



Starting School 2025

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

Children born between 01/09/20 and 31/08/21 are due to start school in September 2025. You need to make an application to us by 15 January 2025, even if your child attends a nursery/pre-school on the school site. All the information you will need regarding your Starting School 2025 application is available on our website.

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, https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/5/school_admissions/496/apply_for_a_new_lower_or_primary_school_place, are available from all Central Bedfordshire schools or you can request for a form to be sent to you by emailing admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

In 2024, 97.8% of parents/carers applied online for Starting School.

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.

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 https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/5/school_admissions/496/apply_for_a_new_lower_or_primary_school_place or
- Email admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk to request one

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.

Contact the School Admissions Team ...

by email: admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
on the web: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions





Starting School 2025 application closing date - 15 January 2025

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan

The arrangements for admitting a child or young person with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) are different to those for children/young people who do not. Admissions to school for children and young people with an EHC Plan are dealt with by the EHC Team, and **not** by School Admissions. During the summer term of the penultimate year at the current school, the school will invite you to a review meeting called a 'Transfer Review'. This will be held during the second half of the Autumn Term of the final year if in an Early Years setting. At this meeting, the school that you would like your child to transfer to will be discussed and the request will be processed by the EHC Team. You will be notified by the EHC Team of your child's confirmed school by 15 February 2025 for pre-16 placements. Further information relating to this process can be found online within Central Bedfordshire's Local Offer: [Annual Reviews of an EHC Plan | Central Bedfordshire SEND Local Offer](#)

Your child's current school will also be able to provide you with an information booklet regarding this process.

If you have any further queries or concerns about this process, please contact the EHC Team on 0300 300 8356. If you prefer to email you can do so at; ehcenquiries@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

[Special Educational Needs and Disability - Local Offer | Central Bedfordshire Council](#)

Applying from outside Central Bedfordshire

If you **live outside of Central Bedfordshire** you need to make an application through your home Local Authority (where you pay your council tax). If you are applying for schools in Central Bedfordshire they will forward your application onto us. They will write to you on the offer day with the outcome of your application.

You also need to check with them about school transport as you will not be eligible for free transport from Central Bedfordshire Council and cannot assume you will be offered a concessionary bus pass.

For families living in our neighbouring authorities we have included below the web address for their School Admissions webpages, which should include details about how to make your application:

Bedford Borough Council
www.bedford.gov.uk/admissions

Buckinghamshire County Council
www.buckscc.gov.uk/apply-for-a-school-place

Cambridgeshire County Council
www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/admissions

Hertfordshire County Council
www.hertsdirect.org/admissions

Luton Borough Council
www.luton.gov.uk/admissions





Milton Keynes Council
www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/schooladmissions

Things to consider before applying

Can my child attend our nearest school?

You need to make your application on-time in order to be considered for your preferred school(s). Applying for your nearest school will give your child priority however it does not automatically guarantee a place at your nearest school. If there are more applications than places available, the admissions criteria for the school will be applied. Should you not get your preferred school(s), we will ensure that your child is offered a place at the next nearest school with places available.

[My Central Bedfordshire - Central Bedfordshire Council](#)
[School catchment areas | Central Bedfordshire Council](#)

Do I have to apply for my nearest school?

No. You have the right to express a preference for up to 3 schools/academies which provide education suitable for your child’s age. You may wish to apply for your catchment school as this will usually mean that if a place is not available at your preferred school, you may still have priority for a place at your catchment school. **If you do not ask for a place at your catchment school or nearest school, it could result in your child attending a school some distance from your home. You may be responsible for transporting your child to that school. (If your preference school is unsuccessful there is no guarantee you will get a place at your catchment school if you do not apply for it).**

Are places offered on a ‘first come, first served’ basis?

All applications received by 15 January 2025 are considered at the same time and priority is not given to those who put the school as a first preference. Decisions about who to offer places to are made solely using the oversubscription criteria for the school, and the home school distance, no other information is taken into consideration. The council and schools must also comply with the legislation on infant class sizes which limits the number of children in a class to 30 for 5, 6 and 7 year olds. Your application might be refused on those grounds.

Will having a sibling at the school guarantee my child a place?

Your child will have a higher priority of a place at the school if they have an older sibling already attending there, however it is not always possible for us to allocate siblings at the same school. If you do not live within the school’s catchment area and have an older child at the school it is possible that they will not be offered a place at the same school.

A sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, step brother or sister, adopted brother or sister or fostered brother or sister where foster care has been arranged by a Local Authority or the child of the parent / carer’s partner, and in every case, the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must be in the school at the time of application and be likely to remain in the school at the proposed date of admission.

Do I have to apply for three schools?





No, you can apply for up to three schools. Naming more than one school will not weaken your chance of gaining a place at your first preference school. Similarly naming the same school more than once will not increase your chance of gaining a place at that school, so therefore it is worth considering other local schools in case a place cannot be offered at your preferred school. **Please only apply for schools that you wish for your child to attend and can transport your child to.**

You should consider carefully the practical arrangements of transporting your child to and from school. You should read the Home to School Travel Policy which will advise whether your child would be eligible to free or concessionary home to school transport. You can also contact them to discuss your personal circumstances. The Home to School Travel Policy can be found at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport

My child attends the nursery; do I still need to apply for a Reception Year place?

Even if your child attends a nursery/preschool on the school site, you must still make a Starting School 2025 application to the School Admissions Team as there is no automatic transfer to Reception Year. Some schools have a nursery or pre-school on their site however attendance at this does not give your child any priority for a place at the school. Therefore, even if your child attends the nursery/preschool it will not have any bearing on your application and it is possible that they won't be offered a place at that school.

Will my child be entitled to school transport?

It is important to consider how your child will travel to school before submitting your application. You should check the Council's Home to School Transport policy to find out whether they will be entitled to free home to school transport to your preferred school(s) when considering which school(s) to apply for. Information is available at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport or you can contact the School Transport Team on 0300 300 8339 or school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

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

Is your Child living with you due to a court agreement or Specific Issue Order

If yes, please provide a copy of the Court Order or Specific Issue Order at the time you submit your application

Fraudulent applications

Central Bedfordshire Council takes very seriously any attempt to obtain a school place by fraud. All fraud allegations are investigated.

If you know someone who intends to or has used a false address to get a school place, you can report this confidentially to our Fraud Investigation Team by emailing benefitfraud@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk or calling 0300 300 5476.

You do not need to give your name but please provide as much information as possible so that we can investigate the matter fully.

If we find that a school place was obtained using a false address we may withdraw our offer, even after the child has started school, and give it to the child who was entitled to the place. We consider every school place obtained through deception denies another child their legitimate place.





If two applications are received, with different addresses and/or different preferences, neither will be processed until the address issue is reconciled.

Please note

- We can only process one application per child, therefore it is important that agreement is reached between parents as to which school is being applied for.
- the address provided on the application submitted by separated parents will be subject to the same address verification checks as all other applications.
- In addition, we will consider information such as the principal address held by the current school, and the address previously used to apply for any school places for your child or any siblings under the same care arrangements. This to ensure there is consistency in the address being used to apply for school places, and that separated parents do not gain an advantage for admission to a preferred school based on distance by using different addresses.

If your child is subject to a court order or Specific Issue Order which states, the school and or address your child lives the majority of the school week, please submit details and relevant documentation with your application form.

Moving within Central Bedfordshire or from within England

If you want us to consider a new address in the on-time allocation, you must have exchanged contracts or have a signed tenancy agreement and provided us with a copy by the 15 January 2025.

It is not sufficient to put details of pending moves in the additional details section on your application form/online account.

If you have not yet exchanged contracts or have a signed tenancy agreement by 15 January 2025 for a property within Central Bedfordshire then you need to apply to the local authority (where you pay council tax) by 15 January 2025. If you have listed Central Bedfordshire schools on your application they will send your application to us for consideration in our allocation.

Changes of address which take place after the closing date will be processed using the original address. We will post your application outcome to your new address; however, it will not be updated on our system until the late allocation round.

Currently living abroad, but moving back to a Central Bedfordshire property

If you own a property in Central Bedfordshire but you live abroad (for example, you're working abroad), we will use your Central Bedfordshire address if you can provide us with a copy of your current Council Tax Bill and your child's current GP registration letter.

If you are unable to provide a copy of your Council Tax Bill and current GP registration letter, in these instances, your application will be processed using the address at which you and your child are living as at the closing date. We will only consider this address to be your home address at the point in which you and your child are living in the property.

You will need to complete a paper application form using your non UK address and provide your child's travelling document showing their return date.

If you own a property in Central Bedfordshire but you live abroad, and the property is empty then your application will be processed using this address at which you and your child are living as at the closing date.





If your child is living abroad, but the family are based in the United Kingdom

Please provide us with a copy of your current Council Tax Bill and your child’s current GP registration letter. If you are unable to provide both documents, then we will use the address of where the child is currently living at the time of the closing date.

Owning a number of properties within the United Kingdom

If you own a number of properties within the United Kingdom, you must apply using the address at which you and your child reside. Please provide us with a copy of your current Council Tax Bill and your child’s current GP registration letter.

Renovating an address that you have purchased/own

If you own a property in Central Bedfordshire but are not living in it because of renovation work at the property, we will consider this address, not the temporary address of the property you are living at during the work, providing that the property being renovated is not being occupied. We will require proof that you own the property being renovated. Please provide us with a copy of your current Council Tax Bill.

Moving into a property owned by a partner or family member

We will only process the application using this address once you and your child have moved into the property. We will need a letter from the property owner confirming that you and your child are living at the address (mentioning you all by full name) and proof that they own the property. Applications are processed based on your child’s address as of the closing date of 15 January 2025.

Moving into a property to live with a partner or family member

We will only process the application using this address once you and your child have moved into the property. We will need a copy of recent documentation e.g. bank statement , driving licence, GP Registration Letter showing that you reside at the property, dated within three months of the closing date of 15 January 2025. Applications are processed based on your child’s address as of the closing date of 15 January 2025.

Living on a Houseboat

- If you live on a Houseboat you may not have a postal address. Here are some options:
- If you have a residential mooring, your berth can serve as your home address. Some marinas may also offer individual post boxes for boat residents
- You may use the marina address where your boat is docked, please check with them first.
- You can set up a PO Box. Some houseboats maintain a PO Box in town and use the marina as a place of residence
- The address that is used when registering at a doctor’s surgery
- The address that is used at your child’s nursery
- If you have family that you have mail sent to, you may use this address

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.



.....
offered their first preference, leaving the place at the third preference school available for another pupil.

Will I have a better chance of getting my first preference than someone who lists it as a second or lower preference?

Not necessarily. All on-time applications submitted receive equal consideration and are ranked against the schools/academies admission criteria. The preference order will only be used when it is possible for more than one school to offer you a place; this is why it is important that you list the schools in your exact order of preference.

Places can be allocated to second or third preference applicants ahead of first preference applicants. For example, child A may be allocated a place at their catchment school which was a second preference as a place could not be allocated at their first preference as they live outside the catchment area and the school was oversubscribed with applications.

All applications received between September 2024 and 15 January 2025 will be considered at the same time.

We will only use your order of preference (rank) if it's possible to offer your child a place at more than one of your preferred schools. If this is the case, we'll offer you a place at the highest ranked school possible.

If a school receives fewer applications than places available, then all applicants will be offered a place at the school, regardless of where they live.

If a school has more applications than places available, then all applicants will be ranked using the school's oversubscription criteria. The oversubscription criteria for all schools and academies in Central Bedfordshire is available on our website.

Where applicants have the same criteria, they will then be ranked using straight line distance with those living closer to the school having higher priority. Home to school distances for admission allocation purposes will be measured along a straight line between a child's address and the relevant school/academy. The measurement is taken from the NLPG (National Land and Property Gazetteer) address point of the child's house to the designated measuring point of the school. Address point data is a nationally recognised method of identifying individual residences. This is an objective method of measuring home to school distances consistently when applying admission criteria. It does not take into account the actual or expected route a child will travel to school. The distance is measured using the local authority's computerised measuring system (Synergy Admissions database). Other mapping tools (such as Google maps) are not used in the allocation of school places.

What if I am not offered a place at my preferred school(s)?

Those not offered a place will be added to the school's waiting list and applicants will have the right of appeal.

If a place cannot be offered at any of the schools listed on the application, and the child lives within Central Bedfordshire, then we will allocate a place at the nearest school which has a place available following the allocation, if applicable to the child. More information on this will be sent to these applicants with their decision letter.

Late applications

All applications received by the School Admissions Team after 15 January 2025 will be classed as late and not processed until the late allocation round, which will take place after the national offer day for on-time applications. Late applications are not dealt with until after all the on-time



.....

applications have been considered. Places are not reserved at schools in the on-time allocation for late catchment children or any other circumstances.

If a place becomes available for your child at your preferred school during the late allocation your original offer will be withdrawn and reallocated to another child if necessary. **It is therefore essential that you inform us in writing by 30 April 2025 for your Starting School preferences, if you do not want to remain on the waiting list so that your original offer is not withdrawn.**

If a place can be offered to your child from the waiting list during the late allocation, then you will be notified on 1 June 2025 (late allocation offer day for Starting School). If a place is still not available at your preferred school(s) you will not be contacted by the School Admissions Team on the late allocation offer day however you can call or email the team from 1 June 2025 and they will let you know your child's position on the waiting list following the late allocation.

Submitting a late application significantly reduces your child's chance of an offer of a place at one of your preferred schools.

Late applications which are made for schools in another local authority will be sent over to the relevant authority **within a week** after the national offer day for the transfer round applied for. The application will be processed by the relevant authority in accordance with their coordinated scheme, which may not correlate with that of Central Bedfordshire Council.

We will write to you with the outcome once we have received this from the relevant authority. This may not be in line with the dates published above as it will depend on the timetable of the relevant authority.

Starting School 2025 application closing date - 15 January 2025

Starting School 2025 Important dates

Date	Event
3 September 2024	Online Starting School 2025 system opens for parents/carers to apply Paper application forms will also be available on our website, and by contacting the School Admissions Team by emailing admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
15 January 2025	National closing date for applications to be received by the School Admissions Team
16 January 2025 - 30 April 2025	Late applications received during these dates will be processed in the late allocation round in June
16 April 2025	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 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 2025	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.
3 June 2025	Late allocation round offer day. All online applicants and those who have supplied an email address with their paper application will receive an email between 9am and 4pm 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 2025	Late applications received after 30 April 2025 will be processed

When will my child start school?

Children born between 01/09/20 and 31/08/21 should apply for a Reception Year place in the Starting School 2025 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...

by email: admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
on the 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 is attending their nearest or catchment school and 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



Is my child entitled to School Transport Assistance?

