

Starting School 2026

Information for parents and carers of children applying for a Reception Year place

Children born between 01/09/21 and 31/08/22 are due to start school in September 2026. You need to make an application to us by **15 January 2026**, even if your child attends a nursery/pre-school on the school site.

All the information you will need regarding your Starting School 2026 application is available on our website, or our 2026 booklet and we strongly advise that you read it before submitting your application

[School admissions | Central Bedfordshire Council](#)

Making your application

Legislation requires you to apply through your home local authority. **If you live outside of Central Bedfordshire, you must contact the local authority you live in and apply to them.**

We recommend that you apply online as it is quick, simple and safe. However, you can alternatively make a paper application; the forms can be downloaded from our website.

Do not make both a paper and online application, if you do only your latest application (submitted before the closing date) will be processed and your first application will be discarded.

All applications received by the School Admissions Team after the national closing dates will be classed as late and not processed until the late allocation round. Late applications are not dealt with until after all the on-time applications have been considered.

Please Note:

Parents are requested to consider how a child would be transported to school, as transport entitlement is only considered if a student meets the qualifying criteria set by the School Transport team.

National Closing Date for Starting School 2026

15th January 2026

You must apply using your child's current primary address (where they live as of the national closing date).



How to make your application

You can either apply:

- online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions or
- complete a paper application; this can be downloaded from our website

You must include proof of your child's date of birth with your application. Please upload a copy of your child's passport or short birth certificate when submitting your application.

Children being educated out of year group

If your child was **approved** for a delayed admission previously (summer born children who were due to start school September 2025), you will **not** be able to apply using the online application system as it will not recognise your child's date of birth. Instead, you will need to complete a paper application form and ensure it is received by the School Admissions Team by 15 January 2026.

Contact the School Admissions Team ...

Telephone: 0300 300 8037

Email: admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Web: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

Deferred and Delayed Entry

Children are normally admitted to school in the September following their fourth birthday, which is at the start of the Reception Year. However, they do not have to start school until they reach statutory school age, which is the term after their fifth birthday. Even if you want to defer the school place, you must still apply at the normal time of admission. To defer your child's place until they are of statutory school age, please put this in writing to the Headteacher once a place has been offered.

Parents/carers of children who are summer born (i.e., 1 April to 31 August) can also request that their child is admitted to Reception Year a year later. A delayed admissions form must be completed and returned to the Local Authority **together** with your Starting School application before the on-time application deadline of 15 January 2026. This is to enable sufficient time for requests to be processed prior to the National Offer Day (16 April 2026).

However, parents/carers do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular age group. A decision will be made by the admission authority for the school. If the Admission Authority is the Local Authority, then this decision will be made in conjunction with the Headteacher of the school. Please ensure that you have already contacted and discussed the needs of your child with the Headteacher of the school. In making your request please provide as much supporting information as possible to the Admission Authority in order to make an informed decision.

Further information and a delayed request form can be found on our website

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/5/school_admissions/496/apply_for_a_new_low_or_primary_school_place/12



Starting School 2026 application closing date - 15 January 2026

Starting School 2026 Important dates

Date	Event
8 September 2025	Online Starting School 2025 system opens for parents/carers to apply Paper application forms will also be available on our website
15 January 2026	National closing date for applications to be received by the School Admissions Team
16 January 2026 - 30 April 2026	Late applications received during these dates will be processed in the late allocation round in June
16 April 2026	National offer day for on-time applications All online applicants and those who have supplied an email address with their paper application will receive an email by the close of business on the offer day with the outcome of their application. Parents who have not provided an email address with their paper application form will have their decision letter posted to them
30 April 2026	Parents/carers who are declining the place offered or wish to change their on-time preferences need to have completed a change of preference form. This must be received by the School Admission Team by this date to be considered in the late allocation round.
1 June 2026	Late allocation round offer day. All online applicants and those who have supplied an email address with their paper application will receive an email by the close of business on the late round offer day with the outcome of their application. Parents who have not provided an email address with their paper application form will have their decision letter posted to them.
During June 2026	Late applications received from 1 May 2026 will be processed

When will my child start school?

Children born between 01/09/21 and 31/08/22 should apply for a Reception Year place in the Starting School 2026 round. Schools must offer your child a full-time place in September following your child's fourth birthday if that is your wish. However, your child does not have to attend school full time until he or she is of statutory age i.e. 5 years old.

Contact the School Admissions Team...

Telephone: 0300 300 8037

Email: admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Web: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions



HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Please Note: Parents are requested to consider how a child would be transported to school, as transport entitlement is only considered if a student meets all the other qualifying criteria set by the School Transport team.

Central Bedfordshire Council currently provides transport assistance to pupils who meet certain criteria as set out in the Council's current Home to School Transport Policy, full details of which can be found on the Council's website, www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/school-transport

Deadlines for applications

To help us ensure we are able to put transport in place for the start of the academic year you will need to have completed your application via our website by the following dates:

Upper and secondary schools **31st March 2026**

Primary, Lower and middle schools **19th May 2026**

When applications are received after these deadlines, we cannot guarantee transport will be in place until the October half term.

Travel for non-eligible students

When you are considering an offer of a school place for your child, you should think seriously about how he/she will travel to and from school, as the Council will only be able to offer transport assistance to qualifying schools as mentioned above. **If you accept a place for your child at a non-qualifying school, you will be responsible for ensuring that suitable transport arrangements are in place**

When there is a Council operated school bus with spare seats available after all entitled pupils have been offered places, the Council may sell these as concessions to non-eligible pupils. They are sold on a first, first served basis, one term at a time and being accepted for a place for one term does not guarantee a place for the next term.

Further information

If you have any queries about entitlement or changes in your child's transport, please contact the School Transport Team by phone 0300 300 8339 or www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport