



WARRINGTON
Borough Council

**PRIMARY EDUCATION
IN-YEAR TRANSFER ADMISSIONS
INFORMATION BOOKLET FOR PARENTS**

1. IN-YEAR TRANSFER APPLICATIONS

- 1.1 In-year transfer applications are those requesting a transfer from one school to another outside of the normal admissions round, for example when a family moves house part way through a school year. This booklet sets out the in-year application process and is also intended to give information and advice to Parents/Carers who wish to explore the possibility of transferring their child from one school to another part way through a school year.
- 1.2 Generally a child will be admitted to another school if there is a place available with the exception of those children whose circumstances meet the requirements of the Fair Access Protocol. For more information about the Fair Access Protocol, please refer to section 5.
- 1.3 If your request for an in-year transfer **is not** because of an address change or relocation from overseas, you are strongly advised to think very carefully before you apply. Problems that your child may be experiencing may not go away simply as a result of a change of school.
- 1.4 Before you consider changing your child's school, it is important to discuss it with your child and find out how he/she really feels about the possibility of a school move. You need to be clear about the real reason why he/she wants to move to a different school. For example, it could be because he/she is worried about certain subjects. If this is the case then you will need to discuss this with your child's current school to allow them the opportunity to address any concerns that you or your child may have. If you think your child needs extra help or has needs that are not being recognised, you would need to arrange to speak to the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) at your child's current school. If you or your child has concerns about bullying or friendship issues, speak to your child's class teacher; head of year or pastoral head. Finally, having explored these options, if you feel your concerns have not been addressed appropriately at your child's current school, you should arrange an appointment to speak with your child's Headteacher.
- 1.5 All schools have a complaints policy which will set out how Parents/Carers should raise school's awareness of any concerns and what steps will be taken to help resolve them.

2. POINTS TO CONSIDER BEFORE MAKING YOUR APPLICATION

- 2.1 There are many points to consider when deciding whether or not a school transfer for your child is the right thing to do. Some of the main points to consider are set out below.
- 2.2 **Teaching and school organisation**
Each school teaches the national curriculum in different ways and at different times of the academic year. It may be the case that the part of the curriculum currently being studied at the 'new' school was covered by your child's current school earlier on in the year. This may impact on your child's education as he/she will be repeating work which he/she has already done. It could be that areas of the curriculum have been completed at the 'new' school but had not yet been covered at your child's current school. This means your child will completely miss out on some areas of the curriculum.
- 2.3 You may find it useful to visit the school's website and contact the school to arrange a visit to discuss this.
- 2.4 **Friendships**
Forming friendships is a very important aspect of school life. Children should feel happy and content at school and relationships with friends and teachers are a key part of any child's social

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development and educational progression. If relationships have broken down at your child's current school, you must discuss this with your child's school before making a decision to transfer to another school. Problems that your child may be experiencing may not go away simply as a result of a change of school.

2.5 **Uniform**

It may be necessary to buy a completely new uniform, including PE kit, for your child if you decide to transfer schools. It should be noted that the Local Authority is unable to provide any subsidy, even for low income families, in connection with uniform costs.

2.6 **Transport**

The Local Authority is required by law to provide or pay for free transport for pupils who have to travel more than the statutory distance to their nearest suitable school. For pupils of primary aged pupils, this distance is 2 miles.

2.7 It is important that you do not confuse the right to express a preference for a school with an entitlement to travel assistance. If you have expressed a preference for a school which is further away from your home and the distance to this school is more than the statutory distance, you may not be entitled to travel assistance. If this is the case, you will need to think about the costs involved with getting your child from home to school and back on time and safely as this is your responsibility. For more information regarding home to school transport assistance, please visit the Council website.

3. **MAKING AN APPLICATION**

3.1 If, having considered all the points listed above, you decide to apply for a school transfer; you must complete the appropriate in-year transfer form. There are two types of in year transfer forms, one for a primary and one for a secondary aged child.

3.2 It is also important to note that a form must be completed for each child seeking a school transfer. For example, if you have three children you wish to transfer, two of primary age and one of secondary school age, you must complete two primary in-year transfer forms and one secondary in-year transfer form.

3.3 It is not possible to apply for a school place any further in advance than six school weeks, for example if you wish to apply for a place from the beginning of the Autumn Term, the earliest you could apply would be the beginning of June.

3.4 Application forms are available to download on the council website at www.warrington.gov.uk/schools or alternatively you can call into the office to collect a form or you can telephone 01925 446226 and ask for a form to be posted out to you. For more information about the schools in Warrington please refer to the Primary or Secondary Information for Parents booklets which are available to download on the In Year Transfer page at www.warrington.gov.uk/schools

3.5 The in year transfer application is made up of seven sections. Sections 1 to 6 must be completed by the Parent/Carer. **Section 7 of the form needs to be completed by your child's current school. It is important that all sections are completed before submitting as incomplete forms will not be processed and will be returned to the Parents/Carer.**

- 3.6 If you are relocating to or within the Warrington area documentary proof of the house move will be required. Examples of acceptable proof are as follows:
- a council tax bill;
 - a copy of your exchange of contracts; or
 - a copy of the signed tenancy agreement (at least 6 months)
 - Driving licence
 - utility bill, not bank statements. For the purpose of this policy, utility bills are defined as water, gas or electric bill
- 3.7 Children Formerly in Care are defined as previously Looked After Children who have ceased to be so because they have been Adopted or became subject to a Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship Order immediately following being looked after. If your child is a child formerly in care then **you must** provide a copy of the Adoption Certificate, Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship Order at the time of application for your child to be considered under this criterion.
- 3.8 **Parental responsibility**
Applications must be completed by a person who has parental responsibility for the child. It is advised that the applicant should inform all other parties who have parental responsibility before submitting the application.
- 3.9 If all parties are not in agreement, with the child moving schools any disputes should be resolved before submitting an application. If parents are unable to reach an amicable agreement then both parents should seek recourse through the family Courts.
- 3.10 Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, the address given on the form should be the address of the parent who is in receipt of child benefit and/or child tax credit. Proof may be required.

4. Children of UK service personnel (UK Armed forces)

- 4.1 Places can be allocated in advance for children of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting in the area, or crown servants returning from overseas to live in the area. If this applies to your child please tell us on your application. You must also provide evidence i.e. an official letter from your commanding officer containing a relocation date and Unit postal address.

5. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 5.1 The fully completed form must be returned to the Local Authority's School Admissions Team. Completed forms may be scanned by the Parent/Carer and emailed to schooladmissions@warrington.gov.uk **Please be aware that photographs of application forms are not acceptable and will be returned.**
- 5.2 Alternatively you can post or hand deliver the completed application form to :

School Admissions Team
East Annexe
Town Hall
Sankey Street
Warrington
WA1 2UH

- 5.3 If you have submitted the form via email, an email acknowledgement will automatically be generated to the sender's email address upon safe delivery to the school admissions mailbox. If an acknowledgement is not received by the sender, there is no guarantee that it has been received by the School Admissions Team.
- 5.4 The School Admissions Team aim to reply to all in-year transfer applications within 10 school days of receiving a complete application form. However, in certain circumstances some applications may take longer to process. **Please be aware that applications cannot be processed during school holiday periods.**
- 5.5 In certain cases it may be necessary to consider an application in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol which may result in the process taking longer than 10 school days.

6. FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL

- 6.1 Each Local Authority must have a Fair Access Protocol, agreed with schools in its area including Academies and Faith Schools, to ensure that, unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible.
- 6.2 The School Admissions Team assess all applications to identify those which meet the requirements of the Fair Access Protocol. The criteria for primary aged children are as follows:
- a) Children from the criminal justice system or Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) who need to be reintegrated into mainstream school;
 - b) Children who have been out of the UK education system for 2 months or more;
 - c) Children of gypsies, Roma, travellers, refugees and asylum seekers;
 - d) Children who are homeless;
 - e) Children with unsupportive family backgrounds for whom a place has not been sought;
 - f) Children who are carers;
 - g) Children with SEN, disabilities or medical conditions (but without an Education, Health and Care Plan);
 - h) Key stage one children whose attendance is less than 85%;
 - i) Key stage two children whose attendance is less than 90%;
 - j) Children who have accessed support from New Horizons;
 - k) Children who have required behaviour support;
 - l) Children who have a period of exclusion during the last 12 months to date;
 - m) Children who have been permanently excluded*;
 - n) Children who have required support from outside agencies
 - o) Number of school moves during the last academic year

*Children who have been permanently excluded are placed at schools in accordance with a rotation system. This is a separate process which is administered by the LA through a process which has been agreed between the LA and schools.

- 6.3 In addition to the above criteria for both primary and secondary schools, the local authority will have regard for pupils who have not been on the roll of a mainstream school for more than four weeks.
- 6.4 Once applications meeting the Fair Access criteria have been identified, an admissions officer will assess each application taking the following factors into account:

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- The preferences expressed by the applicant
 - The home to school walking distances from the applicant's home to the preferred schools
 - The total number of Fair Access admissions already placed/to be considered for each of the preferred schools
 - All other schools within a reasonable distance to the applicants' home address where reasonable distance is defined as a home to school walking distance of 2 miles.
 - The total number of Fair Access admissions for each of the schools within a reasonable distance.
- 6.5 The outcome of this assessment will determine how the Local Authority will share out these applications between all suitable schools. The Local Authority must ensure that no school, including those with places available, is asked to take a disproportionate number of children who meet any of the Fair Access criteria.
- 6.6 There is no requirement to comply with parental preference when placing children in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol however; if an applicant is refused any of their preferred schools, they must be informed of their statutory right of appeal against the decision(s) not to offer a place at the school(s) of their preference.
- 6.7 For more information about Warrington's Fair Access Protocol and to access a copy of it, please visit the Council website at www.warrington.gov.uk/admissions or telephone 01925 446226 and request a copy.

7. ALLOCATING PLACES - FOR APPLICATIONS WHICH DO NOT MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL

- 7.1 Applicants are invited to express preferences for up to three schools. Each of the schools listed on the form is treated as a separate application. The Admissions Team will look to see whether there are places at any of the preferred schools. If a faith school or an academy has been listed as a preference, the Admissions Team will check if there is a place available in the required year group and contact the school to find out whether a place can be offered.
- 7.2 Places are offered for in-year applications on a first come first served basis. If there is one place available at a school and more than one child has applied on the same day, the school's oversubscription criteria will be applied to determine which child has the highest priority and should be offered the place.
- 7.3 If only one of the preferred schools has a place to offer in the required year group, then that place will be offered to the applicant for their child. If more than one of the preferred schools could offer a place, a place would be offered at whichever of those schools is the highest preference.
- 7.4 If all of the preferred schools are full and the applicant does not currently have a school place due to relocating to the area, and proof of the new address has been received, the Local Authority will offer a place at the nearest school which is within a reasonable distance* to the home address that has a place available. This may not be the closest school to the applicants' home as many Warrington schools are already full in many year groups and admission authorities are unable to hold places in reserve for children who may move into an area after the usual point of entry.

**Warrington Local Authority defines a reasonable distance as a home to school shortest walking distance up to 2 miles for primary aged children.*

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- 7.5 If all of the preferred schools are full and the child is a Warrington resident and already has a place at a school that he or she is able to attend, an alternative school place will not be offered.
- 7.6 If no school within a reasonable distance has a place available, it may be necessary to admit over the published admission number at a school which is within a reasonable distance. Admitting over the published admission number will only be considered where the following exceptional circumstances apply:
- a) children admitted outside the normal admissions round with an Education, Health and Care Plans specifying a school;
 - b) looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round;
 - c) children admitted, after initial allocation of places, because of a procedural error made by the admissions authority or Local Authority in the original application process;
 - d) children admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds an appeal;
 - e) children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance;
 - f) children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round;
 - g) children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil;
 - h) children with special educational needs who are normally taught in a special educational needs unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school who attend some classes within the mainstream school.
- 7.7 When considering which school should admit exceptionally above the published admission number, the Local Authority may consult the Headteacher at the school to decide whether or not, on balance, the prejudice caused to the child by not admitting them to a particular school outweighs the prejudice caused to the school by admitting the child. The Authority would make every effort to share such requests between schools which are local to the applicant's address, when it is reasonable to do so. Therefore, if all schools within a reasonable distance are full, the Local Authority will not automatically admit exceptionally to the preferred school.
- 7.8 It should be noted that exceptional circumstances do not apply in the event of a family relocating to the area to live with other family members who are unable to provide proof of address. In cases such as these, if no places are available at a school within a reasonable distance, the application will be refused and the right of appeal will be offered. A list of alternative schools will be provided upon request however; the home to school walking distance for these schools will be more than the reasonable distance defined by the Local Authority.

8. INFANT CLASS SIZE LEGISLATION

- 8.1 Infant classes are those where the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6 or 7 during the school year i.e. Reception and Years 1 and 2.
- 8.2 Infant classes **must not** contain more than 30 pupils with a single school teacher however; additional children may be admitted under limited exceptional circumstances as set out above.
- 8.3 If a child's circumstances meets any of the exceptions listed in Para 6.5 a)-h), then the child may be admitted to an already full/oversubscribed Reception, Year 1 or 2 class as an excepted pupil. This means that the child can be added to a class of 30 in these year groups without the requirement to take qualifying measures i.e. employment of an additional teacher.

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9. NOTIFICATION

- 9.1 You will receive written notification of the outcome of your application. The outcome is normally sent via email, however, if you prefer to receive your outcome via post please let us know.
- 9.2 If you are offered a place you will be asked to contact the school allocated to make arrangements for admission. All offers are available for six school weeks only. If a child has not started by the date given in the offer letter then the offer of a place will be withdrawn.
- 9.4 If the application is due to a relocation to the Warrington area and the Parent/Carer were not able to provide the necessary proof of address before the application was processed, then a conditional offer will be made. The offer made will be upon condition that the proof of the new address is received within six school weeks. If parents are unable to provide proof within the required timescale the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

10. APPEALS PROCEDURE FOR IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

- 10.1 If it has been necessary to refuse any of the preferred schools, the applicant has the statutory right of appeal against the decision not to offer a place at the preferred school(s).
- 10.2 If an applicant decides to appeal, the appeal must be made in writing, stating the child's details and giving the reasons for appealing. Appeal submissions should be sent to: schooladmissions@warrington.gov.uk or alternatively you can post them to:

School Admissions Team
East Annexe
Town Hall
Sankey Street
Warrington
WA1 2UH

- 10.3 Appeals are considered by an Independent School Appeals Panel and their decision is binding on the admission authority, the Parent/Carer and the school. The Clerk to the Independent School Appeals Panel will arrange a date and time for the appeal hearing and will write direct to the applicant with details. **Appeals can take up to 30 school days to arrange.**
- 10.4 Applicants will be notified, by the Clerk to the Independent School Appeals panel, in writing of the outcome of the appeal, within 5 school days of the hearing. If an appeal is successful, Parents/Carers will be asked to contact the school to make arrangements for admission. If an appeal is unsuccessful, the Parent/Carer is unable to appeal again in the same academic year for the same school unless there has been a material change of circumstances that the panel was not aware of at the hearing. A further application would be required. For more information about the appeals procedure, please visit the A further in year transfer application would be required. For more information about the appeals procedure, please visit www.warrington.gov.uk/admissions

SUMMARY OF IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS PROCESS

The key points to remember are set out below.

- Before submitting an in-year application, make sure you speak to your child's current school about your reasons for requesting a school move
- Discuss the option of a school move with your child. If your child is asking to move school, try and find out the reasons why and discuss this with your child's current school to see if there are any issues which can be addressed by them.
- Stop and think about how a school move could impact on your child's education and social wellbeing.
- If you decide to go ahead and explore the possibility of an in-year transfer request, please ensure you visit your preferred schools before making an application.
- Please ensure that all sections of your application form are completed before submitting, as incomplete forms cannot be processed.
- All fully completed application forms will be acknowledged and will normally be processed within 10 school days of receipt, however, some applications may take longer to process.
- If you are relocating into or within Warrington documentary proof of the house move will be required. Examples of acceptable proof are as follows:
 - Copy of the exchange of contracts; or
 - Copy of the signed tenancy agreement (at least 6 months)
 - Council tax bill;
 - Driving licence
 - utility bill, not bank statements. For the purpose of this policy, utility bills are defined as water, gas or electric bills