

In- Year Admissions – Update March 2020 - COVID19

We are changing the way we process in-year admissions applications during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Rationale

To reduce the spread of coronavirus, from Monday 23 March 2020, schools are only open to provide emergency childcare to the children of key workers and vulnerable children. This means that only Looked After Children, children with a social worker, children classed as vulnerable learners and children of key workers will be able to attend emergency child care hubs situated in some of our school sites.

The situation nationally is becoming increasingly serious and we all need to take emergency steps to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. At this time across the country, we need as many people as possible **not** to send their children into schools. This will protect children, families and staff and will reduce the burden on the NHS during this unprecedented Public Health emergency.

Some of our school sites are no longer open, with emergency childcare being operated from hub sites. It is therefore not possible for us to provide school places, as this is normally understood, at this time.

In-year admissions

There are few house moves or social housing relocations taking place. We are asking parents to consider very carefully whether to make an application to transfer schools at this time. Vulnerable and critical worker children are accessing emergency childcare arrangements at this time, but no children are attending school.

During this period, please avoid or delay making an in-year admissions application if you can. Allow your child to continue with their existing provision (at home or in school for vulnerable and critical worker children), particularly if there is no house move.

If your child already has a school place

Where schools are providing work for their pupils, it would be better for your child to continue with existing links to school. As work is being provided remotely, it is very likely that there would be **no** impact on provision, even if you move home.

Children who are not currently on a school roll

We will only process in-year applications for school places for children who do not currently have school places. We expect there to be very few children who are not already on a school roll (e.g. change in foster care placement).

Rationale:

- We expect that any children who are currently in an exclusion process will continue to access remote education (or childcare, if they or their family satisfy the eligibility criteria below) at their current school. This is in the best interests of the child as their current school will have established contacts and relationships with both children and families.
- We expect In Year fair Access protocols to be suspended, as has already happened in many Local Authority areas. This is in the best interests of children. This is because in the current period of school closures, pastoral, safeguarding and admissions staff will not have full information on students, to inform assessments on meeting need.
- We expect that necessary safe and well checks (telephone contact) should remain with the current school. This provides continuity for children and families, unless social care or another school or academy requests a hand over.

The government has asked schools to remain open **only** for those children who absolutely need to attend. Schools are therefore being asked to provide childcare for a limited number of children :

- children who are vulnerable,
- children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

Vulnerable children include:

- children who have an allocated social worker,
- children with child in need plans, or child protection plans,
- looked after children,
- children with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

We liaise closely with schools and academies where children access our hubs but remain on roll at another school.

If you have recently moved to an area and are without a school place, your application will be processed after the school re-opens. During the period of

school closures, our focus is to support the groups above with emergency child care.

If your child has a school place but cannot attend their usual school

If your child is in any of the categories above (a vulnerable child or a child of a key worker), and if you need your child to go to school while you are at work, please contact your child's school to arrange this. If your child cannot attend their usual school, the school will advise you which other school is available in the area. If there is any problem, please contact your local authority who have an oversight of provision in their local area.

If your child has a school place but is not classed as a 'vulnerable learner' and you are not a key worker

Your application will not be processed. You will need to submit an application when schools reopen and we will contact you to discuss this when this happens.

In year admissions process

So that children are not unfairly disadvantaged, any applications we receive will continue to be dealt with in date order.

In order to help us to identify vulnerable and critical worker children, we will ask the following additional questions. They will not affect whether a place is offered or refused but will affect whether your child can be accommodated on-site at school now.

1. Is this child receiving education work from their current school which could continue?
2. Is this child vulnerable under the [criteria](#) set by the government? (This means they will have an allocated social worker, are in the Care of a local authority, are assessed as being in Need or otherwise meet the definition of the Children Act 1989 s17)
3. If yes, tell us who your child's social worker is, stating name, LA, contact number or email?
4. Is this a child of a critical worker under the [criteria](#) set by the government? (Critical workers include health and social care staff, those in education and childcare, in key public services, in the production, processing, distribution and sale of food, hygienic and veterinary medicines, in public safety and national security, transport, utilities, communication and essential financial services.
5. Many parents working in these sectors (above) may be able to ensure their child is kept at home, and every child who can be safely cared for at home should be. Can this child be safely cared for at home?

6. If answered yes, to question 4, please tell us what the job title is and who your employer is: job title, employer, contact number.
7. If yes, have you attached a copy of your work ID or letter confirming critical worker status?

All cases will be considered individually to ensure vulnerable children are safe and to maintain a fair, transparent admissions process through challenging times for schools, families and pupils.

We will be reviewing our processes regularly, in response to changes in national guidance.

In year Fair Access Protocol (IYFAP) - updated arrangements

We have considered the best interests of pupils and students and have concluded that our academies cannot admit students and hold admissions meetings at the current time, as they are closed. We have therefore concluded that, in light of the current public health emergency and the resulting school closures, IYFAP should be suspended. This is an approach adopted by many Local Authorities.

Our pastoral, safeguarding and admissions staff will not have full information on students, as the dialogue and discussions with colleagues, which usually take place prior to decisions regarding allocation, will not have taken place.

For vulnerable children, we would not be in a position to carry out an informed safe and well check, without any relationship with the child or family and no understanding of the risks posed to /by that child.

Students who have been permanently excluded should remain on roll at their present school for the period of school closure (during the period of appeal) and safe and well checks be undertaken by that school.

In instances where the appeal period has expired and the Local Authority has responsibility for provision, we will work with the relevant Local Authority, on a case-by-case basis.