

East Sussex County Council Co-ordinated scheme for in-year admissions in 2021/22

Introduction

The School Admissions Code 2021 requires that Local Authorities co-ordinate in-year admissions to schools for which they are the admission authority (Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools). Own Admission Authority (OAA) schools and Academies may opt in to the scheme.

In-year admissions are those relating to children whose parents are seeking admission outside the normal timescale, which means after the first day of the first term of reception, year 3 (of a junior school) or year 7.

Admissions to years 12 and 13 of those community schools with sixth forms are not co-ordinated by the Local Authority and do not form part of this scheme.

OAA schools and Academies may also require Supplementary Information forms to be completed to enable applications to be ranked in order of admission priorities, but an application will be valid even if this is not done.

OAA schools and Academies opting into the scheme may request in year management of applications and waiting lists as a traded service via the webshop.

Fee-paying schools will not be included in this scheme.

Applications are received throughout the year and therefore no timetable applies to this scheme. Decision outcomes will be issued to parents within ten school days, or as soon as possible thereafter.

This scheme will be administered by the Admissions and Transport Service of East Sussex County Council.

Application Process

1. Parents/carers may name up to three preferences on the application and all preferences expressed by parents will be treated equally. This means that each preference will be measured against the published oversubscription criteria only, without reference to the order stated by the parent. Only one school place will be offered, and this will be the highest possible preference expressed by the parent that can be agreed.

2. Details of current applications will be shared with schools electronically via SAM and schools are asked to confirm within two school days whether a place is available in the relevant year group. If the Admissions and Transport Service already has this information it will offer/refuse the place ahead of this timescale unless by prior agreement with the school.

3. OAA schools or Academies are then asked to confirm within a further three school days whether the available place is able to be offered to the applicant.

4. In order to make a valid application for a school participating in the scheme, parents/carers must complete an in-year application via the parent portal or the form supplied by East Sussex County Council. The East Sussex in year application form is available in paper form on request or applications can be made online through the East Sussex Council website.
5. OAA schools or Academies may require additional information in order to apply their oversubscription criteria and will provide a supplementary information form on the school's website. Where the parent/carer fails to complete the supplementary form, the admission authority will rank the application according to the information given on the application form only. Where the parent/carer completes the supplementary form but fails to complete the LA application form, this will not constitute a valid application.
6. Completed supplementary information forms will be returned to the individual schools, and not the Admissions and Transport Service.

Notifying parents of the outcome of their applications

1. The Admissions and Transport Service will notify parents/carers of the outcome of their applications, where the County Council is the admission authority.
2. OAA schools and Academies must notify all applicants of the outcome of their application within fifteen school days, giving reasons and appeal rights in writing if the application is unsuccessful.
3. If it is not possible to offer a place at any of the preferred schools, the Admissions and Transport Service will notify the parents of this and suggest the child remain in their current provision, if feasible, or offer the nearest available school place if not, assuming the child lives in East Sussex. Where the child qualifies for inclusion in the Fair Access Protocol, this will be invoked to place the child in a suitable school.

Refusing an application to a school where places exist in the child's year group

1. An admission authority may only refuse an application in a year group where places exist if the child's behaviour is challenging and the preferred school has a disproportionate number of challenging pupils already on roll. The County Council will only do this in exceptional circumstances and parents will still have the right of appeal.
2. Any such cases will be referred for placement via the Fair Access Protocol, where the child is unplaced. The protocol may place the child in the preferred school even though a place has initially been refused.
3. This provision cannot be used in the normal year of entry, so that it is not possible to refuse a place (if there is one available) in reception, year 3 (of a junior school) or year 7 at any point during the school year.

Admission to school outside the child's normal age group

1. In England and Wales, children are entitled to attend school from the September following their fourth birthday. However, formal education is not compulsory until the child is five. The vast majority of children start in reception as soon as they are entitled to and remain with the same age group until they leave school at the age of sixteen, or eighteen if they continue in the sixth form provision
2. It is recognised that this arrangement will not suit every child and there is flexibility within every admission authority's arrangements to allow children to be admitted to the year below their chronological age, or, more exceptionally, to the year above.
3. Parents who believe it to be in their child's best interests to be placed out of year group, are asked to complete a request form available on request from the Admissions and to enable the County Council to reach a decision on whether or not the child should be offered a place out of year group.
4. For schools where the County Council is the admission authority, this will normally be agreed where the child has applied to move from another school in England and Wales which follows the National Curriculum and has been educated out of year group up until the point of applying for an East Sussex school.
5. Where this is not the case, the County Council may need more information to enable a decision to be reached.
6. If an admission authority offers a place at the preferred school, but not in the preferred year group, there is no right of appeal against this decision.

School offered

1. Where a place is offered, schools should return a notification of the start date via SAM to confirm that the place has been accepted.
2. If the place is not accepted within ten school days, schools must contact the parent/carer to establish whether or not the place is still required. If the parent/carer declines, or cannot be contacted, the current school should be contacted to establish whether the child is still on roll.
3. If the child is still on roll and the parent no longer requires the place, a SAM notification should be issued to this effect.
4. If the child is not still on roll, a CME referral must be made if efforts to contact the family are unsuccessful. A SAM notification should be issued to advise and the place held for the child until the CME procedure is completed.

Appeals

1. Parents/carers will be informed of their statutory right of appeal when they receive the outcome of their applications. Parents can appeal for any preference expressed but not allocated, even if it was a lower preference than the one offered.
2. Parents will be allowed at least 20 school days from the date of the notification to submit an appeal via East Sussex County Council's School Appeals Team.

3. Links to the East Sussex County Council's School Appeals online process will be included in the notification. Appeal details for OAA schools and academies will be available on the individual school or Academy's website.

Waiting lists

1. Waiting lists for all East Sussex schools where the County Council is the admission authority will be held by the County Council.

2. OAA schools and academies will be responsible for maintaining their own waiting list in accordance with their published oversubscription criteria.

3. The County Council requires parents/carers to renew their waiting list application after every two terms (at Christmas, Easter and for the new academic year). Parents/carers not doing so are assumed no longer to require the place.