

Sandwell Schools Admissions Booklet

**A guide to annual & mid-
year admissions and
appeals.**

**September
2013**



Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

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Introduction

Sandwell Schools Admissions and Appeals Service

What we do

Applying for a school place for your child particularly if it is for the first time, can be a daunting prospect, with many misconceptions about the application process and the schools for which you are applying. We hope that this information will help you to make informed and realistic school preferences.

Our Admissions and Appeals Service administers and coordinates admissions for **all** types of non fee paying Sandwell schools – a total of 111 Primary and Secondary schools, handling around 14,000 annual and in-year applications from Sandwell parents. Our team works to ensure that its admissions and appeals processes and procedures are administered in a professional, fair and efficient manner in order to best serve the needs of Sandwell schools, parents and children. We are continuously striving to refine and improve our service to ensure that we provide a fair and straightforward school admissions system which is transparent, promotes equality and most importantly ensures fair access for all. This is illustrated by 94% of Sandwell parents being offered one of their top three preferred schools last year.

What you need to do

To ensure that you have the best chance to secure a place at one of your preferred schools, it is essential that you meet the [admissions criteria](#) for the school(s) as closely as possible. Make sure you look at the admission criteria for the schools you are interested in – home to school distance (straight line measurement) is one of the most common criterion to be applied so consider how closely your child lives to the school. The distance of the furthest successful applicant will vary year by year depending on how many applicants there are, where they live and the number of applicants with siblings at a particular school.

To assist you in calculating home to school distances, please refer to www.freemaptools.com and select 'How far is it between?' Though this is not 100% accurate, it will give you a **guide** as to how close you live to your preferred school(s). Before confirming your preferred schools please also look carefully at any other criteria e.g. Looked After Child (LAC), Statemented child (SEN), sibling connection, denominational or aptitude criteria, which may apply to you.

Apply online here: www.sandwell.gov.uk/schooladmissions
(ILO)

How we can help

We have a dedicated parent support line (0121 569 6765) and we provide a counter service through our One Stop Shop which is open from 8.00am-5.30pm Monday to Thursday (8.00am – 5.00pm Friday) In cases where you need a ‘face to face’ meeting this may be arranged by calling one of our dedicated team on the parent support line.

How to contact us

School Admissions & Appeals Service
PO Box 16230
Sandwell Council House
Freeth Street
Oldbury
B69 9EX

Tel: 0121 569 6765

Email:

Annual Admissions: annual_schooladmissions@sandwell.gov.uk

Mid Year Admissions: midyear_admissions@sandwell.gov.uk

Appeals: schoolappeals_admissions@sandwell.gov.uk

Types of school

Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools

The Local Authority (LA) is responsible for managing the admissions process at these schools.

Voluntary Aided Schools

The Governing Body is responsible for offering and refusing places at these schools. The LA will deal with the administrative process on the governors' behalf. Voluntary Aided schools participate in the scheme for co-ordinated admissions.

Trust Schools

Trust schools are maintained by LA's and supported by a charitable Foundation or Trust. The Governing Body is responsible for deciding which applicants are offered places, but the LA will deal with the administrative process on the Governors' behalf. Trust schools also participate in the scheme for co-ordinated admissions.

Academies

Academies are independent, state funded schools and the Governing Body is responsible for deciding which applicants are offered places. Like Voluntary Aided and Trust Schools, Academies also participate in the co-ordinated admissions scheme

University Technical College (UTC)

They offer 14-18 year olds the opportunity to take a full time, technically-oriented course of study. They are sponsored by a university and offer clear progression routes into higher education or further learning in work. They are sub-regional, taking students from a wide geographical area.

Types of school (Primary/Secondary)

Voluntary Aided Schools	Trust Schools	Academies
All Saints C.E Primary	Albert Pritchard Infant	Corngreaves Primary
Christ Church C.E Primary	Brickhouse Primary	George Betts Primary Academy
Holy Name R.C Primary	Harvills Hawthorn Primary	Jubilee Park Primary
St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary	Holyhead Primary	Mesty Croft Academy
St Gregory's R.C Primary	Moat Farm Junior	Ocker Hill Junior
St Huberts R.C Primary	Moorlands Primary	Shireland Hall Primary Academy
St John Bosco R.C Primary	Old Hill Primary	Timbertree Primary
St John's C.E Primary	Old Park Primary	Victoria Park Academy
St Margaret's C.E Primary	Park Hill Primary	The ACE Academy
St Martin's C.E Primary	Rowley Hall Primary	Bristnall Hall Academy
St Mary's R.C Primary	Springfield Primary	George Salter Academy
St Matthew's C.E Primary	Tameside Primary	The Ormiston Forge Academy
St Philip's R.C Primary	Wood Green Junior	Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy
Stuart Bathurst Catholic High School	Holly Lodge High School	Oldbury Academy
	Phoenix Collegiate	Q3 Academy
		RSA Academy
		Sandwell Academy
		Shireland Collegiate Academy
		Wood Green Academy

Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools (Primary/Secondary)			
Abbey Infant	Great Bridge Primary	Ocker Hill Infant	Whitecrest Primary
Abbey Junior	Grove Vale Primary	Pennyhill Primary	Yew Tree Primary
Annie Lennard Infant	Guns Village Primary	Perryfields Primary	Holy Trinity C.E Primary
Bearwood Primary	Hall Green Primary	Reddal Hill Primary	St James C.E Primary
Blackheath Primary	Hamstead Infant	Rood End Primary	St Mary Magdalene C.E Primary
Bleakhouse Junior	Hamstead Junior	Rounds Green Primary	St Paul's C.E Primary
Brandhall Primary	Hargate Primary	Ryders Green Primary	Perryfields High School
Burnt Tree Primary	Hateley Heath Primary	Sacred Heart Primary	Wodensborough Community Technology College
Cape Primary	Highfields Primary	Summerhill Primary	
Causeway Green Primary	Joseph Turner Primary	Temple Meadow Primary	
Crocketts Community Primary	King George V Primary	The Priory Primary	
Eaton Valley Primary	Langley Primary	Tipton Green Junior	
Devonshire Infant	Lightwoods Primary	Tividale Community Primary	
Devonshire Junior	Lodge Primary	Tividale Hall Primary	
Ferndale Primary	Lyng Primary	Uplands Manor Primary	
Galton Valley Primary	Moat Farm Infant	Victoria Infant	
Glebefields Primary	Newtown Primary	Warley Infant	
Grace Mary Primary	Oakham Primary	Wednesbury Oak Primary	

Locations of Schools (Primary/Secondary)

Oldbury, Rowley Regis & Smethwick

Oldbury	Rowley Regis	Smethwick
Annie Lennard Infant	Blackheath Primary	Abbey Infant
Bleakhouse Junior	Brickhouse Primary	Abbey Junior
Brandhall Primary	Corngreaves Primary	Bearwood Primary
Burnt Tree Primary	Grace Mary Primary	Cape Primary
Causeway Green Primary	Highfields Primary	Crocketts Community Primary
Christ Church C.E Primary	Oakham Primary	Devonshire Infant
Langley Primary	Old Hill Primary	Devonshire Junior
Lightwoods Primary	Reddal Hill Primary	Galton Valley Primary
Moat Farm Infant	Rowley Hall Primary	George Betts Primary Academy
Moat Farm Junior	Springfield Primary	Rood End Primary
Perryfields Primary	Temple Meadow Primary	Shireland Hall Primary Academy
Rounds Green Primary	Timbertree Primary	St Gregory's R.C Primary
St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary	Tividale Hall Primary	St Matthew's C.E Primary
St Hubert's R.C Primary	Ormiston Forge Academy	St Philip's R.C Primary
St James' CE Primary	St Michael's C.E High	Uplands Manor Primary
Tividale Community Primary		Victoria Park Academy
Warley Infant		Holly Lodge High School
Bristnall Hall Academy		Shireland Collegiate Academy
Oldbury Academy		Sandwell Academy
Perryfields High		
Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy		

Tipton, Wednesbury & West Bromwich

Tipton	Wednesbury	West Bromwich
Glebefields Primary	Albert Pritchard Infant	All Saints C.E Primary
Great Bridge Primary	Harvills Hawthorn Primary	Eaton Valley Primary
Joseph Turner Primary	Holyhead Primary	Ferndale Primary
Jubilee Park Primary	Mesty Croft Academy	Grove Vale Primary
Newtown Primary	Moorlands Primary	Guns Village Primary
Ocker Hill Infant	Old Park Primary	Hall Green Primary
Ocker Hill Junior	Park Hill Primary	Hamstead Infant
Sacred Heart Primary	St John's C.E Primary	Hamstead Junior
St Martin's C.E Primary	St Mary's R.C Primary	Hargate Primary
St Paul's C.E Primary	Tameside Primary	Hateley Heath Primary
Summerhill Primary	The Priory Primary	Holy Name R.C Primary
Tipton Green Junior	Wood Green Junior	Holy Trinity C.E Primary
Victoria Infant	Stuart Bathurst R.C High	King George V Primary
Wednesbury Oak Primary	Wodensborough Community Technology College	Lodge Primary
The ACE Academy	Wood Green Academy	Lyng Primary
RSA Academy		Pennyhill Primary
		Ryders Green Primary
		St John Bosco R.C Primary
		St Margaret's C.E Primary
		St Mary Magdalene C.E Primary
		Whitecrest Primary
		Yew Tree Primary
		George Salter Academy
		Phoenix Collegiate
		Q3 Academy

University Technical College (UTC's)

Currently there are no UTC's in Sandwell.

Schools outside of Sandwell

If you are interested in a school in a neighbouring authority please select from the authorities listed below to go to their website for further information.

[Birmingham](#)

[Dudley](#)

[Walsall](#)

[Wolverhampton](#)

[Worcester](#)

Annual Admissions

How to make your school preferences work for you.

The Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme is a process for children starting reception class, transferring from Infant to Junior schools or starting secondary schools in Year 7. It is a national scheme and applies to all non fee-paying schools in all Council areas. It is designed to make the admissions process simpler and fairer for parents because it means that:

- You can apply for a place at any Infant, Junior, Primary or Secondary school (Community, Voluntary Controlled, Voluntary Aided, Trust or Academy,) on one single [online](#) form. These schools can be in Sandwell or in a neighbouring LA such as Birmingham, Dudley, Walsall or Wolverhampton;
- All parents/carers will receive only one offer of a place

All parents/carers resident in Sandwell **must** apply to Sandwell Admissions Service for a place even if one or more of their preferences is outside the Borough. After the closing date, we will apply the relevant published admission criteria to see whether you qualify for a place at any schools you have requested in Sandwell. We will pass on your details to

Apply online here: www.sandwell.gov.uk/schooladmissions

any neighbouring LA you have requested a place in for them to apply their rules to see if you qualify for a place. When they have told us the results we will look at all your preferences and try to offer you the school you have ranked highest on your application form. If we are unable to offer you one of your preferences we will instead offer a place at the nearest school to your address which still has places available.

If you are not happy with the school offered to you, you will be able to appeal. Appeals will be heard by an Independent Appeals Panel. It is however strongly recommended that you accept the school that has been offered to you even if you decide to appeal for your preferred school. By accepting the school offered, you will guarantee a school place for your child. If you refuse the place, you are very likely to be further reducing the options which may be available to you at a later date. **Accepting the place will have absolutely no bearing on the outcome of your appeal.**

We have put together an example to help illustrate how applications are processed under the national scheme. The following example uses the names of fictitious schools. [Sandwell's Scheme for Co-ordinated Admissions](#) is available to view online.

Paul lives close to Willow Primary School and even closer to Forest Primary School. His parents know that they live a long way from Black Country Catholic Primary School which is usually oversubscribed but they want to see if he will be offered a place there. The school they really prefer is Beech Primary in a neighbouring authority but they mistakenly think they should indicated other schools as higher preference in case Paul fails to be selected for admission to this school.

Preference	School	Paul's Details	School's Admission Criteria Met?	Place Offered?
1	Black Country Primary	Lives 6 miles away	No	No
2	Forest Primary	Lives 1 mile away	Yes	Yes
3	Willow Primary	Lives 2 miles away	Yes	No
4	Beech Primary	Lives 3 miles away	Yes	No
5	Clee View	Lives 1 mile	Yes	No

Preference	School	Paul's Details	School's Admission Criteria Met?	Place Offered?
	Primary	away		
6	Birch Tree Primary	Lives 12 miles away	Yes	No

Paul lives too far from Black Country Primary to be offered a place. He qualified for places at Forest Primary, Willow Primary, Clee View Primary and Birch Tree Primary. He also qualified for a place at Beech Primary. His parents would have preferred a place at Beech Primary but the other schools for which Paul also qualified were a higher preference. He is offered a place at Forest Primary, the highest ranked of the five schools for which he qualified.

If Paul's parents had ranked Beech Primary first they would have been offered a place there.

To ensure that you are best positioned to make *informed* and *realistic* school preferences before making your application, it is strongly advised that you consider the following:

- Don't make your decisions based purely on perception, hearsay or what a school may have been like in the past. Look at the schools' more recent indicators in areas such as development, performance and ethos. If you still have questions about a particular school, then ask the school; if you have a question related to the application process, please contact the School Admissions Parent Support Line (0121 569 6765) and one of our team will be pleased to help.
- Research the school(s) which you may be considering – look at their websites and prospectus, attend their open events and when you are closer to deciding upon your preferred school(s), look carefully at their [admissions criteria](#) and assess how closely you match them. Though qualification through distance and/or sibling criteria is common to many schools' admissions criteria, there may be other criteria specific to the school. Criteria for individual schools can be found in the [determined admission arrangements](#)
- When you have completed your research, make a draft list of the schools for which you intend to apply and then re-check the admissions criteria before applying [online](#).

Apply online here: www.sandwell.gov.uk/schooladmissions

Applying online explained

In Sandwell we have adopted an approach for all applications for a school place September 2014/15 to be done [online](#). Parents/carers can apply from their home, a library or one of the many Sandwell schools that are providing ICT support. The advantages to [applying online](#) are;

- You will receive your offer of a place sooner, via email on offer day.
- You can change your preferences right up to the submission deadline.
- You will receive an electronic receipt as proof of your submission.

[It is essential that you submit your application form before the closing date. If the online application form is not submitted by the closing date your application will be treated as late.](#)

[You can apply on line on the Sandwell website](#)

Guidance for applying online

This guide will help you complete your online application for your child;

[To apply please go to the page on the Sandwell council website.](#)

Before you begin make sure you have the following;

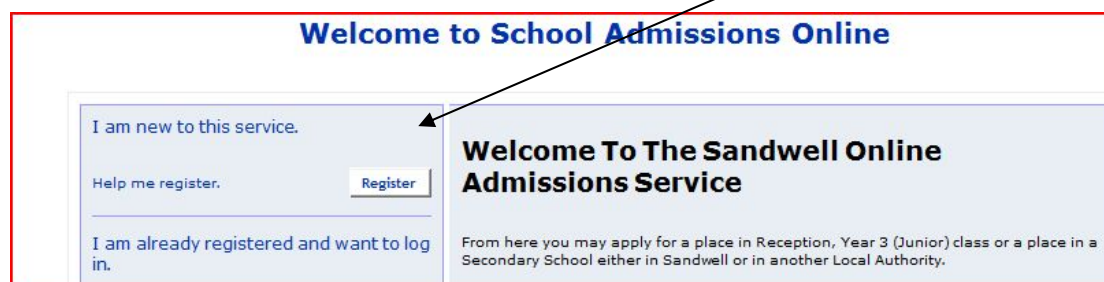
- Any information you have been given about applying for a school place
- Your child's full address (including postcode)
- Your child's date of birth
- If applicable, your child's Unique Identifier (UID)

Step 1

Registration

Apply online here: www.sandwell.gov.uk/schooladmissions
(ILO)

Before you begin you need to register your details, on the [online database](#). To do this, select the register option in the top left hand corner of the screen.



Once you have selected the register option you will go to a new screen and be asked to enter all your details. Once these have been entered you will receive an email confirming your registration and provided with a link to be able to continue to [apply online](#) (see below for example email).

If you need help and advice on setting up an email address please visit the [BBC webwise pages](#) for useful information.

Dear

Thank you for registering with the Sandwell Online Admissions Application Service.

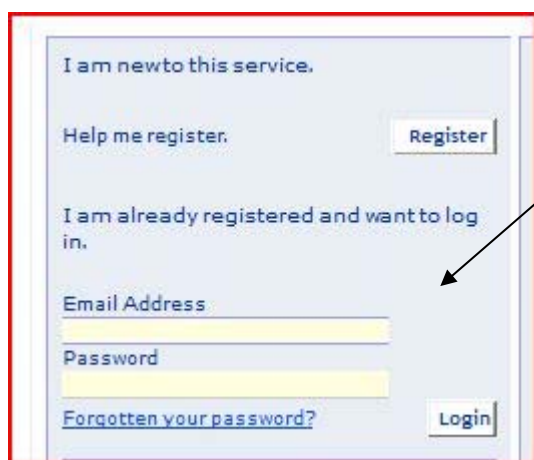
To activate your account we need you to confirm your email address is valid. To do this, click on the link below; this will take you to a page where you can enter your password and login. After you login you will be able to apply for school places.

https://emsonline.lea.sandwell.gov.uk/CCSEnterprise_AdmissionsOnline_live//Account.Mvc/CompleteRegistration/16928__1cc6fc08-de3b-4bdf-b948-f08f841d741b

Please note: if you are unable to click on this link, carefully copy and paste the text into your Internet browser.

Should you experience any further problems, please contact us at annual_schooladmissions@sandwell.gov.uk.

Once you have completed your registration and clicked on the link provided you will then be able to start your application.

A screenshot of a web form for user authentication. The form is enclosed in a red rectangular border. At the top, it says "I am new to this service." followed by "Help me register." and a "Register" button. Below that, it says "I am already registered and want to log in." followed by "Email Address" and "Password" input fields. There is a "Forgotten your password?" link and a "Login" button. A black arrow points from the text above to the "Login" button.

Steps to the application

1. On first screen select "New Application"
2. You will then be prompted to enter the child who the application is for Date of Birth then you will go to the next screen.
3. Select the correct transfer group; open for the DOB you have entered.
4. If you have been supplied with a UID, you need to enter this now then select the next button.
5. The next screen will be pre populated if you have entered a UID, if you have not entered a UID; you now need to complete the page with details about your child.
6. The next screen will ask you to add/check your address. If you entered a UID and the address shown is different to the one your child lives at, please change here. Also you will be able to provide details if you are planning to move house and have a date available.
7. If you are an armed forces/diplomats family you will be asked to confirm this on the address page.

Once complete select next

8. Here you will add the Child's current school (if applicable).
9. This page is where you will add your preferences. When selecting a preference you need to either search the school name or postcode of the school you are looking for or select the authority in which the school is located, this will bring up all the schools against that Local Authority. Click select, next to the school that is required. Once a preference is selected a variety of questions will appear, these will include the reasons why you are making this school a preference, once this has been done you will be given the option to write in the free text box other reasons to support your request for this preference.
10. The screen will then display the current schools that have been selected (you can remove/change your preferences. You can apply for a total of six preferences. When finished selecting, click next.
11. The final part of the application is previewing your application. Here you can either submit or save and finish later. If you do save for later, remember to log back in and submit your application form. If you do not submit by the closing date your form will be treated as late. It is recommended that you print off a copy of the application.
12. If submitting your form you will be asked to read a number of statements and confirm the application is correct.
13. Once submitted you will receive an email confirming your application, if you have not received the email please check your spam. You will also be able to print a copy for your own records.
14. If you need to make any changes to the application you can log into the system and change the details/preferences up until the closing date.

Important Information

- If you have not submitted your application, you will receive a reminder email starting 1 week before the closing date daily.
- You may have to complete [additional forms](#) when you are applying for some Schools and Academies.

Apply online here: www.sandwell.gov.uk/schooladmissions
(ILO)

- The closing dates are;
 - Reception/Junior: 15 January 2014
 - Secondary (Year 7): 31 October 2013
- Any applications received after the closing date will be treated as late.

The Application Process

If you are a Sandwell resident, you will be able to apply online on the [Sandwell's website](#) from 16 September 2013. Don't worry if you haven't got a computer at home, you can apply at one of Sandwell's 19 libraries where staff will be pleased to assist – and will even help you to set up an email account if you don't have one. For details of your local library please call 0121 569 4911 or visit the [library teams website](#). Additionally staff from Sandwell's admissions team will be holding [special sessions to provide help and guidance](#). Alternatively your child's current school may also be able to provide support.

You must include all of your school preferences on your Sandwell form regardless of where the school is located or what type of school it is. If one of your preferred schools is outside Sandwell, then as part of the Coordinated Admissions Scheme, your application will be forwarded to the relevant Local Authority for consideration.

Remember that simply by listing six (the maximum number allowed) school preferences, does not necessarily increase the likelihood of securing the school that you want, it's all about making *informed* and *realistic* preferences.

Timeline for applications

Action	Reception/Junior	Secondary
Application can be submitted from:	16 September 2013	16 September 2013
Deadline for return of all applications: (Failure to return your form by the due date is likely to affect the outcome of your application)	15 January 2014	31 October 2013

Decision e-mails to online applicants:	16 April 2014	3 March 2014
Decision letter to applicants applying on paper forms (posted 2nd class):	16 April 2014	3 March 2014
Date by which you must confirm acceptance of school offer:	30 April 2014	17 March 2014
Any appeal should be received by this date (20 school days following notification that application was unsuccessful):	14 May 2014	28 March 2014
Appeals take place:	June 2014 onwards	May 2014 onwards

Note: some of these dates may vary in other Local Authorities

Applying for a Reception or Junior School place

Children must, **by law**, start school at the beginning of the term after their fifth birthday. However, children can start school in the September of the school year in which they have their fifth birthday, if a place is available.

Parents may delay their child's entry to school, but all children must start school by the term after their 5th birthday. If you want to delay your child's entry to school to after their 5th birthday then please write this on the application form.

Please take particular note that having a place in a nursery class attached to a school does not guarantee a place in the Reception class at that school. In the past some parents have been disappointed as they have not been offered a place at the school where their child attends nursery. You must apply separately for a place in Reception class.

You can apply for up to six schools so please ensure that you complete only ONE form. **Remember: the schools do not all have to be Sandwell schools. If you're a Sandwell resident you can use the form to apply for schools in neighbouring Local Authorities (LA).**

Parents applying for a place in Reception class should note the law governs the maximum size of classes in Key Stage 1 (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2). The law states that it is unlawful for a class in Key Stage 1 to have more than 30 pupils being taught by a single teacher. Although the law also makes reference to very limited circumstances under which exceptions may be made, the LA and Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided and Trust schools in Sandwell will not normally accept more than 30 pupils in a Key Stage 1 class.

If you are not allocated a place at your preferred school because of the restriction, you will be offered a place at the nearest school to your address with places available. You may appeal against the decision to an independent panel but please note that there are **very limited circumstances** under which an appeal may be upheld. You should therefore consider whether your preferred schools are realistic preferences in the light of the information provided in this booklet.

Additional Forms for Primary Schools

If you are applying for a place at a Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled, Trust school, Academy or some schools outside of Sandwell you may have to provide further information by filling in an additional form and/or enclosing a baptism certificate and returning them with your form. Remember you may also have to complete an additional form if you are applying for a place on medical grounds. **The table shows you where you should send your additional form and any other required documents. Please read this carefully before submitting your application.**

- If you wish to apply for a place at a Voluntary school on denominational grounds you must also complete the supplementary form available to [download online](#). If you intend to apply for more than one Voluntary school you will need to complete a separate form for each school.
- You will also need to complete an additional form if you feel that your child may be eligible for a place in a Sandwell Community or Controlled school on medical grounds. A form for this is also available to download. Please note that a place will only be granted on medical grounds if the preferred school is the only or most appropriate to meet the child's needs. All applications under this criterion will be assessed by the LA to decide whether the

child's needs can be met most appropriately by the preferred school.

- For some schools outside Sandwell you may need to fill in some different forms. To find out whether this applies to your preferences please contact the school direct or speak to the admissions team in the relevant LA. Contact details are included in the "[school admission teams in your area](#)" section in this guidance.
- As a Sandwell resident you can apply for a place at any school [online](#). You are strongly advised to contact the appropriate LA if you are applying on medical, social or denominational grounds for schools outside Sandwell as the omission of supplementary forms may affect the chances of your application being successful.

Form	School	What to do when complete
Medical Form	All Schools	Return form direct to School Admissions (Local Authority)
Declaration Form to support application on denominational grounds, Church of England (ASU 75/A)	All Saints CE Primary Christ Church CE Primary St John's CE Primary St Margaret's CE Primary St Matthews's CE Primary	Return to named school on form. Requires one form for each Church of England school on application.
Declaration Form to support application on denominational grounds, Catholic (ASU 76/C)	Holy Name Catholic Primary St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary St Gregory's Catholic Primary St Hubert's Catholic Primary St John Bosco Catholic Primary St Mary's Catholic Primary St Philip's Catholic Primary	Return to named school on form. Requires one form for each Catholic school on application.

What to do and when to do it

Between September 2013 and early January 2014

1. Visit the schools you think you might like your child to go to. Talk to the Head Teacher and get a copy of their school's prospectus.
2. Decide which schools you would like your child to go to. It is always best to consider more than one school because popular schools can have more children wanting to go there than there are places available.

By 15 January 2014

3. Complete an [on-line application](#) (and [additional forms](#) if necessary).
4. After 15 January 2014 we will look at all the completed applications.
5. On 16 April we will send you an e-mail to let you know which school we can offer your child. We will also write to you if we have not been able to meet your first preference. Letters will be sent by second class post. If you have not received your letter within 1 week of the posting date you may obtain a copy from the Admissions and Appeals Service Parent Support Line (**0121-569 6765**). Because of Data Protection considerations we cannot tell you the outcome of your application by telephone. If you need to collect a copy of the letter because you have not received the original you will need to provide proof of your identity such as a passport, driving licence and utility bill for the address provided on the application **and** your child's birth certificate or passport. Otherwise, we will post the letter to the address provided on the application.
6. Normally we will be able to offer you a place at one of the schools you have listed. Sometimes this is not possible so we will try to find a school, with places available, as close as possible to your home. You are advised to apply to a number of schools. Your chances of being offered a place at any particular school are not improved by limiting your preferences.
7. You may appeal against a decision not to offer a place at any school listed on your application form. Parents should inform Admissions and Appeals in writing if they wish to be considered for new preferences or

be placed on the waiting lists for lower preferred schools when a higher preference has been offered.

8. Your child's name will automatically be placed on the waiting list(s) for any higher preference school we have been unable to offer you and this list will be kept until the end of the Autumn term. Some self governing schools and schools outside of Sandwell may keep waiting lists for a longer period.

[For further details on admission arrangements for individual schools please click here.](#)

Applying for a place in a Junior School

We find that most children already at an Infant school want to go to the nearby Junior School. In Sandwell priority will be given to pupils who already attend the linked Infant school and also to those who have brothers or sisters attending either the linked Infant school or the Junior school for which they are applying at the time of admission:

You can only apply for a place at a **Junior school**. If you wish to apply for a year 3 place in a Primary school, this can be done by applying for a [mid year transfer](#).

- Abbey Infant -Abbey Junior
- Albert Pritchard Infant -Wood Green Junior
- Devonshire Infant -Devonshire Junior
- Hamstead Infant -Hamstead Junior
- Moat Farm Infant -Moat Farm Junior
- Ocker Hill Infant -Ocker Hill Junior
- Victoria Infant -Tipton Green Junior
- Warley Infant - Bleakhouse Junior

For information on each primary school, such as, historical preferences, how places are allocated and appeals information please click on the link below.

[Primary admission preference data by school & also admission priorities](#)

Applying for a Nursery place

Sandwell's School Admissions Service **do not** process applications for nursery places. Application forms are available from individual providers. If you wish to speak to someone about nursery education you should contact the Sandwell Family Information Service, Training and Development Centre, Oldbury B69 4PJ (Tel: 0121-569 4914), or [Sandwell Quality Early Years and Childcare Services](#) on 0121-569 4960.

If you are applying for a place at a school nursery, you **must** apply separately to the school.

Applying for a Secondary School place (Year 7)

If you are a Sandwell resident and the parent or carer of a Year 6 child, you will need to apply for a Secondary school place. Residents from neighbouring authorities applying for Sandwell schools must include their Sandwell preferences on their own authorities' application form.

If you are a Sandwell resident you should apply [online](#). You must include all of your school preferences on your Sandwell form regardless of where the school is located or what type of school it is. If one of your preferred schools is outside Sandwell, then as part of the Coordinated Admissions Scheme your application will be forwarded to the relevant Local Authority for consideration.

- Applications can be submitted from: **16 September 2013**
- Deadline for return of online applications: **31 October 2013**
- Decision e-mails to online applicants: **3 March 2014** (a letter will also be sent out confirming your place)
- Appeals: **Late Spring and early Summer terms 2014**

Note: *these dates may vary in other Local Authorities.*

If you are not happy with the school we have offered you, you may appeal. It is however strongly recommended that you accept the school that has been offered to you even if you decide to appeal for your preferred school. By accepting the school offered, you will guarantee a school place for your child. If you refuse the place, you are very likely to be further reducing the options which may be available to you at a later

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date. **Accepting the place will have absolutely no bearing on the outcome of your appeal should you choose to make one.**

[For further details on admission arrangements for individual schools please click here.](#)

Additional Forms for Secondary (Year7) Academies & Voluntary Controlled Schools

Form	School	What to do when complete
<u>Medical Form</u>	Schools that have Medical in the Criteria- This form is used when applying for a place on medical grounds. Medical grounds are considered only by the following schools: George Salter Academy Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy Ormiston Forge Academy Perryfields High St. Michael's Wodensborough CTC The Ace Academy Bristnall Hall Academy Holly Lodge High Phoenix Collegiate Stuart Bathurst RC High	Return form direct to School Admissions (Local Authority)
<u>George Salter Academy Form</u>	George Salter Academy	Return form to George Salter Academy
<u>Oldbury Academy</u>	Oldbury Academy	Return form to Oldbury Academy
<u>Sandwell Academy</u>	Sandwell Academy	Return form to Sandwell Academy
<u>Shireland Collegiate Academy</u>	Shireland Collegiate Academy	Return form to Shireland Collegiate Academy
<u>St Michaels CE High</u>	St Michaels CE High	Return to School Admissions (Local Authority)

Apply online here: www.sandwell.gov.uk/schooladmissions
(ILO)

Form	School	What to do when complete
Stuart Bathurst RC High	Stuart Bathurst RC High	Return form to Stuart Bathurst RC High
Wood Green Academy	Wood Green Academy	Return form to Wood Green Academy

For information on each secondary school, such as, historical preferences, how places are allocated and appeals information please click on the link below.

[Secondary admission preference data by school & also admission priorities](#)

Frequently asked questions (Primary & Secondary)

How are places allocated?

There may be more requests for places at some schools than there are places available. If this happens places will be offered by using the published admission priorities.

Although the LA is arranging admissions on behalf of the Governing Bodies of academies, trust, foundation and voluntary aided primary schools in Sandwell the admission priorities for these schools may be different from those used by the LA. Details of admission arrangements for Sandwell schools are included [here](#). You should read these closely before deciding which school(s) you would like your child to attend. If you wish to apply for a place at a school outside Sandwell you are strongly advised to consult the prospectus for the individual school or the prospectus published by the LA in which the school is situated.

If we receive more applications for schools than they have places available we use the priorities to decide who we can offer places to. We allocate places to those who best meet the priorities, for example whether a child has a brother or sister at the school or lives closer to the school than other applicants. Having sorted applications into these groups we measure the distance of each applicant to all Sandwell schools listed on the application. We are then able to assemble a list which runs in priority order and, within each priority order, distance between home and school. For voluntary aided schools and academies in Sandwell and schools outside Sandwell this process is carried out by the school's governors and/or appropriate LA.

We do this regardless of whether you have ranked a school first or last on the application form. We then see whether your child is sufficiently high enough on each school's priority list to be able to offer a place. If we can offer only one of your preferences we will do so. If we are able to offer more than one of your preferences we will offer you the preference which you ranked highest.

If we can offer none of your preferences we will offer your child a place at the school which is nearest to your home and which has places available after all preferences have been met. If you choose not to accept the offer we have made you can put your case to an independent appeals panel

Please explain to your child that we cannot always give them a place in the school they prefer. This can help make sure they are not too upset if we cannot give them the school they want.

If you have been offered and have accepted a place at a school and then request a place at another school because you are changing address, or if a place becomes available at a school you have ranked higher the Admissions and Appeals Service will assume that you do not wish to keep the place previously offered to you and that your new request will override any previous requests. In this case the place previously offered to your child will be offered to another child.

How many children can be admitted to each school?

Every school has a "Published Admission Number". This is the number of children the school is able to admit in that year. This can be found on the respective [Primary/Secondary](#) information sheets.

What are my chances of being offered my first preferred school?

In the admission year 2013/2014 we were able to meet 88.7% reception and 76.6% of year 7 first preferences that were received on time. We will attempt to meet parental preferences wherever possible but cannot always meet all requests.

Do Sandwell Schools have catchment areas?

None of Sandwell's schools (with the exception of Wood Green Academy), has a catchment area. Though home to school distance forms a key part of all Sandwell schools admissions criteria, it is important to remember that distance (i.e. the furthest distance that an applicant lived from their preferred school but was still offered a place),

will vary from year to year dependent upon how many people apply and where they live.

Are school places allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis?

No, all places are allocated depending on how closely you meet the criteria for that school (but you must also ensure that your application is on time).

I don't want my child to go to a "bad" school

The vast majority of Sandwell schools have now been graded as satisfactory or above following [Ofsted inspections](#). Each school has pupils who achieve very high standards academically. However, a good or a poor reputation can often be gained by schools based on evidence/memories from years gone by. Things can change in schools very quickly, so a school that you went to 20 years ago may be very different to the school as it is today. Also, many people look at GCSE results tables to see how well a school is performing - however, this is only an *indicator* of a schools performance and *does not* give the complete picture. Unless you have personal experience (and even if you have), go and visit the schools. You may be pleasantly surprised at what you find.

Catholic schools are only for Catholic children

This is not true. Baptised Catholic children do get priority for places in Catholic Secondary schools, but if there are places still available then non-baptised children can be offered a place.

Can a school let me know how my application is progressing?

Your preferred school will not know how your application is progressing as the process is run by the Admissions and Appeals Service.

We will email you to let you know which school we are able to offer you on **3 March 2014** (for year 7 secondary places) or **16 April 2014** (for reception or junior school places).

What happens if I provide false information?

Each year a very small number of parents give intentionally misleading information to obtain a place at their preferred school, e.g. the address of a relative living nearer the school.

Information from parents is verified and if found to be fraudulent or intentionally misleading, places offered will be withdrawn.

Last year and in previous years the verification process revealed a number of preferences involving false addresses. These were investigated and in proven cases places were withdrawn.

What happens if I wish to add preferences or change the order of my preferences?

If you have sent us your form on time and wish to add a new preference and/or change the order of your preferences before the closing date it will be necessary for you to put your request in writing to the Admissions and Appeals Service. However, if you have applied online you may log on to the [site](#) to change your details.

Please do not complete a new application. If you request us to make any changes to your preferences after the closing date then these will only be considered as “on time” under the following circumstances:

- When your child has a medical condition which was not present when the previous application was submitted and when your child’s needs can be most appropriately met at the preferred school.
- When your child has a sibling attending the preferred school (not in the Nursery) who will be attending the school in September.
- When you have moved home within Sandwell to an address more than 2 to 3 miles (dependent upon the age of your child) from your previous address after the closing date. (Please provide proof of change of address with your application).

If none of the above criteria apply then your new request will be considered as a late application and will be dealt with after all those applications received by the closing date have been considered. In these circumstances, we will process your original application, including your original preferences and will offer you a school place accordingly. If your request is received after 1 March 2014 (primary)/4 January 2014 (secondary) but before 16 April 2014 (primary)/3 March 2014 secondary, it will not be possible to change your child’s records until we have sent our letters informing parents of the outcome of their application. At this point we will look at your revised list of preferences and try to meet them. If the school offered is unsuitable you will be able to tell us and we

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will try to find a more suitable alternative. You will also be able to appeal for a place in your preferred school(s).

Why can't Sandwell residents be given priority for Sandwell schools?

Often parents/carers live in one LA's area but are closer to schools in a neighbouring Authority. In 1989 the Court of Appeal ruled (the Greenwich Judgement) that priority may not be given to children simply because they live within the area of a particular LA. This means that applications for Sandwell schools by parents/carers living outside Sandwell must be considered equally.

Can I apply for a place at a school outside Sandwell?

Yes. If you wish your child to go to a school outside Sandwell, you should contact the Head Teacher to arrange a visit. Applications by Sandwell residents for schools outside of Sandwell must be included on the Sandwell application form. If particular schools outside Sandwell require the completion of additional forms you will need to complete these and return them to the school direct otherwise your application may be invalid.

[Information about schools in other authorities.](#)

What will happen if I ask to be considered for a different school to that which I have been offered?

If you have been offered and have accepted a place at a school and are then offered a place at a different school the Admissions and Appeals Service will assume that you do not wish to keep your earlier preference or any place previously offered to you and that your new request will override any previous requests and you will lose the place previously offered.

What help is available for me to decide which schools to apply for?

Before you decide on a particular school, you should visit the schools in your area ([details of secondary school open days/evenings](#)). These are arranged for you to look around the school and ask questions which are important to you and your child. Please wait until you have visited all the schools you are interested in before applying.

You can also get advice from the School Admissions Parent Support line on 0121 569 6765.

If you would like information on how particular schools are performing, you can get a summary of the latest Ofsted report from the school, or see full reports on [Ofsted's website](#). You can find information on the school's exam results on the [Department of Education website](#), on the school's website or in their prospectus.

What will happen if my child can be offered a place at more than one of the schools I want?

If your child can be offered more than one school you have listed, we will offer a place at your highest-ranked preference.

What will happen if you can't offer my child a place at any of the schools I want?

If we are unable to give you any of your preferred schools, we will offer your child a place at another secondary school with available places. This may include church schools and single sex schools. If you do not apply for a local school and it becomes full, you may find that the school we allocate your child is some distance from your home.

Can I appeal against this decision?

You can make a [formal appeal](#), to an Independent Appeals Panel, against any decision not to admit your child to a school that you have listed on your preference form. You can obtain appeal forms and more information from us for all schools, except RSA Academy, Sandwell Academy, or Stuart Bathurst. These schools have their own appeal forms; therefore, you must contact them direct.

You cannot appeal for a school that you did not list on your application form unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Do schools keep waiting lists?

All schools keep waiting lists until the end of December. The waiting list will be made up of any applicant who has applied for a place at a school but has been offered a lower preference or offered a school not expressed as a preference. Your child cannot be placed on a waiting list for a school you did not apply for unless there are exceptional circumstances. If any places become available, they will be filled in line with the admission policy and not how long your child's name has been on the list. It is possible for names to fall down the list if other names are added from parents who qualify higher within the admission criteria.

What will happen if I miss the closing date for applications?

If we receive your application after the closing date (31 October 2013 for secondary year 7 places and 15 January 2014 for reception and junior school places), we will only consider it if we receive it before decisions about offers of a place are made by 4 January 2014 (secondary)/ 1 March 2014 (primary) and where there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include, for example, a single parent who has been ill for some time, a family moving into the area, or a family returning from abroad.

If we receive your application after the decisions about offers have been made we will only consider your application if there are exceptional circumstances as mentioned above or if one of your preferences is for an undersubscribed school.

We will send late applications to other admission authorities, but they may not be able to consider them. You may also need to check with neighbouring authorities to see how they treat late applications.

What happens if I change my mind after I have submitted my application?

If you want to change your preferences after the closing date on 31 October 2013 (secondary) 15 January 2014 (primary), you can do so if there are exceptional circumstances, such as a house move. We will consider your changed preferences only if we receive them before we have made decisions on offers of places by 4 January 2014 (Secondary)/1 March 2014 (Primary).

Once we have made decisions or after allocations have been completed, we will only consider changes of preferences in very limited circumstances:

- there are exceptional circumstances, such as a house move;
- the late application or change of preference is for a school with unfilled places

You need to put your request in writing, including your child's details, what your original preference(s) were, what you would like to change your preference(s) to and the reasons why.

You may need to check with neighbouring authorities to see how they treat changes of preferences.

What happens if I move house during the allocation process?

We hold records of all children attending Sandwell schools. If the address you give on the application form is different from that which we have on our records, or if you move house during the application process, we will ask you for proof of your house move. This would normally be a council tax, gas, electricity or phone bill, or a child allowance or benefit document.

When considering applications, the address we use is the 'child's permanent address at the time of admission'.

If you expect to move by September 2014 but you are still living at your current address when you apply, we can only consider your application from the new address if you provide one of the following documents.

- Proof of exchange of contracts on your new property and a solicitor's letter to confirm the sale of your previous property.
- A rental agreement on the new property and confirmation of the ending of your tenancy agreement for the previous property.

We will not accept mortgage offers or letters from estate agents as proof. If your house purchase or rental has not reached a stage where you can provide these documents by the beginning of January, we will consider your application from your current address.

Can my school place be withdrawn once it has been made?

Once we have made an offer of a school place, we would only withdraw the offer in limited circumstances. These include:

- If you have not accepted the place you have been offered within a reasonable time (if applicable)
- If you have deliberately made a fraudulent or misleading application (for example, you have falsely claimed that your child lives in the priority area for the school, which means that a child with a stronger claim has not been offered a place); or
- If your child has been offered a place by the Local Authority by mistake.

Once my child has been offered a school place, how do I find out about travel to school?

Apply online here: www.sandwell.gov.uk/schooladmissions

You can contact our Education Benefits team on 0121 569 8331 for information.

Supplementary Application Forms ([Primary/Secondary](#))

If you are applying for a denominational school, you must also fill in the school's supplementary application form and return it to the school(s) by 31 October 2013, or date specified on form, for each faith place or Academy you apply for. If you do not do so, the school governors may only consider your application in the last category of their oversubscription criteria.

If you are applying for a school in a different local authority, please check with them to see whether you need to complete any other supplementary forms.

School Open Days/Evenings

Secondary schools in Sandwell often hold open evenings for parents/carers who are interested in their children attending that school.

[Here is an up to date list of open evenings for Secondary Schools.](#)

Mid Year Admissions

Moving your child to another school is a very serious step to take. It can affect your child in many ways. It is important that you consider whether a transfer is really the best option. Before deciding to move your child to another school, please read this information carefully.

Many things that worry parents and pupils can be sorted out without the need to move schools. Talking to your child and staff at your child's present school should avoid a transfer between schools in almost all circumstances.

If you child is unhappy at school:

Speak to their class teacher or make an appointment to see the Head Teacher.

• If you have a complaint about the school, the teachers or the work your child is doing:

If it cannot be resolved by the teaching staff, put your complaint in writing to the school's Governors.

• **If your child is not attending school:**

Talk to your child about why they do not want to attend and speak to their teachers. You can also talk to an Attendance Officer.

• **If your child has special educational needs:**

Speak to the teacher in charge of special needs (SENCO) or contact the Special Educational Needs Team.

• **If your child is about to be excluded:**

Speak to your child's class teacher or make an appointment to see the Head Teacher for advice.

There are strict regulations about the transfer of children between schools and the circumstances under which they can be taken off the school's register.

In the majority of cases children may not be taken **off** the schools register until they have been taken **on** to the roll of another school. If parents are concerned that their child has been taken off the school's register inappropriately the Attendance Service can provide advice. Staff may be contacted on **0845 352 7558**.

If you suspect that your child may be being bullied:

- Talk to your child – ask them how they are – is there anything worrying them.
- If they report an incident – write it down.
- Has this happened before?
- It is very important they know that it is not their fault.
- If it happened at school – tell your child's teacher.
- Keep a record.
- Encourage your child to tell someone straight away.

If you believe your child is being bullied at school, it is very important to keep school informed of any incidents so that they can deal with the situation effectively.

If, after speaking to your child's teacher and allowing time for actions to be taken, you are not satisfied with the way the matter was dealt with, contact the Head Teacher and arrange a meeting. The Head Teacher should investigate the matter and action should be taken.

However, if after speaking with the Head Teacher you are still not satisfied with the outcome and you still feel your child is being bullied, your next action should be to contact the Chair of Governors and ask them to investigate.

Finally, if after speaking to the Head Teacher and the Chair of Governors, you are still unhappy put your complaint in writing. You may view the Council's complaints procedure at Customer Services PO Box 2374 Oldbury West Midlands B69 3DE

Tel: 0845 359 7510 **Email:** contact@sandwell.gov.uk

If you feel that a change of school is unavoidable **and you live in Sandwell** you should ask your current Sandwell school for an application to transfer school unless you wish to apply for a school within the Birmingham, Walsall or Wolverhampton area. If your child does not currently attend a Sandwell school you should obtain your form from the Admissions and Appeals Service or one can be downloaded from our website.

When you have completed the first part of the form please ask your child's current school to add the appropriate information to the second half of the form. You do not have to share your application form with your child's current school if you do not wish to do so but if the second part of the form is not completed this may delay the processing of your application.

All completed application forms must be sent to the Admissions and Appeals Service unless you are applying for a school within the Birmingham Walsall or Wolverhampton area or live outside of Sandwell.

If you are applying for a school located within the Birmingham or Walsall area you must request an application form directly from your preferred school. If you are applying for a school within the Wolverhampton area you must request your application form from the Wolverhampton LA. If you do not live in Sandwell then you should speak to your home LA **before** applying for a school place.

How applications are processed

The Admissions and Appeals Service receive applications from parents on a daily basis. We receive information about pupil numbers in schools on a weekly basis. To ensure that we consider applications for places

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fairly we will collect any applications received during a particular week and consider them against the pupil numbers which we receive from the school at the end of that week. If there is more than one application for a single vacancy in a Community or Controlled School we will apply the admission priorities to work out which applicant can be offered a place. If your application is for a Sandwell Community or Controlled school only we will attempt to process your application within 5 working days after the week in which the application is considered. If we are unable to meet any of your preferences your letter will contain a formal refusal, a statement about parents rights of appeal and, if possible, a place At an alternative school which is near to your home address or a list of schools with places available in the appropriate year group.

If it is not possible to offer a place at your preferred school you may appeal against this decision to an independent appeal panel (see appeals section).

The Council is not the Admissions Authority for all schools in Sandwell. This means that we must consult the Governors of Voluntary Aided, Trust and Foundation Schools and Academies about vacancies and this can sometimes take some time to complete. We also have to consult other Local Authorities about vacancies in their area if we receive applications for schools outside Sandwell. This process can significantly affect the time taken to process an application.

Fair Access

Although we hope that all children can start at school and continue until they transfer to secondary education there are some circumstances when this progression through school is interrupted. This could be because of a change of address to another part of the Borough or country, where children have especially challenging behaviour or who have been permanently excluded and cannot find another school place.

All LA's are required to have a "Fair Access" Protocol in place. This ensures that education placements can be made for vulnerable, excluded or "Hard to Place" pupils as quickly as possible. It also ensures that pupils are placed fairly and equitably across the education establishments in the LA.

In Sandwell these arrangements are overseen through "panels" that have been set up especially for this purpose. These meet throughout the academic year.

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Children subject to the Fair Access Protocol take precedence over children who may already be included in the waiting list for a particular school.

All Schools in Sandwell belong to these panels, with Head Teachers or other senior members of staff in attendance. They use their expertise to determine the most appropriate education placement to meet the needs of young people, taking into account parental preferences.

Parents/Carers have the right to Independent Appeal if the panel does not allocate a preference made. The rationale behind this decision is shared with the Independent Appeal Panel and will be taken into account as part of their decision-making.

Occasionally, and only in exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to refuse an application made during the term for a place at a particular school even though there are places available because the school has a particular concentration of children with challenging behaviour AND the school:

- Requires Special Measures or has, within the last 2 years, come out of them.
- Has been identified by Ofsted as requiring significant improvement and given a “notice to improve”.
- Is subject to a formal warning notice by the Local Authority.

In the event of these circumstances applying, and when the child is felt to be “challenging” we will follow the Fair Access protocol.

Application forms can be downloaded;

[Primary](#)

[Secondary](#)

Appeals

We always try to offer you a place for your child at the school you prefer but there are times when we are unable to meet any of your preferences. In these cases we either offer your child a place in an alternative Sandwell Community/Controlled school or include with your

letter a list of the nearest Sandwell schools to your home which, at the time of writing the letter, has places available.

If we cannot offer your child a place at the school or schools you prefer, you have the right to appeal to an independent appeal panel. Please note that you are strongly advised not to give up the place offered to you – giving up a place will not improve your chances of your appeal being successful and you may be without a school place at all if your appeal is unsuccessful. If you do appeal you have the right to attend the appeal hearing. Different arrangements apply for different schools. If we have had to refuse an application for a place at a Sandwell school, (with the exception of those listed below), and you wish to appeal against this decision, or require further information about the appeals process, you should contact the Sandwell Admissions and Appeals team on 0121 569 6765.

If we have had to refuse an application for a place at any of the schools listed below **you should contact the school directly to request an appeal and the** school will make arrangements for your appeal to be heard.

- Christ Church CE Primary School
- St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School
- St Huberts Catholic Primary School
- St Margaret's CE Primary School
- St Matthews CE Primary School
- St Philips Catholic Primary School
- Alexandra High School and 6th Form College
- Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy
- RSA Academy
- Stuart Bathurst Catholic High School College of Performing Arts

In addition, it is also most important that you complete the reply slip included with your letter to let us know your intentions. You should send the completed slip to Admissions and Appeals at the address shown on your letter.

Schools outside Sandwell

If we have had to refuse an application for a place at a school in another Local Authority you should complete the reply slip, return it to Admissions and

Appeals and also contact the relevant LA. Staff there will guide you through the appeal process for that LA. [Details of neighbouring LA's are listed here.](#)

The Independent Appeals Panel

The Appeals Panel is independent of the Local Authority (LA) and individual schools. The Panel to consider appeals for Community and Controlled schools is arranged by Democratic Services of the Council. The Panel will consist of 3 or 5 members. You will be invited to attend to say why you would like your child to go to a particular school rather than the one offered. There will also be someone representing the Local Authority and a clerk from Democratic Services in attendance.

At the meeting the LA officer will explain why a place at the preferred school has been refused. You will then be invited to explain why you think a place should be given.

The decision of the Panel is binding on parents, the LA and schools. The Council, Councillors and even Members of Parliament are unable to change its decision.

Infant Class Size Legislation

The Government has introduced legislation which limits the size of an infant class (a class in which the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6 or 7 during the school year) to 30 pupils per school teacher. Only in very limited circumstances can admission over this limit be allowed. This legislation has also restricted the grounds on which an appeal panel is able to agree an appeal where the class in question has reached the 30 limit. Therefore, in considering whether to appeal against the decision you may wish to note the following which is contained in the DFE Code of Practice on Appeals:

The independent panel may only uphold the appeal where:

- a) it finds that the admission of additional children would not breach the infant class size limit; or

- b) it finds that the admission arrangements did not comply with admissions law or were not correctly and impartially applied and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied or had been correctly and impartially applied; or

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(ILO)*

c) it decides that the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

As a result of this legislation only a small number of appeals are successful (an average of just 4.2% in Sandwell over the last 3 years).

Appeals timetable

For both primary and secondary schools we aim to hold all appeal hearings within 40 school days of the deadline for submitting an appeal. In some exceptional circumstances we may need to hold hearings after this date.

You will be given 10 days notice of an appeal hearing date and time.

The decision

You should be made aware of the appeal decision within five school days unless there is a good reason why the decision has been delayed.

Appeals for heavily oversubscribed schools can last for up to two weeks. You will be notified of the decision no later than five school days of the last hearing unless there is good reason why the decision has been delayed.

Which forms do I complete if I want to appeal?

a) Forms for Annual Appeals will be available after the offer letters are sent out.

b) Mid year appeals in respect of applications made for year groups other than in a) above, will be heard regularly throughout the year. Although the Council and Governing Bodies attempt to arrange meetings of appeals panels as quickly as possible, parents should note that it is unlikely that an appeal will be heard sooner than 30 school days from the date on which the appeal is lodged. [The appeal form you need is available here.](#)

Benefits

Home to School Transport

NB. Transport information in this section is correct at the time of printing but it is possible that changes may be made before or after the beginning of the school year in September 2014.

Today in Sandwell more than 60% of pupils walk to school - which is above the West Midlands and national averages.

Sandwell Council is committed to improving the journey to school for all young people in the Borough and to promoting sustainable and healthier travel, by working with pupils, students, parents, and schools. There are more than 45,000 young people travelling to more than 100 schools in Sandwell each day – that's about 20 million journeys every year! Even a small change in these travel patterns can and will make a big difference to us all. Already a lot is being done - but we can all do more.

For all information on sustainable travel and Home to School Travel in Sandwell visit our [webpage](#)

Parental Preference and School Transport

Transport is provided free of charge for pupils of secondary school age travelling over the statutory walking distance to/from the main entrance of their nearest appropriate school. The Council recognises its obligations under the Education Act 1996 and Education and Inspections Act 2006 to comply with parental preferences regarding choice of school. **However, parents/carers making a preference for a school further away from their home than the nearest appropriate school available will be responsible for transport costs.** (This may not be necessarily within the Borough of Sandwell.)

Information relating to Sandwell's Home to School Transport Policy are detailed below.

Transport Assistance to Mainstream Schools

Free transport will be provided where:

- The pupil is a Sandwell resident, and,
- The school is the **nearest** appropriate school with places available, and is,

- More than three miles from the pupil's home, by the shortest pedestrian route, for pupils between 11 and 16.

Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Legislative changes to home to school transport provision).

In accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the LA introduced changes to home and to school transport provision with effect from September 2008. One of the aims of the Act is to secure fair access to schools, especially for children from low-income groups where lack of affordable transport can act as a barrier to choice.

Low-income groups are defined as those who are entitled to free school meals or those families who are entitled to the maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

Additional Free Transport Eligibility

- Children of secondary school age, aged between 11-16, from low income families will be eligible for free home to school transport to one of their three nearest schools where they live more than two miles, but less than six miles from that school.
- Children of secondary school age, aged between 11-16, from low income families will also be eligible to free home to school transport to the **nearest** school of their religion or denomination, preferred on the grounds of the parent's religion or philosophical belief, where they live more than two miles and less than fifteen miles from that school. The parent/carer will have to be able to demonstrate adherence to the faith of the school, as described in the section "Transport to Denominational Schools" above.
- The two mile distance will be determined using the shortest available walking route. The six mile and fifteen mile distances will be determined using the shortest available road route.

NB

Transport arrangements offered before the start of the school year on low-income grounds are provisional and may need to be withdrawn if circumstances change. **Parents/carers must therefore note that there is no guarantee that free transport will be provided throughout their child's secondary education.**

- An annual reassessment of financial circumstances will be made.
- Where a pupil no longer meets the low-income requirements, transport assistance will be withdrawn at the start of the next academic year.
- Where a pupil from a low-income group no longer qualifies for assistance due to a change of address, meaning they no longer fall within the mileage criterion, transport assistance may be withdrawn immediately. Parents/carers would then become responsible for making arrangements to ensure their child attends school.
- In the light of the above, parents/carers must therefore note that there is no guarantee that free transport will be provided throughout their child's secondary education.

It is possible that changes may be made to Sandwell's Home to School Transport Policy before or after the beginning of the school year in September 2014. The information below is based on 2013/14 entitlement. Parents/carers must therefore note that there is no guarantee that free transport will be provided throughout their child's secondary education.

Transport to Denominational Schools

For pupils attending denominational schools, free transport will be provided where - the pupil is a Sandwell resident, and:

- The school is more than 3 miles from the pupil's home, by the shortest pedestrian route, for pupils between 11 and 16 and,
- The pupil is attending the school in which the religious education provided is that of the religion or denomination in which the pupil has been baptised or where that wish is based on the parent/carers religion or belief.
- Is the **nearest** appropriate school (in terms of **age range and denomination**) to the pupil's home.

(This may not be necessarily within the Borough of Sandwell.)

Transport to the Sandwell Academy

Free transport will be provided where:

- The pupil is a Sandwell resident, and,
- The Academy is more than 3 miles from the pupils home by the shortest pedestrian route

Transport to Oldbury Academy and Wood Green Academy.

Free transport will be provided where:

- The pupil is a Sandwell resident, and,
- The pupil is attending Oldbury Academy or Wood Green Academy as a result of being granted a place on the basis of sporting aptitude, and,
- The school is more than 3 miles from the pupil's home address, measured by the shortest pedestrian route.

Transport arising from a change of address

Assistance will normally only be provided from the time of the house move irrespective of whether the school is located within Sandwell or another Authority providing that all the following criteria are met:

- The pupil is in Year 10 or Year 11.
- Transfer to a school closer to home is impractical because of syllabus requirements.
- The distance between home and school by the shortest pedestrian route is 3 miles or more.

For details or assistance concerning transport policy please contact the Education Benefits/Transport Team on 0121 569 8331. You are advised to check transport entitlement before you make your application for school places if transport costs may effect your decision.

Medical Need

Pupils requiring temporary provision due to medical need e.g. broken legs etc, may be considered for transport provision. For this to be considered by the LA the pupil's parent(s)/carer(s) must be in receipt of Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance and will be responsible for providing proof of their benefits and provide a signed letter of support from the child's Consultant or General Practitioner. Further information about transport assistance is available from Special Educational Needs Tel: 0121 569 8227.

School Meals/Free School Meals

Sandwell aims to secure, maintain and improve children's and young people's health by improving the nutritional quality of meals.

Meals are provided in all schools; the majority offering a choice menu, which takes into account health, religious and ethnic needs and preferences.

Pupils may be eligible for free school meals if their parents/carers are in receipt of Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) or Pension Credit (including Child Tax Credit), Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Child Tax Credit (but with an income of less than £16,190 pa) or receiving support from the National Asylum Support Service. (NB Working Tax Credit does not entitle families to receive free school meals). For further information please contact the Education Benefits Team on 0121-569 8186/9.

School Uniform

Pupils in most Secondary schools in Sandwell are expected to wear some kind of uniform, details of which are set out in the prospectuses for individual schools.

Subject to funding being available on an annual basis, the Sandwell Council operates a scheme providing assistance towards the cost of appropriate school clothing for pupils in Secondary schools.

The scheme is open to families resident in Sandwell who are eligible to receive Free School Meals.

Details are available from schools or the Education Benefits Team on 0121-569 8186/9, also you can apply or view further information [online](#).

General

School Admissions teams in your area

<p><u>Birmingham City Council</u> Directorate of Children, Young People and Families School Admissions and Appeals Tel: 0121 303 1888 e-mail: admissions@birmingham.gov.uk</p> <p>Address: Directorate of Children, Young People and Families Admissions and Appeals 1, Lancaster Circus Queensway Birmingham B4 7DJ</p>	<p><u>Walsall Council</u> Planning Admissions and Transport Unit Telephone 01922 686200 Fax 01922 686440 Email help@walsallcs.serco.com</p> <p>Address: Walsall Children's Services Educational Development Centre Pelsall Lane Rushall Walsall WS4 1NG</p>
<p><u>Wolverhampton City Council</u> Education and Enterprise Directorate School, Skills and Learning Tel: 01902 55 1459</p> <p>Address: Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square, Wolverhampton</p>	<p><u>Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council</u> Directorate of Children's Services School Admissions Service Tel: 01384 814223 e-mail: admissions.cs@dudley.gov.uk</p> <p>Address: Directorate of Children's Services School Admissions Service,</p>

WV1 1RR	Westox House 1 Trinity Road Dudley, DY1 1JQ
<u>Worcestershire County Council</u> The School Admissions Team Childrens Services Tel: 01905 822700 e-mail: worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk Address: County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP	<u>Staffordshire County Council</u> School Admissions and Transport Service Tel: 01785 278593 Fax 01785 278656 e-mail: admissions@staffordshire.gov.uk Address: School Admissions and Transport Service Directorate of Children, Young People and Families Tipping Street Stafford ST16 2DH

A Parental Voice

We are constantly trying to improve our service to parents, pupils and schools and we welcome feedback to help us review how we manage admissions in Sandwell. If you have any comments about ways we might improve our service or on the way in which we have handled your application, please contact the Admissions and Appeals Parent Support Line by telephone on 0121 569 6765. Occasionally matters may not be resolved directly with the service and parents/carers may wish to pursue another way forward.

You can register a complaint or compliment with the Council's Customer Services at:

Service Insight Team,
PO Box 2374,
Oldbury
B69 3BR

Tel: **0845 359 7510**

Email: contact@sandwell.gov.uk

Further details are on the [Council website](#)

The Schools Adjudicator

The Government has established the office of the Schools Adjudicator whose function is to ensure a fair admissions system and whether any departure from the National Code of Practice on admissions is justified.

The Adjudicator may receive referrals from a number of sources including parents who feel that admissions arrangements are unfair or they have been unjustly treated.

The Schools Adjudicator may be contacted as follows:

The Office of the Schools Adjudicator
Mowden Hall,
Staindrop Road,
Darlington
DL3 9BG

Tel: **01325 735303**

Fax: **01325 391313**

Apply online here: www.sandwell.gov.uk/schooladmissions
(ILO)

[Schools Adjudicator Website](#)

Email: OSA.TEAM@osa.gsi.gov.uk

The Local Government Ombudsman

The Local Government Ombudsman investigates complaints about Councils and certain other bodies. They investigate complaints about most Council matters including housing, planning, education and social services. It is an independent, impartial and free service. The Ombudsman can investigate complaints about how the Council has done something but they cannot question what a Council has done simply because someone does not agree with it. The Ombudsman may be contacted as follows:

Local Government Ombudsman

PO Box 4771

Coventry CV4 0EH

Tel: 0300 061 0614 (helpline)

Fax: 024 7682 0001

[Local Government Ombudsman Website](#)

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

The Advisory Centre for Education provides free, independent advice on the admissions process and a range of education issues including bullying, exclusion, SEN and attendance.

Call 0300 011 5142 Monday -Wednesday, 10am -1pm.

For further information visit the [Advisory Centre for Education Website](#)

Enquiries by post to
Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)
1c Aberdeen Studios
22 Highbury Grove
London
N5 2DQ

Other Useful Contacts

<u>Archdiocese of Birmingham (RC)</u>	<u>Diocese of Birmingham (CE)</u>
Diocesan Education Service, 61 Coventry Road , Coleshill, Birmingham,	Diocesan Board of Education, 175 Harborne Park Road, Harborne, Birmingham,

Apply online here: www.sandwell.gov.uk/schooladmissions
(ILO)

<p>B46 3EA. Tel: 01675 430230 Fax: 01675 430321</p>	<p>B17 0BH Tel: 0121 426 0448</p>
<p><u>Diocese of Lichfield (CE)</u> Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education (CE) St Mary's House, The Close, Lichfield, WS13 7LD Tel: 01543 306040 Fax: 01543 306039</p>	<p><u>Department for Education</u> Department for Education, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2GJ Tel: 0370 001 2345</p>
<p><u>Rights and Equality Sandwell</u> 28 Birmingham Street, Oldbury, B69 4DS Tel: 0121 541 1775</p>	

School Terms & Holidays

Here are the schools terms and holidays for the following academic years; 2013/14 & 2014/15. These apply to all Sandwell community & voluntary controlled schools. Many academies and voluntary aided schools will also follow these dates, but you are advised to contact them in case they have alternative arrangements.

School Admissions & Appeals Service
PO Box 16230
Sandwell Council House
Freeth Street
Oldbury
B69 9EX

Parent Support Line

Tel: 0121 569 6765

Email

Annual Transfer:

annual_schooladmissions@sandwell.gov.uk

Mid Year Transfer:

midyear_admissions@sandwell.gov.uk

Appeals:

schoolappeals_admissions@sandwell.gov.uk

[**Apply online at the Sandwell website**](#)

The information in this booklet is correct at the time of publication but it is possible that changes may be made throughout the academic year.