

Notify us of your new address before 31st October 2016

Mr and Mrs X lived in Gloucestershire and submitted their application to their home local authority before the closing date.

In November, Mr and Mrs X informed their local authority that they had moved to a new address, still within Gloucestershire. Mr and Mrs X expected the application to be considered from their new address as outcomes had not yet been sent out to parents.

Even though letters would not have been sent out, the guidance booklet states that the address used for allocation is where the child is permanently resident at the closing date for applications and, as the process involves co-ordinating offers between all Authorities within England, it would have been too late for this change of address to be taken into consideration at this time.

However, if the family had moved before 31st October and notified the authority providing suitable proof of their new address, it would have been possible to consider the application from this new address.

It should be noted that any changes of address received after 31st October can only be considered after National Offer Day.

Apply on time

Mrs N gave her completed application form to her son and asked him to hand it into his primary school.

The school noticed that it had not received a form from Mrs N and it left an urgent message on her mobile phone to let her know that the closing date for receipt of the forms had ended three days previously. Mrs N retrieved the message at approximately 2pm. In haste, Mrs N went to the primary school attended by her son and found the form in his school bag. Mrs N then rushed the form straight to the local authority's offices. Unfortunately the local authority correctly deemed it to be late.

Mrs N's application was therefore considered after all the on time applications had been dealt with. The preferred schools were oversubscribed and were not in a position to offer Mrs N's son a place. Mrs N lodged an appeal, but it was not successful. If Mrs N had applied online and on time, her son might have secured a place at one of his preferred schools.

Every year applications are considered on their own merit

Mr Z's application to the local authority for his child's preferred school was not successful. When he enquired why, Mr Z was told that he lived further away than the last successful applicant. Mr Z challenged this decision on the basis, that two years before, his friend's child was offered the same school from the same road two doors away. Had Mr Z read the admissions criteria he would have known that the furthest straight-line distance can change year on year, as it depends on the number of applications that were considered under this criterion.

Consider how well your child meets the admission criteria for each school

Case Study 1

Mrs K completed an application, on time, for her daughter Sophie making only one preference for School 1.

School 1 has a published admission number of 240. In total, there were 549 preferences expressed for School 1.

All preferences received were ranked in line with the school's oversubscription criteria.

Sophie has no siblings currently attending the school and she does not live in the catchment area. Once all the preferences have been ranked according to School A's oversubscription criteria, Sophie's application is ranked at 480 out of the 549 received. As School 1 can only offer 240 places, a place is not able to be offered to Sophie.

As Mrs K stated no other preference, the local authority has to allocate Sophie a place at an alternative school.

All the places at the catchment school have already been allocated to children who expressed a preference for this school. Therefore the local authority allocates a place at the next nearest school with a place available.

We encourage parents to state five preferences for schools. You will not increase your chance of obtaining a place at a popular school by putting only one preference or the same school five times.

Case Study 2

Mr A completes an application, on time, for his son M, expressing five preferences for Schools 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Mr A really wants M to go to School 1 as he has a sibling attending there but they do not live in the catchment area. He also likes School 2, 3, 4 & 5 but has no siblings attending there, lives outside the catchment area of all schools. Mr A puts School 1 as the first preference and School 2, 3, 4 & 5 as the second, third, fourth and fifth preferences.

All these schools are popular and oversubscribed each year and once the oversubscription criteria has been applied, M's application does not rank high enough for M to be offered a place at any of the schools. All the places at the catchment school have already been allocated to children who expressed a preference for this school.

Therefore the local authority allocates a place at the next nearest school with a place available.

Case Study 3

Mrs R completes an application, on time, for her daughter Rosa, expressing three preferences for Schools 1, 2 and 3. The catchment school is School 3 and this is ranked as the third preference. Mrs R also likes School 1 and School 2 but is not sure if Rosa would be offered a place as she has checked the oversubscription criteria and knows that all three schools are popular and oversubscribed each year. Mrs R ranks School 1 and School 2 as her first and second preference.

Once the oversubscription criteria has been applied, Rosa's application does not rank high enough for her to be offered a place at School 1 and School 2 but is ranked high enough to be offered a place at School 3. A place is offered at School 3, which is her local school.

Always list schools in order of preference

Mr L lived reasonably close to some community and faith schools. He wanted his child to attend a faith school. Mr L mistakenly listed the community schools higher on his application form than the faith school that he wanted his child to attend. He was offered one of the community schools which he had listed. Mr L appealed for the faith school but was unsuccessful. Had he listed his choice of schools in the correct preference order, his child may have been offered a place at the faith school.

If you list 5 schools in preference order and preferences 3, 4 and 5 are in a position to offer a place in accordance with their published admissions criteria, the local authority will automatically seek the highest preference i.e. your third preference and offer your child a place at this school. Your lower preferences 4 and 5 are withdrawn as these are no longer required. You can then request for your child to be reconsidered and placed on the waiting list for your higher preferences 1 and 2, so that your child may be reconsidered for a place at either of these two schools in the reconsideration round should any places become available. Any offers will continue to be made in accordance with the schools' published admissions criteria.

It is recommended you accept the place you are offered

Mrs F listed five preferences on her application form. Unfortunately she was not offered any of her preferred schools. As Gloucestershire has an obligation to ensure that all its pupils receive an offer of a school place at the nearest school where a vacancy exists, Mrs F was offered a place at a local school which had a vacancy but the family turned down this offer. In the reconsideration round, Mrs F was still unsuccessful in securing a place at a preferred school so decided that she would like the place back at the local school allocated to her in the initial round of offers. This place had been offered to another child so Mrs F had to accept a school which was even further away from her home address. Mrs F would have had a school much closer to her home address had she accepted the initial offer, even though it was not one of her preferences.

We would strongly advise you to accept the school place allocated to ensure your child has a school place for September. Accepting a school place does not affect your request to go on the waiting list or to appeal. If the place is declined it then becomes available to offer to other children.

Reviewed August 2016