

# Guidance notes - School managed application for in year admission (SMA)



**Please use these notes to help you complete the school managed in year application form SMA. You should also read the information on in year transfers which is available on Surrey's website at [surreycc.gov.uk/admissions](http://surreycc.gov.uk/admissions) before completing the form.**

## **Which schools can you apply for using the SMA application form?**

You can use Surrey's school managed application form **SMA** to apply for academies and foundation, free, trust and voluntary aided schools which manage their own admissions. A list of the academies and foundation, free, trust and voluntary aided schools which use the SMA form is available at [surreycc.gov.uk/admissions](http://surreycc.gov.uk/admissions). You can only express a preference for that one school. However 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 the schools directory on Surrey's website at [surreycc.gov.uk/schools](http://surreycc.gov.uk/schools).

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 10 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 submit an application for a new school place.

However if your child is already at a local school, we encourage you to think carefully before applying, bearing in mind that other schools may be full and the upheaval may damage your child's progress. Before applying for a new school you must discuss the reasons with your child's current school and try to resolve any issues with them. We discourage unnecessary transfers because this can be disruptive to the child's education and to the education of other children within a school.

If you do want to pursue an application for a change of school, you will need to provide your reasons. You will also be required to ask the headteacher at your child's current school to complete a section of the application form; your form will not be processed without this.

In considering your application, we may need to discuss with you and the school whether it might be better for you to resolve any difficulties your child is having with your child's current school. We may also seek views from any 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 application form**

Please make sure that you complete all sections of the form fully and sign the declaration. Once you have signed the declaration you must ask the headteacher at the child's current/previous school to complete the final section of the form before returning it to your named school with any supporting evidence. If you leave any of the questions unanswered or if you fail to provide a headteacher statement or 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 or visit [surreycc.gov.uk/admissions](http://surreycc.gov.uk/admissions).

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?

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

1d) Do you need a school place within the next four school weeks?

Applications can only be considered up to four school weeks in advance of a place being required (although see exceptions below). If you apply more than four school weeks in advance, your application will not be processed until the four week timeframe has been reached. This is because school places cannot be reserved. If the child does not need a school place within the next four school weeks please state the date that a school place is required.

Exceptions apply for:

- Members of the Armed Services and Crown Servants who are being relocated to the area, for whom applications may be processed up to four months in advance of a move (see question 7i).
- Applicants who are seeking a school place for a child from the beginning of the Autumn term, for whom applications may be processed from the beginning of June.

2 Child's details

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

2f) Child's home address

- Please write the child's full address including the postcode.
- The address given must be the child's normal place of residence. You should not use a business, relative or carer/childminder's address and you cannot use a temporarily rented address to secure a school place for a child. If there is a formal equal share custody arrangement between the two parents, it will be left to the parents to decide which address to use.
- 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 the school 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 1i).

3a) Is the child a British citizen, EEA or Swiss national?

If the answer is 'No' you should provide evidence of the child's status within the United Kingdom, including their passport, visa and any relevant Home Office documentation. Please refer to Surrey's website for more information on the admission of children from abroad [surreycc.gov.uk/admissions](http://surreycc.gov.uk/admissions).

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

Applications for a school place for children who are not yet in the United Kingdom can only be considered if the child is a British citizen, EEA or Swiss national or if their passport has been endorsed to show that they have the right of abode in the United Kingdom. However for these children you must also provide evidence of the date of their arrival/return to the United Kingdom.

If the child is not yet in the United Kingdom and is not a British citizen, EEA or Swiss national or does not have the right of abode in the United Kingdom, the school will be unable to process the application until they arrive.

3c) 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 if they are a British citizen, EEA or Swiss national and those whose passport is endorsed to show that they have the right of abode in the United Kingdom, but 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 application 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 tick the medical/social box on the application form 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 help identify applicants who may be eligible to be placed through Surrey's fair access protocol. This ensures that, outside the normal admissions round, unplaced children are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible and that all schools in Surrey admit their fair share of children with challenging behaviour, whether or not the school is oversubscribed. You are asked to answer these questions accurately and honestly to ensure that 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.
- Further information regarding parental rights and responsibilities is available at [gov.uk/parental-rights-responsibilities](http://gov.uk/parental-rights-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, the school 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.

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

Headteacher statement from current/previous school

Once you have completed sections 1 to 8 of the form, you must pass the form to the headteacher of the child's current or previous school (if that school is in the United Kingdom). They should complete the headteacher statement and return the form to you. If you send the form without the headteacher statement, the school will return the form to you and this is likely to lead to a delay in processing your application. Please note that the school may contact the previous headteacher to gather information if you do not ask them to fill in the headteacher statement, as per the Personal Information Policy at the bottom of the application form.

Returning your SMA application 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 a British Citizen or an EEA or Swiss national, a copy of the child's passport, visa and any relevant home office documentation.
- If the child is not yet in the United Kingdom, 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.
- A copy of the headteacher's statement completed by the child's current/previous school.

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