Somerset Local Authority (LA)
Admission arrangements applying to community (C) or voluntary controlled (VC) Schools

Starting school at a primary, first, infant or junior school in September 2028 or joining any year group during the 2028/29 academic year

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Somerset LA is the Admissions Authority for all C and VC schools located within Somerset.

These admission arrangements should be read in conjunction with the LA 2028/29 coordinated admissions scheme.

Starting at a primary, first, infant or junior school in 2028

Applications must be submitted to the home LA. If this is Somerset, applications can be made on-line at www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions. Paper applications are available to download from the Somerset County Council website at www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions, or upon request by telephoning Customer Contact on 0300 123 2224. Any supporting information must be received by the exemption period deadline.

Applications must be received by 15 January 2028, otherwise the application will be recorded as late. Late applications will be considered after those received on time. Please see the Somerset LA co-ordinated scheme for full details.

Outcomes for on time applications will be sent out by email (for online applicants) or second class post on 18 April 2028 (due to 16th being on a weekend).

Admissions during the academic year (in year admissions)

In year applications must be submitted directly to the school using the LA in-year application form (hard copy only).

Batches of applications will be processed with a 4pm daily working day deadline for receipt of applications. If more applications are received that there are places available, the over-subscription criteria will be applied. A decision will be notified in writing to the applicant within fifteen school days.

Proof of address may be required to be submitted with the application. This will be either the formal 'exchange of contracts' letter from the solicitor for a house purchase, a recent utility bill or the signing of tenancy agreement. The LA reserve the right to seek further documentaryevidence to support a claim of residence.

Where there are more applications than places available within a particular year group, applications will be considered against the published oversubscription criteria and allocated up to the admission number/ limit.

Places will not be allocated more than six school weeks or half a term in advance of being required. The only exceptions are children of UK service personnel and other crown servants (including Diplomats) returning to the UK with a confirmed posting to the area (see Children of UK service personnel).

Oversubscription Criteria

When the school is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan naming the school, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in priority order:

1. Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After – Children who are currently in the care of a Local Authority or have previously been and are now formally adopted or subject to a child arrangement order or special guardianship order. Previously looked after children also includes children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. (See important note 1)

2. Children living in the catchment area, with a sibling at the school at the time of admission, and who live at the same address.

3. a) Children living in the rural catchment area. (See important note 2)

   b) Children living in the catchment area.

4. Children eligible for pupil premium funding (See important note 3)

5. Children living outside the catchment area, with a sibling at the school at the time of admission, and who live at the same address.

6. Children registered in an infant school (within the junior school catchment area).

7. a) Children of staff employed by the school for at least two years prior to the application closing date.

   b) Children of staff employed by the school recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage. (See important note 4)

8. For Infant school admissions only; Children living outside the catchment area, with an older sibling at the linked junior school at the time of admission, and who live at the same address.

9. Children not satisfying a higher criterion.

Tie-break

If in categories 1-9 above a tie-break is necessary to determine which child is admitted, the child living closest to the school will be given priority for admission. Distance is measured in a straight line by a Geographical information System (GIS) method from the geocoded point of the school site to the geocoded point of the pupil's home. In the case of a multi-dwelling building such as a block of flats, the same distance will apply for all occupants.

Random allocation by drawing lots supervised by someone independent of the school will be used as a tie-break in categories 1-9 above to decide who has highest priority for admission if in two or more cases the children's homes are equidistant from the school.

However, if children of multiple births (twins and triplets) are tied for the final place, those siblings will be admitted over PAN.

Important Notes

1. A "Looked After Child" means any child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions in accordance with Section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989.

   A child who was "a previously Looked After Child" means a child who after being Looked After became subject to an Adoption Order under Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, a child arrangement order under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 or Special Guardianship Order under Section 14A of the Children Act 1989, as well as those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society Relevant evidence will be required to be submitted.

2. 'Rural catchment' is defined as living in the catchment area of a school and there is no alternative school within the statutory walking distance of the home address (2 miles for a child aged under eight years old and 3 miles for a child aged eight years old and over).

3. Consideration under this criterion will be determined by entitlement to free school meals (targeted). The parent/carer must make an application for free school meals and confirmation of entitlement must be received by the Admissions Team by the exemption closing date for primary admissions (4th February 2028) for on time applications. For second round applications, confirmation of entitlement must be received by the closing date (1 May 2028).

For all post second round applications, confirmation of entitlement must be received with the application. If applicable, a child's position on the waiting list will be adjusted in line with the over-subscription criteria should evidence of free school meal entitlement be received after the exemption/closing date. If a child lives in another Local Authority area then evidence of entitlement from the home Local Authority will be required by the relevant dates above.

4. Criterion 7 - The Head Teacher or Governing Body of the relevant school will be asked to verify point b.

Additional Information

Home Address

The home address is very important as school places are allocated on the basis of the permanent home address of each child. A child's permanent home address is considered to be where the child spends the majority of their time with parents or carers. (Please see shared care arrangements information below).

Documentary evidence of home ownership or suitable rental agreement may be required, together with proof of permanent residence at the property concerned. Places cannot be allocated on the basis of an intended future address, unless the house move can be confirmed through the formal 'exchange of contracts' or the signing of a tenancy agreement from a letting agency. Please note private letting agreements may not be accepted as proof of residence. An address change due to a move to live with other family members or friends will not be considered until the move has taken place and suitable proof of residency has been obtained. Proof that a move from the previous address has taken place may also be required e.g. proof of exchange of contracts, a tenancy agreement showing the end date of the tenancy or a notice to quit from the landlord or repossession notice. The LA reserve the right to seek further documentary evidence to support any claim of residence which could include contacting the estate agent, solicitor, landlord or relevant professional. A representative of the LA may carry out a home visit/s without prior notice to verify a pupil's home address.

An address used for childcare arrangements cannot be used as a home address for the purpose of applying for a school place. Fraudulent claims relating to the home address of a particular child may lead to the withdrawal of any offer of a school place.

Proof of address will not be required for Traveller families where the address is confirmed by the Traveller Education Service. A foster carer will not be required to supply proof of address for a child placed with them by a LA.

The LA and/or Admissions Authority must be notified of any change of address during the admissions procedure.

Shared care arrangements
Where shared care arrangements are in place and parents/ carers of the child submit two separate applications for different schools, the LA will only accept one application which will be the application made by the parent/carer that lives at the same permanent home address as the child. Where there are exceptional grounds such as on-going court proceedings for example, these applications will be considered on a case by case basis.

Where it is necessary to establish the permanent home address for the child parent/carers will be asked to write to the LA stating the number of days each week the child spends with them. The LA may also ask for evidence of which parent/carer was in receipt of child benefit at the point of application. If the parent/carer is not in receipt of child benefit, the LA will ask for proof of the child's home address as held by the doctor's surgery at the point of application. If the child's home address cannot be verified the LA reserve the right to request further documentary evidence to support any claim of permanent home address.

The LA will also use the above to establish the permanent home address of a child on behalf of own admission authority schools and academies if this is not stated in their admission arrangements.

Catchment Areas
Catchment areas for Somerset schools can be viewed here School catchment (somerset.gov.uk)

Parent/Carer
Natural parents, whether they are married or not, any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person. Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child is considered to be a parent in education law).

Relevant Area
The School Standards & Framework Act 1998 requires LA's to establish Relevant Area(s) for admission policy consultations. The Relevant Area is the area in which admission authorities must consult with schools regarding their proposed admission arrangements before finalising them.

The Education Act 2002 requires the LA to consult on and review its Relevant Area every 2 years.

The relevant area for Somerset admission authority is the geographical area for Somerset. The relevant area for VA, Foundation, Academies and Free Schools is the district in which the school is located (i.e. Mendip, South Somerset, Taunton Deane, West Somerset or Sedgemoor.) This relevant area will apply until the next time the relevant area consultation takes place.

Sibling
For the purpose of admissions, a sibling is defined as children living at the same permanent home address. Please see the information on 'Shared care arrangements' which will apply if necessary in order to determine the sibling's permanent home address.

Pupil Premium Funding
The pupil premium is additional funding paid annually to schools under Section 14 of the Education Act 2002 for the purposes of supporting the attainment of disadvantaged children.

Appeals
All applicants refused a place have a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel constituted and operated in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code. Details of how to appeal are included in the outcome email or letter. Information on the timetable for the appeals process is available on the Somerset LA website by 28 February each year.

Waiting lists
The LA will maintain a waiting list for every over-subscribed Community and Voluntary Controlled school. Children will automatically be placed on the waiting list if a place is refused. The waiting list for the year of entry will operate until the end of the first term after the beginning of the school year. If parent/carers wish for their child to remain on the waiting list after this time a request must be made in writing to the Local Authority by the start of the Spring Term.

The waiting list for all other year groups will operate until the end of the academic year for which the place has been requested.

Children's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Where places become vacant they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. The waiting list will be reordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria whenever anyone is added to or leaves the waiting list. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure the LA are informed of any changes that may affect their child's position on the waiting list.

When a place is offered from the waiting list, the offer will not be held open to allow time for the family to visit or revisit the school and decide again whether the place is still required. Offers must be accepted or declined by the end of the next school day following the offer. This is to ensure that other children on a waiting list can be offered quickly if necessary and the vacancy filled promptly.

Withdrawal of places
The LA will consider withdrawing the offer of a place at a Community or Voluntary Controlled school if;

- The place has been offered on the basis of an application which is subsequently found to be fraudulent or intentionally misleading.

- If a school is offered on the basis of an address that is subsequently found to be different from a child's permanent home address then that place is liable to be withdrawn.

- The parent/carer has not responded to the offer within a reasonable period of time and a further opportunity has been given for the parent to respond within 10 days having explained that the offer may be withdrawn if they do not.

Deferred Entry
Parents offered a place in reception for their child have a right to defer entry, or to take a place up part-time, until the start of the term beginning immediately after their child has reached compulsory school age. However, places cannot be deferred beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Children reach compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their 5th birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March.

Full-time schooling
Parents have a right to a full-time place at school for their child from the September following their fourth birthday.

Summer Born Children
Parents of summer born children (born between 1st April and 31st August) may request that they are admitted into reception rather than year one when they become of compulsory school age. Applications will be considered as set out below (see admission of children outside their normal age group).

Admission of children outside their normal age group
Parents may request that their child is admitted to a year group outside their normal age range (delayed or accelerated admission / transfer), for instance where the child is summer born or where the child is gifted or talented or where a child has suffered from particular social or medical issues impacting his or her schooling.

When such a request is made, the Admission Authority will make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned. The Admission Authority will take into account the parent's views and any supporting information provided and the views of the Headteacher. Also relevant is information about the child's academic, social and emotional development, where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional, whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group, whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely.

Applications for delayed or accelerated entry or transfer must be made on the online form on the webpage Delayed or Accelerated Admission. If the application is for an own admission authority school it will be sent to the school for consideration and the school will contact the parent with the decision.

If the application is for a VC or Community school a panel of Local Authority officers comprising of the Team Leader and Service Manager of the Admissions & Entitlements Team and the Strategic Manager of Curriculum and Literature who is a qualified Early Years Teacher will consider the application. The Headteachers views will also be sought. A written outcome will then be sent including any reasons for refusal if applicable.

It is advised that an on-time school place application is also submitted for the correct chronological year group. If a delayed admission / transfer request is agreed, the on-time school place application can then be withdrawn.

Where an Admission Authority agrees to a parent's request for their child to be admitted out of their normal age group the parent must apply for that year group according to the published timescales. If a school place application is submitted after the closing date it will be considered as late and processed according to the relevant timescales.

If a request for delayed admission is refused, the parent must decide whether to apply for a school place for the chronological age group, or to make an in year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday.

One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parents, therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference schools.
For further information and important things you should consider please visit;
https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/starting-school-early-or-late/

Children from overseas
The LA will treat applications for children coming from overseas in accordance with Home Office rules for Foreign nationals.

This is the most recent guidance;

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-admissions-applications-from-overseas-children

Children of UK Service Personnel
The Admissions Authority endeavours to ensure that their admission arrangements support the Government's commitment to removing disadvantage for service

children. In year applications are usually considered for admission up to a maximum of half a term in advance of the place being taken up. An exception is made for children of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting to the area and crown servants returning from overseas to live in the area where a place can be made available up to a year in advance of being required providing the appropriate documentation is provided as proof of posting (an official government letter (e.g. MOD, FCO or GCHQ) declaring a relocation date and intended posting.)

Usually, a place may be allocated prior to actual residency, only on receipt of exchange of contracts or a formal signed rental agreement. An exception is made for children of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting to the area and crown servants returning from overseas to live in the area. This means that, providing the application is accompanied by an official government letter (e.g. MOD, FCO or GCHQ) declaring a relocation date and intended posting, the admissions authority will process the application. If proof of a home address is not available at this stage the admissions authority will accept a unit postal address or quartering area address.

If the parent/carer is moving to the area as a result of leaving the armed forces then no special consideration will be given to the application under the grounds of the application being made by a service family.

For further information please refer to the DfE explanatory note on Admission of Children of Crown Servants;

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/461481/Admission_of_children_of_crown_servants.pdf

Children Looked After (CLA)

The LA will endeavour to secure a place for a CLA at the catchment or nearest school to the address at which they are placed. A LA has the power to direct the admission authority for any maintained school (e.g. Voluntary Controlled, Community, Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools) in England to admit a child who is looked after by the LA, even when the school is full. The LA must **not** choose a school from which the child is permanently excluded but may choose a school whose infant classes are already at the maximum size. Before deciding to give a direction, the LA must consult the admission authority of the school it proposes to direct. In the case of an academy a LA can request that the Secretary of State consider directing the admission of a CLA.