School Managed Application for in year admission to a school (SMA) – Guidance Notes

Guidance notes

Please use these notes to help you complete the School Managed in year Application form (SMA).

You should also visit the admissions section of our website to read the information on in year transfers before completing the form.

Which schools can you apply for using the SMA form?

You can use Surrey's SMA form to apply for academies and foundation, free, trust and voluntary aided schools which manage their own admissions. A list of the schools which use the SMA form is available from the admissions section of our website. You can only express a preference for one school on each form but you can submit an application for as many of these schools as you wish.

Surrey's community and voluntary controlled schools and other academies and foundation, free, trust and voluntary aided schools use a Centrally Managed Application form (CMA). You can express a preference for up to three schools on Surrey's CMA form.

You can check how to apply for in year admission to a particular school and access the appropriate application form by looking at our online schools directory.

If you wish to apply for schools outside Surrey, you should contact either the school or the local authority where the school is situated to find out how to apply.

How long will it take to process your application?

Schools should aim to process applications within a maximum of 15 school days of receiving a fully completed application form. Most schools will be unable to process applications during a school holiday. Failure to complete the application fully or to attach evidence is likely to result in a delay in processing your application.

When is it appropriate to apply for in year admission to a new school?

If you need a school place for a child who is moving into Surrey or because of a house move within Surrey where your child cannot continue at their existing school, it is reasonable to apply for a place at a new school.

However, if your child is already at a local school, we encourage you to think carefully before applying for a place at a new school. Please bear in mind that other schools may be full and the upheaval of changing school may damage your child's progress. Before applying for a new school please discuss the reasons with your child's current school and try to resolve any issues with them. We discourage unnecessary school transfers because this can be disruptive to a child's education and to the education of other children within a school. If you do wish to apply for a change of school, you will be asked to confirm the reasons.

In considering your application, the school may contact your child's current school so they might discuss your reasons for applying for a new school and whether it might be possible for them to resolve any difficulties your child may be having. They may also liaise with other services within Surrey, including any which have been involved with your child. You should not withdraw your child from their current school until you have secured an alternative school place.

A school cannot ask you to withdraw your child from school or withdraw your child from the school roll without your permission or without first knowing that your child has a new school place. However, where a school believes a change of school may be in your child's best interests, the headteacher can discuss arranging a managed move to another school or a referral to alternative education provision, with you.

Guidance on completing the SMA form

Please make sure that you complete all sections of the form fully and sign the declaration. If you leave any of the questions unanswered or if you fail to provide supporting information, it is likely to cause a delay in your application.

These notes should help you with some of the questions on the form. If you are unsure of the answer to any of the questions, please contact Surrey's Admissions team on 0300 200 1004 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm) or visit the admissions section of our website.

1a) Does the child have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP)?

• If the child has a current Education, Health and Care Plan you should not complete the SMA form. Instead, you should contact the Special Educational Needs team for the local authority in which the child lives for details on changing school.

• If the child has special educational needs and disability but does not have a current Education, Health and Care plan you should answer 'No' to this question and continue completing the form.

1b) Is the child currently in the care of a local authority?

If the child is in local authority care (eg foster care) you should not complete this form. Instead the child's social worker should complete Surrey's separate form, 'Child in care application for in year admission to school'. By law, children in care receive top priority for admission to school. It is therefore important that the social worker completes the correct application form.

1c) Has the child previously been in care and did they leave care through adoption, a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order or were they child adopted from state care outside England?

If the child was previously looked after but left care through adoption, a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order or if they were adopted from state care outside England, you must indicate this on the application form and provide supporting evidence from their social worker. By law, children who were previously looked after (included those adopted from state care outside England) receive top priority for admission to school and it is therefore important that this is declared on the application form.

1d) From what date is a school place required?

Please tell us the date that you need a school place.

If a place is offered and accepted, the school will arrange to admit your child as soon as possible, normally within 10 school days of you formally accepting the place. If it is not possible for your child to take up the place within 10 school days, for example because they are not yet living in the area, the school can agree a later start date.

Alternatively, you may have good reason for wishing to defer your child's start date, such as where they are due to take exams at another school. In such cases a school may agree to defer the start date, but the maximum deferral period is usually four weeks.

Where your child is available to take up a school place straightaway and there is no good reason for deferring their start date, they must start on the date provided by the school. The place may be withdrawn if they do not start then.

2 Child's details

Please complete the child's details fully in sections 2a) to e).

2f) Child's home address

Please give the child's full address including the postcode.

The child's home address excludes any business or childminder's address and must be the child's normal place of residence. It also excludes any relative's address unless the child lives at that address as their normal place of residence. Where the child is subject to a child arrangements order and that order stipulates that the child will live with one parent/carer more than the other, the address to be used will be the one where the child is expected to live for the majority of the time. For other children, the address to be used will be the address where the child lives the majority of the time. In cases where the child spends an equal time between their parents/carers, it will be up to the parent/carers to agree which address to use. Where a child spends their time equally between their parents/carers and they cannot agree on who should make the application, we will accept an application from the parent/carer who is registered for child benefit. If neither parent/carer is registered for child benefit we will accept the application from the parent/carer whose address is registered as the main address with the child's current school.

We will not generally accept a temporary address if the main carer of the child still possesses or rents a property that has previously been used as a home address, nor will we accept a temporary address if we believe it has been used solely or mainly to obtain a school place when an alternative address is still available to that child.

In order to ensure fairness to all children applying for a school place, we reserve the right to check details submitted by parents/guardians against council and school records.

Documentary evidence confirming address details **must be provided with the form**. This should be a copy of your current council tax bill or a signed tenancy agreement along with one other form of evidence, such as a recent utility bill.

Any offer based on where the child lives is conditional on the child being resident at the declared address on the date an offer is made. You must tell us if the child moves address after you have made your application.

Any offer of a school place made on the basis of false information may be withdrawn, even if the child has already started at the school.

2g) Date the child moved to this address.

Please include the date the child moved to this address and, if it was less than two years ago, include the child's previous address in section 2i).

3a) Is the child currently in the United Kingdom?

When making an application for a school place, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child has a right, under their visa entry conditions, to study at a school and that they will not be contravening the conditions of any visa or United Kingdom immigration law if they take up the school place.

3b) Is the child in the United Kingdom on a temporary visit?

Children in the United Kingdom on a temporary visit are not generally entitled to receive state education. Exceptions may apply to children who have the right of abode in the United Kingdom, but normally only if they are expected to remain in the United Kingdom for more than three months.

4a) Name and address of current school

Please confirm the name and address of the child's current school. If the child is not currently on roll at any school you should put not applicable (N/A) in this section but you must include details of previous schools in section 4c).

4b) Date started at current school

Please enter the date that the child first started at the school named in section 4a).

4c) Other schools attended

Please include details of all other schools attended before the child started at their current school. You must include dates of attendance. Please continue on a separate sheet of paper if necessary.

4d) Reason for applying for a change of school (or reason for leaving previous school)

Please give the reasons why you wish the child to change school. If it is to do with difficulties in their current school, you should include details of what you have done to try and resolve those difficulties. If the child is not currently in school, you should provide the reasons for leaving their previous school. Please continue on a separate sheet of paper if necessary.

5. School preference

You can only name one school on the SMA form.

If you wish to apply for other schools you must complete a separate application form.

If you wish to apply under a school's exceptional social or medical criterion where it applies, you must indicate this in section 5 and provide additional information and professional written evidence to support your case.

In order to be considered for sibling priority where it applies, you must provide details of any siblings for whom you wish to claim sibling priority.

You can include reasons for naming a preference, but you are not required to do so.

6. Fair access admissions

Fair access questions are asked on the application form in order to identify Surrey applicants who may be eligible to be placed through Surrey's Fair Access Protocol, if a place cannot be offered under the in-year process. The Fair Access Protocol ensures that vulnerable and unplaced children, who aren't successful in gaining a place through the normal in-year admissions process, are offered a place at a suitable school within 20 school days. This includes admitting children above the published admission number to schools that are already full

You are asked to answer these questions accurately and honestly to ensure that unplaced and vulnerable students are placed quickly and appropriately in school and that support is identified at the earliest stage.

7. Parent/guardian/carer details

Please complete your contact details in sections 7a) to f).

7g) Relationship to child

Please confirm your relationship to the child, eg mother, father, aunt, uncle, grandparent, family friend. If you are not the child's parent and the child is not under the care of a local authority, please supply a letter from the parent to explain the circumstances and why the child lives with you or a copy of the official documentation that indicates that you have parental responsibility for the child.

7h) Do you have parental responsibility for this child?

Please confirm if you have parental responsibility for the child. Parental responsibility is defined by the Children Act 1989 and amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002. For children born prior to 1 December 2003, the child's natural mother acquired parental responsibility automatically at birth. The child's natural father only acquired parental responsibility if he was married to the mother at the time of birth or if they married subsequently.

For children born since 1 December 2003, a child's natural father will also have parental responsibility if he jointly registered as the child's natural father following the child's birth.

Other people who do not have automatic parental responsibility, including step-parents, grandparents and other close relatives, can obtain parental responsibility by seeking a parental

responsibility legal agreement, obtained with the consent of all persons with parental responsibility or by a court order, or when a child is placed with them for legal adoption.

If you are a distant relative or not related at all to the child, it is likely that you are a private foster parent. In law this means you must tell your local authority you are caring for the child and also you must tell the child's parents (or the person with parental responsibility) about the application for a school place and obtain their permission.

Gov.uk has further information regarding parental rights and responsibilities.

7i) Are you working as a Crown Servant or in Her Majesty's Armed Forces and in need of a school place as a result of a return to the area?

If you are working as a Crown Servant or in Her Majesty's Armed Forces and have been given notice of a relocation, we may be able to accept an application for admission up to four months ahead of a move. If this applies you should include evidence of your relocation and provide details of a posting or unit address as soon as these are available.

7j) Are you making an application for any other children who are part of the same family?

In order to best support families who are making an application for more than one child, please indicate here if you are making an application for any other children who are part of the same family. **However, please note, you will still need to complete a separate application for each child**.

8. Additional contact

If you wish to authorise us to discuss your application for a school place with someone else, please complete their details under the 'Additional contact'. However, you must remember to tell us if, at any time, you no longer wish us to discuss your application with this person.

9. Declaration of parent/guardian/carer

Please read the declaration before completing your name and signing and dating the form.

10. The next steps

Returning your SMA form

Before returning your form, please check that you have provided the following evidence, as appropriate:

- ☐ If the child has previously been in care, confirmation that they left care through adoption, a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order.
- ☐ Confirmation of the child's home address.
- ☐ If the child is not yet in the United Kingdom or has arrived in the United Kingdom but not always lived here, confirmation of the date of their arrival, such as a copy of the child's flight ticket.
- ☐ If you are applying for exceptional social/medical priority, appropriate professional evidence to support your case.
- ☐ If you do not have parental responsibility for the child, a letter from the child's parent explaining the circumstances and authorising you to act on their behalf.

You must then send the completed form and supporting information to the school that you have named in section 5 of the form.