

Changing Schools in Cumbria

Introduction

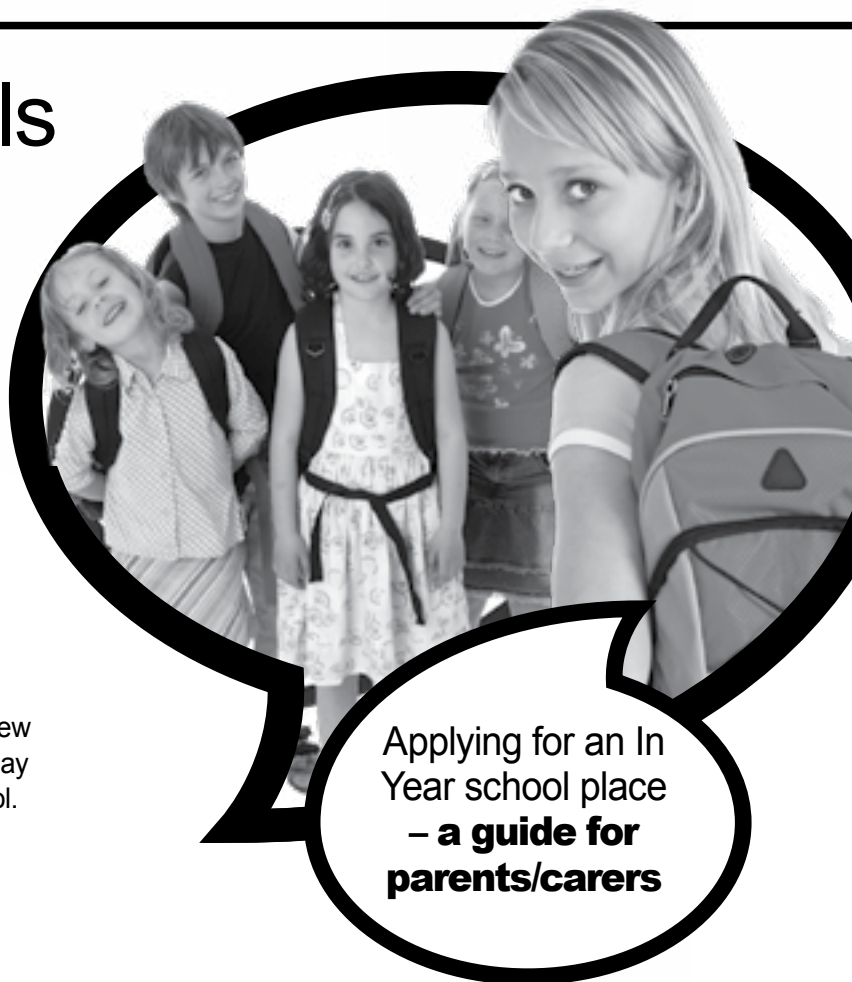
The in year application process is for children seeking to change schools during the academic year.

Sometimes a change of school is unavoidable, such as when a family moves house. However, if you are considering changing your child's school for other reasons, there are a few issues that you should consider.

Changing schools is a very important step. This can be unsettling for a child, as it involves leaving existing friendship groups, making new friends, settling with new teachers and getting used to a new environment. It may also affect the progress that they are making at school.

If you are thinking about transferring your child to another school for reasons other than moving house, you should:

- Talk through any issues or concerns you may have with the current school.
- Bear in mind that, if your child already has a local school place, the new school would not need to accept him/her on roll until the start of the next term.
- Be aware that, although there is a national curriculum that every child is expected to follow, each school delivers parts of this curriculum at different stages and times during the school year. If you transfer your child's school mid-year, they might miss out or repeat a part of the scheme of work at the new school. Secondary schools may follow a different curriculum, use different examination boards or offer different options that could present difficulties for your child. Transferring a child in Years 10 or 11 (and even Year 9), when children have started their GCSE coursework, can be particularly problematic.
- Consider any transport implications. If you transfer your child to another school, you may be responsible for transporting your child to and from school and any costs involved. (The transport policy is explained in the leaflet "How to apply for School Transport"). You can find out more information at cumbria.gov.uk/schooltransport



How to apply for an in-year school place?

If, you would like your child to change schools, there are two ways you can do this:

1. By contacting your preferred school/s direct

The Local Authority (LA) is no longer required to be involved in changes of school during the academic year, and schools can now offer places direct. You can contact your preferred school/s to find out what you need to do to apply.

If you are applying for a place at an academy, voluntary aided, foundation or free school, you do not need to apply via the LA and can contact the school direct. If your application is refused by the school, they should do so in writing and you must be given the right of appeal.

If you are applying for a place at a community or voluntary controlled school you can still contact the school directly, or apply to the LA on form SA8.

2. Via the School Admissions and Appeals Team

- Download the application form SA8 at cumbria.gov.uk/schooladmissions or, if you need a paper copy, you should contact the School Admissions and Appeals Team on: **01228 221582**.
- Complete the form, giving up to three preferences of schools. We cannot guarantee that you will get your first preference so it is important that you provide other options.
- Return the completed form to the School Admissions and Appeals Team by email or post.

What happens next?

Dependent upon the status of the school, either the school or the LA will confirm in writing whether a place is available.

If the school does not have places available, you will have the right to appeal. Further information about the appeals process is available on our website and will be included in the letter you receive.

Your child should stay at their current school until they have formally been offered a place and a confirmed start date at another school.

How long will it take?

The length of time it takes to process an application varies in each individual case. Please remember that if a child already has a local school place the new school is not required to accept your child on roll until the start of a new term.

Important points to note

- All children between the ages of 5 and 18 must receive full-time education. This may be through attending school regularly or by some other arrangement. This is a legal duty and it is your responsibility as a parent/carer to ensure regular, prompt attendance. If you do not, it could result in the LA taking action against you.

- Infant class size legislation limits class sizes to a maximum of 30 pupils by law in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, which may cause difficulty in moving children in these year groups.
- Non-attendance at the current school will be recorded as unauthorised absence and can lead to prosecution.

How do I find a new school?

The online schools directory, available on our website (cumbria.gov.uk/childrenservices or the 'find a school' link on cumbria.gov.uk/schooladmissions), gives details of all Cumbrian schools, including details on age ranges, links to Ofsted reports, admission criteria etc. It is important that you arrange visits to the schools that you are considering.

Remember, every child's needs are different, so a school which may be suitable for your friend's children may not offer the support your child requires. You should contact the head teacher of the school to arrange a visit and to get a copy of the school prospectus.

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Need or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Most children with a statement/EHCP can, with appropriate support, have their needs met at any local school. Occasionally, however, a child's needs may be such that they can only be met at a particular school. This may be, for example, a school which has been adapted to cater for mobility problems. If this is the case, the school will be named in your child's statement/EHCP.

If you need further information or advice regarding your child's statement/EHCP, you can contact the Special Educational Needs and Disability Team on one of the following numbers:

Allerdale & Copeland	01946 506211
Carlisle & Eden	01228 226843
Barrow & South Lakeland	01229 407403

Further advice and information:

If you require any further advice or information contact the School Admissions Team at: school.admissions@cumbria.gov.uk or telephone: **01228 221582**

Please send form SA8, or any other written correspondence, to us at:

School Admissions and Appeals Team, Cumbria County Council,
PO Box 415, Carlisle CA1 9GU