



Applying for a School or College Place for a Surrey Looked-after Child

A brief guide for Social Workers

Legislation:

‘Mainstream schools must give the highest priority to the admission of a looked-after and previously looked-after child.’

‘Schools cannot refuse to admit a looked-after child on the basis of challenging behaviour or refer a child for action under the Fair Access Protocol on this basis.’

You can read the [School Admissions Code](#) which refers to this. There is also a link to [Promoting the Education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children](#). The statutory Guidance is on page 11 – 14.

How to apply for a statutory school place (Reception to Year 11, age 4 to 16)

Use this link to [the Department of Education website](#) to find the closest suitable school to the child’s placement.

Schools must be judged by Ofsted to be Good or better; every school has their latest Ofsted report on their website.

NB: It is imperative to secure education prior to the move and for the child to visit the school(s) before the application is made. The Virtual School will assist with this process.

If you do not apply to the closest school you will need to provide strong justification for this decision.

For a young person in Year 6, 10, 11 or 12, the Virtual School must give permission for them to move schools.

Moving Schools within the Academic Year

If a school place is needed during the school year, then an In-year Transfer application should be completed. This is different for each LA so scrutinise schools’ admissions process to ensure application is correctly made into either the LA or direct to the school. This is especially relevant for academies. Copy in your Virtual School Education Support Worker when submitting applications.

Applying for a Reception/Year 3/Year 7 place for the following September

This is usually managed by the Admissions Department in a LA. The Common Application Form (CAF) should be completed. You can only name one preference of school for a looked-



after child. Check the schools' Admissions policy found on their website and make application as advised. Some schools also require a supplementary form to be completed.

Secondary: Closing date 31 Oct / Outcome 01 March

Primary: Closing date 15 Jan / Outcome 16 April

Children with an Education Health and Care Plan

When a child has an EHCP, SEND lead on finding the most appropriate setting to meet the exacting needs of the child as outlined in their plan. Any placement changes must be communicated to the SEND caseworker for the child. If the child is out of County, their residing LA's SEND caseworker will consult with schools for a place. Surrey SEND approve funding.

Remember to hold a PEP meeting for a child within 20 days after a school move.

Out of County Admissions

Where the young person has been placed out of county, you must apply directly to the admissions service of the county or borough they are placed within.

There will be an admissions process that mirrors our own so please check their website.

As with all academies, please check the academy website where there will either be a link to the LA admissions process or details on the academies own process.

Colleges: For any college, you apply directly on the college website.

Applying to a Faith School

If you name a faith school and the looked-after child is of that faith then they are given the highest priority for admission into the school. However, if the looked-after child is not of that faith, you should consider naming other schools also (applies to both in year and new round applications) as they may not be offered a place since faith schools are allowed under the Admissions Code to give priority to faith children before non-faith LAC/PLAC.

Remember to hold a PEP meeting for a child within 20 days after a school move.

Late applications

Applications for looked-after children received after the closing dates may still be accepted by a local authority. Check the 'late for a good reason' closing dates which will be published by the local authority.



Interim Education

All looked-after children of statutory school age have the right to be educated in a suitable place of education. It is the expectation of the Virtual School that an urgent application will be made for a place in a suitable educational setting. Children and young people without a place must not have the application delayed except in exceptional circumstances.

Where a child is not in receipt of any education, Social Workers can request interim education two weeks after application for a school place has been made. Please contact the VS education support worker (ESW) for the quadrant, to make a request.

For children with an EHCP – social workers should make this request to their child's SEND caseworker.

Remember to hold a PEP meeting for a child within 20 days after a school move

Academies

Every academy has its own admissions policy. This means that, for in-year applications, you will need to go onto the academy's website & find out whether you need to apply directly to them or through that LA's admissions team.

For new round applications for the following September, see slide 4.

You can apply to more than one Academy at once.

Once the young person has joined a school/education setting, please email your Virtual School ESW to inform them of the Designated Teacher's name and email address in order to gain access to their EPEP on Welfare Call.

Outcome

Once the school has received the In-year application, a decision should be made within 7 working days. Allow 15 days for consultation with Special Schools although the young person's SEND Caseworker will be leading on this process if they have an EHCP.

We must not allow drift

Contact Admissions; (SEND) and alert the Virtual School if this deadline has passed.

Direction

Surrey LA will use its powers of direction where a school has not observed the law and is refusing to admit a child without robust reason. The LA will consider direction once the timescale for response has expired. In the week that follows, liaise with Admissions and



consult the Virtual School. The Virtual School will escalate to direction or suggest an alternative strategy.

Post-16

Please apply directly to the college's website. If you are unsure of local provision (especially for UASC) then don't hesitate to contact the Virtual School.

UASC

For a statutory-age UASC the application process is no different.

If you are considering a 14-16 college place then you must apply through the Local Authority admissions team and make that clear. Do not apply directly to the college in this instance.

Application forms

Please see [Surrey's In-Year and New Round Admissions](#), as well as the [LAC Protocol and application form](#).

The Surrey Admissions application form can be found on the admissions website (above), your quadrant's Virtual School Education Support Worker or our [SVS website](#).

Virtual School Contacts

- NE – Sandy Ball
- SE – Mary Cooke
- NW – Michele Hawkins
- SW – Caroline Carter
- Post-16 – Anne Vickers
- UASC – Lisa Smith

Email: virtual.school@surreycc.gov.uk

Phone 0208 541 7761

Remember to initiate a PEP meeting for a child within 20 days of any school move.