#)
- [School admissions - Middlesbrough Borough Council](#)
- [School admissions - North Yorkshire County Council](#)
- [School admissions - Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council](#)

Contact us

If you have questions relating to the application process or you need to talk to us about your application, contact the School Admissions Team.

Telephone: 01642 526605

Email: school.admissions@stockton.gov.uk

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