

Somerset Local Authority (LA)

Admission Arrangements applying to Community (C) or Voluntary Controlled (VC) Schools

**Starting school at a Primary, First, Infant, Junior or Middle school
in September 2016 or joining any year group during the 2016/17 academic year**

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 2016 coordinated admissions scheme.

Applications to start school for the first time - should be submitted to the home Local Authority. If this is Somerset applications can be made on-line at www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions. It is the parent's responsibility to keep online contact details up to date. Paper applications are available to download from the Somerset County Council website at www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions, or upon request by telephoning Somerset Direct on 0845 4564038. Any supporting information must be received by the exemption period deadline using the appropriate Supplementary Information Form (SIF).

Applications and SIFS must be received by 23:59 hours on 15 January 2016 , otherwise the application will be recorded as late and cannot be considered until all on time applications have been dealt with.

Decisions in connection with on time applications will be sent out by email (for on line applicants) or second class post sent out on 16 April 2016.

Admissions during the academic year - must be submitted directly to the school using the LA in-year application form (hard copy only)

Applications will be processed in strict date order with a 4pm daily working day deadline for receipt of applications. A decision will be notified in writing by second class post to the applicant within ten school days. Where a place cannot be provided, the right of appeal will apply.

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 a minimum of a six month tenancy agreement. The Local Authority reserve the right to seek further documentary evidence 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.

Oversubscription Criteria

Places will be allocated strictly in accordance with the Equal Preference with Ranking allocation method.

The school will be required to admit any child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC) if the school is named, then;

1. Children Looked After– Children who are in the care of a Local Authority or have previously been and are now formally adopted or subject to a residence/child arrangement order or special guardianship order.
(See important note 1)
2. Children without a statement of Special Educational Needs, identified with a sensory, physical or medical disability (High Needs Pupils), where a multi-agency professional team has identified the school as the nearest suitable school. (See important note 2)
3. Children living in the catchment area, with an older sibling at the school at the time of admission, and who live at the same address.
4. a) Children living in the rural catchment area. (See important note 3)
.. b) Children living in the catchment area.
5. Children living outside the catchment area, with an older sibling at the school at the time of admission, and who live at the same address
6. Children living outside the catchment area and registered in an Infant, First or Middle school (within the transfer school catchment area).
7. 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.
8. In VC schools with a religious foundation:
 - a) Children and/or parent(s) who are practising members of the founding religious body of the school (eg, Anglican or Methodist).
 - b) Children and/or parent(s) who are practising members of other churches or religious denominations. (see important note 4).
9. a) Children of staff employed by the school for at least two years prior to the application closing date.

- b) Children of staff recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage. (See important note 6)

10. Children not satisfying a higher criterion

Important Notes

1. A looked after child is a 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 (see the definition in Section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989).
2. Criterion 2 enables schools to plan with SEN Officers for the school entry of children with physical, medical or sensory impairments. This includes children that are in receipt of Early Years School Action Plus funding at level 3 and / or where significant capital works (eg, accessible toilets, changing space, access to classrooms) are required and / or children that are identified as requiring a place at a Resource Base attached to a mainstream school
3. 'Rural catchment' is defined as living in the catchment area of a school and where there is no alternative school within the statutory walking distance of the home address
4. "Practising" is defined as at least once a month for at least six months prior to the application closing date attendance at church by at least one parent and/or child . This must be confirmed by a member of the clergy on a supplementary information form.
5. In the event of oversubscription within any of the over-subscription criteria listed above, preference will be given to applicants who live closest to the school, as measured in a straight line by a Geographical information System (GIS) method from the address point of the school site to the address point for the pupil's home. Where two distances are equal and it is therefore not possible to differentiate between them, priority will be determined by independent drawing of lots
6. Criterion 9 - The Head Teacher or Governing Body of the relevant school will be asked to verify point b.
7. Criterion 4, 8 and 9 – Children considered under sub-criteria a) will have a priority over children considered under sub-criteria b).

Distance Measurements

For the purpose of measuring home to school distance, all calculations will be measured using a straight-line measurement from the geocoded point of the home to the geocoded point of the school using the LA's GIS mapping system.

Equal Preference with Ranking The equal preference with ranking allocation system requires the admission authority to consider all preferences received for a particular school (first, second, third, fourth and fifth) equally and, where the school is oversubscribed, apply the oversubscription criteria. Where more than one preference can be met the local authority will offer the highest ranking preference.

Home Address

The home address is very important, as school places are allocated on the basis of the home address of each child. A child's home address is considered to be where the child spends the majority of their time with parents or carers.

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 minimum of a six month formal 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 family 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 eg 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 Local Authority 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 Local Authority 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 Local Authority.

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

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).

Parental Responsibility

A mother automatically has parental responsibility for her child from birth.

A father usually has parental responsibility if he's:

- married to the child's mother
- listed on the birth certificate (after a certain date, depending on which part of the UK the child was born in)

For information on how to gain parental responsibility please click on this link.

<https://www.gov.uk/parental-rights-responsibilities/apply-for-parental-responsibility>

Sibling

For the purpose of admissions, a sibling is defined as children living at the same permanent home address.

Supplementary Information Form (SIF)

In order for applications to be considered against criterion 8 applicants will need to use the appropriate Supplementary Application Form (SIF) to demonstrate their ability to meet the particular criterion. The SIF will need to be completed and signed by a member of the clergy and submitted along with the school place application.

Appeals

Applicants whose school place application is turned down have the legal right to appeal to an independent appeal panel against the decision to refuse admission. Details concerning how to appeal are explained in the decision letter sent out by email or post on the published dates.

Waiting lists

The Local Authority will maintain a waiting list for the entry year group for every oversubscribed Community and Voluntary Controlled school. This will be maintained until the end of the first term in the new academic year. The waiting list will hold the names of every child formally refused admission, in ranked order according to the oversubscription criteria. If a place becomes available within the Published Admission Number, this will be offered to the highest ranked child at that time. Children who are the subject of a direction by a Local Authority to admit or who are allocated to the school in accordance with the In-Year Fair Access Protocols, will take precedence over those children on a waiting list. The LA has delegated responsibility for waiting lists back to those schools who wish to keep a waiting list for further year groups or for longer periods of time. Please check the individual schools website for further details.

Withdrawal of places

The Local Authority 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.

Statement of Special Educational Needs/Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans

Children with a statement or EHC plan naming a Community or Voluntary Controlled school will be admitted to that school within the Published Admission Number before any other applications are considered.

Admission of children below compulsory school age

Parents are entitled to a part-time or full-time place at school for their child in the September following their fourth birthday. Where the parents wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age. A child becomes of compulsory school age when they reach the age of five and, where a parent has elected to register their child at school, they must start school on a full time basis in the term following their fifth birthday.

Deferred Entry

Parents offered a place 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 until the next academic year

Summer Born Children

Parents of summer born children may request that they are admitted into reception rather than year one when they become of compulsory school age. The parent is required to make an on-time application for the child's normal age group but can submit a request for admission out of the normal age group at the same time. The Local Authority will then ensure that the parent receives a response to the request before primary national offer date.

If their request is agreed, their application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered. If their request is refused, the parent must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday.

Where a parent's request is agreed, they must make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year.

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.

Please see the link below for advice from the DfE on the admission of summer born children

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389448/Summer_born_admissions_advice_Dec_2014.pdf

Retained or accelerated entry

The Local Authority will consider applications for retained or accelerated entry (a year group other than the child's chronological age) to a Community or Voluntary Controlled school on a case by case basis. The reasons for the request should be fully explained on an application form, to be submitted at the same time as the school place application. The Governing Body will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. The Governing Body will set out clearly the reasons for their decision.

The process for requesting such an admission is as follows;

- The parent/carer is required to make an application for their child's normal age group but can submit a request for admission out of the normal age group at the same time.
- The parent/carer is required to submit a request for admission out of the normal age group and attach supporting evidence as necessary. The Governing Body have the right to request further evidence that may be required.
- The Governing Body will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned.
- The Governing Body will write to the parent with the outcome and set out clearly the reasons for their decision.
- In the case of applications for summer born children to be admitted out of their normal age group the parent will receive the outcome before the primary national offer day.
- If their request is agreed, their application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered. If their request is refused, the parent must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday.
- Where a parent's request is agreed, they must make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year.
- 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.

Phased/Staggered Entry

To help children settle smoothly into school, some schools operate different start dates for children entering reception classes. This is known as “Phased or Staggered Entry”.

Issues relating to shared residency arrangements

Where shared residence arrangements are in place and parents/ carers of the child submit two separate applications for different schools, the LA requires parents to resolve matters between themselves, taking legal advice if necessary, and inform the LA which application should be processed. The LA will not become involved in private disputes. If more than one offer of a school place is made, the LA would expect one of the places to be withdrawn by the parent. If this is not the case, when the child starts school, the alternative school place will be withdrawn by the LA.

Each parent may be required to write to the Local Authority and inform them of the number of days each week the child spends with them. Where the child spends equal time with both parents the Local Authority may ask for additional information including evidence of which parent/carers is in receipt of child benefit, and/or the name of the GP surgery at which the child is registered.

Multiple birth applications (for example twins)

Where the last place within the Published Admission Number is allocated to a multiple birth application, a place(s) will be allocated to any siblings above the Published Admission Number at the point of allocation. This will ensure that multiple birth siblings can be allocated places at the same school (sibling definition still applies).

This includes situations whereby admitting multiple birth siblings would breach the Infant class size legislation of 30 key stage 1 children per qualified teacher.

Children from outside the UK

The Local Authority will process applications for children who are citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA) if proof of the Somerset address and the expected date of arrival in the UK are provided by 15 January for primary phase applications and 31 October for secondary phase applications. The application can then be considered on this address. If proof of the Somerset address is not available by the dates above the application will be considered on the current address. Please click on this link for a list of the countries in the EEA.

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/international/social-security-agreements/list-of-countries/>

The Local Authority will also process applications for UK citizens living in any other country if proof of the Somerset address and the expected date of arrival back in the UK are provided by 15 January for primary phase applications and 31 October for secondary phase applications. The application can then be considered on this address. If proof of the Somerset address is not available by the dates above the application will be considered on the current address. The only exceptions are

children of UK Service personnel and other Crown servants (including Diplomats) returning to the area.

The Local Authority will not allocate a place to any non EEA citizen moving into Somerset from outside the UK prior to their arrival in the country. The Local Authority will require copies of the passports, appropriately endorsed visas and proof of residency – see home address definition.

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.

Children Looked After (CLA)

The Local Authority will endeavour to secure a place for a CLA at the catchment or nearest school to the address at which they are placed. A local authority has the power to direct the admission authority for any maintained school (eg Voluntary Controlled, Community, Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools) in England to admit a child who is looked after by the local authority, even when the school is full. The local authority **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 local authority **must** consult the admission authority of the school it proposes to direct. In the case of an academy a Local Authority can request that the Secretary of State consider directing the admission of a CLA.

Supplementary Information Form for Voluntary Controlled Schools

This form must be completed and submitted to Somerset Local Authority if you would like your application for a Voluntary Controlled school to be considered under criterion 8 of the over subscription criteria relating to regular church attendance which is:

Children and/or parent(s) who are practising members of the founding religious body of the school (eg, Anglican or Methodist).

Children and/or parent(s) who are practising members of other churches or religious denominations.

“Practising” is defined as at least once a month for at least six months prior to the application closing date attendance at church by at least one parent and/or child.

Please ensure that the attached form is completed by you and signed by the relevant church representative (vicar, priest, minister, pastor, church warden) and submitted to Somerset Local Authority. It must be received by Somerset Local Authority by midnight on 9 February 2016 for primary admissions and 1 December 2015 for secondary admissions. For in year admissions it must be submitted directly to the school alongside an in year application form.

Failure to send the correctly completed supplementary information form to Somerset Local Authority by the closing date will mean that your application cannot be considered under the church attendance criterion.

Please return form to:

Admissions & Entitlements Team
PPC402C
Somerset County Council
County Hall
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 4DY

Notes for Clergy

Notes for clergy or those responsible and authorised to sign supplementary information forms for those applying to church schools under a church attendance criterion.

The recommendation of the Bath & Wells DBE is that it is best practice to have a sub-committee of at least three members, including clergy, church wardens and those with responsibility for Sunday school to consider these requests and be authorised to sign the form if it is agreed appropriate.

Please also note that if this form is not received by Somerset Authority prior to the published deadline the child cannot be considered eligible under any church attendance criteria.

In order for the application to be considered under any church attendance criteria within the school's admissions arrangements, the following must be ensured:

1. The DBE does recommend that the child or a parent has attended actual worship and that attendance at toddler groups or other activities that are held at the church does NOT meet the requirements.
2. The completed form must be received by Somerset Local Authority by midnight on 9 February 2016 for primary admissions and 1 December 2015 for secondary admissions. For in year admissions the parent/carer must submit it directly to the school alongside an in year application form.
3. For applicants who have recently, or are about to move to a different area, the supplementary information form should be completed by the clergy at the church where they have been regularly worshipping. It is the responsibility of the applicant to organise this and ensure that the SIF is completed and sent in on time.

Please Note:

The application process is a legal one and every effort **MUST** be made to ensure that applications and any supplementary forms are completed accurately and on time. If applicants are unsuccessful, they have the right to appeal. **Clergy should not be pressured into signing a form if they know that the applicant does not, or are in doubt as to whether the applicant does, meet the criteria laid down by the school. This is one reason why a committee should consider every application. It is also particularly helpful where there is an inter-regnum or where clergy have been in post less than 6 months.**

Please complete your child's details then give this form to your clergy leader (priest/minister/pastor), who will complete the remaining part of the form.

Details of Child/Children

Applicants Name:.....

Childs Full Name:.....

Childs Date Of Birth:.....

Details of Church and Church Representative

Name and Address of Church:.....

.....

Name and Position of Church Representative.....

.....

Church Denomination (ie Anglican, Methodist etc).....

Tel:.....

Declaration

I, (insert name).....

confirm that the child and/or parent(s)/carer(s identified above has attended

(name of church).....

at least once a month for a minimum of 6 months prior to the date of application.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Please return form to: Admissions Team, PPC402C, Somerset County Council,
County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY