



Closing
Date
15 January
2026



Primary Education in Essex 2026/2027

Your guide to starting primary education or transferring from
infant to junior school

Closing date for applications 15 January 2026

Apply online at: www.essex.gov.uk/admissions



Essex County Council

Online admissions

Parents and carers who live in the Essex County Council area (excluding those living in the Borough of Southend-on-Sea or in Thurrock) can apply for their child's school place online using the Essex Online Admissions Service at:

www.essex.gov.uk/admissions

The online application system has a number of benefits for parents and carers:

- you can access related information through links on the website to find out more about individual schools, home to school transport or inspection reports;
- when you have submitted your application you will receive an email confirming this;
- you will be told the outcome of your online application by email on offer day if you requested this when you applied.

You will be able to make your application online from 10 November 2025.

The closing date for primary applications is 15 January 2026. This is the statutory national closing date set by the Government.



**15 January 2026
Applications close**

Key Points to Remember

- **APPLY ON TIME - closing date 15 January 2026.**
- **Use all 4 preferences.**
- **Tell us immediately in writing (email or by letter) about any address change.**
- **Make sure you read and understand the Education Transport Policy information on pages 25-26 if entitlement to school transport is important to you. School priority admission (catchment) areas are not relevant to transport eligibility. Transport is generally only provided to the nearest available school where the distance criteria is met. The 'catchment' school for an address may not be the nearest school. It is vital you carefully consider the transport implications before you make your application for a school place. Please contact us if you need advice (see pages 25-26).**



Hello and welcome

This booklet is to help you through the admissions process for your child to start primary education or transfer from infant to junior school in Essex in September 2026.

It gives you lots of useful information on the application process, explains how places are allocated and what to do after you have received your school offer.

Please ensure that you read this information alongside the 'Primary Schools Admission Policies Directories 2026/2027', which provides all the information on individual schools and how they offer places.

Last year 99% of applications were made online, which is a fast, safe and secure way to make your application. If you are unable to apply online, a printable application form can be found on our website or you can request one.

You must only make your application online or by paper, please do not do both.

The Council's School Admissions Team will handle all applications fairly under the admissions criteria, but they cannot influence decisions about school places. It is really important you consider the detail provided in this booklet.

Whatever you may hear from other people, there are no secret formulas for getting a place. You need to ensure that you have applied on-time, put your preferred schools in the order you want them considered and used all of your 4 preferences wherever possible. If you only apply for one school and there are not enough places at your preferred school, we will have to offer you an alternative school, which may not be one you would have preferred.

I hope that your child has an enjoyable and fruitful primary education, and wish them every success for the future.

Councillor Tony Ball
**Cabinet Member for Education Excellence,
Lifelong Learning and Employability**



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(If you can't find what you are looking for here, there is a full index towards the back of the booklet)

Please ensure that you read this information alongside the 'Primary Schools Admission Policies Directories 2026/2027', which provide all the information on individual schools and how they offer places.

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The information contained in this booklet is correct as at the time of printing. Policies may change in the light of decisions made by the Schools' Adjudicator, the Education Skills and Funding Agency or any change in the law. An addendum will be available on request.

Your application journey

Staying on track is a really important part of the process of applying for a primary school place, so here are the key dates for your diary.

Date	Procedure
10 November 2025	Applications open (apply online at www.essex.gov.uk/admissions)
October 2025 - 15 January 2026	Parents to read all the available information in this booklet, visit schools (if available) and make decisions on what to apply for.
15 January 2026	National closing date for applications NB: any application received after this date will normally be treated as late. You cannot apply using the online system after this date.
30 January 2026	The last date that evidence of changes of address can be accepted to be included in the first round of offers on 16 April 2026.
February 2026 – 16 April 2026	The LA runs all the relevant processes with schools and other councils to prioritise applications and determine school offers
16 April 2026	National offer day Essex County Council send offer notifications to Essex resident applicants
15 May 2026	Deadline for lodging appeals to be heard before summer holidays.
May 2026 – 31 August 2027	Waiting lists maintained by the LA and vacant places allocated
June – July 2026	Appeals held

The Council sends all correspondence in 'good faith' that it will be received on time. If, for any reason, you do not receive an acknowledgement to your application, which confirms you have submitted it, please contact School Admissions and we will check it for you.



15 January 2026
Applications close

All online and paper applications must have been received by this date.

Myth-busting

Before you start the admissions process, please be aware that whatever you may hear from other people, there are no secret formulas for getting a place. You need to ensure that you have applied on-time, put your preferred schools in the order you want them considered and used all of your preferences. If you apply for one school and there are not enough places at your preferred school, we will have to offer you an alternative school, which may not be one you would have wanted.

Here are some of the things we have heard people say and the reasons why they are not correct.

“Only listing one school will mean that I have to get a place at that school.”

Not true. If the school is oversubscribed with children who have a higher priority than your child, we won't be able to offer this school and will offer a place at an alternative school, which may not be one you would have preferred and may be some distance from your home. To give your child the best opportunity of getting a preferred school, we strongly recommend you use all of your four preferences.

“Talking to a member of the admissions team can help me get the school I want.”

Not true. Our team cannot influence the outcome of what happens with your application.

“Living close to the school means I am guaranteed a place.”

Not true. We cannot guarantee that your child will be offered a place at a particular school. We strongly advise that you use all of your preferences to give your child

the best opportunity to secure a place at a preferred school.

“It doesn't matter if I miss the deadline for applications.”

Not true. If you apply after the deadline, your application will be looked at after all those who applied on time and your preferred schools may already be full by that time. We strongly advise that you do not miss the closing date for applications (15 January 2026).

“They will have to change the decision if I appeal”

Not true. All appeals are considered by an independent appeal panel and they make decisions based on the cases they hear, whether they feel the school is full to capacity and whether they are satisfied that the admissions process has been carried out correctly. There is no guarantee that your appeal will be upheld.

Quick links to useful information

To help you find the information you need, we have created the following links, which you can click on to find out more.

Online Applications:

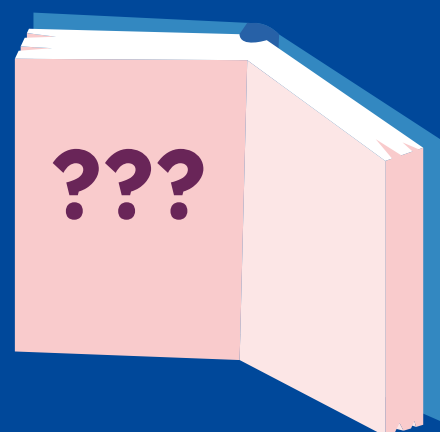
Applying online is a quick, safe and secure way to submit your application. Find out more [here](#)

Glossary:

We have included a [glossary](#) of terms, abbreviations and phrases that you may not be familiar with to help you understand the admissions process.

Applying to schools outside Essex:

Primary school admissions are fully coordinated across the country. This means that if you live in the Essex County Council area, you only need to fill out one application (the CAF), even if some, or all, of your preferred primary schools are outside Essex. Find more information [here](#).





Apply online

If you live in the Essex County Council area (which does not include Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock) you must apply for your school place through Essex County Council. Each year 99% of the applications we get are submitted online.

You can apply online using the Essex Online Admissions Service at: www.essex.gov.uk/admissions

People tell us it is easier to apply online because:

- it is safe and secure, nothing can get lost in the post!
- we send you an email to confirm that we have received your application
- there are helpful links to schools, transport information and inspection reports
- you can get an email on offer day confirming the result of your application (if you don't apply online, you will be sent an offer letter in the post, which may take some time to be delivered).
- you can apply from anywhere (your home, a library, your phone, at work).
- you can change your application (eg your preferred schools) up until the closing date.

NB: You must remember to resubmit your online application every time you change it or view it online, as we will process the last version as at the closing date.

You will be able to make your application online from 10 November 2025.

The national statutory closing date for all primary school applications in England is 15 January 2026.

Key points to remember:

- We strongly recommend that you use all of your preferences to give your child the best chance of being offered a preferred school.

- We recommend that you seriously consider applying for your local school if how your child gets to school is a factor.
- Applying online is quicker, easier and more secure. It also gives you the benefit of receiving your child's offer by email on offer day.
- The national closing date for applications is 15 January 2026 for all applications.

If you are unable to apply online, a downloadable application form can be found on our website, or you can request one by calling 0345 603 2200.

You must only make your application online, or by paper, you cannot do both.



Your application explained

All admissions to schools in Essex are carried out in accordance with statutory regulations and guidance from the Department for Education.

Common Application Forms (CAFs)

If you live in the Essex County Council area¹ (which does not include Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock) you must apply for your school place through Essex County Council. The Essex Common Application Form (CAF) is the only way you can apply for a primary or infant school place for your child.

You can apply online at www.essex.gov.uk/admissions or, if you are unable to apply online, an application form can be found on our website or you can request one via 0345 603 2200.

You must only make your application online or by paper, you cannot do both. If we receive more than one application from you for your child we process the last one to be submitted. **Don't forget, you must submit your application by 15 January 2026.**

Paper applications will be acknowledged by letter within 10 working days of receipt by the School Admissions team. If you have applied by paper, please contact School Admissions if you do not receive an acknowledgement letter.

Please note:

- The LA can only discuss details about an application with the person who completes the application.
- The LA is not responsible for any application sent by post that does not arrive with the School Admissions team by the stated closing date.
- If you apply online and then unsubmit your application (either by making a change, by viewing the application or for any reason), the LA is not responsible for processing unsubmitted applications. You must ensure that your application is fully submitted by the closing date.

Supplementary Information Forms (SIFs)

Some schools will need extra information to rank your application against their admission criteria. This includes most faith (religious) schools.

These schools will have a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) that you need to complete in addition to your application to the LA.

Where a SIF is required this is made clear in the school's admissions policy which you can find on our website www.essex.gov.uk/admissions SIFs must be returned directly to schools by the closing date for applications.

Please remember that completing a SIF on its own is not an application – you must also complete and submit the Common Application Form by the closing date for applications.

Applying to schools outside Essex

In the normal admission round primary school admissions are fully coordinated across England. This means that if you live in the Essex County Council area you only need to fill out one application to Essex County Council, even if you are applying for schools outside of Essex.

You can apply online at www.essex.gov.uk/admissions or, if you are unable to apply online, an application form can be found on our website or you can request one via admissions@essex.gov.uk.

You must only make your application online or by paper, you cannot do both.

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¹ If you live in Essex your council tax will be payable to one of the following District Councils: Basildon, Braintree, Brentwood, Castle Point, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Harlow, Maldon, Rochford, Tendring or Uttlesford. ECC accepts no responsibility for applications submitted in error to it by parents resident in another council area.

Your application explained



Closing date for applications

The statutory national closing date for all primary school applications in England is **15 January 2026**.

To give your child the best opportunity of securing a place at a preferred school, it is vital that you apply on time. Applications received after this date will normally be treated as late and be considered after all on time applicants.

Late applications

All applications received after the closing date of 15 January 2026 will normally be treated as late. This means your application will be dealt with after all on time applications have been processed, unless you have provided evidence that shows that the application could not reasonably have been made on time due to exceptional circumstances. A new on time preference will not be accepted after the closing date unless the circumstances are deemed to be exceptional. All late applications will be considered by LA officers to determine whether there are exceptional circumstances. Where that is deemed to be the case, the application will be treated as 'on time'. Even if there are reasons why you could not apply on time, all applications or requests for new preferences and changes received after 30 January 2026 will be treated as late and will be held to be considered only after the national offer day (16 April 2026).

Parental responsibility

More than 1 person can have parental responsibility for a child. A mother automatically has parental responsibility for her child from birth, unless the child has been adopted.

A father usually has parental responsibility if he is listed on the birth certificate or married to the child's mother at the time of birth or any time afterwards. If divorced, the father will retain parental responsibility.

Shared parental responsibility and shared custody (normal admission round)

If you share parental responsibility and/or share custody with someone who lives at a different address, it is important that you both agree which schools to apply for, which address is the child's main place of residence (home) and which parent/carer is the main applicant.

The address to be used on any application must be where your child spends the majority of the school week.

You must only submit one application for each child. If more than one application is received, or the Admissions Team is made aware of a dispute between two parents, these applications will be placed on hold.

This means that they will not normally be processed until either a) written agreement is received from both parents/carers stating which application has been agreed to be processed or b) a Court Order is provided confirming which application is to be processed.

We strongly recommend that agreements are reached before any application is submitted to ensure that your child is not disadvantaged in being considered for a school place due to the delay in resolving the parental dispute over the applications.

The Council cannot discuss, offer any advice or make any decisions on parental disputes and, if you can't reach agreement, we recommend you seek your own independent legal advice.

Please ensure that only one application is submitted by 15 January 2026. If multiple applications are received at any stage in the process you risk your child being disadvantaged in getting a school place.

Types of schools

All schools in Essex (except independent fee-paying schools) are known as maintained schools or Academies. There are several types of school outlined below. The list of schools in the **Schools' Admission Policy Directories 2026/2027** show which type of school it is.

Different types of schools have different types of admission authority.² The admission authority is responsible for all aspects of pupil admissions and appeals.

- **Community** – The Local Authority (LA) is the admission authority and sets the arrangements and oversubscription criteria.
- **Voluntary Controlled (VC)** – The Local Authority (LA) is the admissions authority and sets the arrangements and oversubscription criteria. These are often faith (religious) schools - normally Church of England.

- **Foundation Schools** – The school's governing body is the admission authority and sets the oversubscription criteria.

- **Voluntary Aided (VA)** – The school's governing body is the admission authority and sets the arrangements and oversubscription criteria. These are often faith (religious) schools - eg Church of England, Catholic, Jewish etc.

- **Academies** – These are maintained independent schools. The academy must comply with all admissions law and the School Admissions Code. The relevant Academy Trust is the admission authority and sets the arrangements and oversubscription criteria.

- **Free Schools** – These are academy schools set up in response to parental demand. They comply with all admissions law and the School Admissions Code. The relevant Academy Trust is the admission authority and sets the arrangements and oversubscription criteria.

When your child can start school

When can my child start school?

You have the right to start your child at school on a full-time basis from the September following their fourth birthday, providing they have been allocated a school place. This means that you have the right to a full-time place at the school your child is offered from September 2026.

Ensuring your child is ready for Reception

We understand that all children develop at their own pace, and that we're all learning from birth. When it's time to start school, some children will need more help than others.

There are key things that schools can expect children to have learnt before their first day, such as managing going to the toilet and washing their hands. Practising these will help make your child's transition into school as positive as possible.

If your child is already at nursery, in pre-school or with a childminder those professionals should work with you, and you with them and your child to help get them ready.

There's lots you can do at home to help build your child's confidence and independence, helping them feel emotionally and practically prepared to start school. The website below has some useful tools to assist you with this: www.startingreception.co.uk.

Deferred entry into school later in the school year

Essex County Council's policy is that children born on and between **1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022** would normally commence primary school in Reception in the academic year beginning in **September 2026**.

² An admission authority is responsible for all aspects of pupil admissions and appeals.

When your child can start school

As required by law, all Essex infant and primary schools provide for the full-time admission of all children offered a place in the Reception year group from the September following their fourth birthday. This means that you are entitled for your child to start full time at the school you have been offered from September.

You can request that the date your child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the same school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age in the same school year. The law does not require a child to start school until the start of the term following their fifth birthday, when the compulsory school age is reached.

Where entry is deferred, the school will hold the place for your child and not offer it to another child. You would not however be able to defer entry beyond the beginning of the term after your child's fifth birthday, nor beyond the academic year for which the original application was accepted.

You can request that your child attends part-time until they reach compulsory school age. If you are interested in taking up a part-time place, please contact the individual school(s) for further details as to what this would entail.

If you plan to defer your child's start date until later in the school year, you must still apply at the usual time for primary or infant school places

You should speak to the schools you are applying for, to discuss how you would like your child to be admitted. If you choose to defer entry, the school may reasonably expect that the child would start at the beginning of a new school term/half term.

Summer-born children 2027 Entry

If your child is summer-born (i.e. born during the period 1 April 2022 and 31 August 2022) and

you want them to start in Reception in September 2027 (instead of starting in the 2026-27 academic year), this is what you will need to do:

- Send an email to admissions@essex.gov.uk stating that you want a Reception place from September 2027 and explaining why you want your child to start school from then, rather than starting in the 2026-27 academic year.
- Name up to 4 schools that you are interested in.
- You must attach an email or letter from the Headteacher of all of the schools you are applying for. The email/letter from the Head teacher must give their view on your request. If this is not provided, we will be unable to process your request.
- Attach with the email any supporting evidence.

Examples of evidence could include a letter from the current nursery, a health professional etc. You should send all of the above to us as soon as possible.

Once this has been received, for any Essex Community or VC schools, the Council will decide whether an application for the Reception admission round for September 2027 will be processed. For Foundation VA schools and Academies, the individual schools will make the decision. There are no guarantees that your request to delay your child's admission until September 2027 will be automatically agreed.

You will be notified by ECC whether an application for the schools you named in your request will be processed for Reception in September 2027.

We advise you to make any such request as soon as possible because if your request is not agreed, you will need to make an application for a place for the school year starting in September 2026, and the deadline for you to do this is 15 January 2026.

When your child can start school

Summer-born children 2026 Entry

If your child was born during the period 1 April 2021 and 31 August 2021 and you want them to start school from September 2026 in Reception you need to do the following:

- Complete the 'Reception 2026' paper application form (which will be available from November 2025 on the website www.essex.gov.uk/admissions)
- Attach a covering letter stating that you want a Reception place from September 2026 explaining why you want your child to start school in September 2026 (instead of starting in the 2025-26 academic year)
- You must attach an email or letter from the Headteacher of all of the schools you are applying for. The email/letter from the Headteacher must give their view on your request. If this is not provided, we will be unable to process your request.
- Attach any supporting evidence to the form and covering letter. Examples of evidence could include a letter from the current nursery, a health professional etc.

Send all of the above to us by the closing date of 15 January 2026.

Once this has been received, for any Essex Community or VC schools, the Council will decide whether an application for the Reception admission round for September 2026 will be processed. For Foundation, VA schools and Academies, the individual schools will make the decision.

There are no guarantees that an application will be automatically agreed. You will be notified by ECC whether your school preferences will be processed for Reception in September 2026. If they are, then you will be informed of the outcome on the National Offer Day of 16 April 2026.

If any of your school preferences are not agreed to be processed for Reception in September 2026, you will be informed.

If your request is not agreed and you would still prefer that your child starts in September 2026, you would need to make a mid-year application in the summer term in 2026 for a Year 1 place at the relevant schools. The application will not be dealt with as a Reception application.

Nursery classes

Please note that attendance at a nursery attached to a school or a co-located children's centre, does not guarantee admission to the school.

Parents of children who are attending such nursery provision must apply for a place at the school if they want their child to attend the Reception class. The application will be considered against the published admission criteria for the school. There is no guarantee that a place will be offered.

The information in the Schools' Admission Policies Directories, about admission numbers and policies, only applies to children being admitted to Reception classes and generally to admissions to other year groups in schools.



When your child can start school

Year 2 to Year 3 applications

If your child currently attends an infant school and is in Year 2 then you will have to make an application to transfer to a junior school.

There is no automatic transfer from infant schools to junior schools. Places will only be offered in the junior school based on the applications received.

The essential information and deadlines in this booklet also apply to the Year 2-3 transfer process e.g. closing date. Please note that you can apply for up to four junior schools, but please note that there may not be four junior schools in your area.

Where parents of children in Year 2 of an infant school apply, in the normal admission round, for a place in Year 3 of a primary school (which does not admit an extra number of children in Year 3) that preference will be treated as a mid-year admission. A decision will not be made until after the summer half term break when there is likely to be a clearer indication of potential places at the school in September.

If your child is in Year 2 of a primary school you do not need to apply for Year 3 in the same school.

If, however, you wish for your child to change schools and attend a junior school from Year 3, you will need to apply through the normal admissions process as described.

It is your responsibility to ensure that an application is submitted by 15 January 2026. If you do not make an application, your child will not be offered a school place. This means your child could miss out on a place at your preferred junior school because you did not make an application.

Not intending to apply for a school

If you have decided not to apply for a school for your child because you will be sending them to an independent (fee paying) school, have decided to home educate or for another reason, please ensure that you email admissions@essex.gov.uk to advise of this.



School preference order

If you are an Essex County Council resident, you can name up to 4 primary schools on your application. We strongly recommend you:

- a) Do name your preferred schools in the order you want them considered**
- b) Do use all of your 4 preferences to give your child the best chance of being offered a preferred school**
- c) Don't list a school more than once – naming it multiple times does not increase your chances of being offered**
- d) Do name your local school as one of your preferences because if you don't, it won't be considered and you could end up being offered a school many miles away**

The order of your preferences is confidential between you and the Council. Schools are not advised where you named them during the admissions process, but the order may be shared as part of the appeal process.

No school is allowed to use admission criteria that insists that you name them as your first preference.

If you are applying for schools outside Essex, you should check their admissions arrangements carefully. Contact details for local authorities bordering Essex can be found [here](#).

If how your child gets to school is a factor in your decisions, please read the home to school transport section of this booklet to understand how the order of your preference impacts your child's eligibility for transport. The Council's Education Transport Policy is explained [here](#).

You can find useful information about alternative transport options on the following websites, if your child will not qualify for home to school transport:

- www.essex.gov.uk/publictransport
- www.traveline.info

If none of your named preferred schools can be offered, the LA will offer a place at the nearest Essex school to your home that has a vacancy

(after all on time applications have been dealt with) This could mean that the school offered is several miles away from your home, which is why we advise you to use all 4 preferences.

For Year 2 to Year 3 transfer into a junior school, please note that there may not be four junior schools in your area.

Changing preferences

If you have applied online, up until the published closing date, you can change your preference by logging into your account, amending your existing application and resubmitting it.

If you unsubmit your online application (either by making a change, by viewing the application or for any reason), the LA is not responsible for processing unsubmitted applications. You must ensure that your application is fully submitted by the closing date (15 January 2026).

If you applied on paper you will need to write to School Admissions before the closing date so your letter/email is received by 15 January 2026. After the closing date a change request will not be accepted, unless this is for an address change. Evidence of any address change must be supplied by the specified deadlines.

Any applications or change requests received after 30 January 2026 will be held and not considered until after the first round of offers on 16 April 2026.

Any requests must be submitted to School Admissions in writing, whether you applied online or by paper. You can email admissions@essex.gov.uk.

**Please use all
4 preferences.**

Addresses



Home address

The address used on the application must be your child's home address (i.e. the main address that they live at) at the time of the application.

If you are moving, you must provide details of your new address to the LA and also provide evidence of that address (either a copy of the exchange of contracts document or a signed and dated tenancy agreement) no later than 30 January 2026.

Applications will normally be processed on the basis of the home address for the child at the time of application and determination, unless, where there is a new home address, proof of an exchange of contracts or a copy of a tenancy agreement can be provided by 30 January 2026.

The home address is considered to be the address at which the child resides on a permanent basis or is 'ordinarily resident'. This is generally the address of the parent/carer.

In some cases, children may be 'ordinarily resident' for the majority of the school week, including overnight, with another relative or carer, such as a grandparent. This may also be the case where a child resides between two parents at different addresses following the breakdown of the parental relationship. Where this is the case, the application may

be processed on the basis of that address (where the child resides for the majority of the school week) and proof of address and residence arrangement will be required with the application. The child must be living with the parent, relative or carer 24 hours per day, for the majority of the school week.

Arrangements where parents can leave and collect children from another relative or carer on a daily basis will be regarded as childcare arrangements, and the child will not be deemed to be 'ordinarily resident' with that person. In all cases we expect that the adult with whom the child is 'ordinarily resident' receives the child benefit for the child (where eligible).

Some Foundation, VA schools and Academies have different rules on home address and you should check each school's policy.

Applications from members of the Armed Forces and Crown Servants

Members of the Armed Forces and Crown Servants with automatic right of entry to the UK who are able to provide evidence of their relocation can apply for a school place ahead of a move. An application can be made as soon as confirmation of the relocation is available. For Armed Forces applications we will use the unit posting address when considering the application, until such time as a confirmed home address can be provided. For Crown Servants an address can only be used if there is evidence of the address the child is returning to.

There is no guarantee that a place will be available at a preferred school; each application will be considered in accordance with the school's admissions criteria.

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Changing address details

If you move home either within Essex or into Essex, during the admissions process, you must notify School Admissions immediately by email to admissions@essex.gov.uk.

You must provide proof of the new address. This can be a copy of exchange of contracts (if you are buying your new home) or a copy of a signed and dated tenancy agreement (if you are renting). It is your responsibility to ensure that School Admissions has the accurate information and proof. School Admissions do not rely on address records held by other areas of the Council and work on the information provided by you.

If there are changes to your plans you must let School Admissions know immediately or your child's offer of a place could be withdrawn.

If you know you are moving to Essex before the closing date for applications but are not able to provide evidence by that date, you must make your application through the local authority where you are living and can name Essex schools.

If you apply online and move home, you still need to notify School Admissions in writing and provide the proof of the new address. Just changing your address on your online account will not be enough for School Admissions to take it into account.

The deadline for providing this evidence is 30 January 2026.

If anything is received by School Admissions after this date, your new address will not be used to process your application. It will only be taken into account when the waiting list processes open after the relevant offer day.

Please note that if you are applying for a place at schools outside Essex there may be different dates after which a new address cannot be considered. If you are in doubt please contact School Admissions.

If you own a property in Essex but are not living in it, but intend to take up residency at the Essex home before the start of the autumn term, your application will be processed using



your Essex address once evidence has been received. Any offer of a school place will then be conditional upon receipt of evidence of you taking up residency at that property in Essex.

Address checking

The LA may ask a random sample of applicants to provide proof of their home address. This must be a copy of one of the following:

- UK driving licence;
- council tax notification;
- two utility bills dated within the last six months (gas, electricity, water or landline phone).

Fraudulent/Misleading applications

It is expected that parents will be honest about the information they provide on their applications, especially around the child's home address. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, which is not acceptable because it can mean that an offer is made that directly disadvantages another child who should have been offered.

If any school place is secured using false information that the Council is aware of or has been offered in error, the admission authority can investigate the matter. If it is found that the application used fraudulent or intentionally misleading information to secure a place at a particular school, the admission authority can withdraw the school place offered.

Siblings



The Council defines a sibling as a child who has a brother, sister, adopted brother or sister or stepbrother or stepsister living in the same family unit, in the same family household and address, who attends the preferred school in any year group excluding the final year. Biological and adopted siblings who attend the preferred school in any year group excluding the final year will also be treated as siblings, irrespective of place of residence.

Children residing in the same household as part of an extended family, such as cousins, will not be treated as siblings.

For mid-year applications a sibling is a child who has a brother, sister, adopted brother or sister or stepbrother or stepsister living in the same family unit in the same family household and address as a child who attends or has been offered a place at the preferred school or partner school at the time of application and determination and with a reasonable expectation that the sibling will be attending at the time of admission.

Some Foundation, VA schools and Academies may have different definitions of a sibling. Please contact the school to check.

Twins, triplets etc.

For Community and VC schools in the normal admission round, if the last child to be offered a place is a twin and their sibling cannot be offered initially, the LA will ensure both twins are offered a place. In the case of triplets or other multiple births, if the majority of children can be offered a place initially, the LA will offer places to the remaining child or children. For example if two triplets can be offered a place, the remaining child will also receive an offer of a place.

For mid-year applications, where a family moves into an area necessitating a change of school for their twins, or triplets etc and the majority can be offered a place then a place will be offered for the remaining child or children. However, where the family does not move but wishes to transfer the children to another local school where there are insufficient places for all of them, then places would not normally be offered to all.

For Foundation, VA schools and Academies the decision will be made by the governing body or Academy Trust.

Will my child's brothers and sisters be able to go to the same school?

You should check the priority given to siblings in each school's admissions criteria to assess the chances of this, but there is no automatic guarantee that siblings can go to the same school.

Similarly, having a child already in receipt of transport does not guarantee that a future sibling will automatically qualify for transport to the same school.

Other circumstances

Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order will be given first priority in oversubscription criteria ahead of all other applicants in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021. This also includes those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (as defined in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

Priority admission area

No school guarantees places to children living in their priority admission (catchment) area, however, many include living in the priority admission area as one of their oversubscription criteria. **Please note that not every school has a priority admission area.**

You can find out which school's priority admission area (if any) your address is in by using our 'Catchment Area Finder' tool on our website www.essex.gov.uk/admissions.

Attendance at a priority admission area school does not guarantee entitlement to free home to school transport, as the 'catchment' school may not be the nearest school.

Medical circumstances

Some schools may include medical circumstances as part of their criteria. If this is relevant to your child, you need to check the school's admission policy and send any supporting evidence to the school directly. If the school is in another local authority, check with the school where to send any evidence.

Admission of children living overseas

All children of compulsory school age (5 to 16 years) in the UK have a right of access to education.

For parents and children living overseas and planning to move to the UK, an application for a school place will be considered for such children even though they may not be resident in the UK at the time of application. The application may however be processed on the basis of the overseas address.

It is the responsibility of the parents of foreign national children to check that their children have a right under their UK entry conditions to study at a school before applying for a place. The County Council cannot advise or assist in such immigration matters.

If an applicant from overseas owns a property in Essex but is not living in it, but intends to take up residence with their child at the Essex home before the start of the autumn term, then evidence of this address must be provided for the application. Any offer of a school place will then be conditional upon receipt of evidence of taking up residency at that property in Essex.

Other circumstances

Distance tie-breaker

Most schools use distance to prioritise their applications. Straight line distance is commonly used; however, a small number of schools measure by the shortest walking route. Straight line distance is measured from the address point of the home address to the address point of the school. Distances are reported in miles to three decimal places.

For admissions purposes the LA uses data provided by Ordnance Survey to measure straight line distances. The definition of the home address is as described [here](#).

If your child's time is split equally between two homes, the address of the home at which they reside for the majority of the school nights (as described previously) would be used to measure the distance between the school and home.

In the unlikely event of two applicants with identical distances being considered for the final place at a Community or VC school the place will be offered to one applicant on the basis of lots drawn by an officer of the County Council not involved in admissions, with the exception of twins, triplets etc. Foundation, VA schools or Academies may have their own tie-break policy.

15 January 2026
Applications close

All online and paper applications must have been received by this date.



Decisions and appeals

How decisions are made

Each school has a Published Admission Number (PAN) which is the maximum number of children the school can admit each year. If there are more applications than the PAN then the school's oversubscription criteria will be applied. This is a set of rules against which applications are prioritised, for example siblings or distance.

Please ensure that you read the individual school's entry in the 'Primary Schools Admission Policies Directories 2026/2027', which provide all the information on individual schools and how they offer places. This information can help you assess the chances of your application being successful.

Infant class size legislation

The law requires all primary and infant schools to ensure that there are no more than 30 pupils in an infant class with one school teacher. This requirement has led to schools removing their guarantee of a place for priority admission area children. This legislation restricts the circumstances under which appeal panels can uphold an appeal for an infant place.

If none of your preferences can be met

If you are an Essex resident and none of your preferences can be met, the LA will offer your child a place at the nearest Essex school to your home with a vacancy. For September 2025 only 1.63% of Essex parents could not be offered any of their preferences whilst 96.19% were offered their first or second preference of primary school.

We strongly recommend that you use all of your preferences to give your child the best chance of being offered a place at a preferred school.

If your child is not offered a place

If your child is refused a place at a preferred Essex school that is ranked higher than the offer you have received, your child's details will automatically be held on a waiting list. You will

also have the right to appeal to an independent appeal panel for any school named on your application that has not been able to offer your child a place.

Independent appeal panels can grant a place at a school even when the admission authority has demonstrated that the process has been carried out properly and the school is full to its published admission number. Panels have to weigh the disruption and difficulty to the school and the quality of education it delivers (referred to as 'prejudice'), as a result of having an additional pupil, against the prejudice to your child if they did not attend that school.

Some parents are concerned that their appeal would be a 'waste of time'. This is not true, but you should carefully consider your reasons for wanting your child to attend the relevant school, particularly where the infant class size limit of 30 pupils is concerned.



Decisions and appeals

Non-Essex schools

If your child has been offered a place at a non-Essex school, you need to check with the relevant LA how you formally accept the place at that school.

We recommend you do this as soon as possible after receiving your offer, as some Some LAs may automatically withdraw an offer of a school place if it has not been formally accepted or they are able to offer your child a place at a higher ranked school within that LA from a waiting list. It is your responsibility to find out how to accept the place and the waiting list process for schools in other LAs. This includes what happens if an offer is made from a waiting list.

Waiting lists

After 16 April 2026, waiting lists are held for Essex schools ranked according to the admissions criteria for the individual school. These lists include all children offered a lower preference school than the waiting lists school for both on time and late applications.

If you have been offered a higher preference school but decide that you want your child to be considered for one of your lower preference Essex schools, you can request for them to be added to that school's waiting list by writing to the School Admissions team to request this.

If you want your child added to the waiting list for a non-Essex school, you will need to contact the relevant LA or school to find out how to do this. Essex County Council cannot

give you any information on waiting lists for non-Essex schools.

School Admissions will hold waiting lists for all Essex oversubscribed schools until the end of August 2026. After this date oversubscribed Foundation, VA schools and Academies are required to maintain their own waiting lists, as a minimum, until the end of the autumn term and you will need to check with them on your child's position at that time.

It is important to understand that your child's position on a waiting list can change, up or down, as a result of an offer of a place being made or because of new applications being received which have a higher priority against the criteria.

Continued interest in a school after the end of the autumn term

Waiting lists are not automatically maintained after the end of the autumn term for Community and VC schools. This means that if you have been refused in the normal admissions round but still want a place, you will have to contact us to put your child's name on a continued interest list. For Reception applicants the registration form is available from November. It should be completed and returned before the end of December to ensure your child is on the list from January.

If a place becomes available, those on the list will be ranked along with any other applications that have been received for a place at the school.

When there are more live applications, on the same day, than the number of places available, the school's admission criteria will be used to determine any offers that can be made.

This situation may be different if you are applying for a place at a Foundation, VA school or an Academy. You will need to contact the school to see how they handle your application and continued interest in a place.



**15 January 2026
Applications close**

All online and paper applications must have been received by this date.

Decisions and appeals

I want to change primary schools (mid-year)

If you wish your child to transfer from one primary school to another you will need to make an application in writing. You can complete an online form www.essex.gov.uk/admissions or request a paper form to be sent to you. If you want to apply for a school outside Essex please contact the LA directly to discuss how to apply.

The opportunity to transfer depends on places being available at the preferred school. If a place can be offered, it is usually made available at the start of the following term. If no places are available your application will be refused and you will be given the right of appeal. Applications for transfer will not ordinarily be determined until the half term prior to the requested admission date.

Changing schools is a serious step to take. **Before applying please discuss the reasons for your request with your child's current headteacher. You should not remove your child from their current school before securing a place at another school.**

A school may admit a child over the admission number and outside the admission criteria mid year where they have been excluded from another school or are being placed as a move supported by all agencies.

If, after you have applied for a place, your child is still left with no school place at all please contact School Admissions for more advice.

The LA has a 'Fair Access' officer who can offer advice and assistance where no schools in the area have vacancies.



Fair Access Protocol

The LA has a Fair Access Protocol to ensure that schools and the LA work together to secure access to education swiftly for children that do not have a school place. The aim of the protocol is to encourage close co-operation between schools, when allocating places for pupils who are considered 'hard to place' (for example children with challenging behaviour) that balances the needs of parents, children and schools.

In addition, under the protocol the LA can, in exceptional cases, approach schools and ask them to admit children over their admission number where, for example, a child has moved into an area and there are no schools within a reasonable distance of the child's home with a place available.

Children considered for admission under the Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over children on a waiting list who are attending another school.



If you need to appeal against an admission decision



We understand that you may wish to appeal if your child has not been offered a place at your preferred school, but you should carefully consider your reasons for your child attending the school, particularly where the infant class size limit of 30 pupils is concerned.

For Reception admissions in the academic year 2025/2026, there were 58 appeals heard for Reception in Community and Voluntary Controlled schools where the infant class size limit was involved. Of these, only 3 were successful.

There were 2 further appeals not involving the infant class size limit of which 0 were successful.

Making an appeal

You have the right of appeal for any school named on your application that has not offered your child a place, including schools named as a lower preference than the school offered. Appeals should be lodged within 20 school days of being refused a place. More information is available on the website www.essex.gov.uk/admissions.

Infant class appeals (Key Stage 1 appeals)

Legislation is in place to enable schools to meet the requirement that there will be no more than 30 pupils in an infant class with one school teacher.³ This legislation restricts appeals panels to only allow successful appeals on one of three grounds where admission would exceed the class size limit, either:

- it finds that the admission of additional children would not breach the infant class size limit; or
- it finds that the admission arrangements did not comply with admissions law or were not correctly and impartially applied and the child would have been offered a place if

the arrangements had complied or had been correctly or impartially applied; or

- it decides that the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

This means that an appeal for a place in the Reception year, Year one or Year two, has limited grounds for success where the admission authority's grounds for refusal is based on infant class sizes of 30.

It is advisable that you consider carefully whether to submit an appeal in such a case to avoid unnecessary disappointment.

After you have made your appeal

You will be advised by the clerk to the appeal panel in advance of the date of your meeting, called a 'hearing'. School admissions cannot assist you with information on the date and time of your appeal.

Wherever possible the appeal hearings will take place in the area local to the school for which you are appealing. You are encouraged to attend your hearing in person to present your case. If you do not attend, and do not inform the clerk, the panel may consider your appeal in your absence. This means that the panel won't be able to ask you any questions to clarify their understanding of your case and you will not be able to add anything beyond what is in your written case, so they will not be able to take account of that when making their decision.

If you wish, you may bring a friend, relative or representative to support you. Before the hearing you will be sent a written summary of the admission authority's case for not being able to offer your child a place at the preferred school.

³ Defined by section 122 of the Education Act 2002 and the Education (School Teachers' Prescribed Qualifications etc.) order 2003 which was made under that section.

At your hearing

There will usually be three panel members who will be introduced to you. A clerk will also be present to record the panel's decisions and advise on the law and procedure. A representative of the admission authority (the school or the LA depending on the type of school) will present the case for not offering a place.

The panel will have copies of your appeal (plus any letters or additional information you may have sent in support of the appeal) together with information on why the school has not been offered. If you attend, the hearing will usually follow this pattern:

- **the school's case for not offering a place will be presented;**
- **you, or your representative, may ask questions;**
- **you, or your representative, will present your case;**
- **you may be asked questions;**
- **the school's case will be summarised;**
- **you, or your representative, will be given the opportunity to summarise your case.**

It is important to remember that the appeal is for a place at your preferred school, not against the school that has been offered. It is important that you ensure that the panel understand your reasons for wanting the school you are appealing for.

Grouped appeal hearings

When there are a large number of appeals for one school they may be heard using the 'grouped appeal' system. There are normally two stages to this process.

Stage 1:

- The admission authority will present its case to all parents and representatives at the same time at the group hearing.
- The grouped hearing is not an opportunity to discuss your individual case.
- The date and time of the grouped hearing will be decided by the panel and you will be invited.
- Notes of the meeting will be sent to all appellants (if there is sufficient time before the second stage)

Stage 2:

- The appeals for individual cases will be held in private, as described earlier.
- No decision will be made on any appeal until all on-time appeals have been heard for the relevant school.

The decision

In non-infant class size cases, the panel will, firstly, decide whether the admission authority has demonstrated why it cannot admit any more children. If the panel is satisfied that the admission authority has proven this, it will go on to consider all the points you have made. The second part of the hearing is based on balancing the need of the individual child against the effect on the school of admitting another child.

For infant class size cases, the appeal panel can only uphold the appeal on the grounds shown on the previous page.

The clerk will write to you, usually within five working days of the hearing, although this may not be possible where there are multiple appeals for one school, telling you of the appeal panel decision and the reasons for it. The decision is binding on both parties.

If a parent has already had an unsuccessful appeal in the same academic year, Essex County Council's policy, which applies to community and VC schools, is that we will not consider another application for the same school in the same academic year unless there have been significant and material changes in the circumstances of the parent, child or school, which could warrant a new application. These changes have to relate to the new application and not be connected with the result of the first application.

The Local Government Ombudsman can investigate complaints of maladministration. For Academies, the Education Funding Agency can investigate such complaints.



Home to school transport

Will my child qualify for free transport?



Mainstream primary schools

You should consider carefully how your child will get to and from the school(s) you apply for before you make your application for a school place.

Children will only be entitled to free home to school transport if they are assessed to qualify under the Council's Education Transport Policy.

There is no guarantee that a child will receive home to school transport, even if a sibling or other local child is already receiving it. All applications are assessed individually, and **the policy criteria must be met in all cases.**

Where a child does not qualify, parents are fully responsible for all financial costs and transport arrangements for their child.

The full Education Transport Policy is published on our website www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport

Please note that entitlement to school transport will not take account of any priority admission ('catchment') areas, historically 'designated areas' or feeder schools. Applications are assessed only against the criteria shown in the Education Transport Policy.

The Council, in accordance with its statutory duty, will provide free home to school transport for children of primary school age **to the nearest available school*** to their home address, as defined in the Education Transport Policy, if they live 2 miles or more from the school for children below the age of eight (until the end of Year 3) or 3 miles or more from the school for children aged eight and above (Years 4-6)

It is important to note that the 'catchment' school for an address may not be the nearest school.

ECC will measure using the shortest road route to calculate distances to establish which is the nearest school to the home address. Thereafter, the shortest available walking route is measured to calculate the distance to the nearest school, to determine if the qualifying distance is met for entitlement to transport.

ECC uses a Geographical Information System (GIS) to measure and calculate home to school distances. The measurements produced by the Council's GIS are the definitive distance calculations that the Council will use to determine transport eligibility. Any distances found from online tools (such as a route finder tool) will not be considered.

Continued over the page...

* As defined in the Education Transport Policy

Home to school transport

For children in year groups 4–6 from low income families, the distance remains at 2 miles. You will need to submit evidence of benefits annually. Children from low income groups are defined as those who are entitled to free school meals due to their income, or those families whose annual taxable household income is less than £16,190 as defined in their current child tax credit form.

Transport entitlement is also extended to those children from low income families, as defined above, who are attending their designated faith school which is 2 miles or more by the shortest available walking route.

Unless the low income criteria is met, transport will not be provided to a school if any of the following bullet points apply:

- **There is any nearer school to the home for which a parent did not apply on the original admission application**
- **There is any nearer available school which was listed as a lower preference on the original admission application**
- **The parent has rejected an offer of a place at any nearer school**

What is the nearest school for transport purposes?

You can find out which school the Council considers to be your nearest school for transport purposes by emailing educationawards@essex.gov.uk

The email must include your child's name and address, and specifically ask which primary school the Council considers to be the nearest school for transport purposes.

Faith Schools

Transport entitlement is extended to those children from low income families who are attending their designated faith school between 2 and 15 miles from home by the shortest road route.

To evidence that the child is attending a school based on religion or belief, their baptism certificate or a written statement supporting the reasons for selecting a faith school must be provided.

For Roman Catholic (RC) schools, the 'designated faith school' for this purpose is the school which the RC Diocese and the County Council have agreed as the RC school for the area of the home address. In the case of other faiths, transport will only be provided to the nearest school of that faith, if the relevant income and distance criteria are met.

A faith school is considered to be a voluntary aided school or faith academy which, in its admission arrangements, gives priority for admission to children of the faith. Voluntary controlled schools are not considered to be 'faith schools' for the purposes of transport.

Points to remember

- **There is no guarantee of free school transport even if you live over three miles away from the school and it is the priority admission (catchment) area school.**
- **Before you apply for a school place and for home to school transport you should read the information made available to you in this booklet and the full Education Transport Policy on the website: www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport**
- **If your child does not qualify for free school transport you may be able to purchase a bus pass or seat on a vehicle operating to the school. You would need to contact the relevant transport operator about this.**

It is important that, when making your school application, you consider how your child will get to school if they do not qualify for free home to school transport. Information on alternative transport options can be found at www.essex.gov.uk/publictransport

Sustainable modes of travel

Essex County Council aims to give the people of Essex a better choice when it comes to travelling in and around the county and deliver the environmental, social and health benefits of better managed transport links. For more information about sustainable modes of travel, please visit www.essex.gov.uk

Financial support

Free school meals

In line with current Government guidance, all children in Key Stage 1 (Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2) are entitled to receive Universal Infant Free School Meals. Essex County Council does not process Free School Meals applications for children in Key Stage 1.

Once your child moves into Key Stage 2 (Year 3 and above) you will need to apply to be assessed for eligibility for free school meals.

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

- **Income Support**
- **income-based Jobseekers Allowance**
- **income-related Employment and Support Allowance**
- **support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999**
- **the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit**
- **Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)**
- **Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit**
- **Universal Credit with an income of £7400 or less**

Children who get any of the above benefits in their own right (i.e. they get benefits payments directly, instead of through a parent or guardian) can also get free school meals. Children under the compulsory school age who are in full time education may also be able to get free school meals.

Please note that the Council does not assess free School Meal applications for all schools. If your school has opted out of the Council's process you will need to apply direct to the school.

Entitlement to free school meals is strictly confidential. Your entitlement will only be shared with the school your child attends to enable the meal to be provided.



Uniform grants

The Council only considers and provides financial support for school uniforms in very limited, exceptional circumstances for families who receive one of the qualifying benefits listed below.

Examples of exceptional circumstances that are considered are:

- enforced re-housing and associated move of school
- parent and children in a refuge enforcing a change of school
- enforced move of school through bullying with evidence from the previous school
- exceptional circumstances requiring the replacement of a uniform

Families must be in receipt of one of the following qualifying benefits:

- **Income Support**
- **income-based Jobseekers Allowance**
- **Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)**
- **the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit**
- **income-related Employment and Support Allowance**
- **support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999**
- **Universal Credit with an income of £7400 or less**

For more information or to request an application form please visit: www.essex.gov.uk/grants-in-exceptional-circumstances

Special educational needs and Essex special schools

Essex County Council wants to make sure that every child and young person in our schools/academies or settings, whatever their circumstance or ability, has a sense of belonging, feels respected, and is valued for who they are. We want to give children skills, knowledge and confidence to enable them to move on to the next phase of learning and life with success.

(from Essex schools accessibility strategy 2023 to 2027)



The Council has additional responsibilities for children with special educational needs. An assessment of these needs may lead to an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) being issued. Most children with an EHCP are educated at their local mainstream school, with appropriate additional support.

Some children with an EHCP, who have significant special educational needs, attend a special school or a mainstream school with additional special provision. For further details about the statutory assessment procedures or special education in Essex please refer to the Local Offer website <https://send.essex.gov.uk/>

The list found on page 29 gives details of the special schools in Essex and an indication of the type of needs catered for by each school.

A child is only placed in a special school if they have an EHCP and the school is named in the EHCP. Most special schools take pupils from a wide area of the county. For most children a mainstream school will be able to meet their needs.

Children with an EHCP that names a school are required to be admitted to that school.

If your child has, or is currently being assessed for an EHCP, you will have discussed the most suitable school and the range of options available with the SEND Operations Team. If you think your child may have special educational needs you should first speak to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) at your child's present school.

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Special educational needs and Essex special schools

Please note: If your child already has an EHCP, they will be allocated a primary school place by the SEND Operations Team as part of the review of their EHCP starting at a primary school. Whilst you will have the opportunity to express preferences for your preferred school(s), you should do this as part of the discussions following the issue of the proposed EHCP. **You must not submit an application through the main admissions process.**

If an application is received for a child with an EHCP a place will not be allocated as part of the coordinated admissions process.

Essex Local Offer

The Essex Local Offer brings together helpful information in one place for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), as well as their parents, carers, and the professionals who support them.

The Local Offer is a website and also runs SEND roadshows each month around the county of Essex for face-to-face support.

Who is it for?

- Children and young people with SEND, from birth to 25 years old
- Parents, carers, and families
- Teachers, support workers, and health professionals

You can use the Local Offer to:

- understand what to do if you're new to SEND
- understand the support that is available in schools and Early Years settings
- browse for local support and services such as parent groups, fun activities or specialist healthcare
- find out what to do in a complex situation, for example if you need to appeal a decision
- get advice for young adults with SEND, such as housing and employment support

You can watch this [YouTube video](#) to find out more about how the Local Offer can help.

Explore more on the Local Offer website to find the support that's right for you: [Essex County Council: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) | Essex Local Offer](#).

The Local Offer is published as part of the SEND reforms under the Children and Families Act 2014 and will be developed over time, with partners involved reviewing it.

SEN transport arrangements

Arrangements for free home to school transport can be found online at www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport

In line with statutory duty, Essex County Council provides free home to school transport to the nearest appropriate school if the pupil resides:

- 2 miles or more from the school for pupils up to the age of 8 (end of Year 3);
- 3 or more miles from the school and is over the age of 8 (Year 4 and above).

If a child lives under the statutory distance criteria, transport cannot be provided unless there is clear evidence that the child's special educational needs are such that you cannot get them to school.

The provision of a passenger assistant (escort) on the vehicle is not automatic and is based on the child's individual needs at the time of assessment.

Where a school is or can be named in a child's EHCP as it is the nearest appropriate school but as a result of parental preference they prefer an alternative school further away, transport will not be provided to the alternative school. Parents will be required to make their own arrangements to get their child to and from school in this instance.



Special schools in Essex

For pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties

School	Serving Area	Age
Lift Pioneer	Basildon	3 – 19
The Edith Borthwick School	Braintree	3 – 19
Glenwood School	Castle Point / Rochford	3 – 19
Lift Columbus (School Campus)	Chelmsford	3 – 19
Lexden Springs School	Colchester	3 – 19
Oak View School	Epping Forest	3 – 19
Harlow Fields School & College	Harlow / Uttlesford	3 – 19
Shorefields School	Tendring	3 – 19

For pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties

School	Serving Area	Age
Castledon School	Basildon	5 – 19
Thriftwood School & College	Braintree / Chelmsford	7 – 19
The Endeavour Co-operative Academy	Brentwood	5 – 16
Cedar Hall School	Castle Point / Rochford	4 – 16
Kingswode Hoe School	Colchester	5 – 16
Market Field School	Colchester	4 – 19

For pupils with Physical and Neurological Impairments

School	Serving Area	Age
Southview School	All	3 – 19

For pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties

School	Serving Area	Age
Wells Park School	All	5 – 11
Langham Oaks School	All	10 – 16
Ramsden Hall Academy	All	10 – 16
The Greenwell Academy	Harlow	7 – 16
The Sir Geoff Hurst Academy	Chelmsford	7 – 16

For pupils with Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties

School	Serving Area	Age
Grove House School	All	8 – 19

For pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder

School	Serving Area	Age
Chatten Free School	Witham	4 – 19
The Hawthorns School	Chelmsford	7 – 16

Primary schools in Essex

The primary schools in Essex are divided into 4 areas - **North-East, Mid, West and South**. Check which is the right booklet for you.

The directories list the details of primary schools in Essex, along with a summary of each school's admission policy.

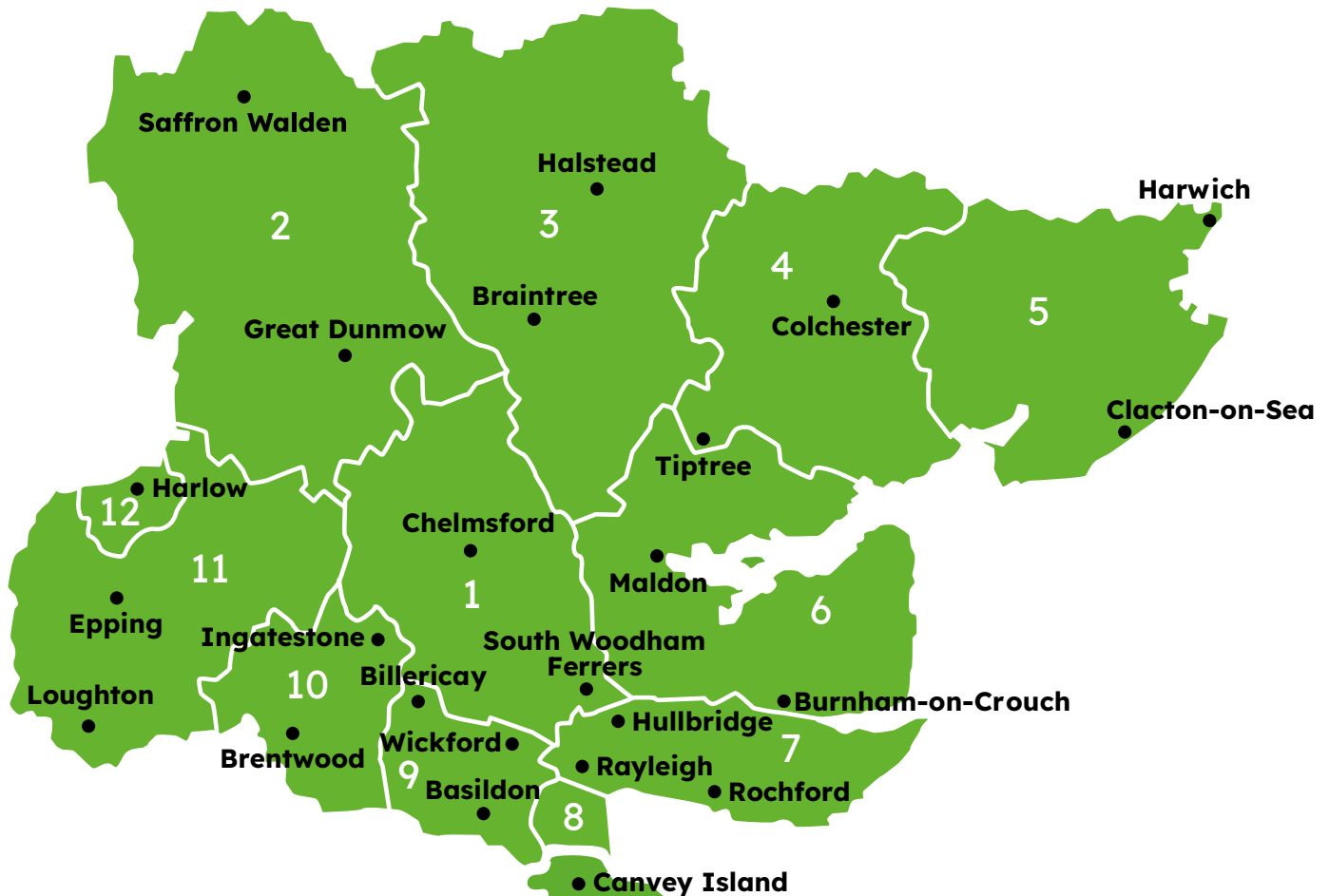
The summaries are useful, but they are not a substitute for the school's prospectus. To get a true impression of a school, we recommend a visit.



For schools in

Area

1 Chelmsford	Mid
2 Uttlesford	West
3 Braintree	Mid
4 Colchester	North-East
5 Tendring	North-East
6 Maldon	Mid
7 Rochford	South
8 Castle Point	South
9 Basildon	South
10 Brentwood	South
11 Epping Forest	West
12 Harlow	West



Useful contacts

Essex County Council

For School Admissions enquiries

website: www.essex.gov.uk/admissions
email: admissions@essex.gov.uk
post: Essex County Council, County Hall,
Market Road
Chelmsford, CM1 1QH

For school transport or free school meals enquiries

websites: www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport
www.essex.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals
email: educationawards@essex.gov.uk

If you are entitled to travel and have a question about the contract allocated or tickets, please contact the Passenger Transport Co-ordination Section:

email: Passenger.Transport@essex.gov.uk



Other LA's local to Essex

Southend on Sea City Council

www.southend.gov.uk/admissions
admissions@southend.gov.uk
Tel: 01702 212934

Thurrock Council

www.thurrock.gov.uk/admissions
school.admissions@thurrock.gov.uk
Tel: 01375 652652

Cambridgeshire County Council

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/admissions
admissions@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel: 0345 045 1370

Hertfordshire County Council

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions
transfer.admissions@hertfordshire.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 123 4043

Suffolk County Council

www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions
admissions@suffolk.gov.uk
Tel: 0345 600 0981

London Borough of Barking & Dagenham

www.lbdd.gov.uk/admissions
admissions@lbdd.gov.uk
Tel: 020 8215 3004

London Borough of Havering

www.havering.gov.uk/admissions
schooladmissions@havering.gov.uk
Tel: 01708 434343

London Borough of Redbridge

www.redbridge.gov.uk/schools/school-admissions
admissions@redbridge.gov.uk
Tel: 020 8554 5000

A guide to other information sources

Department for Education (DfE)
Website: www.education.gov.uk
Tel: 0370 000 2288

Information regarding national standards and curriculum
Performance tables and research statistics
Details of Local Education Authorities
Various publications

Ofsted
Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 123 1231

School inspection reports
Details of Local Education Authorities
Details of Post 16 Education

Independent Schools Council (ISC)
Website: www.isc.co.uk
Tel: 020 7766 7070

Information about independent schools
Various publications
Information for parents e.g. fees and contact details

Exam results and statistical information are only one factor to be considered when deciding on a school for your child. Visiting schools can help you decide on which schools you feel are right for your child before making your application.



Glossary:

There are often some technical terms, phrases and abbreviations that we have to use as part of the admissions process. Below is a glossary of some of those terms to help you understand what they mean.

Admission Authority

The body responsible for deciding the admission criteria and for allocating school places. For Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, this is the local authority and for Voluntary Aided schools, Free Schools and Academies it is the school's governing body or academy trust.

Admissions criteria

The arrangements that are used to prioritise applications and make decisions on how school places are offered.

Common Application Form (CAF)

The application you need to complete to apply for a secondary school place, either online or paper.

DfE

The Department for Education, which is the Government department responsible for education and children's services.

Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)

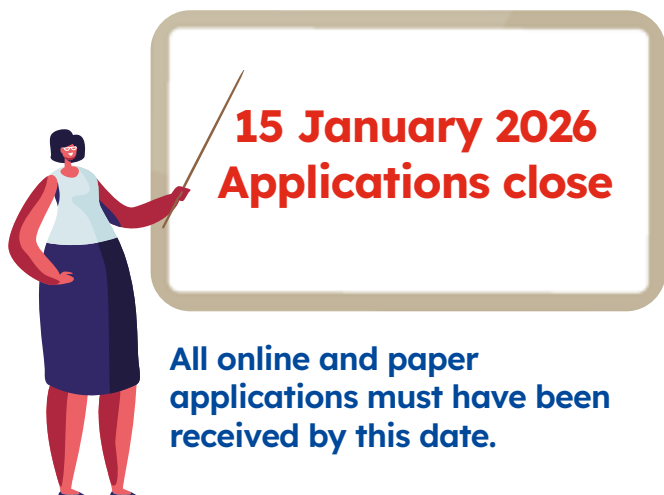
A legal document drawn up between the Local Authority, Health and Social Care and a child's family, or a young person between 16 and 25, detailing the young person's needs, relevant support and education provision.

Local authority (LA)

The Council that is responsible for education in each area. In Essex, this is Essex County Council.

Looked-after children (LAC)

A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order will be given first priority in oversubscription criteria ahead of all other applicants in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021. This also includes those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (as defined in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).



Continued over the page...

Normal Admission Round

The period during which parents are invited to express a minimum of three preferences for a place at any state-funded school, in rank order on the common application form provided by their home local authority. This period usually follows publication of the local authority composite prospectus on 12 September, with the deadlines for parental applications of 31 October (for secondary places) and 15 January (for primary places), with subsequent offers made to parents on national offer day.

Ofsted

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They are responsible for inspecting schools and regulating services which care for children and young people and provide education and skills for learners of all ages.

Oversubscribed school

When the number of applications a school receives is higher than the number of places available to be offered.

Parent

A "parent" as described under section 576 of the Education Act 1996 (EA 1996) in relation to a child or young person is defined as: The natural parents of a child, whether they are married or not. Anyone who although not a natural parent has parental responsibility for a child. Any person, who although not a natural parent, has care of a child.

Prospectus

A document produced by a school, which gives details about the school, the courses they offer and the opportunities available to your child at the school.

Published admission number (PAN)

The number of pupils a school can admit in its intake year. The figure is set by the admissions authority following a public consultation process and by working in partnership with the LA.

Sibling

Brothers or sisters of the child being applied for. A full definition can be found [here](#).

Statutory

This means that these rules and duties must be followed by the LA, schools and other agencies involved in the admissions process.

15 January 2026
Applications close

All online and paper applications must have been received by this date.

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The information contained in the booklet is correct as at the time of printing. Policies may change in the light of decisions made by the Schools' Adjudicator, the Education Skills and Funding Agency or any change in the law. An addendum will be available on the website and on request.



This information is issued by Essex
County Council, School Admissions.

We recommend you apply on line at
www.essex.gov.uk/admissions

Visit our website: www.essex.gov.uk/admissions

Email: admissions@essex.gov.uk

Telephone: 0345 603 2200

Postal address:
School Admissions
Essex County Council
County Hall
Market Road
Chelmsford
CM1 1QH

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you want to hear about at:
essex.gov.uk/keepmeposted

 Follow us @Essex_CC

 Find us on facebook.com/essexcountycouncil

The information contained in this document can
be translated, and/or made available in alternative
formats, on request.

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