

Notify us of your new address before 15th January

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

In February, 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 15th January 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 15th January can only be considered after National Offer Day in April

Apply on-time- consequences of making a late application

Mrs H has two children - one in Y3 and her other child is due to start in reception class. Initially Mrs H did not make an application, thinking that the younger child would have an automatic transfer to the primary school because of the sibling connection. Unfortunately, this is not the case. When Mrs H realised her error and made her application after the closing date for reception applications, the preferred school was already full. Mrs H appealed for her preferred school, but the appeal was unsuccessful because she had failed to apply at the proper time. This meant she ended up having two children attending different schools.

If Mrs H had applied on time, then her younger child would have secured a place under the sibling connection criterion.

Attendance at a pre-school

Mr & Mrs C's daughter attends a pre-school associated with a particular school. They chose this pre-school as it close to Mrs C's parent's home for childcare reasons. When they applied online they only put one preference for her and named the school that she attends the pre-school because they assumed that this was ok. Unfortunately as the school was oversubscribed the places were offered in line with the oversubscription criteria for the school and Mrs C's application was unsuccessful because they lived too far away from the school.

If they had read the admissions policy for the school and done their homework they would have realised that attending a pre-school does not always guarantee your child a place in that school.

Every year applications are considered on their own merit

Mr P's application to the local authority for his child's preferred school was not successful. When he enquired why, Mr P was told that he lived further away than the last successful applicant. Mr P 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 P 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 the distance criteria. The number of siblings will vary from year to year and also parents will be applying from different addresses.

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

Case Study 1

Mrs C completed an application, on time, for her daughter Emily making only one preference for School A. School A has a published admission number of 60. In total, there were 149 preferences expressed for School A. All preferences received were ranked in line with the school's oversubscription criteria. Emily has no siblings currently attending the school therefore her application is considered under the distance criteria of the school. Once all the preferences have been ranked according to School A's oversubscription criteria, Sophie's application is ranked at 80 out of the 149 received. As School A can only offer 60 places, a place is not able to be offered to Emily. As Mrs C stated no other preference, the local authority has to allocate Emily a place at an alternative school. All the places at her nearest school have already been allocated to children who expressed a preference for this school. Therefore the local authority allocates a place at the nearest school with a place available, which is 1.7 miles from Emily's home address.

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 3

Mrs R completes an application, on time, for her daughter Rosa, expressing three preferences for Schools 1, 2 and 3. Rosa has a sibling attending School 3 but Mrs R prefers School 1 and School 2 and is due to move to the area where these schools are located Mrs R is not sure if Rosa would be offered a place as she has checked the oversubscription criteria for School 1 and School 2 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 because of the sibling connection. A place is offered at School 3 which Mrs R accepts

Mrs R can then request for Rosa to be reconsidered and placed on the waiting list for her higher preferences 1 and 2, so that Rosa 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.

Always list school 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 for reconsideration or to appeal. If the place is declined it then becomes available to offer to other children