

Applying for a Secondary School place in September 2020

Frequently Asked Questions

When can I apply for a place at High School Year 7?

The application process is available from 1 August 2019 to 31 October 2019 for children born between 1st September 2008 and 31st August 2009.

How do I apply for a place?

You can apply online by going to www.leeds.gov.uk/admissions and searching for secondary admissions. If you need assistance with the application you can call us on 0113 2224414 or email us at startingsecondary@leeds.gov.uk

What are admissions policies?

Admissions policies set out how schools will offer places. The admissions policy tells you who is more likely to get a place if there are more applications than places available. The oversubscription criteria in the admissions policy shows how the school will rank all applications. Places are then offered from the top of the ranked list until the year group is full.

In Leeds there are different types of schools, most set their own admissions policy, so admission criteria varies from school to school.

It is important that you look at the admissions policy for each of the schools you are including in your preferences. Admissions policies for all kinds of schools (Community, Foundation, Voluntary Aided and Academy schools) can be obtained from schools directly, found on the school website, on the Leeds City Council website at www.leeds.gov.uk/admissions or by contacting the Admissions Team on 0113 2224414.

How are places offered?

The local authority co-ordinates all applications for year 7 places. This means everyone must apply to the Local Authority, then the schools rank their applications, and the Local Authority sends out the offer letters, making sure each child only receives one offer.

Where your application falls on a school's ranked list of applicants depends on the schools you have asked for and their admission policies, the number of applications they have received, your circumstances and the circumstances of all other applicants to that school.

I have good reasons why my child should attend my first preference school – so you have to offer them a place there don't you?

Many parents have good reasons why they would prefer their child to attend a particular school, but while parents have the legal right to express their preference, this is not the same as free choice about where their child is admitted. School admissions policies set out clear criteria about who will be prioritised over others for a place. They can't take anything else into account when they're ranking the applications. You should review the policies to see whether your child meets any of these priority criteria. If they do, please tell us on your application, and make sure you complete any supplementary forms if required, so that the admissions policy can be applied correctly.

Does it matter what order I list my preferences?

Yes! By law we must offer you the highest preference school we possibly can, so you should list your schools in order of preference. When schools are ranking their applications, they don't know what preference you have given that school, as it's against the law to have a 'first preference first' admissions policy. The only time your preference order is taken into account is if you could be offered more than one school. In that situation, we offer you the school you said you preferred the most.

If I only provide one preference, do you have to offer me that school?

No. Providing just one or two preferences does not increase your chances of being offered a place at these schools. Your application for each school is ranked in line with the admissions policy. Where

you only ask for a place at one school, you are only on that school's list of applicants but it doesn't affect where on that list your application falls.

If the Local Authority is unable to offer a preferred school, you will be offered a place at any school with a vacancy available after all other applications have been considered, so not using all five of the available preferences actually decreases the chances of you being offered a preferred place.

Do head teachers decide which children are offered places?

No. The governing body / academy trust rank their applications in line with their published policy. When they've done this, they don't know who will be offered a place, as they don't know whether it's your highest preference, or whether you'd be offered a place at another school.

Can I find out which schools are closest to my home?

You can contact the Leeds City Council Admissions Team on 0113 2224414 or send an email to startingsecondary@leeds.gov.uk to ask for this information. Please remember to include your address when contacting us. Our measurements are based on a straight-line distance from the school to your address.

Previous allocation maps for secondary schools are on the Leeds City Council website www.leeds.gov.uk/admissions. These show the distances from home to school for the people who were successful in gaining places last year so give an indication of your chances of being offered a place. Most online mapping tools only use postcodes and not the full address. You should have received a letter which gave details of your five closest schools by distance but you don't need this letter to apply. You can look on the "Find a School" page on the Leeds City Council website www.leeds.gov.uk/admissions for maps showing the catchment priority areas for Local Authority schools.

Do I have to include my closest school as one of my preferences?

No, it is not compulsory to state one of your closest schools as a preference. However, if it is not possible to offer you one of your 5 preferences, you may find that all the places at your closest schools have been filled with children who did express them as preference and the only schools with vacancies may not be close to your home.

I already have a child at my preferred school. Do I need to apply?

Yes. You must apply even if you have a sibling already at the school, in the same way as everyone else. Not all schools provide a higher priority for siblings, you must read the admissions policy to see how applications are prioritised.

What does "priority catchment school" or "nearest school" mean in an Admissions Policy?

Some schools offer a priority for those families who have the school as their nearest, or live in a defined catchment area. To work out which school you would get this nearest / catchment priority at, you need to carefully check the admissions policies for each of your 5 closest schools, calculated in straight line distance order. The closest school to you which includes in their Admission's policy an oversubscription criteria for "nearest school" or "nearest priority school" will offer you a higher priority. To check if you live within a "priority catchment area" you need to look at the map attached to the admissions policy on the "Find a School" page or on the schools website and see if your home address falls within the catchment area. You can see a map at www.leeds.gov.uk which indicates the nearest priority areas and catchment areas across the city.

It is important that you look at each school admission policy and all other available information before making a decision about your preferences as it is important to consider whether you have a realistic chance of being offered a place.

I live in a catchment area, does that mean I am guaranteed a place?

No, it means your application is prioritised higher than those living outside the catchment area but does not guarantee a place. If you live outside a catchment area you can still apply for a place at the school.

What is the 'furthest allocation distance'?

In the information provided on the Leeds City Council website, 'furthest allocation distances' are stated where this information is available.

The furthest allocation distance is how far the last pupil lived who was allocated a place at a school under one of the distance priorities.

Further details of allocation data can be found on www.datamillnorth.org/dataset/secondary-school-allocations or at www.leeds.gov.uk/admissions.

How can people living further away than me get a place when I didn't?

Those pupils might meet a higher priority of the admissions policy (e.g. children looked after by the Local Authority, pupils with siblings attending the school, meeting a faith criteria or attending a named feeder school). It is important to check individual school admissions policies for this information.

When will I find out which school my child has been offered?

2 March 2019 is the first working day after National Offer day. You will be sent an email on this day on how to access your offer or if you did not apply online a letter will be sent out by second class post and you will receive it a few days after the 2 March 2020. These emails will be sent from 9am onwards on 2 March.

What should I do when I receive my offer of a place?

You should accept the offer of the school place directly with the school. Accepting a lower preference offer will not affect your position on a waiting list or your right to appeal against the refusal at any other school.

What happens if I don't get offered a place at the school I want?

If you don't get offered a place at the school you would prefer, you can request to go on the waiting list. You can also appeal against the decision to refuse a place at a school, although appeals can only be granted in specific circumstances. More information will be provided with your offer.

What happens if I move into the area or change address?

If you move into the area or change address before the start of the new school year in September 2020, you must let us know as this could affect your application. The standard evidence we require to change an address is:

- one document showing you have left the old address (final Council tax bill or utility bill) and
- one document showing your new address (tenancy agreement or completion of purchase or council tax bill for new address).

If for any reason you don't have these, we will ask you to send us in as much evidence as you do have and the admissions team will decide if we can change the address.

Does the local authority investigate claims of fraudulent addresses?

The local authority takes the use of a fraudulent address to obtain a school place very seriously and will investigate any allegations that are made. If there is proof that a fraudulent address has been used to obtain a school place that place will be withdrawn. Using an address for a childminder or relative or renting a property for a short period of time would be considered using a fraudulent address. We cannot share the outcome of individual investigations because of data protection and safeguarding.

If a place in the school is offered on the basis of an address that is subsequently found to be different from a child's normal and permanent home address, then that place can be withdrawn. Each year we withdraw places after offer day following investigations.

Can I educate my child at home?

By law, you can make arrangements to educate your child at home. However, you have a duty to make sure that your child receives an appropriate full-time education suitable for their age and ability, and for any special educational needs they may have. We want to make sure you are meeting your legal responsibility, so you must tell us if you are educating your child at home. If you would like more information, please phone 0113 378 5028 or email EHE@leeds.gov.uk. You will not receive any financial help from the Local authority if you choose to educate your child at home.

Useful numbers and contacts details

Leeds City Council website: www.leeds.gov.uk/admissions

Admissions team: For all admissions enquiries please contact 0113 222 4414 or email startingsecondary@leeds.gov.uk

Transport: For application forms, guidance notes, Leeds Children's Transport policy, Under-16 Photocards and information about bus travel can be obtained at: www.metro.com/schools. If you need information on your 'Nearest Qualifying School' or have other general school transport questions please contact the Leeds Education Transport Assessment Team on 0113 348 1122 or educationcustomerservices@westyorks-ca.gov.uk.

Elective Home Education: For information on Elective Home Education please contact 0113 378 5028

School meals: For information and applying for free school meals please contact 0113 222 4404.

School uniforms and other expenses parents should contact the school their child will be attending for information about help with school uniforms.

Special Educational Needs Information: For children with an existing Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) parents should contact their SEN casework officer phone 0113 378 5256. For general information, support and advice about SEN and disabilities contact the Leeds Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Service phone 0113 378 5020.