



**BEDFORD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



# In Year Admissions

## Guidance Notes for Parents/Carers

*Children's Services*

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## **Introduction**

The In Year application form must be completed if you want your child to attend a Bedford Borough school. You cannot apply on-line.

There are four different types of in-year admission:

- Parents or carers who have moved into the Bedford Borough Council area and do not have a school place for their child.
- Parents or carers who are moving within the Bedford Borough Council area, and whose child already has a school place.
- Parents or carers who live in the Bedford Borough Council area, are not moving, but would like their child to change school within Bedford Borough.

**In the above cases you will need to complete the Bedford Borough Council In-Year application form and return it to the address above.**

- Parents or carers who wish to apply for a school place in another Council's area.

**In this case you will need to contact the Council for the area where the school is located.**

## **Making an application if you have moved**

If you are moving or have moved into the Bedford Borough Council area and do not have a school place, you will need to complete the in-year application form and provide proof of your new address.

If you are moving or have moved within the Bedford Borough Council area and your child cannot continue to attend their current school because it is too far from your new home, you will need to complete the in-year application form and provide proof of your new address.

## **Making an application if you have not moved**

Moving your child to another school can affect them in many ways and the decision should not be taken without careful thought. You will need to consider the following before deciding to change your child's school:

### **Teaching and school organisation**

For children of any age, every school has its own way of doing things e.g. another school may teach the National Curriculum in different ways and at different times.

### **How will your child cope?**

- With learning new rules?
- Doing things in different ways?
- If he/she has done the work before or has missed important earlier work?
- If he/she finds the work new or strange?

### **Older children who transfer school after exam subjects have been chosen may find:**

- That they can't do the same subjects in a new school; or
- That the exam boards and courses are different

### **Have you thought whether?**

- Your child can take the same subjects at a new school?
- The courses will be the same?
- Your child will be comfortable taking new subjects or exam courses?

### **Relationships**

Children need to feel happy at school and relationships with friends, and with teachers, are an important part of this.

- Will he/she be able to settle in and get to know new people quickly, so that his/her learning does not suffer?

### **Uniform**

You might need to buy a completely new uniform, including PE kit, if your child changes school.

- Have you thought about the cost involved? It is very unlikely that you will be eligible for a school clothing grant.

### **Transport**

Your child needs to be able to travel to school easily, safely and arrive on-time.

- How would your child get to a new school?
- What will be the cost involved? A change will usually be regarded as parental preference. In most circumstances you are unlikely to be eligible for travel assistance.

### **Other things to consider**

Many things that worry parents and children can be sorted out without the need to move schools. Often moving schools will not resolve your concerns and can adversely affect your child's education. There are many difficulties that can arise within a school. Your child may be feeling unhappy or is not getting on with friends/teachers at the moment. Maybe your child is struggling with his/her work or has been in trouble and you feel that it cannot be sorted out.

All of the above issues can occur to any pupil at any stage in his/her school life and can be resolved without changing your child's school. Before you make a definite decision to request a transfer to another school you should think very carefully and talk through your problems with the current school with a view to resolving the issues. If you are not happy about the way in which the school is working with your child you should speak to the Headteacher first. If your concerns are not dealt with to your satisfaction you may decide to write to the Chair of Governors. If, having considered all of the above and having discussed your concerns with the Headteacher/Chair of Governors, you wish to transfer your child to another school, you should complete an in-year application form.

If having considered all of these factors you still wish to apply for place at an alternative school please be aware that even if a place is available it may not be possible for your child to start until the next half term.

### **Useful Information:**

- School performance tables are published annually by the Department for Education. Information can be obtained by telephoning **0370 000 2288** website: **[www.education.gov.uk/performance tables](http://www.education.gov.uk/performance-tables)**
- Ofsted reports can be viewed on **[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)**
- Parents/carers may find it useful to visit **[www.parentscentre.co.uk](http://www.parentscentre.co.uk)**

## **Making an application for a “Looked After”, “Previously Looked After” Child or a “Looked After” Child from Outside of England**

Social workers and carers should state a preference for the school they feel would best meet the needs of the child. This might involve a visit to a number of schools before making an application. The in-year admission application form should be completed and sent to the School Admissions Service providing details of:

- Name of Care Authority
- Date the child became ‘Looked After’
- Name and contact details of Social Worker

## **Conflicting Applications**

We will only accept one application per child. Where parents disagree on school preferences for their child, they must settle their differences between each other and only submit one application. Where different applications are received or we are made aware of a dispute between two parents, all applications will be placed on hold and will not be processed until such time that:

- One joint application is made, signed by all parties; or
- Written agreement is provided from both parents; or
- A court order is obtained confirming which parents’ application carries precedence

Conflicting applications that are not resolved will be placed on hold until resolved.

Whilst we appreciate differences between parents can be a difficult time for all involved, including possible court action, the School Admissions Service must remain neutral and treat both parties equally.

## **In-Year Fair Access Protocol**

Bedford Borough is required to operate an in-year fair access protocol for a very small number of difficult to place pupils e.g. those pupils who have been permanently excluded from school. Pupils admitted to schools, via the protocol, override the usual admission arrangements, such as waiting lists.

## **The In-Year Application Form**

To help us deal with your application for a place at a Bedford Borough school, please complete all the relevant sections of the application form. **Only complete one application form per child.**

**You should not use this form if:**

- your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP);
- your child is due to transfer from lower to middle school, primary to secondary school, or from middle to upper school;
- you are applying for a lower or primary school place at the normal time of entry (that is into the reception year).

There are separate processes in each of these cases and you should contact us for further information. These notes will tell you what you need to do. However, if you need any further

advice or help in completing the application form, please contact the School Admissions Service general enquiries, contact details are on the back of this booklet.

**Please note that, if we receive your application during the school holidays, we may not be able to consider your application until start of the new school term.**

## **How to fill in the In-Year Application Form**

The following notes and the notes on the form are designed to help you fill in the form. Please read them carefully and answer all the relevant questions, giving further details where the form asks for them.

If you are not sure how to complete the form, please contact us.

### **Section A: Name of School(s) requested**

Please list in order of preference the school(s) at which you would like your child to be considered for a place. Please give the date when the place is required.

### **Section B: Pupil Details**

Please note that you must submit evidence to confirm your child's address by providing official documentation, e.g. council tax bill, a recent utility bill (gas, electric or water), a rental agreement, child benefit annual statement or family tax credit information. Please provide a copy of the information and attach it to your application form before returning it to the School Admissions Service. If you are moving from abroad to live in the UK, you **must** also provide a copy of the relevant pages of your child's passport and visa (if applicable) as evidence to confirm that your child has the right of abode in the UK.

If you are unable to provide this information because you are moving house, you must provide either of the following:

- Confirmation that your house purchase is legally binding (that is, you have already exchanged contracts and have established a date by which you will have moved into your new address). Normally a letter from your solicitor will be sufficient.
- A formal tenancy agreement showing that you will be resident at the proposed address at the time of admission and for at least 12 months after. The property should be one in which you and your family intend to live and which is appropriate for your family needs.

If we offer a place and then find that you have given fraudulent or misleading information that has effectively denied a place to a child with a stronger claim - for example a false claim to residence in the catchment area - we will withdraw the offer of a place. **Please note that, if you move into the catchment area after the normal time of admission, or after we have allocated places, we cannot guarantee your child a place at the catchment area school.**

### **Section C: Other Children**

If, at the time of admission, you will have another child continuing to attend one of the schools you have nominated in Section A, please put their name, date of birth and the school they attend, in the boxes provided on the form. We will check this information with the school(s) concerned. This does not, however, guarantee a place.

## Section D: Religious Grounds

If you are applying for a place at a school on religious grounds, it is important to provide all the information this section of the form asks for. You may be asked by the school to provide additional information to support your application, for example, your Religious Leader may be asked to support your application, or you may be asked to provide the baptismal certificate. To help you with this a form to confirm your religious affiliation is attached to the application form.

## Section E: Other Information

To help us to process your application, please complete this section of the form. If you answer 'yes' to any of the questions it does not guarantee your child a place. We will only consider applications under medical grounds where there are "**exceptional**" medical reasons which make it **essential** for your child to attend a particular school and where the preferred school is the **only** school locally that could meet your child's needs. In recent years very few applications have met this criterion. With the application, you must submit a medical report from your child's doctor or consultant, setting out valid medical reasons why admission to the school is essential and the difficulties that would be caused if your child had to attend another school. We may seek further information to determine whether it is essential for your child to be admitted to the preferred school on medical grounds. We cannot consider admission on medical grounds when those grounds relate to the medical condition of a parent/carer, brother or sister, other relative or childminder.

## Declaration

**Please complete, sign and date this part of the form.**

**The form should be returned to the School Admissions Service.**

## Conflicting Applications

We will only accept **one** application per child. Anyone with parental responsibility can make an application. If you share parental responsibility, all those who share responsibility must be in agreement about the preferences and information submitted. We expect separated parents to agree on school places **before** an application is made. The local authority is not in a position to intervene in disputes between parents over a school application, and will request that these are resolved privately.

Where different applications are received or we are made aware of a dispute between two parents, all applications will be placed on hold and will not be processed until such time that:

- One joint application is made, signed by all parties; or
- Written agreement is provided from both parents; or
- A court order is obtained confirming which parents' application carries precedence

Whilst we appreciate differences between parents can be a difficult time for all involved, including possible court action, the School Admissions Service must remain neutral and treat both parties equally.

## **Waiting Lists**

If we are not able to offer your child a place at any of your preferred schools, your child's name will be placed on a waiting list for the school for the academic year in which you have applied.

## **How places are offered**

On receipt of a completed application form you should normally receive an offer of a school place within 10 school days, once we have contacted the school. However, this may take longer at peak times, particularly at the start of the new school term. In addition we may not be able to process applications made during the school holidays until the start of the next school term. Applications for the next academic year will not be processed until later in the summer term. Applications received from 1<sup>st</sup> July will be processed for the autumn term, unless your child does not have a school place in Bedford Borough.

You will receive a letter from the Local Authority to let you know if a place is available at your preferred school(s). If a place is not available you will be advised of the appeals procedure.

## **Admission of children from overseas**

If you are moving from overseas, either on a temporary or permanent basis, your child may be eligible for a Bedford Borough school place. In order to be eligible your child must be:

- between the age of 4 and 16;
- resident in Bedford Borough for a significant period of time;
- free from immigration restrictions that prevent them attending a mainstream school.

## **Immigration Restrictions**

Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter, study and/or work in the UK. If your children will accompany you, they may also require a visa. You can find out if you need a visa on the UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) website.

If you do need a visa, your children can only study at a mainstream school if this is permitted by UKVI. In all cases, it is your responsibility to ensure that your child has the legal right to study at a mainstream school. If you are in any doubt, please contact UKVI.

## **UK Service Personnel/Crown Agents**

Admission authorities **must** treat a family being posted to their area, whose posting abroad comes to an end, as meeting the residency criteria for the catchment area even if no house is currently owned in that area, once proof of the posting has been provided.

A school place will be allocated in advance if accompanied by an official government letter declaring a relocation date and intended address. The School Admissions Service will accept a unit postal address or a quartering area address for applications from service personnel in the absence of a new postal address.

## **Data Protection**

Under new Data Protection regulations (GDPR) Bedford Borough Council needs to inform you of the reasons why we are capturing your data and what we will do with your data. Any personal data collected and/or processed under this policy/procedure will be dealt with in accordance with Data Protection Legislation and the Council's Data Protection Policy. Data is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to individuals only where relevant to this policy/procedure. To find out more information on this follow the link below.

View the Council's current Privacy Notices at [www.bedford.gov.uk/gdprprivacy](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/gdprprivacy)