

A group of secondary school students in white shirts, dark ties, and dark trousers/skirts are walking along a paved path outdoors. In the foreground, a boy and a girl are walking towards the camera, smiling. Other students are visible in the background.

**Closing  
Date  
31 October  
2026**

# Secondary Education in Essex 2027/2028

Your guide to transferring from primary to secondary school

**Closing date for applications 31 October 2026**

Apply online at: [www.essex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions)



Essex County Council

# Online admissions

Parents and carers who live in the Essex County Council area (excluding those living in the Borough of Southend-on-Sea or in Thurrock) can apply for their child's school place online using the Essex Online Admissions Service at:

**[www.essex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions)**

The online application system has a number of benefits for parents and carers:

- you can access related information through links on the website to find out more about individual schools, home to school transport or inspection reports;
- when you have submitted your application you will receive an email confirming this;
- you will be told the outcome of your online application by email on offer day if you requested this when you applied.

You will be able to make your application online from 12 September 2026.

The closing date for secondary applications is 31 October 2026. This is the statutory national closing date set by the Government.



## Key Points to Remember

- **APPLY ON TIME** - closing date **31 October 2026**.
- Use all 6 preferences.
- Tell us immediately in writing (email or by letter) about any address change.
- Make sure you read and understand the Education Transport Policy information on pages 24-26 if entitlement to school transport is important to you. School priority admission (catchment) areas are not relevant to transport eligibility. Transport is generally only provided to the nearest available school where the distance criteria is met. The 'catchment' school for an address may not be the nearest school. It is vital you carefully consider the transport implications before you make your application for a school place. Please contact us if you need advice (see pages 24-26).



# Hello and welcome

This booklet is to help you through the admissions process for your child to start secondary school in Essex in September 2027.

It gives you lots of useful information on the application process, explains how places are allocated and what to do after you have received your school offer.

**Please ensure that you read this information alongside the ‘Secondary Schools Admission Policies Directory 2027/2028’, which provides all the information on individual schools and how they offer places.**

Last year 99% of applications were made online, which is a fast, safe and secure way to make your application. If you are unable to apply online, a printable application form can be found on our website, or you can request one. **You must only make your application online, or by paper, please do not do both.**

The Council’s Schools Admissions Team will handle all applications fairly under the admissions criteria, but they cannot influence decisions about school places. It is

really important that you consider the detail provided in this booklet.

Whatever you may hear from other people, there are no secret formulas for getting a place. You need to ensure that you have applied on-time, put your preferred schools in the order that you want them considered and used all of your 6 preferences wherever possible. If you only apply for one school and there are not enough places at your preferred school, we will have to offer you an alternative school, which may not be the one you would have preferred.

As Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and SEND, I hope that your child has an enjoyable and fruitful secondary education, where I hope that they will thrive. I wish them every success for the future.

**Councillor Sam Journet**  
Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and SEND.



# Contents

(If you can't find what you are looking for here, there is a full index towards the back of the booklet)

Please ensure that you read this information alongside the 'Secondary Schools Admission Policies Directory 2027/2028', which provides all the information on individual schools and how they offer places.

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The information contained in this booklet is correct as at the time of printing. Policies may change in the light of decisions made by the Schools' Adjudicator, the Education Skills and Funding Agency or any change in the law. An addendum will be available on request.

# Your application journey

Staying on track is a really important part of applying for a secondary school place, so here are the key dates for your diary.

| Date                          | Procedure                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12 September 2026             | <b>Applications open</b><br>(apply online at <a href="http://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions">www.essex.gov.uk/admissions</a> )                                                                                                                                                                    |
| September - October 2026      | Parents to read all the available information in this booklet, visit schools (if available) and make decisions on what to apply for.                                                                                                                                                           |
| Autumn term 2026              | Tests for selective (grammar) schools and specialist places at some schools are taken for children who have been registered.<br><b>NB: Please visit the CSSE website (for grammar testing) and individual school websites for the latest information on how to register and testing dates.</b> |
| 31 October 2026               | <b>National closing date for applications</b><br><b>NB: any application received after this date will normally be treated as late. You cannot apply using the online system after this date.</b>                                                                                               |
| 20 November 2026              | The last date that evidence of changes of address can be accepted to be included in the first round of offers on 1 March 2027.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| November 2026 – February 2027 | The Council runs all the relevant processes with schools and other councils to prioritise applications and determine School offers.                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1 March 2027                  | <b>National offer day</b><br><b>Essex County Council send offer notifications to Essex resident applicants.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 13 April 2027                 | <b>Deadline for lodging appeals to be heard before summer holidays.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| March 2027 – 31 August 2027   | Waiting lists maintained by the LA and vacant places allocated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| April – July 2027             | <b>Appeals held.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |



The Council sends all correspondence in 'good faith' that it will be received on time. If for any reason you do not receive an acknowledgement to your application, which confirms you have submitted it, please contact School Admissions and we will check it for you.

# Myth-busting

Before you start the admissions process, please be aware that whatever you may hear from other people, there are no secret formulas for getting a place. You need to ensure that you have applied on-time, put your preferred schools in the order you want them considered and used all your preferences. If you apply for one school and there are not enough places at your preferred school, we will have to offer you an alternative school, which may not be the one you wanted.

Here are some of the things we have heard people say and the reasons why they are myths and not correct.

***“Only listing one school will mean that I have to get a place at that school.”***

Not true. If the school is oversubscribed, with children who have a higher priority than your child, we won't be able to offer this school and will offer a place at an alternative school, which may not be the one you preferred and may be some distance from your home. To give your child the best opportunity of getting a preferred school, we strongly recommend you use all of your six preferences.

***“Talking to a member of the admissions team can help me get the school I want.”***

Not true. Our team cannot influence the outcome of what happens with your application.

***“Living close to the school means I am guaranteed a place.”***

Not true. We cannot guarantee that your child will be offered a place at a particular school. We strongly advise that you use all of your preferences to give your

child the best opportunity to secure a place at a preferred school.

***“It doesn't matter if I miss the deadline for applications.”***

Not true. If you apply after the deadline, your application will be looked at after all those who applied on time and your preferred schools may already be full by that time. We strongly advise that you do not miss the closing date for applications (31 October 2026).

***“They will have to change the decision if I appeal”***

Not true. All appeals are considered by an independent appeal panel and they make decisions based on the cases they hear, whether they feel the school is full to capacity and whether they are satisfied that the admissions process has been carried out correctly. There is no guarantee that your appeal will be upheld.

## Quick links to useful information

To help you find the information you need, we have created the following links, which you can click to find out more.

### Online Applications:

Applying online is a quick, safe and secure way to submit your application. Find out more on page 7.

### Glossary:

We have included a glossary of terms, abbreviations and phrases that you may not be familiar with to help you understand the admissions process. Please see page 33.

### Applying to schools outside Essex:

Secondary school admissions are fully coordinated across the country. This means that if you live in the Essex County Council area, you only need to fill out one application (the CAF), even if some, or all, of your preferred secondary schools are outside Essex. Find more information on page 9.





# Apply online

If you live in the Essex County Council area (which does not include Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock) you must apply for your school place through Essex County Council. Each year, 99% of the applications we get are submitted online.

You can apply online using the Essex Online Admissions Service at: [www.essex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions)

## People tell us it is easier to apply online because:

- it is safe and secure, nothing can get lost in the post!
- we send you an email to confirm that we have received your application.
- there are helpful links to schools, transport information and inspection reports.
- you can get an email on offer day confirming the result of your application (if you don't apply online, you will be sent an offer letter in the post, which may take some time to be delivered).
- you can apply from anywhere (your home, a library, your phone, at work).
- you can change your application (e.g. your preferred schools) up until the closing date.

**NB: You must remember to resubmit your online application every time you change it or view it online, as we will process the last version as at the closing date.**

You will be able to make your application online from 12 September 2026.

**The national statutory closing date for all secondary school applications in England is 31 October 2026.**

## Key points to remember:

- We strongly recommend that you use all of your preferences to give your child the best chance of being offered a preferred school.

- We recommend that you seriously consider applying for your local school if how your child gets to school is a factor.
- Applying online is quicker, easier and more secure. It also gives you the benefit of receiving your child's offer by email on offer day.
- The national closing date for applications is **31 October 2026** for all applications.

If you are unable to apply online, a downloadable application form can be found on our website, or you can request one by calling 0345 603 2200.

**You must only make your application online, or by paper, you cannot do both.**



# Your application explained

All admissions to schools in Essex are carried out in accordance with statutory regulations and guidance from the Department for Education.

## Common Application Forms (CAFs)

If you live in the Essex County Council area<sup>1</sup> (which does not include Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock) you must apply for your school place through Essex County Council. The Essex Common Application Form (CAF) is the only way you can apply for a secondary school place for your child.

You can apply online at [www.essex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions) or, if you are unable to apply online, an application form can be found on our website or you can request one via 0345 603 2200.

**You must only make your application online or by paper, you cannot do both.** If we receive more than one application from you for your child, we process the last one to be submitted. **Don't forget, you must submit your application by 31 October 2026.**

Paper applications will be acknowledged by letter within 10 working days of receipt by the School Admissions team. If you have applied by paper, please contact School Admissions if you do not receive an acknowledgement letter.

### Please note:

- The LA can only discuss details about an application with the person who completes the application.
- The LA is not responsible for any application sent by post that does not arrive with the School Admissions team by the stated closing date.
- If you apply online and then unsubmit your application (either by making a change, by viewing the application or for any reason), the LA is not responsible for processing unsubmitted applications. You **must** ensure that your application is fully submitted by the closing date.



## Supplementary Information Forms (SIFs)

Some schools will need extra information to rank your application against their admission criteria. This includes most faith (religious) schools and some of those schools that have partial selection by ability or aptitude. These schools will have a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) that you need to complete in addition to your application to the LA.

Where a SIF is required this is made clear in the school's admissions policy which you can find on our website [www.essex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions) SIFs must be returned directly to schools by the closing date for applications.

**Please remember that completing a SIF on its own is not an application. You must also complete and submit the Common Application Form by the closing date for applications.**

<sup>1</sup> If you live in Essex your council tax will be payable to one of the following District Councils: Basildon, Braintree, Brentwood, Castle Point, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Harlow, Maldon, Rochford, Tendring or Uttlesford. ECC accepts no responsibility for applications submitted in error to it by parents resident in another council area.

# Your application explained

## Schools with a specialist criterion

Some schools have a specialist criterion for a certain number or percentage of their intake.

If you wish to be considered for a place at a school under its specialist criterion you must complete their SIF and return it by the date set by the school. This is in addition to your application to the LA. The school will invite your child to attend a selection test and they will advise you of the outcome before the closing date for applications. It is important to remember that being successful at the school's test does not guarantee a place at the school. It will, however, help you make a decision on whether you are likely to gain a place if you apply under the school's specialist criterion.

## Applying to schools outside Essex

In the normal admission round, Secondary school admissions are fully coordinated across England. This means that if you live in the Essex County Council area you only need to fill out one application to Essex County Council, even if you are applying for schools outside of Essex.

You can either apply online at **[www.essex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions)** or, if you are unable to apply online, an application form can be found on our website or you can request one via **[admissions@essex.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@essex.gov.uk)**.

**You must only make your application online or by paper, you cannot do both.**

## Closing date for applications

The statutory national closing date for all secondary school applications in England is 31 October 2026.

To give your child the best opportunity of securing a place at a preferred school, it is vital that you apply on time. Applications received after this date will normally be treated as late and be considered after all on time applicants.

## Parental responsibility

More than 1 person can have parental responsibility for a child. A mother automatically has parental responsibility for

her child from birth, unless the child has been adopted.

A father usually has parental responsibility if he is listed on the birth certificate or married to the child's mother at the time of birth or any time afterwards. If divorced, the father will retain parental responsibility.

## Shared parental responsibility and shared custody (normal admission round)

If you share parental responsibility and/or share custody with someone who lives at a different address, it is important that you both agree which schools to apply for, which address is the child's main place of residence (home) and which parent/carer is the main applicant. **The address to be used on any application must be where your child spends the majority of the school week.**

You must only submit one application for each child. If more than one application is received, or the Admissions Team is made aware of a dispute between two parents, these applications will be placed on hold. This means that they will not normally be processed until either a) written agreement is received from both parents/carers stating which application has been agreed to be processed or b) a Court Order is provided confirming which application is to be processed.

We strongly recommend that agreements are reached before any application is submitted to ensure that your child is not disadvantaged in being considered for a school place due to the delay in resolving the parental dispute over the applications.

The Council cannot discuss, offer any advice or make decisions on parental disputes and if you can't reach agreement, we recommend you seek your own independent legal advice.

**Please ensure that only one application is submitted by 31 October 2026. If multiple applications are received at any stage in the process you risk your child being disadvantaged in getting a school place.**  
**Continued over the page...**



### **Not intending to apply for a school**

If you have decided not to apply for a school for your child because you will be sending them to an independent (fee paying) school, have decided to home educate or for another reason, please ensure that you email **admissions@essex.gov.uk** so that your child's records can be updated.

**Please note that if you do not submit an application your child will not be offered a school place.**

### **Types of schools**

All schools in Essex (except independent fee-paying schools) are known as maintained schools or Academies. Below is a list of the various types of schools and each school's entry in the **'Secondary Schools Admission Policies Directory 2027/2028'** shows you which type of school it is.

Each school has an admission authority<sup>2</sup>, which is responsible for all aspects of admissions and appeals.

- **Community** – The Local Authority (LA) is the admission authority and sets the arrangements and oversubscription criteria.

- **Voluntary Controlled (VC)** – The Local Authority (LA) is the admissions authority and sets the arrangements and oversubscription criteria. These are often faith (religious) schools - normally Church of England.

- **Voluntary Aided (VA)** – The school's governing body is the admission authority and sets the

arrangements and oversubscription criteria. These are often faith (religious) schools - e.g. Church of England, Catholic, Jewish etc.

- **Academies** – These are maintained independent schools. The academy must comply with all admissions law and the School Admissions Code. The relevant Academy Trust is the admission authority and sets the arrangements and oversubscription criteria.

- **Free Schools** – These are academy schools set up in response to parental demand. They comply with all admissions law and the School Admissions Code. The relevant Academy Trust is the admission authority and sets the arrangements and oversubscription criteria.

- **Studio Schools** – These are Academy schools for 14-19 year olds (admitting from year 10) which offer academic and vocational qualifications, in a project-based way. The relevant Academy Trust is the admission authority and sets the arrangements and oversubscription criteria.

- **University Technology Colleges (UTCs)** These are Academy schools for 14-19 year olds (admitting from year 10) which specialise in subjects such as engineering and construction, along with a broad, general education. The relevant Academy Trust is the admission authority and sets the arrangements and oversubscription criteria.

<sup>2</sup> An admission authority is responsible for all aspects of pupil admissions and appeals.

# School preference order

**If you are an Essex County Council resident, you can name up to 6 secondary schools on your application.**

**We strongly recommend you:**

- a) Do name your preferred schools in the order you want them considered.**
- b) Do use all of your 6 preferences to give your child the best chance of being offered a preferred school.**
- c) Don't list a school more than once – naming it multiple times does not increase your chances of being offered.**
- d) Do name your local school as one of your preferences because if you don't, it won't be considered and you could end up being offered a school many miles away.**

The order of your preferences is confidential between you and the Council. Schools are not advised where you named them during the admissions process, but the order may be shared as part of the appeal process. No school is allowed to use admission criteria that insists that you name them as your first preference.

If you are applying for schools outside Essex, you should check their admissions arrangements carefully. Contact details for local authorities bordering Essex can be found on page 31.

**If how your child gets to school is a factor in your decisions, please read the home to school transport section of this booklet to understand how the order of your preference impacts your child's eligibility for transport.** The Council's Education Transport Policy is explained on page 24.

You can find useful information about alternative transport options on the following websites, if your child will not qualify for home to school transport:

- [www.essex.gov.uk/publictransport](http://www.essex.gov.uk/publictransport)
- [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info)

If none of your named preferred schools can be offered, the LA will offer a place at the nearest Essex school to your home that has a vacancy (after all on time applications have been dealt with). This could mean that the school offered is several miles away from your home, which is why we advise you to use all 6 preferences.



**Please use all 6 preferences.**

# School preference order

## Changing preferences

If you have applied online, up until the published closing date, you can change your preference by logging into your account, amending your existing application and resubmitting it.

**If you unsubmit your online application (either by making a change, by viewing the application or for any reason), the LA is not responsible for processing unsubmitted applications. You must ensure that your application is fully submitted by the closing date (31 October 2026).**

If you applied on paper you will need to write to School Admissions before the closing date so your letter/email is received by 31 October 2026.

After the closing date a change request will not be accepted unless this is for an address change<sup>3</sup>. Evidence of any address change must be supplied by the specified deadlines.

Any requests must be submitted to School Admissions in writing, whether you applied online or by paper. You can email [admissions@essex.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@essex.gov.uk)

## Selective/Grammar schools

Essex County Council is not responsible for selective /grammar testing for any school in Essex. This is managed by the 'Consortium for Selective Schools in Essex' (CSSE).

Up to date information for the CSSE selective schools is available on the CSSE website ([www.csse.org.uk](http://www.csse.org.uk)) and the individual school websites for all grammar schools. Please ensure that you have read this information when applying for testing and the schools.

If your preferred schools include grammar schools, you need to include them on your application and you need to consider the order of your schools carefully. The LA will process your application in line with the order of your preferences and offer the highest of your preferences that can be met under the admissions criteria. This means that, even if your child obtains a score high enough to be offered your grammar preference, if you have named another school higher and it can be offered, the LA will offer the higher named preference.

## Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan applying for grammar schools

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) it is most likely that their secondary school place will be decided through a consultation process with the SEND Operations Team.

If, however, you are looking for your child to take the grammar school tests, you will need to ensure that they are registered for testing with the CSSE and complete the application for the normal admissions process (only including the grammar school preferences). If your child obtains a score high enough to be offered a place, we will inform SEND Operations so that they can name the school in your child's EHCP.

## Late applications

All applications received after the closing date of **31 October 2026** will normally be treated as late. This means your application will be dealt with after all on time applications have been processed, unless you have provided evidence that shows that the application could not reasonably have been made on time due to exceptional circumstances. A new on time preference will not be accepted after the closing date unless the circumstances are deemed to be exceptional.

All late applications will be considered by LA officers to determine whether there are exceptional circumstances. Where that is deemed to be the case, the application will be treated as 'on time'.<sup>4</sup>

Even if there are reasons why you could not apply on time, all applications or requests for new preferences and changes received after 20 November 2026 will be treated as late and will be held to be considered only after the national offer day (1 March 2027).

<sup>3</sup> Any applications or change requests received after 20 November 2026 will be held and will not be considered until after the first round of offers on 1 March 2027.

<sup>4</sup> Even if there are reasons why you could not apply on time, it will not be possible to treat any application received after 20 November 2026 as on time. In addition, any new applications, preferences or change requests received after 20 November 2026 will be held and not considered until after the first round of offers on 1 March 2027.

# Addresses



## Home address

**The address used on the application must be your child's home address (i.e. the main address that they live at) at the time of application.**

If you are moving, you must provide details of your new address to the LA and also provide evidence of that address (either a copy of the exchange of contracts document or a signed and dated tenancy agreement) no later than 20 November 2026.

Applications will normally be processed on the basis of the home address for the child at the time of application and determination, unless, where there is a new home address, proof of an exchange of contracts or copy of a tenancy agreement can be provided by 20 November 2026.

The home address is considered to be the address at which the child resides on a permanent basis or is 'ordinarily resident'. This is generally the address of the parent/carer.

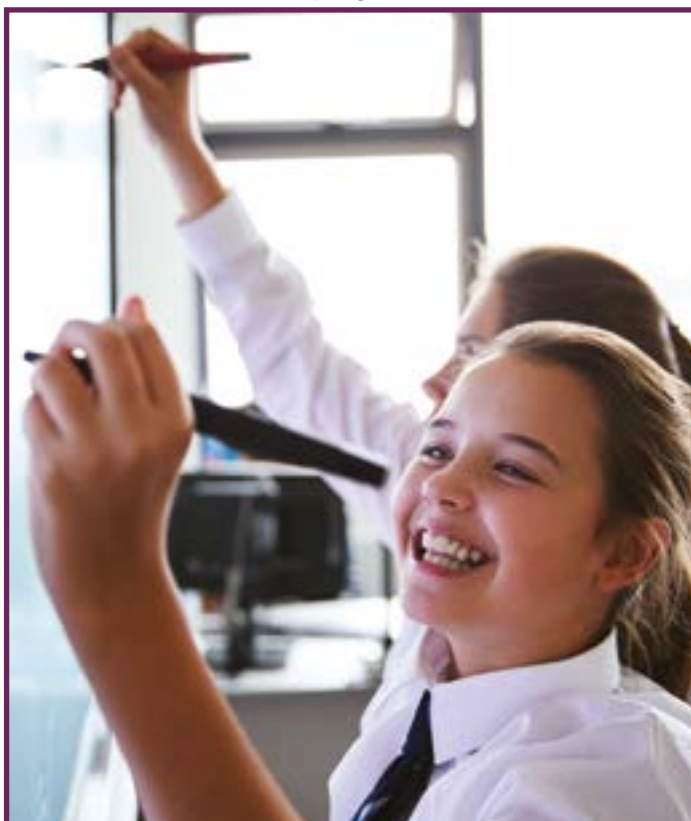
In some cases, children may be 'ordinarily resident' for the majority of the school week, including overnight, with another

relative or carer, such as a grandparent. This may also be the case where a child resides between two parents at different addresses following the breakdown of the parental relationship. Where this is the case, the application may be processed on the basis of that address (where the child resides for the majority of the school week) and proof of address and residence arrangement will be required with the application. The child must be living with the parent, relative or carer 24 hours per day, for the majority of the school week.

Arrangements where parents can leave and collect children from another relative or carer on a daily basis will be regarded as childcare arrangements, and the child will not be deemed to be 'ordinarily resident' with that person. Where relevant, it is expected that the adult with whom the child is 'ordinarily resident' receives the child benefit for the child (where eligible).

Some Foundation, VA schools and Academies have different rules on home address and you should check each school's policy.

**Continues over the page...**



## Changing address details

If you move home, either within Essex or into Essex, during the admissions process, you must notify School Admissions immediately by email to **admissions@essex.gov.uk**.

You must provide proof of the new address. This can be a copy of exchange of contracts (if you are buying your new home) or a copy of a signed and dated tenancy agreement (if you are renting). It is your responsibility to ensure that School Admissions has the accurate information and proof. School Admissions do not rely on address records held by other areas of the Council and work on the information provided by you.

If there are changes to your plans you must let School Admissions know immediately or your child's offer of a place could be withdrawn.

If you know you are moving to Essex before the closing date for applications but are not able to provide evidence by that date, you must make your application through the local authority where you are living and can name Essex schools.

If you apply online and move home, you still need to notify School Admissions in writing and provide the proof of the new address. Just changing your address on your online account will not be enough for School Admissions to take it into account.

**The deadline for providing this evidence is 20 November 2026.**

If anything is received by School Admissions after this date, your new address will not be used to process your application. It will only be taken into account when the waiting lists process opens after the relevant offer day.

**Please note that if you are applying for a place at schools outside Essex there may be different dates after which a new address cannot be considered.** If you are in doubt please contact School Admissions.

If you own a property in Essex but are not living in it, but intend to take up residency at your Essex home before the start of the autumn term, your application will be processed using



your Essex address once evidence has been received. Any offer of a school place will then be conditional upon receipt of evidence of you taking up residency at that property in Essex.

## Address checking

**The LA may ask a random sample of applicants to provide proof of their home address. This must be a copy of one of the following:**

- **UK driving licence;**
- **council tax notification;**
- **two utility bills dated within the last six months (gas, electricity, water or landline phone).**

## Fraudulent/Misleading applications

It is expected that parents will be honest about the information they provide on their applications, especially around the child's home address. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, which is not acceptable because it can mean that an offer is made that directly disadvantages another child who should have been offered.

If any school place is secured using false information that the Council is aware of or has been offered in error, the admission authority can investigate the matter. If it is found that the application used fraudulent or intentionally misleading information to secure a place at a particular school, the admission authority can withdraw the school place offered.

# Siblings



The Council defines a sibling as a brother, sister, adopted brother or sister or stepbrother or stepsister living in the same family unit in the same family household and address, who attends the preferred school in any year group **excluding the final year**. Biological and adopted siblings who attend the preferred school in any year group **excluding the final year** will also be treated as siblings, irrespective of place of residence.

Children residing in the same household as part of an extended family, such as cousins, will not be treated as siblings.

For mid-year applications a sibling is a child who has a brother, sister, adopted brother or sister or stepbrother or stepsister living in the same family unit in the same family household and address as a child who attends or has been offered a place at the preferred school or partner school at the time of application and determination and with a

reasonable expectation that the sibling will be attending at the time of admission.

For 11–18 schools, a sibling link to a child in Year 11 or Year 12 at the time of application and offer will be taken to exist where there is a reasonable expectation that the child will be returning to the school for a post 16 course of study.

Some Foundation, VA schools and Academies may have different definitions of a sibling. Please contact the school to check.

## Twins, triplets etc.

For Community and VC schools in the normal admission round, if the last child to be offered a place is a twin and their sibling cannot be offered initially, the LA will ensure both twins are offered a place. In the case of triplets or other multiple births, if the majority of children can be offered a place initially, the LA will offer places to the remaining child or children. For example if two triplets can be offered a place, the remaining child will also receive an offer of a place.

For mid-year applications, where a family moves into an area necessitating a change of school for their twins or triplets etc and the majority can be offered a place then a place will be offered for the remaining child or children. However, where the family does not move but wishes to transfer the children to another local school where there are insufficient places for all of them, then places would not normally be offered to all.

For Foundation, VA schools and Academies the decision will be made by the governing body or Academy Trust.

## Will my child's brothers and sisters be able to go to the same school?

You should check the priority given to siblings in each school's admissions criteria to assess the chances of this, but there is no automatic guarantee that siblings can go to the same school.

Similarly, having a child already in receipt of transport does not guarantee that a future sibling will automatically qualify for transport to the same school.

# Other circumstances

## **Looked After and Previously Looked After Children**

A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order will be given first priority in oversubscription criteria ahead of all other applicants in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021. This also includes those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (as defined in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

## **Feeder primary schools**

Some schools give priority to children based on attendance at a feeder primary school. If you are not sure at what point attendance at a feeder primary school is taken into account, check with the school. **Feeder primary school links have no relevance to school transport entitlement.**

## **Priority admission areas**

No school guarantees places to children living in their priority admission (catchment) area, however, many include living in the priority admission area as one of their oversubscription criteria. **Please note that not every school has a priority admission area.**

You can find out which school's priority admission area (if any) your address is in by using our 'Catchment Area Finder' tool on our website [www.essex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions).

**Attendance at a priority admission area school does not guarantee entitlement to free home to school transport, as the 'catchment' school may not be the nearest school.**

## **Medical circumstances**

Some schools may include medical circumstances as part of their criteria. If this is relevant to your child, you need to check the school's admission policy and send any supporting evidence to the school directly. If the school is in another local authority, check with the school where to send any evidence.

## **Admission of children living overseas**

All children of compulsory school age (5 to 16 years) in the UK have a right of access to education.

For parents and children living overseas and planning to move to the UK, an application for a school place will be considered for such children even though they may not be resident in the UK at the time of application. The application may however be processed on the basis of the overseas address.

It is the responsibility of the parents of foreign national children to check that their children have a right under their UK entry conditions to study at a school before applying for a place. The County Council cannot advise or assist in such immigration matters.

If an applicant from overseas owns a property in Essex but is not living in it, but intends to take up residence with their child at the Essex home before the start of the autumn term, then evidence of this address must be provided for the application. Any offer of a school place will then be conditional upon receipt of evidence of taking up residency at that property in Essex.



### **Applications from members of the Armed Forces and Crown Servants**

Members of the Armed Forces and Crown Servants with automatic right of entry to the UK who are able to provide evidence of their relocation can apply for a school place ahead of a move. An application can be made as soon as confirmation of the relocation is available.

For Armed Forces applications we will use the unit posting address when considering the application, until such time as a confirmed home address can be provided. For Crown Servants an address can only be used if there is evidence of the address the child is returning to.

There is no guarantee that a place will be available at a preferred school; each application will be considered in accordance with the school's admissions criteria.

### **Distance tie-breaker**

Most schools use distance to prioritise their applications. Straight line distance is commonly used; however, a small number

of schools measure by the shortest walking route. Straight line distance is measured from the address point of the home address to address point of the school. Distances are reported in miles to three decimal places.

For admissions purposes the LA uses data provided by Ordnance Survey to measure straight line distances. The definition of the home address is as described on page 13.

If your child's time is split equally between two homes, the address of the home at which they reside for the majority of the school nights (as described previously) would be used to measure the distance between the school and home.

In the unlikely event of two applicants with identical distances being considered for the final place at a Community or VC school the place will be offered to one applicant on the basis of lots drawn by an officer of the County Council not involved in admissions, with the exception of twins, triplets etc. Foundation, VA schools or Academies may have their own tie-break policy.



# Decisions and appeals

## How decisions are made

Each school has a Published Admission Number (PAN) which is the maximum number of children the school intends to admit each year. If there are more applications than the PAN then the school's oversubscription criteria will be applied. This is a set of rules against which applications are prioritised, for example siblings or distance.

**Please ensure that you read the individual school's entry in the 'Secondary Schools Admission Policies Directory 2027/2028', which provides all the information on individual schools and how they offer places. This information can help you assess the chances of your application being successful.**

### **If none of your preferences can be met**

If you are an Essex resident and none of your preferences can be met, the LA will offer your child a place at the nearest Essex school to your home with a vacancy.

For September 2026 only 2.96% of Essex parents could not be offered any of their preferences, whilst 92.32% were offered their first or second preference of secondary school.

**We strongly recommend that you use all of your preferences to give your child the best chance of being offered a place at a preferred school.**

### **If your child is not offered a place**

If your child is refused a place at a preferred Essex school that is ranked higher than the offer you have received, your child's details will automatically be held on a waiting list. You will also have the right to appeal to an independent appeal panel for any school named on your application that has not been able to offer your child a place.

Independent appeal panels can grant a place at a school even when the admission authority has demonstrated that the process has been

carried out properly and the school is full to its published admission number. Panels have to weigh the disruption and difficulty to the school and the quality of education it delivers (referred to as 'prejudice'), as a result of having an additional pupil, against the prejudice to your child if they did not attend that school.

Some parents are concerned that their appeal would be a 'waste of time'. This is not true, but you should carefully consider your reasons for wanting your child to attend the relevant school. You must be able to prove to the panel that the prejudice to your child not attending is greater than the prejudice to the school if a place is offered by the appeal panel.



# Decisions and appeals

## **Non-Essex schools**

If your child has been offered a place at a non-Essex school, you need to check with the relevant LA how you formally accept the place at that school.

We recommend you do this as soon as possible after receiving your offer, as some LAs may automatically withdraw an offer of a school place if it has not been formally accepted or they are able to offer your child a place at a higher ranked school within that LA from a waiting list. It is your responsibility to find out how to accept the place and the waiting list process for schools in other LAs. This includes what happens if an offer is made from a waiting list.

## **Waiting lists**

After 1 March 2027, waiting lists are held for Essex schools ranked according to the admissions criteria for the individual school. These lists include all children offered a lower preference school than the waiting lists school for both on time and late applications.

If you have been offered a higher preference school but decide that you want your child to be considered for one of your lower preference Essex schools, you can request for them to be added to that school's waiting list by writing to the School Admissions team to request this.

If you want your child added to the waiting list for a non-Essex school, you will need to contact the relevant LA or school to find out how to do this. Essex County Council cannot give you any information on waiting lists for non-Essex schools.

School Admissions will hold waiting lists for all Essex oversubscribed schools until the end of August 2027. After this date oversubscribed Foundation, VA schools and Academies, are required to maintain their own waiting lists, as a minimum, until the end of the autumn term and you will need to check with them on your child's position at that time.

It is important to understand that your child's position on a waiting list can change, up or down, as a result of an offer of a place being made or because of new applications being received, which have a higher priority against the criteria.

## **Continued interest in a school after the end of the autumn term**

If you still want to pursue a place at an Essex secondary school after the waiting lists have closed, you will need to contact the relevant school directly to see what you need to do and how they will consider your continued interest.

# Please remember



**All online and paper applications must have been received by this date.**

# Decisions and appeals

## **I want to change secondary schools (mid-year)**

Changing schools is a serious step to take, particularly for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

**Before applying please discuss the reasons for your request with your child's current headteacher. You should not remove your child from their current school before securing a place at another school.**

You need to apply in writing directly to schools. The schools must then consider your application and give you an answer (offer or refuse a place) in writing within 15 school days of receiving your application.

There is an application form available at all Essex Secondary schools, on the Essex County Council website and on request from the LA's School Admissions team. The application form has guidance notes to help you.

If you want to apply for a non-Essex school, please contact the relevant school or LA directly to discuss how to make your application.

In the majority of cases, a decision will be easy to make since a place should be offered unless the year group is fully subscribed to the admission number, or there are competing applications for a limited number of places.

Where a place is refused, the letter must give a reason for the refusal (which will normally be that the year group is fully subscribed) and advise you of your statutory right of appeal to an independent panel.

A school may admit a child over the admission number and outside the admission criteria mid year, where they have been excluded from another school or are being placed as a move supported by all agencies.

If, after you have applied for a place, your child is still left with no school place at all please contact the School Admissions team for more advice.

## **Fair Access Protocol**

The LA has a Fair Access Protocol to ensure that schools and the LA work together to secure access to education swiftly for children that do not have a school place. The aim of the protocol is to encourage close co-operation between schools, when allocating places for pupils who are considered 'hard to place' (for example children with challenging behaviour) that balances the needs of parents, children and schools.

In addition, under the protocol the LA can, in exceptional cases, approach schools and ask them to admit children over their admission number where, for example, a child has moved into an area and there are no schools within a reasonable distance of the child's home with a place available.

Children considered for admission under the Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over children on a waiting list who are attending another school.



# If you need to make an appeal against an admission decision



We understand that you may wish to appeal if your child has not been offered a place at your preferred school, but you should carefully consider your reasons for your child attending the school.

From figures available at the time of preparing this booklet, for year 7 admissions to Essex secondary schools in September 2026, there have been 488 appeals heard for places, of which 41 were successful.

## **Making an appeal**

You have the right of appeal for any school named on your application that has not offered your child a place, including schools named as a lower preference than the school offered. Appeals should be lodged within 20 school days of being refused a place. More information is available on the website [www.essex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions).

## **After you have made your appeal**

You will be advised by the clerk to the appeal panel in advance of the date of your meeting, called a 'hearing'. School Admissions cannot assist you with information on the date and time of your appeal.

Wherever possible the appeal hearings will take place in the area local to the school for which you are appealing. You are encouraged to attend your hearing in person to present your case. If you do not attend, and do not inform the clerk, the panel may consider your appeal in your absence. This means that the panel won't be able to ask you any questions to clarify their understanding of your case and you will not be able to add anything beyond what is in your written case, so they will not be able to take account of that when making their decision.

If you wish, you may bring a friend, relative or representative to support you. Before the hearing you will be sent a written summary of the admission authority's case for not



being able to offer your child a place at the preferred school.

## **At your hearing**

There will usually be three panel members who will be introduced to you. A clerk will also be present to record the panel's decisions and advise on the law and procedure.

A representative of the admission authority (the school or the LA depending on the type of school) will present the case for not offering a place.

The panel will have copies of your appeal (plus any letters or additional information you may have sent in support of your appeal) together with information on why the school has not been offered. If you attend, the hearing will usually follow this pattern:

- **the school's case for not offering a place will be presented;**
- **you, or your representative, may ask questions;**
- **you, or your representative, will present your case;**
- **you may be asked questions;**
- **the school's case will be summarised;**
- **you, or your representative, will be given the opportunity to summarise your case.**

It is important to remember that the appeal is for a place at your preferred school, not against the school that has been offered. It is important that you ensure the panel understand your reasons for wanting the school you are appealing for.

### **Grouped appeal hearings**

When there are a large number of appeals for one school, they may be heard using the 'grouped appeal' system. There are normally two stages to this process.

#### **Stage 1:**

- The admission authority will present its case to all parents and representatives at the same time at the group hearing.
- The grouped hearing is not an opportunity to discuss your individual case.
- The date and time of the grouped hearing will be decided by the panel and you will be invited.
- Notes of the meeting will be sent to all appellants (if there is sufficient time before the second stage).

#### **Stage 2:**

- The appeals for individual cases will be held in private, as described earlier.
- No decision will be made on any appeal until all on-time appeals have been heard for the relevant school.

### **The decision**

The panel will, firstly, decide whether the admission authority has demonstrated why it cannot admit any more children. If the panel

is satisfied that the admission authority has proven this, it will go on to consider all the points you have made. The second part of the hearing is based on balancing the needs of the individual child against the effect on the school of admitting another child.

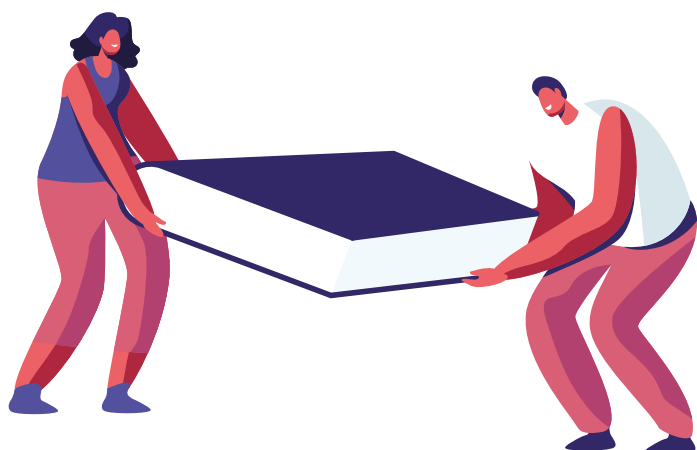
The clerk will write to you, usually within five working days, although this may not be possible where there are multiple appeals for one school, telling you of the appeal panel decision and the reasons for it. The decision is binding on both parties.

If a parent has already had an unsuccessful appeal in the same academic year, Essex County Council's policy, which applies to community and VC schools, is that we will not consider another application for the same school in the same academic year unless there have been significant and material changes in the circumstances of the parent, child or school, which could warrant a new application. These changes have to relate to the new application and not be connected with the result of the first application.

The Local Government Ombudsman can investigate complaints of maladministration. For Academies, the Education Funding Agency can investigate such complaints.



# What happens post 16?



Young people are required, following Year 11, to remain in education, employment or training until at least their 18th birthday. This can be either:

- Full-time education, such as school with a Sixth Form, College, Sixth Form College or a University Technical College in Harlow.
- Work based learning, such as an Apprenticeship or Traineeship.
- Part-time education or training if the young person is employed, self-employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours a week.

There are many different types of education establishments that offer opportunities to young people after Year 11. These include:

- Schools with sixth forms.
- Sixth form colleges providing mainly academic courses in Braintree, Colchester and Thundersley.
- Further education colleges in Basildon, Braintree, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest and Harlow offering a wide range of technical and vocational education opportunities.
- A University Technical College in Harlow, which specialises in science, technology, engineering and maths.

All education establishments will publish their entry criteria for a place in their sixth form or college within their prospectus or on their website.

If your child is interested in an Apprenticeship or Traineeship there are a wide range of Training Providers working with employers, in Essex, to deliver these programmes. Your child's school will supply information to them in Year 11 on all the opportunities and Training Providers available in the local area or to find out more visit: [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

To find out more about the next steps and all the options available to young people, please visit [www.essex.gov.uk/futurelearning](http://www.essex.gov.uk/futurelearning)

## Post 16 applications from outside of Essex

For applications to post 16 education providers in Essex from outside of the county, including from other countries, please contact each institution directly for support in applying for a place. All education institutions can be found on the website mentioned above.



# Home to school transport

## Will my child qualify for free transport?



### Mainstream secondary schools

**You should consider carefully how your child will get to and from the school(s) you apply for before you make your application for a school place.**

Children will only be entitled to free home to school transport if they are assessed to qualify under the Council's Education Transport Policy.

There is no guarantee that a child will receive home to school transport, even if a sibling or other local child is already receiving it. All applications are assessed individually, and **the policy criteria must be met in all cases.**

Where a child does not qualify, parents are fully responsible for all financial costs and transport arrangements for their child.

The full Education Transport Policy is published on our website [www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport)

**Please note that entitlement to school transport will not take account of any priority admission ('catchment') areas, historically 'designated areas' or feeder schools. Applications are assessed only against the criteria shown in the Education Transport Policy.**

The Council, in accordance with its statutory duty, will provide free home to school transport for secondary aged children to **the nearest available school\*** to their home address, as defined in the Education Transport Policy, if they live 3 miles or more from that school.

It is important to note that the 'catchment' school for an address may not be the nearest school.

ECC will measure using the shortest road route to calculate distances to establish which is the nearest school to the home address. Thereafter, the shortest available walking route is measured to calculate the distance to the nearest school, to determine if the qualifying distance is met for entitlement to transport.

ECC uses a Geographical Information System (GIS) to measure and calculate home to school distances. The measurements produced by the Council's GIS are the definitive distance calculations that the Council will use to determine transport eligibility. Any distances found from online tools (such as a route finder tool) will not be considered.

\* As defined in the Education Transport Policy

# Home to school transport

For children from low income families, the policy is extended to provide transport to any one of the three nearest state secondary schools between 2 and 6 miles from the home. Children from low income groups are defined as those who are in receipt of Universal Credit, with a household income of £7,400 or less.

Entitlement is also extended to those children from low income families who are attending their designated faith school between 2 and 15 miles from home by the shortest road route.

**Unless the low income criteria is met, transport will not be provided to a school if any of the following bullet points apply:**

- **There is any nearer school to the home for which a parent did not apply on the original admission application.**
- **There is any nearer available school which was listed as a lower preference on the original admission application.**
- **The parent has rejected an offer of a place at any nearer school.**

## **What is the nearest school for transport purposes?**

You can find out which school the Council considers to be their nearest school for transport purposes by emailing [educationawards@essex.gov.uk](mailto:educationawards@essex.gov.uk). The email must include your child's name and address and specifically ask which secondary school the Council considers to be the nearest school for transport purposes.

## **Faith schools**

Transport Entitlement is extended to those children from low income families who are attending their designated faith school between 2 and 15 miles from home by the shortest road route.

To evidence that the child is attending a school based on religion or belief, their baptism certificate or a written statement supporting the reasons for selecting a faith school must be provided.

For Roman Catholic (RC) schools, the 'designated faith school' for this purpose is the school which the RC Diocese and the County Council have agreed as the RC school for the area of the home address. In the case of other faiths, transport will only be provided to the nearest school of that faith, if the relevant income and distance criteria are met.

A faith school is considered to be a voluntary aided school or faith academy which, in its admission arrangements, gives priority for admission to children of the faith. Voluntary controlled schools are not considered to be 'faith schools' for the purposes of transport.

## **Selective/Grammar schools**

Home to school transport will be provided to those children from low income families that are attending a selective school and reside 2 or more miles away.

A selective school (i.e. grammar school) is considered to be one which admits all pupils by reference to their academic ability, by means of a selection test or other process to determine academic ability.

The Consortium for Selective Schools in Essex (CSSE) also run transport services to all of their selective schools and you can purchase a termly ticket for this transport. You will be sent an information pack by the CSSE if your child is successful in being offered a selective school place. More information is available at [www.csse.org.uk](http://www.csse.org.uk) or by calling **01245 348257**.

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# Home to school transport

## Points to remember

- There is no guarantee of free school transport even if you live over three miles away from the school and it is the priority admission (catchment) area school.
- Before you apply for a school place and for home to school transport you should read the information made available to you in this booklet and the full Education Transport Policy on the website: [www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport).
- If your child does not qualify for free school transport you may be able to purchase a bus pass or seat on a vehicle operating to the school. You would need to contact the relevant transport operator about this.

It is important that, when making your school application, you consider how your child will get to school if they do not qualify for free home to school transport. Information on alternative transport options can be found at [www.essex.gov.uk/publictransport](http://www.essex.gov.uk/publictransport)

### Sustainable modes of travel

Essex County Council aims to give the people of Essex a better choice when it comes to travelling in and around the county and deliver the environmental, social and health benefits of better managed transport links. For more information about sustainable modes of travel, please visit [www.essex.gov.uk](http://www.essex.gov.uk)

### Scholars' tickets

Some commercial bus services operate under contract to Essex County Council. You may be able to purchase a discounted ticket on these services. For further information go to: [www.essex.gov.uk/publictransport](http://www.essex.gov.uk/publictransport)

### Post 16 transport

Students undertaking a post 16 course of full time education at a sixth form or college will be eligible for transport if the nearest appropriate sixth form or college is more than three miles from home and a contribution is made to the cost of transport. An appropriate sixth form or college is one at which the course, or the majority of the course, is offered.

The contribution of £900 is payable in one annual payment or 3 termly instalments. This charge is reduced to £450 for low income families. For children from low income families, the policy is extended to provide transport to any one of the three nearest state secondary schools to the home address which are between 2 and 6 miles from the home. Children from low income families are defined as those who are in receipt of Universal Credit, with a household income of £7,400 or less. The three mile distance is measured by the nearest 'walking route', which may not be the nearest main route to the school.

The transport arrangements provided for entitled Post 16 students can be found at [www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport)



# Financial support

## Free school meals

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

- **Universal Credit**
- **Income Support**
- **Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance**
- **Pension Guarantee Credit**
- **Employment and Support Allowance, income related**
- **Support under part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act, 1999**

Children who get any of the above benefits in their own right (i.e. they get benefits payments directly, instead of through a parent or guardian) can also get free school meals.

Children under the compulsory school age who are in full time education may also be able to get free school meals. If you are entitled to one of the above benefits you may apply via [www.essex.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals](http://www.essex.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals)

**Please note that the Council does not assess free School Meal applications for all schools. If your school has opted out of the Council's process you will need to apply direct to the school.**

Entitlement to free school meals is strictly confidential. Your entitlement will only be shared with the school your child attends to enable the meal to be provided.

## Uniform grants

The Council only considers and provides financial support for school uniforms in very limited, exceptional circumstances for families who receive one of the qualifying benefits listed below.

Examples of exceptional circumstances that are considered are:

- **Enforced re-housing and associated move of school.**



- **Living in a refuge enforcing a change of school.**
- **Enforced move of school through bullying with evidence from the previous school.**
- **Exceptional circumstances requiring the replacement of a uniform.**

Families must be in receipt of one of the following qualifying benefits:

- **Universal Credit, with a household income of £7,400 or less**
- **Income Support**
- **Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance**
- **Pension Guarantee Credit**
- **Employment and Support Allowance, income related**
- **Support under part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act, 1999**

For more information or to request an application form please visit [www.essex.gov.uk/grants-in-exceptional-circumstances](http://www.essex.gov.uk/grants-in-exceptional-circumstances)

# Special educational needs and Essex special schools

Essex County Council wants to make sure that every child and young person in our schools/academies or settings, whatever their circumstance or ability, has a sense of belonging, feels respected, and is valued for who they are. We want to give children skills, knowledge and confidence to enable them to move on to the next phase of learning and life with success.

**(From Essex schools accessibility strategy 2023 to 2027)**



The Council has additional responsibilities for children with special educational needs. An assessment of these needs may lead to an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) being issued. Most children with an EHCP are educated at their local mainstream school, with appropriate additional support.

Some children with an EHCP, who have significant special educational needs, attend a special school or a mainstream school with additional special provision. For further details about the statutory assessment procedures or special education in Essex please refer to the Local Offer website <https://send.essex.gov.uk/>

The list found on page 30 gives details of the special schools in Essex and an indication of the type of needs catered for by each school. A child is only placed in a special school if they have an EHCP and the school is named in the EHCP. Most special schools take pupils from a wide area of the county. For most children a mainstream school will be able to meet their needs.

Children with an EHCP that names a school are required to be admitted to that school. However, if a child with an EHCP wishes to be considered for a grammar school, the child must sit the relevant selection tests.

**Continued over the page...**

# Special educational needs and Essex special schools

If your child has, or is currently being assessed for, an EHCP you will have discussed the most suitable school and the range of options available with the special educational needs and/or disabilities operations team (SEND).

If you think your child may have special educational needs you should first speak to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) at your child's present school.

**Please note, if your child already has an EHCP, they will be allocated a secondary school place by SEND as part of the review of their EHCP for the transition from primary to secondary school. Whilst you will have the opportunity to express preferences for your preferred school(s) you should do this as part of the discussions following the proposed amended EHCP being issued. You must not submit an application through the main admissions process. However if you wish your child to try for a grammar school please see page 12.**

## Essex Local Offer

The Essex Local Offer brings together helpful information in one place for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), as well as their parents, carers, and the professionals who support them.

The Local Offer is a website and also runs SEND roadshows each month around the county of Essex for face-to-face support.

### Who is it for?

- Children and young people with SEND, from birth to 25 years old
- Parents, carers, and families
- Teachers, support workers, and health professionals

### You can use the Local Offer to:

- understand what to do if you're new to SEND
- understand the support that is available in schools and Early Years settings
- browse for local support and services such

as parent groups, fun activities or specialist healthcare

- find out what to do in a complex situation, for example if you need to appeal a decision
- get advice for young adults with SEND, such as housing and employment support

**You can watch this [YouTube video](#) to find out more about how the Local Offer can help.**

**Explore more** on the Local Offer website to find the support that's right for you: [Essex County Council: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\)/Essex Local Offer](#).

The Local Offer is published as part of the SEND reforms under the Children and Families Act 2014 and will be developed over time, with partners involved reviewing it.

## SEN transport arrangements

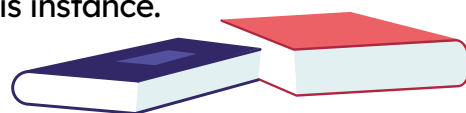
Arrangements for free home to school transport can be found online at [www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport)

In line with statutory duty, Essex County Council provides free home to school transport to the nearest appropriate school with space if the pupil resides 3 miles or more from the school.

If a child lives under the statutory distance criteria, transport cannot be provided unless there is clear evidence that the child's special educational needs are such that you cannot get them to school.

The provision of a passenger assistant (escort) on the vehicle is not automatic and is based on the child's individual needs at the time of assessment.

Where a school is or can be named in a child's EHCP as it is the nearest appropriate school but, as a result of parental preference they prefer an alternative school further away, transport will not be provided to the alternative school. Parents will be required to make their own arrangements to get their child to and from school in this instance.



# Special schools in Essex

## For pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties

| School                         | Serving Area            | Age    |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|
| Lift Pioneer                   | Basildon                | 3 – 19 |
| The Edith Borthwick School     | Braintree               | 3 – 19 |
| Glenwood School                | Castle Point / Rochford | 3 – 19 |
| Lift Columbus (School Campus)  | Chelmsford              | 3 – 19 |
| Lexden Springs School          | Colchester              | 3 – 19 |
| Oak View School                | Epping Forest           | 3 – 19 |
| Harlow Fields School & College | Harlow / Uttlesford     | 3 – 19 |
| Shorefields School             | Tendring                | 3 – 19 |

## For pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties

| School                             | Serving Area            | Age    |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|
| Castledon School                   | Basildon                | 5 – 19 |
| Thriftwood School & College        | Braintree / Chelmsford  | 7 – 19 |
| The Endeavour Co-operative Academy | Brentwood               | 5 – 16 |
| Cedar Hall School                  | Castle Point / Rochford | 4 – 16 |
| Kingswode Hoe School               | Colchester              | 5 – 16 |
| Market Field School                | Colchester              | 4 – 19 |
| Harlow Fields School & College     | Harlow / Uttlesford     | 3 – 19 |

## For pupils with Physical and Neurological Impairments

| School           | Serving Area | Age    |
|------------------|--------------|--------|
| Southview School | All          | 3 – 19 |

## For pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties

| School                      | Serving Area | Age     |
|-----------------------------|--------------|---------|
| Wells Park School           | All          | 5 – 11  |
| Langham Oaks School         | All          | 10 – 16 |
| Ramsden Hall Academy        | All          | 10 – 16 |
| The Greenwell Academy       | Harlow       | 7 – 16  |
| The Sir Geoff Hurst Academy | Chelmsford   | 7 – 16  |

## For pupils with Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties

| School             | Serving Area | Age    |
|--------------------|--------------|--------|
| Grove House School | All          | 8 – 19 |

## For pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder

| School               | Serving Area | Age    |
|----------------------|--------------|--------|
| Chatten Free School  | Witham       | 4 – 19 |
| The Hawthorns School | Chelmsford   | 7 – 16 |

# Useful contacts

## Essex County Council

### For School Admissions enquiries

website: [www.essex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions)

email: [admissions@essex.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@essex.gov.uk)

post: Essex County Council, County Hall,  
Market Road  
Chelmsford, CM1 1QH

### For school transport or free school meals enquiries

websites: [www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport)

[www.essex.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals](http://www.essex.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals)

email: [educationawards@essex.gov.uk](mailto:educationawards@essex.gov.uk)

**If you are entitled to travel and have a question about the contract allocated or tickets, please contact the Passenger Transport Co-ordination Section:**

email: [Passenger.Transport@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Passenger.Transport@essex.gov.uk)



## Other LA's local to Essex

### Southend on Sea City Council

[www.southend.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.southend.gov.uk/admissions)

[admissions@southend.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@southend.gov.uk)

Tel: 01702 212934

### Thurrock Council

[www.thurrock.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/admissions)

[school.admissions@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:school.admissions@thurrock.gov.uk)

Tel: 01375 652652

### Cambridgeshire County Council

[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/admissions)

[admissions@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

Tel: 0345 045 1370

### Hertfordshire County Council

[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions)

[transfer.admisison@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:transfer.admisison@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

Tel: 0300 123 4043

### Suffolk County Council

[www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions)

[admissions@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@suffolk.gov.uk)

Tel: 0345 600 0981

### London Borough of Barking & Dagenham

[www.lbbd.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.lbbd.gov.uk/admissions)

[admissions@lbdd.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@lbdd.gov.uk)

Tel: 020 8215 3004

### London Borough of Havering

[www.havering.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.havering.gov.uk/admissions)

[schooladmissions@havering.gov.uk](mailto:schooladmissions@havering.gov.uk)

Tel: 01708 434343

### London Borough of Redbridge

[www.redbridge.gov.uk/schools/school-admissions](http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/schools/school-admissions)

[admissions@redbridge.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@redbridge.gov.uk)

Tel: 020 8554 5000

# A guide to other information sources

## Department for Education (DfE)

Website: [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

Tel: 0370 000 2288

Information regarding national standards and curriculum

Performance tables and research statistics

Details of Local Education Authorities

Various publications

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## Ofsted

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Tel: 0300 123 1231

School inspection reports

Details of Local Education Authorities

Details of Post 16 Education

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## Independent Schools Council (ISC)

Website: [www.isc.co.uk](http://www.isc.co.uk)

Tel: 020 7766 7070

Information about independent schools

Various publications

Information for parents e.g. fees and contact details

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## The Consortium of Selective Schools in Essex (CSSE)

Website: [www.csse.org.uk](http://www.csse.org.uk)

Tel: 01245 348257

[admin@csse.org.uk](mailto:admin@csse.org.uk)

[transport@csse.org.uk](mailto:transport@csse.org.uk)

Guides to the selection process for parents and children

Dates of the selection test results

Information about selective schools

11+ queries/email correspondence

Bus queries

---

**Exam results and statistical information are only one factor to be considered when deciding on a school for your child.**

**Visiting schools can help you decide on which school(s) you feel are right for your child before making your application.**

# Glossary:

There are often some technical terms, phrases and abbreviations that we have to use as part of the admissions process. Below is a glossary of some of those terms to help you understand what they mean.

---

## Admission Authority

The body responsible for deciding the admission criteria and for allocating school places. For Community and Voluntary-Controlled schools, this is the local authority and for Voluntary-Aided schools, Free Schools and Academies it is the school's governing body or academy trust.

---

## Admissions criteria

The arrangements that are used to prioritise applications and make decisions on how school places are offered.

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## Common Application Form (CAF)

The application you need to complete to apply for a secondary school place, either online or paper.

---

## DfE

The Department for Education, which is the Government department responsible for education and children's services.

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## Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)

A legal document drawn up between the Local Authority, Health and Social Care and a child's family, or a young person between 16 and 25, detailing the young person's needs, relevant support and education provision.

---

## Local authority (LA)

The Council that is responsible for education in each area. In Essex, this is Essex County Council.

---

## Looked after children (LAC)

A child who is in the care of a local authority, either in foster care or a children's home, or a previously looked after child who was adopted or subject to a child arrangement order or special guardianship order immediately following having been looked after.

---

## Normal Admission Round

The period during which parents are invited to express a minimum of three preferences for a place at any state-funded school, in rank order on the common application form provided by their home local authority. This period usually follows publication of the local authority composite prospectus on 12 September, with the deadlines for parental applications of 31 October (for secondary places) and 15 January (for primary places), with subsequent offers made to parents on national offer day.

**Continued over the page...**

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**Ofsted**

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They are responsible for inspecting schools and regulating services which care for children and young people and provide education and skills for learners of all ages.

---

**Oversubscribed school**

When the number of applications a school receives is higher than the number of places available to be offered.

---

**Parent**

A "parent" as described under section 576 of the Education Act 1996 (EA 1996) in relation to a child or young person is defined as: The natural parents of a child, whether they are married or not. Anyone who although not a natural parent has parental responsibility for a child. Any person, who although not a natural parent, has care of a child.

---

**Prospectus**

A document produced by a school, which gives details about the school, the courses they offer and the opportunities available to your child at the school.

---

**Published admission number (PAN)**

The number of pupils a school can admit in its intake year. The figure is set by the admissions authority following a public consultation process and by working in partnership with the LA.

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**Sibling**

Brothers or sisters of the child being applied for. A full definition can be found on page 15 in this booklet.

---

**Statutory**

This means that these rules and duties must be followed by the LA, schools and other agencies involved in the admissions process.



**31 October 2026  
Applications close**

**All online and paper applications  
must have been received  
by this date.**

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The information contained in the booklet is correct as at the time of printing. Policies may change in the light of decisions made by the Schools' Adjudicator, the Education Skills and Funding Agency or any change in the law. An addendum will be available on the website and on request.









This information is issued by Essex  
County Council, School Admissions.

We recommend you apply on line at  
[www.essex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions)

Visit our website: [www.essex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions)

Email: [admissions@essex.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@essex.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0345 603 2200

Postal address:  
**School Admissions**  
**Essex County Council**  
**County Hall**  
**Market Road**  
**Chelmsford**  
**CM1 1QH**

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Published September 2026.



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Essex County Council