

Thurrock Council

In-year school admissions – a guide for parents

In-year application is the name we give to any application for a school place that we receive:

- after the normal time to make an application for a school place has ended
- for year groups other than the normal year of entry – for example, year 4 or year 9

This guide is designed to help you make an in-year application if you are resident in Thurrock and:

- you have moved within the borough and would like to change to a more local school
- you have moved to Thurrock, either from another part of the country or from abroad
- you wish to move from home education to school education
- you wish to move from a fee-paying school to a state-funded school
- you wish to change schools

If any of the above applies, you will need to complete an in-year application form.

The form can be downloaded from www.thurrock.gov.uk/in-year-admissions

Additional forms for individual schools

If you wish to apply in-year for a place at any of **The Gateway Learning Community** schools, you must apply direct to the school **as well as** completing our in-year admissions form.

The Gateway Learning Community schools are:

- **Herringham Primary Academy**
- **Lansdowne Primary Academy**
- **The Gateway Academy**
- **The Gateway Primary Free School**
- **Tilbury Pioneer Academy**

If you wish to apply in-year for a place at **Grays Convent High School**, you must complete the Grays Convent High School supplementary information form and return it to the school, as well as completing our in-year admissions form.

What to consider before applying for a place at another school

If you simply want to change schools, you should think carefully about whether this is really necessary and in your child's best interests.

It is generally in a child's best interest to remain at the same school. Whatever the stage of education your child is in, changing schools can cause disruption.

You should ask yourself the following questions before making a decision.

"Is my child having problems at their current school?"

If your child is having problems, a change of school is not always the answer. You should discuss any concerns with your child's head teacher before you apply for a transfer.

There are many support agencies that will be able to help. The head teacher of your child's school will be able to advise what help is available.

"Does my child have an education, health and care plan?"

If your child is receiving extra support through an education, health and care plan, or is undergoing a formal assessment of special educational needs, you should speak to your child's current head teacher and special education needs case officer before applying to transfer school.

A change of school could mean that there was a delay in completing the assessment or in setting up support in a new setting, or that some types of support would not be available.

"Is my child in Key Stage 4 – years 10 or 11?"

If your child is in year 10 or year 11, you should think very carefully before moving them, for any reason.

The Key Stage 4 curriculum is different in each secondary school. A different school is unlikely to be able to offer all the same subject options, such as GCSEs and BTECs, for which your child has studied and completed coursework. Even if they do, they may use different examination boards or syllabuses.

Some schools also start the Key Stage 4 curriculum in Year 9 so moving your child in Year 10 or Year 11 may present further problems.

You need to speak to the school you are interested in about options and exams before making a request to transfer.

"Do I get help for my child's travel to their current school?"

You should keep in mind that if you choose to move your child from one school to another, you will not automatically qualify for home to school transport.

Go to www.thurrock.gov.uk/home-to-school-travel-support for information on home-to-school travel support eligibility.

Finding a place for your child

Thurrock Council's School Admissions team will help you to find a school that has a place.

It might be difficult to find a place at the school that you want in the middle of the school year as it may already be full and have a waiting list.

If you are applying for a place for more than one child at the same school, and it is not possible to find a place for all of them at the same school, the Admissions Team can help you with details of schools that have places.

We cannot normally hold places open for families that are planning to move to Thurrock and cannot guarantee a place will be available at the school for which you apply.

You should contact our School Admissions team when you decide to move house to find out which schools have vacancies.

If a place is available at the school for which you applied, your child will need to start on the agreed date. We cannot hold a place open after that.

You can ask for a place at any school in Thurrock, but we strongly advise you to speak to the Admissions Team first so that you know where there are likely to be spaces.

Completing your application

It is important to read the admissions criteria – the rules that schools use to offer place – for the schools in which you're interested, as this will help you understand how places are allocated.

You can find the list of admissions criteria either:

- directly from the school
- from the school's website
- in the primary and secondary admission brochures at www.thurrock.gov.uk/admissions

Some schools will ask you to give extra information on a supplementary form.

You are asked to name up to 4 primary schools or 6 secondary schools on the form. You must only use the Thurrock form to apply for schools in Thurrock. If you would like to apply for schools in another area, you must contact the school admissions teams in the boroughs where the schools are located, to find out where there are likely to be vacancies.

Remember – you are applying for schools at a time when places have already been allocated, so the schools you prefer, or those closest to your home, may not be able to offer a place.

Parents and carers are responsible for making sure that their children receive an education if they are of statutory school age, usually between 5 and 16 years-old.

We strongly advise you to make the full number of choices of school and to talk to our School Admissions team, who can give you advice so that your child gets a school place as quickly as possible.

You must fill in the form fully and accurately. If you do not, it could mean that it takes longer to complete the application process. You will need to fill in a separate form for each child.

It may not always be possible to offer places to all your children at the same school.

There may not be spaces in every year group at the same school. In most cases, if one child is offered a place, other children will receive sibling priority on the waiting list for the same school. Some schools are very popular, however, and there are very few spaces throughout the year.

You will be asked to provide proof of your permanent home address

Offers

All your preferences will be considered at the same time, regardless of how you rank them.

Providing your application is complete and we have verified your home address, a letter will be sent within **20 school days** of the date we receive your application, to let you know the outcome.

Starting at the new school

When you have accepted the offer of a place, we will pass your child's details to the school who will contact you to arrange a date for your child to start.

The date your child starts school will depend on your particular circumstances. These arrangements will be discussed between you and the school.

If you have recently moved to the area, the school will normally arrange a start date as soon as possible. Schools will often invite the parents/carers and children to a pre-admission meeting before the child starts school. This meeting is an opportunity for you and your child to provide any information that the school needs to know in order to plan for admission.

Refusals

All schools have a fixed number of places available. This is called the published admission number. If it is not possible to offer your child a place at one of your preferred schools, the Admissions Team will write to you within 15 school days.

Appeals

You have the right of appeal against a decision not to offer a place. Details of the appeals procedure will depend on the type of school and this will be explained in the refusal letter. You may also find it useful to contact ACE Education Advice and Training, who provide independent free advice on admissions and appeals:

- www.ace-ed.org.uk
- 72 Durnsford Road, London, N11 2EJ

It is the responsibility of parents to make sure their children receive an education while they are of statutory school age. You are strongly advised to use all your preferences and take advice from our School Admissions team on realistic preferences to avoid delay.

Thurrock Council has a duty in law to provide your child with a suitable education – defined as efficient full-time education suitable to a child's age, ability and aptitude – but we do not have a duty in law to offer a place at a school that is full.

Waiting lists

You can ask for your child's name to be put on a waiting list at schools for which you applied but that were not able to offer a place. Your child's name will be placed on the waiting list, as per the published admission criteria.

Thurrock Council only has information about waiting lists for schools in its area. For schools located outside Thurrock, you will need to contact the relevant local authority or school.

It is also important to remember that a waiting list position can go up and down. If, for example, a child who lives closer to the school or who meets one of the other main rules for getting a place is added to the waiting list they will take priority on the list.