Admissions to Schools in Suffolk 2026/2027

A guide for parents and carers on how to apply for your child's school place in the normal year of entry

Application closing dates for the normal year of entry:

Secondary schools
► Your application must reach us by **Friday 31 October 2025**

Primary (including infant and junior) schools
► Your application must reach us by **Thursday 15 January 2026**

Apply online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions

Contents

3	Introduction to admissions in Suffolk
4	Important dates
5	Your guide to applying for a school place
7	Key information about schools ▪ Suffolk's co-ordinated admissions scheme
8	When will my child start school? ▪ Primary and infant schools ▪ Summer born children ▪ Infant class size ▪ Junior schools ▪ Secondary schools
10	How to decide which schools you would like to apply for ▪ Important - School Travel eligibility
14	How to make an application ▪ How to apply online ▪ How to apply on paper ▪ Supplementary Information Form (SIF) ▪ Twins, triplets or multiple birth children ▪ Supporting evidence ▪ Changing your mind before the closing date
18	Additional information for applying for a school place ▪ Cross-county applications ▪ Moving house ▪ Children of UK service personnel and crown servants ▪ Applications from other countries ▪ Children living at more than one address ▪ Parental disputes ▪ Definition of parent ▪ Fraudulent applications ▪ Children out of the normal age group
25	How places are offered Suffolk County Council's admissions oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools ▪ Example of how places are offered using Suffolk County Council's admissions oversubscription criteria
31	Applications received after the relevant closing date – late applications ▪ Exceptional circumstances ▪ Changing your mind after the relevant closing date ▪ Processing late applications
34	Offer of a school place
35	What happens when your child cannot be offered a place at your preferred school(s) ▪ Waiting lists ▪ Making another application for the schools you have already applied for
37	The appeals process for Suffolk schools
39	Early education
41	Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)
43	School Travel Policy
48	Choices for 16 to 19 year olds in Suffolk ▪ Post-16 Travel Policy
53	Other useful information ▪ Term dates ▪ Charging and remissions policy ▪ Fair Access Protocol (FAP) ▪ Children in care, children who were previously in care and children adopted from state care outside of England ▪ Private fostering ▪ Free school meals ▪ Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children
56	Useful contacts
58	Glossary and definitions
61	Comments, compliments and complaints
61	Data Protection

Introduction to admissions in Suffolk

This guide is designed to give you all the information you need to apply for your child to start at or transfer to another school in the 2026/2027 school year.

Suffolk County Council (SCC) Funded School Travel

Please be aware: You **must** consider how your child will travel to and from school **before** you apply for a school place. The following information is very important:

1. We will provide SCC funded school travel to the **Nearest Suitable School** that would have had a place available for your child when they are: a) aged under 8 and live more than two miles from the school; or b) aged 8 or older and live more than three miles from the school. This would be whether or not an application was made for a place at that school. The distance in a) and b) above is called the **statutory walking distance**.
2. **We will only provide SCC funded school travel to your child's catchment area school when it is the nearest suitable school to their home that would have had a place available for them and they meet the distance criteria.**
3. It is important that you check which school is your child's nearest suitable school on our **Nearest School Checker** for the **2026/2027 school year.** You can find out which are the three nearest Suffolk schools (based on the statutory walking distance including Public Rights of Way) by putting your child's postcode into the Checker which can be found at nearestschool.suffolk.gov.uk. **We update this each year to include new roads and developments.**
4. Your **School Preferences** and the order in which you put them on your admissions application could affect your child's eligibility for SCC funded school travel. Our **School Travel Scenarios** can help you work out when your child might be eligible for SCC funded school travel to their school when the age and distance criteria are met. These can be found in Step 4 of the relevant 'Apply for a school place' page online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.
5. **More school travel information** is available on page 43 of this guide.
6. **Full details about SCC funded school travel**, including the School Travel Policy, additional arrangements for low income families and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), can be found at www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel.

School Admissions

You can decide which schools to apply for and you do not have to apply for your child's nearest suitable school. This could mean that they would not be eligible for SCC funded school travel to any school, including their catchment area school.

It is important that we receive your application by the relevant closing date, otherwise it may not be dealt with until after places have been offered to those who applied on time. You should apply online and **must** submit your application by this date:

Secondary schools
► Your application must reach us by **Friday 31 October 2025**

Primary (including infant and junior) schools
► Your application must reach us by **Thursday 15 January 2026**

If for any reason you are unable to apply online, you should complete the paper application (CAF1) and send this to us so that we receive it by the relevant closing date. If you do not apply by the relevant closing date your application may not be dealt with until after places have been offered to those who applied on time. You cannot apply online after the relevant closing date.

All of the information about applying for a school place can be found in this guide and online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

Apply online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions

Important dates

	Secondary schools	Primary (including infant and junior) schools
You should apply online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions or fill in a paper application (CAF1).	From Friday 12 September 2025	From Friday 12 September 2025
National closing date for applications (online and paper)	**Friday 31 October 2025**	**Thursday 15 January 2026**
If you were unable to apply by the relevant closing date, and we agree that there are very exceptional reasons for an application being late, we will consider it as on time if it is received by this date and evidence is provided with your application. This only applies in circumstances outside your control which made it impossible for the application to have been made on time. If you are moving house, this is the latest date for you to provide written evidence to the Admissions Team that you are legally committed to your move so that your new address can be considered in the on time allocation process.	Wednesday 17 December 2025	Thursday 5 February 2026
National Offer Day If you applied online, we will send you an email to let you know which school has been offered. If you applied on a paper application form, we will send you a letter by second class post to let you know which school has been offered.	Monday 2 March 2026	Thursday 16 April 2026
We will consider late applications (see 'Applications received after the closing date – late applications').	From Monday 2 March 2026 onwards	From Thursday 16 April 2026 onwards
We will assume that you have accepted the place offered (if you applied on time) unless you let us know in writing by this date. This does not affect your right to appeal for any of the schools where you have been refused a place.	Monday 16 March 2026	Thursday 30 April 2026
Date by which you should register an appeal if you applied on time (see 'The appeals process for Suffolk schools').	Friday 27 March 2026	Friday 15 May 2026
Appeals for on time applications to be heard by this date (see 'The appeals process for Suffolk schools').	Monday 15 June 2026	Friday 17 July 2026

Your guide to applying for a school place

The information within this guide is for parents and carers of children living in Suffolk. It explains what you need to do to apply for a school place for your child in the normal year of entry from September 2026. It also sets out the steps to follow, the important closing dates that must be met, and what to do if you have any problems. The normal years of entry for schools from September 2026 are shown below:

School Phase	Normal Year of entry
Primary and Infant	Reception Year*
Junior	Year 3
Secondary	Year 7

***You must apply for a school place if your child was born between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022**. You must make an application for a full-time Reception Year school place even if your child is already attending a nursery class in a primary or infant school, a pre-school or a family hub next to a school site. This is because a place in a nursery class, pre-school or family hub does not guarantee your child a full-time place at that school.

It is important that we receive your application by the relevant closing date. You should apply online and submit your application by this date. If for any reason you are unable to apply online, you should complete the paper application (CAF1) and send this to us so that we receive it by the relevant closing date.

If you do not apply by the relevant closing date your application may not be dealt with until after places have been offered to those who applied on time. This means that all available places at your preferred school(s) may have been filled and it could be some time before you know the outcome of your application. You cannot apply online after the relevant closing date.

Secondary schools
► Your application must reach us by **Friday 31 October 2025**

Primary (including infant and junior) schools
► Your application must reach us by **Thursday 15 January 2026**

All of the information about applying for a school place can be found online, including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

Or you can contact the Admissions Team:

By email: admissions@suffolk.gov.uk **By phone:** 0345 600 0981 (local rate)
By post: The Admissions Team, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2BX

For more information and to keep up to date with school admissions:

Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/SuffolkCountyCouncil/
Follow us on X: x.com/suffolkcc

If your child lives outside Suffolk, you must contact the local authority where they live for details on how to apply (see page 56). You should make your application to your child's home local authority, but you can name Suffolk schools on your application.

Apply online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions

Suffolk County Council co-ordinates the offer of school places to all community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, free schools and academies in Suffolk for the normal year of entry. Our aim is to make the process as simple as possible and to make sure it is fair and transparent for all. This guide explains:

- When your child will start school.
- How to decide which schools you would like to apply for.
- How to make an application.
- How places are offered if there are more applications than places available.
- What will happen if your child cannot be offered a place at your preferred school(s).

There are two Directories of Schools in Suffolk where you can find out more information about the schools you are interested in, including the criteria for how applications are ranked for each school. One directory is for **primary (including infant and junior) schools**, and one is for **secondary schools**. Both directories are available online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions or you can request a paper copy by contacting us on 0345 600 0981 (local rate).

We aim to make sure as many children as possible get the school place they want and, working with Suffolk schools, we try to make the process smooth and straightforward. Many schools in Suffolk are popular and oversubscribed so you should consider your preferences carefully. Suffolk has a good track record of meeting parental preferences for school places. Some of this success is because many parents make sure that at least one of their preferences has a good chance of success and they apply by the relevant closing date.

Last year, Suffolk County Council received 14,776 on time applications for pupils wishing to start at a primary or infant school, or to transfer to a junior or secondary school.

Secondary schools
Last year 97.51% of children were offered a place at one of the secondary schools their parents or carers applied for, with 91.88% getting their first preference when their application was on time.
Primary (including infant and junior) schools
Last year 99.36% of children were offered a place at one of the primary or infant schools their parents or carers applied for, with 96.27% getting their first preference when they applied on time. 99.6% of children whose parents or carers made an on time application for a junior school received a place at one of their preferences, with 98.4% offered their first preference school.

All the information you need is available on our website.

You should apply online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions as this is safe and simple to do. It is also secure, and you will get an acknowledgement when your application is submitted. You can change and resubmit your preferences right up to the relevant closing date.

Your online application must be completed and submitted before midnight on the relevant closing date. You will be able to see the school place we have offered your child online on the relevant national offer day. We will also email you on this date to confirm your offer.

Alternatively, if you are unable to apply online, you should complete the paper application (CAF1). This is available on our website, or you can contact the Admissions Team for a paper copy. We do not acknowledge paper application forms. We will send you a letter by second class post on the relevant national offer day. We do not provide outcomes by telephone.

Apply online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions

Key information about schools

Suffolk's co-ordinated admissions scheme

There are different types of schools in Suffolk (maintained, academies and free schools) and we co-ordinate admissions to the normal year of entry for them all.

The **co-ordinated admissions scheme** can be found under 'Further information' on the relevant page online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions. You can also request a paper copy by contacting us on 0345 600 0981 (local rate). This document provides the detailed admission arrangements for Suffolk and is in place to make sure all applications are handled fairly, consistently and efficiently. It applies to all schools in Suffolk to ensure that children across the county are offered a single school place on the same day.

The different types of schools that we co-ordinate admissions for are:

Maintained schools

A maintained school is a state school funded by central government through the local authority and does not charge fees. These include community, voluntary controlled and voluntary aided schools.

Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools

We are the admissions authority for these schools, and we are responsible for setting the admissions arrangements and allocating places in accordance with Suffolk County Council's published oversubscription criteria.

Voluntary Aided (VA) schools

These schools are run by the school governors, so the school's governing body is the admissions authority. They are responsible for setting the admissions arrangements and allocating places in accordance with their published oversubscription criteria.

Academies and free schools

Academies and free schools receive their funding directly from central government and are outside of Suffolk County Council's control. These schools are run by the governing body or academy trust. They are the admissions authority responsible for setting the admissions arrangements and allocating places in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria. Some schools will become academies during the school year.

All maintained, academy and free schools must comply with the statutory guidance set out in the School Admissions Code.

We refer to voluntary aided, free schools and academies as 'own admission authority' schools, as the governing body or academy trust is the admission authority.

When will my child start school?

Primary and infant schools

If your child was born between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022 you must apply for a Reception Year place at a primary or infant school by **Thursday 15 January 2026**.

Children normally attend school full-time in the Reception Year in the September following their fourth birthday. All primary schools must offer children a full-time place at the start of the Autumn term in September. Legally a child does not have to start full-time education until the term after their fifth birthday. Whatever you decide, it is important that you apply for a primary or infant school place by the closing date.

You must make an application for a full-time Reception Year school place even if your child is already attending a nursery class in a primary or infant school, a pre-school, or a family hub next to a school site. This is because a place in a nursery class, pre-school, or family hub does not guarantee your child a full-time place at that school.

Unfortunately, each year some children who have been going to a school's nursery class, pre-school, or family hub do not get a place in the school's Reception Year class. This is because there were more applications than Reception Year places and other applicants had a higher priority for those places.

When you receive your offer of a school place you will be asked whether you want your child to start school full-time, part-time, or whether you want them to start the term after their fifth birthday. If you choose to defer entry for your child, they must start school by the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made. This means they must start school in the Reception Year.

Summer born children

If your child was born between 1 April and 31 August ('summer born') you can choose not to send them to school until the September following their fifth birthday.

If your child has already been offered a full-time Reception Year place and you decide to delay them starting school until the following September, a place will not be held open for them in Year 1. If this is your choice you will need to complete an in-year application for them to start school in Year 1, but you should be aware that there might not be a place available for them in your preferred school(s). More information about the in-year application process is available online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions or by contacting us on 0345 600 0981 (local rate).

If you wish to apply for a Reception Year place to start in the September following your child's fifth birthday, please see the 'Children out of the normal age group' section on page 23. Further advice for parents of summer born children can also be found on the Department for Education website.

Infant class size

It is against the law for children in an infant class, which is defined as a class in which the majority of children will reach the age of five, six or seven during the school year (Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2) to be taught in a class of over 30 pupils with one qualified teacher. We take this infant class size legislation into account when allocating school places and when appeals are heard (see 'The appeals process for Suffolk schools' section on page 37). Additional children may be admitted under limited exceptional circumstances, these are outlined in the School Admissions Code.

Junior schools

If your child was born between 1 September 2018 and 31 August 2019 and/or is currently in Year 2 at an infant school, you must apply for a place in Year 3 starting in September 2026 at another school by **Thursday 15 January 2026**.

Applications from Primary schools to Junior schools

If your child is currently in Year 2 at a primary school and you want them to change to a junior school for Year 3 in September 2026 you must apply by **Thursday 15 January 2026**. We will not write to you with details of how to apply. You will need to visit our website www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions for this information.

Applications from Infant schools to Primary schools

If your child is currently in Year 2 at an infant school and you want them to change to a primary school for Year 3 in September 2026 you must apply by **Thursday 15 January 2026**.

If your child is in their final year at a Suffolk infant school, you will receive details via your child's school of how to apply for a school place before it is time to move schools.

If your child is being taught out of their normal age group and you would like this to continue, please see the 'Children out of the normal age group' section on page 23.

Further advice for parents when making a request for admission out of the normal age group can also be found on the Department for Education website.

Secondary schools

If your child was born between 1 September 2014 and 31 August 2015 and/or is currently in Year 6 at a primary or junior school, you must apply for a place in Year 7 starting in September 2026 at a secondary school by **Friday 31 October 2025**.

If your child is in their final year at a Suffolk junior or primary school, you will receive details via your child's school of how to apply for a school place in the September before it is time to move schools.

If you live in Suffolk and your child is not currently attending a Suffolk maintained school, academy, or free school we will not have your details and will be unable to send you a letter. You must make an application by the relevant closing date above.

If your child is being taught out of their normal age group and you would like this to continue, please see the 'Children out of the normal age group' section on page 23.

Further advice for parents when making a request for admission out of the normal age group can also be found on the Department for Education website.

How to decide which schools you would like to apply for

In Suffolk, you can rank up to three preferences when you apply for a school place. You may want your child to go to a local school. This could be the catchment area school. A catchment area is a geographical area which is used by some schools to give applicants a priority for a place at that school. The catchment area may be part of the school's oversubscription criteria which is used to rank applications. Some voluntary aided, free schools and academies do not have catchment areas.

A catchment area school may not be the nearest suitable school to your child's home address and could affect their eligibility for SCC funded school travel. Information on School Travel eligibility is below.

Choosing your preferences is very important. You need to think realistically about how likely your child is to be offered a place at one of your preferred schools before you make your application and how your child will get to and from school.

- You can rank up to three schools inside and/or outside Suffolk. If you only apply for one school your child will not be considered for any other schools. If we are unable to offer your child a place at your preferred school(s), they will be offered a place at the nearest suitable school with a place available after everyone else's preferences have been considered. Places may be limited, and a place may be offered at a school some distance from your child's home. You should be aware that your child may not be eligible for SCC funded school travel to the school offered. Further information can be found below.
- Each of your preferences will be considered equally and separately. Listing second and third preferences will not affect your child's chance of being offered their first preference. Your first preference will be offered above your second or third preferences where possible.
- Schools do not know how you order your preferences or which other schools you have applied for when they are ranking your application because this information is not shared with them.

Important – School Travel eligibility

The School Travel Policy is separate to admission policies, and we would like to remind you to consider the following before submitting an application. Please be aware: You **must** consider how your child will travel to and from school **before** you apply for a school place. The following information is very important:

1. We will provide SCC funded school travel to the **Nearest Suitable School** that would have had a place available for your child when they are:
    a) aged under 8 and live more than two miles from the school; or
    b) aged 8 or older and live more than three miles from the school.

    This would be whether or not an application was made for a place at that school. The distance in a) and b) above is called the **statutory walking distance**.
2. **We will only provide SCC funded school travel to your child's catchment area school when it is the nearest suitable school to their home that would have had a place available for them and they meet the distance criteria.**

3. It is important that you check which school is your child's nearest suitable school on our **Nearest School Checker** for the **2026/2027 school year**. You can find out which are the three nearest Suffolk schools (based on the statutory walking distance including Public Rights of Way) by putting your child's postcode into the Checker which can be found at nearestschool.suffolk.gov.uk. **We update this each year to include new roads and developments.**
4. Your **School Preferences** and the order in which you put them on your admissions application could affect your child's eligibility for SCC funded school travel. Our **School Travel Scenarios** can help you work out when your child might be eligible for SCC funded school travel to their school when the age and distance criteria are met. These can be found in Step 4 of the relevant 'Apply for a school place' page online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

Even though there are separate policies for School Admissions and School Travel, it is important that you understand how the school place your child is offered is used to assess their eligibility for SCC funded school travel. The key things to know are:

- The statutory walking distance (which includes Public Rights of Way) from your child's home address to the school offered, or extended rights criteria must be met as set out in the School Travel section on page 43, and on www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel.
- SCC funded school travel eligibility for on time applications is based on the nearest suitable school in Suffolk that would have had a place available for your child on the relevant national offer day for the 2026/2027 school year. This would be whether or not you applied for a place at that school. This means that even if an older sibling, for example, is eligible for SCC funded school travel, younger siblings may not be eligible if the school offered is not the nearest suitable school that would have had a place available on the relevant national offer day.
- SCC funded school travel eligibility for late applicants will be assessed when the application is decided.
- If you have a low income you may have Extended Rights Eligibility, further information is provided on page 44.
- If you make a second or subsequent application, SCC funded school travel eligibility will not be reassessed unless there is a change of school offered or a change to your child's home address.
- There is a separate Post-16 Travel Policy.

More information is provided in the School Travel section on page 43 to help you consider your options if SCC funded school travel is important to you. Full details are online at www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel.

Please think realistically

It is a good idea to start by gathering as much information as you can about how places are prioritised at your preferred schools. You should:

- Read and understand the oversubscription criteria for each school you are interested in as they may be different from one another. Consider which oversubscription criterion applies to your child for each school.
- Be realistic about your preferences. **We recommend that you apply for more than one school. Please be aware that a place at any school, including your child's catchment area or nearest suitable school, cannot be guaranteed.**

- Consider how you will get your child to and from school. You are responsible for ensuring they attend school, and this includes getting them there on time. In some cases we will help with your child's home to school travel. We will normally only provide SCC funded school travel if your child meets the criteria as set out in the School Travel Policy. See page 43 of this guide and online at www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel.
- Understand that attending or being offered a place at a primary (including infant or junior) school does not guarantee your child a place at another school at a later stage of transfer, even if the school traditionally feeds into another school.
- Be aware that if the school your child is offered a place at or is currently attending is named as a feeder school in another school's admissions oversubscription criteria, this does not mean they will get SCC funded school travel to that school as this is based on your child attending the nearest suitable school to their ordinarily resident address.
- Do not make your decision based on other people's opinions or experiences. Every situation is different, and things change all the time. Find out as much as you can about the schools you are interested in to help you select your preferred schools.

If you live near the border with Cambridgeshire, Essex or Norfolk you may wish to apply for schools in these local authorities. The contact details for these authorities can be found in the 'Useful contacts' section. Please visit their websites for details about the schools in their areas.

If your child lives in Suffolk and you want to apply for a school in a neighbouring authority, you must still apply through Suffolk County Council and include that school(s) on your application form. If you live outside Suffolk, you must apply to your home local authority even if you are applying for a Suffolk school (see 'Additional information for applying for a school place').

If your child has Special Educational Needs or a disability and you are having difficulties in making your school choices and would like to discuss this with someone, you can contact the Suffolk Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (Suffolk SENDIASS) during term time (see the 'Useful contacts' section). The SENDIASS team are independent of the local authority.

How you can find out about the schools in your area and the schools you are interested in

If you are not sure where your child's nearest schools are, you can find this information on our Nearest School Checker for the **2026/2027 school year** (which is based on the statutory walking distance including Public Rights of Way). The checker can be found at nearestschool.suffolk.gov.uk.

You can enter your child's postcode to find out the three nearest Suffolk schools. This is a very useful tool if you are thinking about how your child will travel to and from school and how the School Travel Policy may affect your child's eligibility for SCC funded school travel. **We update this each year to include new roads and developments.**

If your child lives in Suffolk and the nearest suitable school is outside of the county, we would still provide SCC funded school travel to the nearest Suffolk school that would have had a place available for your child, subject to your child's age and meeting the statutory walking distance criteria.

You can also:

- Check the catchment area lists or view the catchment area maps for Suffolk online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions. If you would like a paper copy contact us on 0345 600 0981 (local rate). **A catchment area school may not be the nearest suitable school to your child's home address.** If this is the case, we would not normally provide SCC funded school travel for your child to their catchment area school.

  Please note: Some voluntary aided, free schools and academies do not have catchment areas.

- Look at the relevant Directory of Schools in Suffolk. There are two Directories, one for **primary (including infant and junior) schools** and one for **secondary schools**. Each Directory includes:

  - Contact details for each school.
  - The number of places available in the normal year of entry which is known as the Published Admission Number (PAN), and information relating to last year's on time applications.
  - A link to the admissions policy which includes the oversubscription criteria used to rank applications.

  Both directories are available online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions or you can request a paper copy by contacting us on 0345 600 0981 (local rate).

- Visit the schools on their open day.
- Look on the school's website and read their prospectus.
- Visit the government funded website www.gov.uk/find-school-in-england which provides detailed information about schools, including links to school performance data and the school profile.

Do	Don't
▪ Make time to visit the schools you are interested in, if you can, before the relevant closing date. ▪ Ask questions about anything that worries you. ▪ Talk to the headteacher about your child if you have any concerns. ▪ Understand the impact of the School Travel Policy.	▪ Think that good exam results or an outstanding Ofsted report are the only things that matter. ▪ Judge a school by what others say, go and see for yourself.

Schools and preferences change over time and what has happened in the past is not always a reliable guide to what a school is like now.

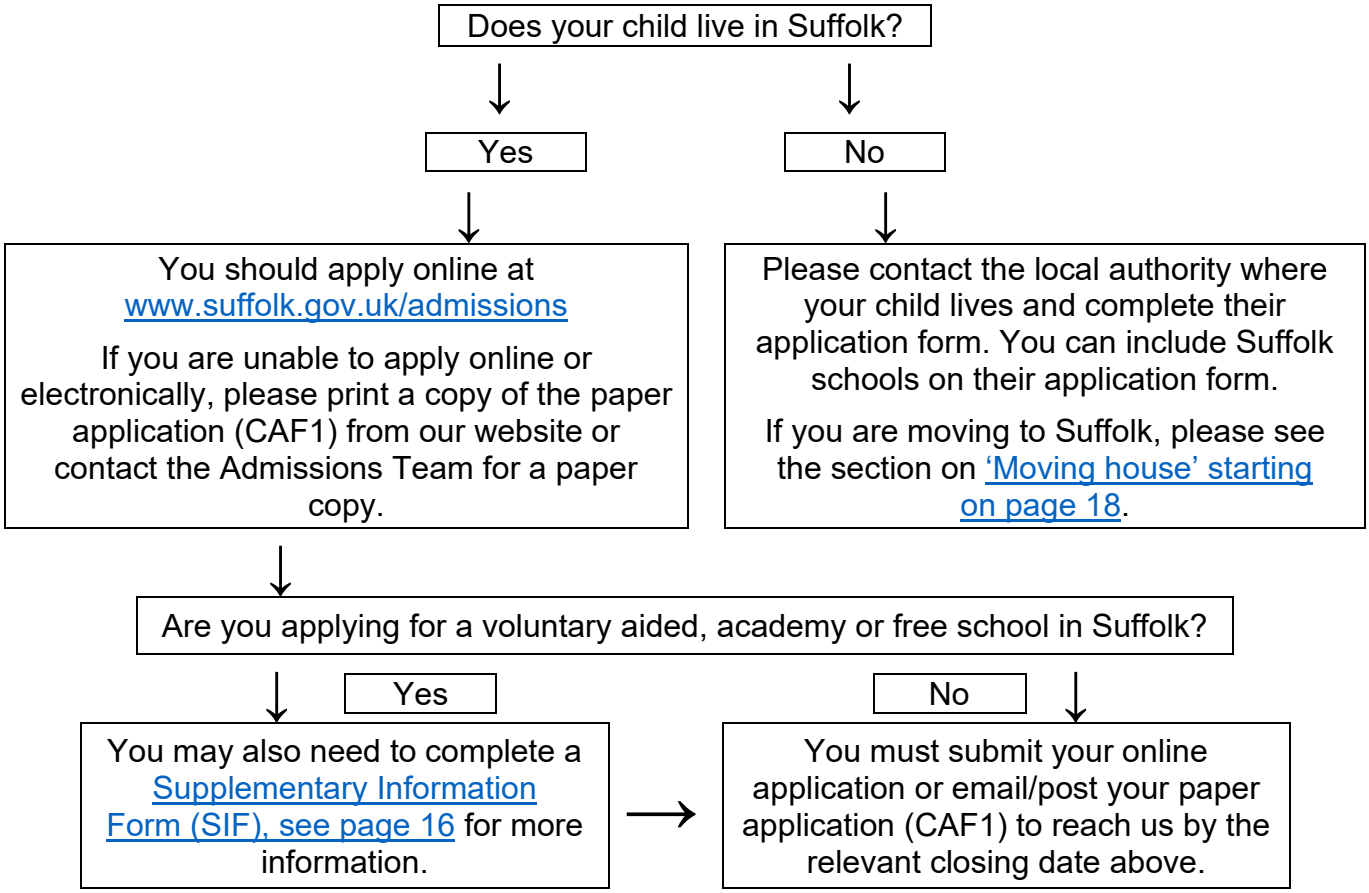
How to make an application

It is very important that we receive your application on or before the relevant closing date for applications. You cannot apply directly or return your application form to a school.

If your child has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan or special educational needs, please see the section on 'Children with Special Educational Needs' on page 41.

Secondary schools
► Your application must reach us by **Friday 31 October 2025**

Primary (including infant and junior) schools
► Your application must reach us by **Thursday 15 January 2026**



Siblings

You must include the names and dates of birth of any siblings at your preferred schools. If you do not provide this information on your application, your child cannot be considered under the sibling criterion, and as a result, they may not be offered a place at your preferred school. Please refer to the individual school policies for definitions of siblings at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions. If you do not provide this information on your application, it is likely to affect the offer of a school place.

Reasons for each preference

You are able to add your reasons for each preference on your application, but you don't have to. The admissions authority is only able to take reasons into account if they have a direct bearing on how your application is ranked against the relevant published oversubscription criteria.

Apply online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions

How to apply online

It's safe and simple to apply online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

By completing and submitting your application online:

- You will receive confirmation of your application by email.
- You can check or change your application right up to midnight on the closing date.
- You can view the outcome of your application online on the relevant national offer day.
- You will receive an email with details of your school offer on the relevant national offer day.

Your online application must be completed and submitted before midnight on the relevant closing date.

If you do not have internet access, you can apply online from any Suffolk library.

Please note that when you apply online you must not submit a paper application (CAF1).

You cannot use the online facility to apply after the relevant closing date, or if you are making an application for your child to be taught out of their normal age group.

Step 1	You will be asked to register, set up a password and add your child(ren)'s details to allow you to start the application process. If you have previously registered, you will not need to register again. We would strongly recommend you check your details and that of your family in 'my account' to ensure they are still accurate, especially if you have moved house since using this online facility as this may affect how your child's application is ranked.
Step 2	Select the schools you want to apply for, these can be schools in Suffolk or in another local authority, and give reasons for your preferences if you want to.
Step 3	You must agree to the declaration that you: ▪ Have read the guide 'Admissions to Schools in Suffolk 2026/2027' and the relevant Directory of Schools in Suffolk. ▪ Have read and understood the School Travel Policy and how eligibility for SCC funded school travel will be decided. ▪ Have given information on the form which is true. ▪ Are the parent of the child under section 576 of the Education Act 1996, see page 22 for more information.
Step 4	Submit your application. Once you have submitted your application you will receive a confirmation email.

You are unable to attach evidence electronically to your online application. You will need to either email or post your evidence to the Admissions Team so that we receive it by the relevant closing date, making it clear who this evidence relates to by writing your child's name and date of birth on it. If you don't have access to a scanner, you can take photos of your evidence or supporting information and attach these to your email. If you send your information through the post, we strongly suggest you get proof of posting as we cannot be responsible for information lost in the post (see the 'Supporting evidence' information on page 17).

If your contact details change before the relevant closing date you will need to update your details in 'my account' and your child's application in the case of an address change. Any change may set your application back to 'unsubmitted' and you may need to resubmit your application. If your contact details change after the relevant closing date you will need to update your details in 'my account' and email us separately with the changes. You are unable to update your child's online application after the relevant closing date. You do not need to let us know separately if you change your email address.

How to apply on paper

If you are unable to apply online, you must apply using a paper application (CAF1). You can print a copy of the paper application (CAF1) from our website at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions or you can request a paper copy by contacting us on 0345 600 0981 (local rate).

You must send your application directly to us. Do not hand it in at a school. Neither the school nor ourselves will accept responsibility for any lost application forms.

You must make sure that we receive your application form and any relevant evidence on or before the relevant closing date for applications. You should email or post your application to the Admissions Team. If you don't have access to a scanner, you can take photos of your application form, evidence or supporting information and attach these to your email.

If you send your paper application (CAF1) or evidence to the Admissions Team by email, you do not need to send us a copy in the post.

We do not acknowledge receipt of paper applications, so we strongly suggest that you get proof of postage as we cannot be responsible for forms lost in the post.

If you send your paper application (CAF1) to us by post or by email, you may not receive your letter with details of the school offered for two or three days after offers are emailed to all those parents and carers who have applied online. We cannot confirm the outcome of your application over the telephone or before you receive your letter.

Supplementary Information Form (SIF)

Some schools also require a SIF to be completed. If one of your preferences is for a voluntary aided, free school or academy you may need to complete a SIF. A SIF is not an application form. It is used to provide extra information to help the admissions authority apply their oversubscription criteria to rank your application. All SIFs should be returned to the relevant school directly by the relevant closing date.

If a school requires you to complete a SIF but you choose not to, your application will still be considered but it may affect how your application is ranked. Check the oversubscription criteria for the schools you wish to apply for in the Directory of Schools in Suffolk to see whether you need to complete a SIF. SIFs are available to download from www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions or can be requested from the voluntary aided, free school or academy.

Twins, triplets or multiple birth children

If you are applying for twins, triplets or other multiple births you must make a separate application for each child.

Supporting evidence

If you want to provide any extra information with your application please include your child's name, date of birth, and the school it relates to on any additional paperwork. Sometimes we need evidence to support your application. This could include:

- An adoption certificate, child arrangements or special guardianship order for a child who was previously in care, immediately following having been in care.
- Evidence to show that your child has previously been in state care outside of England (in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society) immediately before they were adopted.
- Evidence to support your address (see the 'Additional information for applying for a school place' section).

Changing your mind before the closing date

We understand that for a number of reasons parents and carers may want to change the schools they originally listed on their application.

By applying online, you can change your school preferences at any time before midnight on the relevant closing date. **Please note you must resubmit your application after you have made any changes. If you do not resubmit your application, it will default to unsubmitted and may not be processed**. We will process the application submitted closest to the relevant closing date.

If you have to apply using the paper application (CAF1) you can change your school preferences at any time up until the relevant closing date by submitting another paper application form. **You must make sure these changes are received by us on or before the relevant closing date**. We will process the application received before and closest to the relevant closing date.

Additional information for applying for a school place

Cross-county applications

	Suffolk Resident	Non-Suffolk Resident
Applying for a place in a Suffolk school	You should apply online using the Suffolk application process or, if you are unable to do so, by completing a paper application (CAF1).	You should contact the local authority where your child lives for information about how to apply. You can include Suffolk schools on your application to your home authority.
Applying for a place at a school outside of Suffolk	You should include any school(s) that you wish to apply for which are located outside of Suffolk using the Suffolk online application process, or if you are unable to do so, by completing a paper application (CAF1).	

If one of your preferences is for a selective school in Essex you must:

- Contact the Consortium of Selective Schools in Essex (CSSE) without delay if you are interested in these schools (see the 'Useful contacts' section for details).
- Put the school as a preference on your online or paper application (CAF1) and return this to the Admissions Team by the relevant closing date.

Moving house

Planning to move house before the relevant closing date for applications

If you are moving to a new address and you want to use that address as your child's ordinarily resident address (see page 28) for your application, you must send us written evidence by the relevant closing date that you are legally committed to the move and that it will happen before the start of the school year you have applied for. The evidence must be one of the following:

- Proof of exchange of contracts for your new address.
- Signed letting/tenancy agreement confirming your new address.

Please note that a sale memorandum, an unsigned tenancy agreement or a letter from your solicitor confirming exchange of contracts will take place soon will not be accepted.

Children of UK service personnel and crown servants

If you are a UK service personnel family with a confirmed posting to Suffolk, or a crown servant family returning from overseas to live in Suffolk, we will offer places in advance of the move provided the application is accompanied by:

- An official letter that declares a relocation date
- Evidence of a future address may also be required. A Unit or quartering address can be used if requested.

Planning to move after the relevant closing date for applications

If your new address cannot be confirmed by the relevant closing date you should still apply by the relevant closing date using your current address. We recommend you apply for schools based on your current address in case your proposed move falls through. You can then make a further application once your plans have been confirmed. As long as we receive your further application and written evidence that you are legally committed to the move (acceptable evidence shown on page 18) by the relevant date below we will use your new address to allocate a school place.

Secondary schools
► Your evidence must reach us by **Wednesday 17 December 2025**

Primary (including infant and junior) schools
► Your evidence must reach us by **Thursday 5 February 2026**

If you cannot provide evidence of your move by the relevant date above, we will use your child's current address to allocate a school place. Please let us know if you change address before the relevant national offer day to make sure any correspondence that may be posted is sent to the correct address.

If you own two properties and will be moving from one to the other, or you are moving in with a partner or family so you cannot provide evidence that you are legally committed to a house move, then you must write to us explaining your situation. You may be asked to provide evidence to confirm your address (acceptable evidence shown below). If your circumstances are unusual, please contact the Admissions Team for further advice. You should be aware that using an address that is not your ordinarily resident address to gain a higher priority for a school place may lead to that place being withdrawn, even after your child has started at that school.

You may be asked to provide us with evidence to confirm your new address before your child takes up a place at their new school. We may request one of the following:

- A personal bill such as mobile phone
- A salary or wage slip
- A DVLA registration or driving licence
- A letter from HM Revenue and Customs.

There is no need to include financial information in any evidence you send us.

If you move address before the relevant closing date you must let us know. This is because this may change the oversubscription criterion that applies to your child and how they are ranked in priority order within it.

If your child moves house before the relevant closing date, but you do not tell us, and your change of address would have affected how your child's application was considered for a school place, this may be fraud and the offer of a school place may be withdrawn by the admissions authority for that school.

Applications from other countries

Applications can be made for a Suffolk school when your child is not living in the UK. **It is your responsibility as the parent or carer to check that your child has a right, under their UK entry conditions, to study at a state-funded school (maintained, free school or academy).**

We recommend that if you are entering the UK from overseas and wish to apply for a school place that you check your child has a right of abode or that the conditions of their immigration status otherwise permits them to attend a maintained, free school or academy in England. Further information can be found on the Department for Education website. Irish citizens' right to live in the UK will not change.

Foreign nationals cannot use the six-month standard visitor visa, or 11-month short-term study (English language) visa, to enter the UK to enrol as a pupil at a school.

We will need evidence of your new address in Suffolk. If we do not receive this before we process your child's application, then your child's current address will be used. If this is in another country, it would give your child a lower priority for admission to most schools.

If we receive evidence of your new address by the relevant closing date or we receive this before the following dates, we will process your application from your new address as an on time application. You will need to either email or post your evidence to the Admissions Team making it clear who this evidence relates to by including your child's name and date of birth. If you send your information through the post, we strongly suggest you get proof of posting as we cannot be responsible for information lost in the post.

Secondary schools
► Your evidence must reach us by **Wednesday 17 December 2025**

Primary (including infant and junior) schools
► Your evidence must reach us by **Thursday 5 February 2026**

If you cannot provide evidence of your move by these dates, we will use your child's current address to allocate a school place. You may be asked to provide us with evidence to confirm your new address before your child takes up a place at their new school. We may request one of the following:

- A personal bill such as mobile phone
- A salary or wage slip
- A DVLA registration or driving licence
- A letter from HM Revenue and Customs.

There is no need to include financial information in any evidence you send us.

Children living at more than one address

If your child lives at two or more addresses, each for part of the week, only one address can be used in the admissions application process. The address you must use for your application is the child's ordinarily resident address. This is the address where the child sleeps overnight the majority of the time on weeknights (Monday to Friday, and excluding weekends and school holidays).

In cases where your child spends an equal proportion of the school week at two or more different addresses, evidence of which is to be considered the main contact address will be required to support the application. You will be required to agree and state in writing which address is to be used as the ordinarily resident address (see page 28). This address will then be used when processing all school preferences expressed. You cannot use one address for one school preference and another address for another school preference.

Evidence must include the nights the child sleeps at each address, whether it is a weekly or fortnightly arrangement, or something else. For example, an equal shared care arrangement could be: week one Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday your child sleeps at their father's address, Thursday and Friday nights they sleep at their mother's address, and week two is Monday and Tuesday nights sleeping at their father's address, with Wednesday, Thursday and Friday nights sleeping at their mother's address.

We can only accept and process one application for each child, so it is important that you agree who will make the application and agree the school(s) being applied for.

Please note: we will not consider a child to be ordinarily resident at an address that they sometimes sleep at due to childcare arrangements. For example, if a child sleeps at their grandparent's address some nights during the school week whilst one of their parents works shift patterns, we will not accept the grandparent's address for the purposes of allocating a school place.

Parental disputes

We will process an application from a parent of a child, in education law as defined by section 576 Education Act 1996 (see definition below), unless we are aware of a parental dispute.

Once an application is processed, and a school place has been offered, there are only three lawful reasons to withdraw the offer. If none of these reasons apply, then the offer must stand. These reasons are:

- the school place has been offered in error
- a parent has not responded to an offer within a reasonable period of time or,
- it is established that the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application.

If you are a parent objecting to an application and/or a change of school, after an offer has been made and there are no lawful reasons to withdraw that offer, then if you wish to pursue the matter further you will need to seek your own independent legal advice. We will not be able to intervene in this process.

If we are aware of a parental dispute before we process an application, we will put the application(s) on hold and will not process them until we receive either:

- a joint agreement, signed and returned separately by each parent, confirming all the details that we should use for the school admission application
- a Family Court order specifically indicating which parent's views we should follow (for example, a Specific Issues Order or a Prohibited Steps Order) or,
- evidence from one parent that the right of the other parent to have a say in the children's education has been removed.

If we receive an application for the normal year of entry and we are aware of a parental dispute, you will be advised of any important dates when the evidence set out above will need to be provided to ensure your child is allocated a school place. It is in your child's best interests to agree on an application before the relevant closing date for applications for a place in the normal year of entry. This is because if you don't your child may not be offered a school place at the same time as their friends and all the places at your preferred school(s) may have been filled.

In cases of dispute, if your child lives at two or more addresses, each for part of the week, then we would expect separate evidence from every parent to indicate the nights the child sleeps at each address, so that the ordinarily resident address can be confirmed (see page 28). We will not be able to intervene or mediate throughout this process.

Definition of parent

For the purposes of education law, section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines a 'parent' as:

- all natural (biological) parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person (this could be a step-parent, guardian or other relative)
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

A person has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child.

You may be asked to provide evidence that you are the 'parent' of a child as we will need to be satisfied that you have a right to this information before sharing it with you. We may ask for this evidence even if you reside with the child or not.

Fraudulent applications

You must let us know if you have any change in circumstances (for example, change of address). If information is deliberately withheld or untrue, your application may be invalid and could result in the offer of a school place being withdrawn.

We may check application addresses with current schools. We may also carry out address checks randomly for a school's full allocation to confirm that all of the children offered places at that school live at the address given as their ordinarily resident address on their application or subsequent evidence. If you have any concerns or information about the use of fraudulent information, please contact us as soon as possible. Any information you provide will be strictly confidential.

Allegations of false addresses or other false information given on an application form or Supplementary Information Form (SIF) will be investigated. The admission authority may withdraw the offer of a place if they find that details were deliberately false or misleading. We do not have a significant issue in Suffolk of fraudulent addresses being used. Cases are investigated as necessary and as a result places have been withdrawn because applications were found to have been made fraudulently, this can be particularly distressing for all concerned.

Children out of the normal age group

It is expected that children will normally be educated within their normal age group (chronological year group). When a request is made for a child to be educated out of their normal age group, admission authorities will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned in line with the School Admissions Code.

This includes when you wish for your summer born (April to August) child to start full-time education in the Reception Year group when they reach compulsory school age rather than in Year 1.

You need to be aware that any decision made by an admission authority about a change to the normal age group will not be binding on any other admission authorities considering applications for this year group or schools in later years. The admission authorities of the preferred schools named in such an application would have to consider the evidence provided and reach their own conclusion, in the light of the legislation and guidance available at that time.

There are different ways of making a request for delayed or accelerated transfer depending on what type of school you intend to apply for:

Community and voluntary controlled schools

You can make a request in writing for a delayed or accelerated transfer to the Admissions Team. This will need to include, where relevant, any supporting information about why your child should be admitted out of their normal age group.

When considering the request this will include, but is not limited to, taking account of your views as the parent or carer; information about your child's academic, social, and emotional development; whether your child has previously been educated out of their normal age group; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. Any evidence in respect of these or any other reasons can be submitted. Where relevant, consideration can be given to your child's medical history and any evidence from a medical professional involved with your child's care or treatment such as:

- a speech and language therapist
- an occupational therapist
- a social worker
- a paediatrician
- your child's nursery, childminder or current school.

The decision will also take into account the views of the headteacher of the school(s) concerned.

You are not expected to get evidence that you do not already have.

An application for your child's normal transfer year group should be made at the same time. The request with a paper application (CAF1) must be sent to the Admissions Team by the relevant national closing dates (see the 'Important dates' section).

Officers at Suffolk County Council will make a decision on the request. The Admissions Team will write to you with the outcome including the reasons for the decision. If the request is refused you will be given details of how to complain. Even if the request is agreed there is no guarantee there will be a place available at your preferred school(s).

Voluntary aided, free schools and academies

You can make a request to the admission authority for each school in writing. This will need to include, where relevant, any supporting information about why the child should be admitted out of their normal age group. The governing body or academy trust will make a decision on the request, taking into account the views of the headteacher.

The school will write to you with the outcome including the reasons for the decision. If the request is refused, you should be given the details of how to complain to the school.

A paper application (CAF1) must be sent to Suffolk County Council along with the decision letter(s) from the own admissions authority school(s) and other relevant evidence by the relevant national closing dates (see the 'Important dates' section). Even if the request is agreed there is no guarantee there will be a place available.

Further information

If you have not got the agreement of the admission authority for your child to be taught out of their normal age group, your preference for that school will not be considered.

You should make a request for admission out of the normal age group at each school you wish to apply for, in case your preferred school is unable to offer your child a place.

Further information for parents when making a request for admission out of the normal age group can also be found on the Department for Education website.

Information regarding summer born children and children who are being taught out of their normal age group can also be found on page 8. If you would like further advice, please contact the Admissions Team.

How places are offered

Each school offers a set number of places in any one year. This number is known as the Published Admission Number (PAN). Although the PAN applies to the normal year of entry, this number would normally be applied across all year groups in the school. Sometimes there are situations when this is not possible. If the number of applicants is less than the PAN all applicants will normally be admitted.

There is an example of how places are offered using Suffolk County Council's admissions oversubscription criteria on page 30.

The process for offering places is:

↓ ↓

Step 1	If your first preference can be met, an offer of a place will be made for your child at that school.
Step 2	If your first preference cannot be met but your second preference can be met, an offer of a place will be made for your child at that school. Your child's name will be placed on the waiting list for your first preference school and you will be given the right of appeal.
Step 3	If your second preference cannot be met but your third preference can be met, an offer of a place will be made for your child at that school. Your child's name will be placed on the waiting list for your first and second preference schools and you will be given the right of appeal for each school refused.
Step 4	If none of your preferences can be met, an offer of a place will be made for your child at the nearest suitable school which has a place available. The nearest suitable school could be a community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, free school or academy. The nearest suitable school will be measured by walking distance.* *Distances are measured by the shortest available route along which a child may walk, accompanied as necessary. Routes are calculated using a network comprised of the Ordnance Survey MasterMap Highways Network, which includes all roads and urban paths, and Public Rights of Way as shown on the Definitive Map. Distances are measured from the point of the network that is closest to the address point of the child's home to the nearest gate or access to the school. Your child's name will also be placed on the waiting lists for your first, second and third preference schools and you will be given the right of appeal for each school refused.

How places are offered if there are more applications than places available

If a school receives more applications than it has places available ('oversubscribed') then the school's published oversubscription criteria are used to decide which applicants will be offered a place. Your child will be offered a place at the highest ranked school where possible.

Depending on the type of school, these decisions are either made by Suffolk County Council, the school's governing body or by the academy trust. You can find the oversubscription criteria for all schools online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

Suffolk County Council's admissions oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools

Where there are more applications than places available, we will rank your application using Suffolk County Council's admissions oversubscription criteria below.

Children who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan which names the school must by law be offered a place at that school.

The following admissions oversubscription criteria show the order of priority for places at community and voluntary controlled schools, community school sixth forms, and at those voluntary aided schools and academies where they have agreed to operate the same policy as Suffolk County Council. These are identified in the relevant Directory of Schools in Suffolk online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

These criteria may also be used to allocate places at schools that were community or voluntary controlled schools when their admissions arrangements were determined for the 2026/2027 school year but have since converted to academy status.

For applications to the normal year of entry at a school, these criteria will be applied according to the evidence provided to show the circumstances existing before midnight at the end of the relevant closing date.

1)	Children in care (looked after children) and children who were previously in care (children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order, immediately following having been in care, including those 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).
2)	Sibling: where the child has a sibling in the school or a sibling has already been offered a place at the school, and where the sibling will still be attending the school at the time of admission but not in a specialist unit or a specialist resource base for Hearing Impaired provision, a nursery or in the sixth form. Priority will be given, where necessary, to applications where there is the smallest age gap in calendar days between the child's date of birth and the date of birth of any sibling already attending the school, or who has been offered a place at the time of application. The term 'sibling' includes: natural, half, step, and adopted brothers and sisters; a child of the partner of the parent; and children who are fostered into the family. In all these cases, the child and their sibling will both be living at the same address (that is where the child is ordinarily resident) in a single family unit. This means that children from different family units, where those separate families are living together at the same address, are not considered siblings under this criterion. The sibling criterion will also apply to applications to Fairfield Infant and Colneis Junior Schools, Felixstowe, as these are paired infant and junior schools. We will treat applicants as siblings when the older child is already attending Colneis Junior School or will be offered a place at this school in the normal year of entry. In cases where the younger child is about to start in the Reception Year group in Fairfield Infant School and the older child is due to transfer to Colneis Junior School, we will treat both applicants as siblings. Similarly, we will use the sibling criterion for an application to Colneis Junior school if the younger child is already attending or has been offered a place at Fairfield Infant school.

3)	Children who are ordinarily resident in the catchment area who live nearest to the school. We will measure the distance by a straight line ('as the crow flies'). All straight line distances are calculated electronically by Suffolk County Council using data provided jointly by the Post Office and Ordnance Survey. The data plots the co-ordinates of each property and provides the address-point between which the straight line distance is measured and reported to three decimal places. Where there is more than one home within a single building (for example apartments) we will measure to a single point within that building irrespective of where those homes are located.
4)	Children who live outside the school's catchment area who live nearest to the school. We will measure the distance by a straight line ('as the crow flies') as set out in criterion 3) above.

Notes to Suffolk County Council's admissions oversubscription criteria:

Children in care (looked after children)

A 'child in care' or 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 (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

Children previously in care (previously looked after children)

Children previously in care (previously looked after children) includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Section 46 adoption orders). Child arrangements orders are defined in Section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

Children adopted from state care outside of England

A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

Sibling tie-breaker

Priority will be given, where necessary, to applications where there is the smallest age gap in calendar days between the child's date of birth and the date of birth of any sibling already attending the school, or who has been offered a place at the time of application.

In the unlikely event that two applicants competing for a single place at a school have the same number of days difference in age from their closest aged sibling, the place will be offered to one applicant on the basis of lots drawn by an officer of Suffolk County Council not involved with admissions.

Distance tie-breaker

It is possible that the PAN of the school will be reached in any one of the categories. For this reason, all applications will be prioritised according to the criteria described. Decisions will be made about the offer of places in accordance with those priorities. If it is necessary to use a tie-breaker to distinguish between two or more applications, a distance criterion will be used. We will give priority to the applicants who live nearest to the school as measured by a straight line.

In the unlikely event that two applicants competing for a single place at a school live the same distance from the school, the place will be offered to one applicant on the basis of lots drawn by an officer of Suffolk County Council not involved with admissions.

Twins, triplets and other multiple births

If the final place available at a school is offered to a twin, triplet or other multiple birth and the remaining sibling(s) would ordinarily be refused, we will offer places to the remaining sibling(s) at the same school. The law requires that this will apply even in those primary schools where this would mean that more than 30 pupils would be admitted to an infant class with a single qualified teacher. Where a sibling of a twin, triplet or other multiple birth has a school named on their EHC plan, we will from the date of issue of the EHC plan treat their twin, triplets or other multiple births under the sibling oversubscription criterion for the named school. This does not apply to siblings of children in a specialist unit or a specialist resource base for Hearing Impaired provision or a nursery, because they do not meet the sibling definition in the oversubscription criteria.

Ordinarily resident

By ordinarily resident we mean the place where your child usually lives. We consider this to be where they sleep overnight. We may need proof of this address. If you use another address to give the impression that your child lives at a different address to where they are ordinarily resident, such as a second home or a grandparent's address, so that you have a higher priority for a place at that school; we consider this to be a fraudulent application. Where a child lives at two or more addresses, each for part of the week, the address at which the child is ordinarily resident will be considered to be the address that the child lives at for most of the week (excluding weekends and school holidays). Separate evidence in writing from each parent must be provided to confirm the child's living arrangements at the time of application.

In cases where the child spends an equal proportion of the school week at two or more different addresses, evidence of which is to be considered the main contact address will be required to support the application. Agreement in writing by the parents will be required to state which address is to be used as the ordinarily resident address. This address will then be used when processing all school preferences expressed. It is not acceptable to use one address for one school preference and another address for another school preference.

If we are aware of a parental dispute affecting the application, we may not be able to deal with the application and you may need to seek independent legal advice in order to resolve the matter.

Please note: we will not consider a child to be ordinarily resident at an address that they sometimes sleep at due to childcare arrangements. For example, if a child sleeps at their grandparent's address some nights during the school week whilst one of their parents works shift patterns, we will not accept the grandparent's address for the purposes of allocating a school place.

Admissions to a community school sixth form

Year 11 students who are staying at their community school's sixth form are able to continue into Year 12, subject to meeting minimum entry requirements. The Published Admission Number (PAN) for a community school sixth form is the number of places available for external students to enter that sixth form. If the demand for those places exceeds the PAN, the oversubscription criteria listed above will be applied.

Each sixth form will have minimum entry requirements depending upon the course being applied for. For example, to enter an A Level course the school may make a decision based on an applicant's achievements at GCSE. Please see the individual school's sixth form prospectus for further details and how to apply. The link to these can be found on the schools' websites which are listed in the Directory of Schools in Suffolk for the relevant school year at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

Example of how places are offered for the normal year of entry using Suffolk County Council's admissions oversubscription criteria

Jack does not have an Education, Health and Care plan and he is not a child in care or a child who was previously in care. His parents apply for the following three maintained schools.

First preference	Second preference	Third preference
School A A popular and oversubscribed school. Jack does not have a sibling already at the school who will still be there next year, or a sibling who has been offered a place. Although the school is near to Jack's home he lives outside of the catchment area.	**School B** The school is some distance away and Jack lives outside of the school's catchment area. Jack's sister Chloe attends and will still be at the school next year.	**School C** Jack's catchment area school.
↓ ↓	↓ ↓	↓ ↓
Jack **meets priority 4)** of the oversubscription criteria for this school.	Jack **meets priority 2)** of the oversubscription criteria for this school.	Jack **meets priority 3)** of the oversubscription criteria for this school.
↓ ↓	↓ ↓	↓ ↓
Jack is not offered a place at this school because all the places at the school were offered to other children who had a higher priority when the oversubscription criteria were applied. Jack's name is added to the waiting list and the right of appeal is given.	Jack is offered a place because he had a higher priority than other children when the oversubscription criteria were applied. **As he has ranked this school above his third preference he is offered a place here.**	Jack would be offered a place because he had a high priority for a catchment area place in the oversubscription criteria. As Jack could be offered more than one school place, we offered him a place at the highest ranked school on his application that could offer a place (his second preference school). As a place could be offered at a higher preference school, this place is not required.

Applications received after the relevant closing date – late applications

Applications received after the relevant closing date

You cannot make an online application after the relevant closing date. To apply after the relevant closing date, you must complete a paper application (CAF1) which is available from our website at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions or you can request a paper copy by contacting us on 0345 600 0981 (local rate). Any paper application received after the relevant closing date will normally be treated as a late application.

You significantly reduce your child's chances of being offered a place at one of your preferred schools if you apply late. Late applications are not dealt with until all on time applications have been considered. This can cause great upset especially if your child's friends all apply by the relevant closing date and have confirmation of their school place. It could also mean your child misses out on induction days at the school offered.

Exceptional circumstances

Sometimes there are very exceptional reasons why an application cannot be made by the relevant closing date. This only applies in circumstances outside your control which made it impossible for the application to have been made on time. If you feel that this applies to you, please write to us giving all your reasons and include as much supporting evidence with your application as you can by the dates given below.

Secondary schools
► Your evidence must reach us by **Wednesday 17 December 2025**

Primary (including infant and junior) schools
► Your evidence must reach us by **Thursday 5 February 2026**

Your evidence will be considered by a panel and each case will be decided individually. You will receive a letter telling you whether your application will be treated as late or on time. Please note that we may carry out checks and/or ask for further information, which may be sensitive in order to make our decisions.

Even if we agree that the application will be considered as 'on time', if the school applied for is in another county, this may still be processed as a late application. It is up to the local authority where the school is based to decide on the timescales and evidence required for a late application to be processed as 'on time'.

If you make a late application by the relevant date above and you do not include any reasons as to why it could not be made by the relevant closing date, it will be processed as a late application.

Late applications will continue to be accepted after the dates shown above but they will not be considered 'on time', regardless of the circumstances. This means that we will process your application after we have offered school places to all the applicants who applied on time.

Changing your mind after the relevant closing date

If you have made an on time application and you want to change any of your school preferences after the relevant closing date but before the relevant offer day, and you have not had any change in circumstances (for example you have not moved house), you should submit a paper application (CAF1) which is available from our website, www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions or you can request a paper copy by contacting us on 0345 600 0981 (local rate). We will still process your original application and offer a place based on this on the relevant national offer day unless you request in writing for your on time application to be withdrawn.

Please note: if you request for your on time application to be withdrawn, your child will not receive an offer of a school place on the relevant national offer day, and when we process your subsequent late application all the places at your preferred school(s) may have been filled.

When you make a new application, you will be agreeing to the following:

- That any previous offer of a school place that may have been made will be withdrawn if we can offer a place at any school from your second or subsequent applications. Therefore, please think carefully before making a subsequent application.
- That you will no longer have the right to appeal against a refusal for a school that is not included on your most recent application and that
- Your child's name will be removed from any waiting list for that school.

We will process your second or subsequent applications as soon as we can, and we will do our best to let you know the outcome before the end of the summer term. Please also be aware that we are unable to confirm the status or outcome of your application over the telephone. You will be informed of the outcome in writing.

Please note that if you submit a second or subsequent application then this will override any previous application. This is because you can only have up to three 'live' preferences at any one time.

Processing late applications

If you apply late this could mean that all the places at your preferred school(s) may have been offered already. If we cannot offer your child a place at any of the schools you have applied for, we will offer your child a place at the nearest suitable school which has a place available. The nearest suitable school will be measured by walking distance.

Secondary schools

Application received between	How and when we will deal with your application
12 September 2025 and 31 October 2025	On time application: if you applied online, we will send you an email on Monday 2 March 2026 to let you know which school has been offered. If you applied on a paper application (CAF1), we will send you a letter by second class post on Monday 2 March 2026 to let you know which school has been offered.
1 November 2025 and 17 December 2025	If we did not receive any evidence as to why your application was late, or we did not agree your reasons were very exceptional, then your application will be processed in the second round of allocations, and you will be notified of the outcome by the end of March 2026.
18 December 2025 and 1 March 2026	Your application will be processed in the second round of allocations, and you will be notified of the outcome by the end of March 2026.

continued on next page

18 December 2025 and 1 March 2026 **(continued)**	We will only process a second or subsequent application made during this period, in the second round of allocations, if you provide and we agree your reasons for the change are exceptional. You will be notified of the outcome by the end of March 2026. If we do not agree the reasons for your application being late are exceptional, we will deal with your application after we have processed the second round of allocations.
2 March 2026 and 31 August 2026	We will process your application after the second round of allocations, and you will be notified of the outcome as soon as we can.

Primary (including infant and junior) schools

Application received between	**How and when we will deal with your application**
12 September 2025 and 15 January 2026	On time application: if you applied online, we will send you an email on Thursday 16 April 2026 to let you know which school has been offered. If you applied on a paper application form, we will send you a letter by second class post on Thursday 16 April 2026 to let you know which school has been offered.
16 January 2026 and 5 February 2026	If we did not receive any evidence as to why your application was late, or we did not agree your reasons were very exceptional, then your application will be processed in the second round of allocations, and you will be notified of the outcome by the middle of May 2026.
6 February 2026 and 15 April 2026	Your application will be processed in the second round of allocations, and you will be notified of the outcome by the middle of May 2026. We will only process a second or subsequent application made during this period, in the second round of allocations, if you provide and we agree your reasons for the change are exceptional. You will be notified of the outcome by the middle of May 2026. If we do not agree the reasons for your application being late are exceptional, we will deal with your application after we have processed the second round of allocations.
16 April 2026 and 31 August 2026	We will process your application after the second round of allocations, and you will be notified of the outcome as soon as we can.

Please note: the dates set out above are for preferences made for Suffolk secondary and primary (including infant and junior) schools. Other local authorities may operate different timescales when processing late applications for schools in their area and we may not be able to comply with these. This may mean that a late application you make for your child to attend a school that is located outside of Suffolk may not be dealt with in the timescales listed above. Similarly, if you live outside Suffolk and make a late application for a Suffolk school then it may not be dealt with in the timescales specified in your local authorities' scheme.

If your child is starting school for the first time and you do not make an application for a full-time place in the Reception Year at a primary or infant school, we will be unable to allocate a place to them.

If you do not make an application for a place at a junior or secondary school, we will allocate a school place for your child if they live in Suffolk and are attending a Suffolk maintained school, academy, or free school and we have your child's details. We will offer them a place at the nearest suitable school with a place available. This will be once all on time applications and late applications have been processed. It may be late in the summer term when we write to you with the school we can offer.

Offer of a school place

Online applications

If you applied online, you will receive an email (unless you have indicated that you do not wish to) with details of your child's offer of a school place on the relevant national offer day below. If you have not been offered a place at your preferred school(s), this email will give you more information about what to do next. You may also find the waiting list and appeals process sections in this guide useful.

Paper applications

If you applied on a paper application (CAF1), we will send you a letter by second class post on the relevant national offer day below with the offer of a school place. If you have not been offered a place at your preferred school(s), this letter will give you more information about what to do next. You may also find the waiting list and appeals process sections in this guide useful.

Secondary schools	
►	An offer of a school place will be sent out on **Monday 2 March 2026**

Primary (including infant and junior) schools	
►	An offer of a school place will be sent out on **Thursday 16 April 2026**

If we have not heard from you by the relevant date below, we will assume you have accepted the school place that has been offered to your child. If you accept the school place offered this will not affect your chances of getting a place from the waiting list or through an appeal for any of your preferred schools that your child has been refused a place at.

Secondary schools	
►	If you do not want to accept the place offered for your child, please let us know in writing* by **Monday 16 March 2026**

Primary (including infant and junior) schools	
►	If you do not want to accept the place offered for your child, please let us know in writing* by **Thursday 30 April 2026**

Even if your circumstances change after the dates set out above and you no longer need the school place offered, please let us know by email or by writing to us as soon as possible, as we may have a waiting list for that school and may be able to reallocate the place to another child.

***Please note:** we will not withdraw an offer of a school place unless your child has another school place or education provision in place. It is important to let us know what alternative provision is in place for your child when you email or write to us.

What happens when your child cannot be offered a place at your preferred school(s)

Waiting lists

If we are unable to offer your child a place at your preferred school(s), we will automatically add their name to the waiting list for that school(s). Names are placed on the waiting list in the priority order set out in the school's admissions oversubscription criteria.

The order of the waiting list can change each time a child's name is added or the circumstances of a child already on the list changes. As a result, a child's place on the list can go up or down (for example due to withdrawals or late applications).

If you change your address while your child is on a waiting list, you must let us know. Please be aware that this may change your child's position on the waiting list. Written evidence of this will be required.

Having your child's name on a waiting list will not affect your right to appeal for any of the schools your child has been refused a place at.

Late applicants will be added to any waiting lists in oversubscription priority order if their parental preferences cannot be met.

If a place becomes available at a school, it will be offered to the child who is ranked highest on the waiting list. Places are not offered based on the date on which names were placed on the list.

The waiting lists for community and voluntary controlled schools will close on 31 December 2026. The waiting lists for those voluntary aided schools and academies who have agreed to operate the same policy as Suffolk County Council (SCC) will also close on 31 December 2026.

Information on when the waiting lists close for voluntary aided, free schools and academies who do not follow the same policy as SCC is available from the schools directly.

Waiting lists and SCC funded school travel

If after the initial offer of a school place, a place can be offered from the waiting list, by the end of the summer term (July 2026), for a school which was previously refused but with a higher parental preference, any previous offer of SCC funded school travel will normally be withdrawn.

Moving from the waiting list to the in-year application process

Once the waiting lists have closed the names of all the children on those lists will be removed. After this date, if you would like your child to be considered for any place that becomes available at a school, you will need to make an in-year application. More information is available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions or by contacting us on 0345 600 0981 (local rate). Some voluntary aided, free schools and academies may continue to operate waiting lists throughout the year. Please contact these schools direct for more information.

Making another application for the schools you have already applied for

You can apply for a school place for your child through the in-year process and we will consider this. If your application has been refused, we will not process another application for the same school in the same school year, unless there has been a significant change in circumstances of the parent/carer, child or school. This might be a house move or a place becoming available at a school.

If there is no significant change in circumstances, you can make another application for the following school year. This will not normally be considered more than one term ahead of the date when you want your child to start at the school.

Some voluntary aided, free schools and academies may have different arrangements. You should contact them directly for more information.

The appeals process for Suffolk schools

Please visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions for information about the appeals process and to download an appeal application form and guidance notes.

You have the right of appeal if your child has been refused a place at one of your preferred schools. You should submit your appeal application form to the Education Appeals Office (see the 'Useful contacts' section) by the relevant dates below. Appeals received on or before the dates below will be heard within 40 school days. If they are received after these dates, they may be heard later.

Secondary schools
► You must submit your appeal form to the Education Appeals Office by **Friday 27 March 2026**

Primary (including infant and junior) schools
► You must submit your appeal form to the Education Appeals Office by **Friday 15 May 2026**

If you made a late application your appeal should be heard within 40 school days from the deadline for lodging an appeal where possible, or within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.

If you want to appeal for a school outside of Suffolk, you must contact the relevant local authority who will provide you with the necessary forms and information.

The appeal hearing

An independent appeal panel will review the decision the admissions authority made to refuse your child a place at your preferred school.

During the appeal hearing a representative from the admissions authority will explain why it was not possible to offer your child a place at the school. You are strongly advised to attend the appeal hearing to help clarify, explain and expand upon your written reasons for appealing.

The clerk will write to you with a decision within five school days.

Infant class size appeals

Infant class size legislation states that it is against the law for children in an infant class, which is defined as a class in which the majority of children will reach the age of five, six or seven during the school year (Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2) to be taught in a class of over 30 pupils with a single qualified teacher.

If you decide to appeal and your child has been refused a place because the admission of another child would breach infant class size legislation, then your appeal will be heard as an infant class size appeal. This type of appeal can apply to applications for the Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2.

There are very limited grounds for success for infant class size appeals. The panel can only offer a place where it is satisfied that:

a) The admission of additional children would not breach infant class size; or

b) 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

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

In relation to c) the threshold for finding that an admission authority's decision to refuse admission was not one that a reasonable authority would have made is high. The panel will need to be satisfied that the decision to refuse to admit the child was 'perverse in light of the admission arrangements, that is it was 'beyond the range of responses open to a reasonable decision maker' or 'a decision which is so outrageous in its defiance of logic or of accepted moral standards that no sensible person who had applied his mind to the question could have arrived at it'.

For example, a decision that makes it impossible for you to transport all your family to school on time or even impossible for you to continue working, is very unlikely to meet this threshold and found to be 'perverse'. This has been established in the courts.

Future infant class size appeals

Your appeal will also be heard as an infant class size appeal if the admission of an additional child would cause future infant class size prejudice. An example of this may be a school that has a Published Admission Number of 60, who organise three Reception Year classes of 20 children, which then become two classes of 30 children when the children enter Year 1 or Year 2. Admission of a sixty-first child to the Reception Year would lead to one of the future Year 1 or Year 2 classes exceeding the infant class size limit of 30 children with one qualified teacher. We will tell you if future infant class size prejudice applies to your appeal.

Sixth form appeals

Where the offer of a place would have been conditional upon exam results, the panel must hear appeals within 30 school days of confirmation of those results.

Where the offer of a place would not have been conditional upon exam results, appeals must be heard within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.

Children who have been permanently excluded from two schools

If your child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools and the most recent exclusion occurred within the past two years, the right of appeal does not apply for the schools refused.

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan

If your child has an EHC plan, in the first instance contact the Statutory SEND Services for advice by emailing SENDFamilyServices@suffolk.gov.uk.

If your appeal needs to be directed to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability), further information is available online at www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/first-tier-tribunal-special-educational-needs-and-disability.

Early education

What funded early education and childcare can I get for my child?

Childcare support for parents and carers can be found on the Suffolk County Council website.

Three and four year olds (universal offer)

- A total of **570 hours per year**, that you can use flexibly with one or more childcare provider.
- It's usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year during school term time. Some providers will allow you to 'stretch' the hours over 52 weeks, using fewer hours per week.
- Children born between 1 April and 31 August 2022 can start their early education at the beginning of the Autumn term 2025 (September).
- Children born between 1 September and 31 December 2022 can start their early education at the beginning of the Spring term 2026 (January).
- Children born between 1 January and 31 March 2023 can start their early education at the beginning of the Summer term 2026 (April).

Two year olds

Two year olds can get 15 hours per week of funded early education if they meet certain criteria. More information is available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/two.

Working parents of children aged nine months to four years old

Working parents may get 30 hours funded early education a week for 38 weeks of the year (1140 hours per year). You will find more information at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk.

Where can I get funded early education and childcare for my child?

You can get funded early education with a childminder or a private, voluntary or independent pre-school or private day nursery included in Suffolk's list of approved providers. Further information is available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/fsd.

Your child can also get funded early education at many state schools. Please look at the school's website or contact the schools direct for further information. You will need to ask the school or setting what age of children they take and what hours they offer each day as some are able to be more flexible than others.

How do I apply for a place for my child?

The providers of funded early education and childcare will have their own admissions policies which will explain how they allocate places and what will happen if more children have applied than the places available.

You can speak to the childcare provider to find out what places they offer and how to apply.

When does funded early education and childcare stop?

Funded early education and childcare stops once your child starts the Reception Year in a school.

If they are not attending a school Reception Year class, they can continue to get funded early education and childcare in an approved school nursery, private, voluntary or independent provider if they have spaces. They can stay there until they are of compulsory school age. This is the beginning of the term after their fifth birthday.

When can my child start school in the Reception Year?

All primary schools must offer children a full-time place at the start of the Autumn term in the September following their fourth birthday. Children normally attend school full-time in the Reception Year in the September following their fourth birthday. Legally they don't have to start full-time education until the term after their fifth birthday.

Until this time they do not have to take up a school place or can choose to attend school part-time. Once your child is offered a school place you can talk to the school about your options. Whatever you decide, it is important that you apply for an infant or primary school place by the relevant closing date.

Please note that a place in a school nursery class does not guarantee a place in the Reception Year of that school. You must make a separate application by the relevant closing date of **Thursday 15 January 2026**.

Children with Special Educational Needs

All children and young people are entitled to a mainstream education that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and the fulfilment of their potential.

A child or young person has Special Educational Needs (SEN) if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

A child or young person accessing education has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 providers.

Mainstream education is for all and therefore most children and young people with SEN or disabilities will have their needs met within local mainstream early settings, schools or colleges. Some children and young people may require an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) in order for the Local Authority to decide whether it is necessary for it to make provision in accordance with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

The route by which you should apply for a school place for your child with SEN varies depending on whether or not they have an EHC plan or are currently going through the EHCNA process.

1) Applying for a school place if your child has SEN but does not have an EHC plan

Secondary schools
► If you would like to discuss your child's options, please speak to the SENCo at your child's current school. For most children, their educational needs will be met in a mainstream school. You must apply online or on a paper application (CAF1) by **Friday 31 October 2025**.

Primary (including infant and junior) schools
► If your child is starting in the Reception Year at a primary or infant school, you could talk to staff from their Early Years setting (if they have one) about what provision they think your child may need to meet their needs, or to the SENCo at the school(s) you are considering. For most children, their educational needs will be met in a mainstream school. You must apply online or on a paper application (CAF1) by **Thursday 15 January 2026**.

2) Applying for a school place if your child has SEN and is currently undergoing an EHCNA

Until you know the outcome of your child's EHCNA, or a draft EHC plan has been issued, you must apply through the mainstream admissions process as outlined in 1) above. If the outcome of the assessment is that a draft EHC plan is issued, your child's school placement will then be overseen by Statutory SEND Services and an appropriate school will be named in Section I of their EHC plan when it is finalised.

Apply online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions

3) Applying for a school place if your child has an EHC plan

If your child has an EHC plan, then this will need to be amended to specify the name of their new school. In order for the Local Authority to consider your preferences and understand what sort of provision might be most suitable to meet your child's needs, a 'Phase Transfer Review' of their EHC plan must occur in the first half term of the year before they transfer (Nursery, Year 6 and Year 11), to allow plenty of time for everyone to plan what support your child will need when they transfer. The SEN Co-ordinator (SENCo) at your child's current school should invite you to a review meeting. You will have the opportunity to say, at that review meeting, what school you would like your child to transfer to.

After the review meeting, your child's current school will send the review paperwork to Statutory SEND Services, who will then send you the proposed amendments to your child's EHC plan for your consideration. Statutory SEND Services will then consider any representations you make, and they might need to consult with different potential schools and other placements. When all required consultations are complete, Statutory SEND Services will then finalise and issue the new amended EHC plan.

Please contact Statutory SEND Services who will be able to advise and support if you have any questions about this process.

Statutory SEND Services	Email address	Telephone Number
South Suffolk and Ipswich	SENDSS@suffolk.gov.uk	01473 260670
Lowestoft and Waveney	SENDLW@suffolk.gov.uk	01502 521516
West Suffolk, Central Suffolk and Bury St Edmunds	SENDWS@suffolk.gov.uk	01284 741234

Specialist Education Settings in Suffolk

Admissions to specialist, alternative or independent schools or settings are managed by Inclusion Services and are outside the normal admission arrangements. The majority of children of statutory school age will have an EHC plan when admissions to these specialist settings are considered.

If you would like more information about specialist education settings in Suffolk, please visit the Suffolk Local Offer website at www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk. You can also contact Statutory SEND Services, contact details in the table above, who will be able to advise and support if you have any questions about this process.

You can also access advice and support from Suffolk Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (Suffolk SENDIASS), see the 'Useful contacts' section or below.

Further sources of information and support can also be found at:

- Suffolk SENDIASS www.suffolksendiass.co.uk
- Suffolk Parent Carer Forum suffolkpcf.co.uk

School Travel Policy

Suffolk County Council (SCC) School Travel Policy

Suffolk's School Admissions Policies and SCC's School Travel Policy are separate policies. It is important you understand how your school admission preferences may affect your child's eligibility for SCC funded school travel before you apply for a school place.

The current School Travel Policy applies to children starting at a new school or when they move house. SCC funded school travel will only be provided when a child is attending their **nearest suitable school** and meets the distance criteria as detailed in the table on the next page.

All children living in Suffolk who will be starting at a new school will be eligible for SCC funded school travel when they meet the statutory walking distance criteria from their home to the **nearest suitable school** that would have had a place available for them. This would be whether or not an application was made for a place at that school.

Full details about SCC funded school travel, including additional arrangements for low income families and those with children who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), can be found at www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel.

When you apply for a school place for your child, it is important to think about how you will get your child to school on time. Most parents make their own arrangements for their child to go to and from school.

Nearest School Checker

Find out what your child's three nearest Suffolk schools are at nearestschool.suffolk.gov.uk for the 2026/2027 school year. **We update this each year to include new roads and developments.**

The **catchment area school** may not be your child's nearest suitable school for SCC funded school travel – you **must** check this before you apply for a school place if SCC funded school travel is important to you. **We will only provide SCC funded school travel to your child's catchment area school when it is the nearest suitable school to their home that would have had a place available for them and they meet the distance criteria.**

Important: If your child is offered a place at a school that is **not their nearest suitable school** but a place could have been offered at a nearer school when your admission application is decided, whether or not you applied for that school, you will be responsible for making school travel arrangements for your child, travelling with them as necessary, and paying their travel costs.

Closing date for eligible pupils to opt-in

If your child is starting at a new school in September 2026 and you wish to be assessed for SCC funded school travel, you will need to opt-in by **31 May 2026**. Late applications may not be processed by the beginning of the Autumn term 2026.

SCC funded school travel may be provided on a dedicated closed contract school bus, for pupils only, or on public transport, depending on where you live.

Information on school travel will be provided in the admissions email or letter that we send you in 2026 when we offer your child a school place. Find out more information about school travel and whether your child may be eligible at www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel.

SCC funded school travel

We will offer your child SCC funded school travel if your child meets at least one of the eligibility criteria in the table below.

Statutory walking distance	All children aged between 5 and 16* (Reception Year to Year 11) qualify for SCC funded school travel if they attend their **nearest** suitable school with a place available when the school admission application is decided and live more than: ▪ Two miles from the school if they are aged under 8. ▪ Three miles from the school if they are aged 8 or older. *ages are taken at 1 September each school year. If your child receives SCC funded school travel and is under eight years of age and lives more than two miles but less than three miles from the school allocated, travel arrangements will finish at the end of the school year following their eighth birthday. We will support travel for four-year olds who have a full-time place in the Reception Year class when their fifth birthday falls during the school year. The way we measure distances for school travel is different to the method used for school admissions. We measure distances by the shortest available route along which a child may walk accompanied as necessary. Routes are calculated using a network comprised of the Ordnance Survey MasterMap Highways Network, which includes all roads and urban paths, and Public Rights of Way as shown on the Definitive Map. Distances are measured from the point of the network that is closest to the address point of the child's home to the nearest gate or access to the school.
Safety of the Route	If your child attends their nearest suitable school and does not meet the statutory walking distance criteria, but the route has been deemed to be not safe by a Road Safety Officer. If your child is not eligible for SCC funded school travel to their nearest suitable school because they do not meet the statutory walking distance, but you consider the route from home to the school is unsafe for them to walk, accompanied as necessary, with reasonable safety then you can appeal this decision. If an appeal panel agrees with you, we will provide SCC funded school travel while the route remains unsafe.
Next nearest suitable school	If your child is offered a place at a school that is **not their nearest school** but it is the nearest suitable school that could have offered your child a place, whether or not you applied for that school, when your application was determined, and the relevant distance criterion is met, your child will be eligible for SCC funded school travel.
Low income	**Extended Rights Eligibility** Extended rights are designed to support low-income families to exercise school choice. A child is eligible for SCC funded school travel if they are eligible for free school meals or a parent with whom they live receives maximum Working Tax Credit and they are: ▪ aged 8 or over but under 11, attend their nearest suitable school and it is more than two miles from their home; or

	▪ aged 11 to 16 years, and attend one of their three nearest suitable schools provided it is more than two miles but not more than six miles from their home; or ▪ aged 11 to 16 years, attend a school that is more than two but not more than 15 miles from their home that their parents have chosen on the grounds of their religion or belief if, having regard to that religion or belief, there is no suitable school nearer to their home. We measure distances by the shortest available route along which a child may walk accompanied as necessary. Routes are calculated using a network comprised of the Ordnance Survey MasterMap Highways Network, which includes all roads and urban paths, and Public Rights of Way as shown on the Definitive Map. Distances are measured from the point of the network that is closest to the address point of the child's home to the nearest gate or access to the school or college.
Special educational needs, a disability, or mobility problems	If your child has special educational needs, a disability, or mobility problems, we will assess their eligibility for SCC funded school travel against our School Travel Policy. Where a child has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan which names a school that SCC agrees is the nearest suitable school to meet the child's special needs, the child will be eligible for SCC funded school travel, provided that the statutory walking distance is met or it is agreed that the child is unable to walk to school, accompanied as necessary. In very exceptional cases, we may agree to provide a passenger assistant to travel with your child. This decision would be made on an individual basis using the evidence provided. If your child does not have an EHC plan but has special educational needs, a disability, or mobility problems (including temporary medical conditions) and is not eligible under the School Travel Policy, you can challenge this decision and request a review/appeal so that your child's individual needs can be considered (see the Review/Appeals section on the next page).
Exceptions	If you feel you or your child has exceptional circumstances that require your child to have help with SCC funded school travel, you can ask us to review your case (see the Review/Appeals section on the next page).

If your child is eligible for SCC funded school travel and home to school travel options are not available in your area, we may consider paying you a mileage allowance to take your child to and from school instead.

Spare seats

If your child is not eligible for SCC funded school travel, we may still be able to help you through our spare seat procedures. If there are spare seats on vehicles that SCC has arranged specifically for children eligible for SCC funded school travel, then you may be able to buy a seat for your child on a term by term basis. SCC will sell these on a first come first served basis.

We cannot guarantee that a spare seat will continue to be available as this will depend on the number of seats needed for children who are eligible for SCC funded school travel. We re-assess school travel capacity every school term. This may mean that we have to withdraw the offer of a spare seat if more children become eligible for SCC funded school travel.

The charging arrangements for the sale of spare seats is currently £1,050 per year. The termly charge is £350 per child per seat. The charge for spare seats is reviewed annually and may increase from September 2026.

If your child has Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and is not eligible for SCC funded school travel, you may currently purchase a spare seat for £780 per year for the school year. The termly charge is £260 per child per seat. The charge for spare seats is reviewed annually and may increase from September 2026.

We will give a 50% reduction to the relevant charge for a spare seat for a child whose family has low income and is in receipt of qualifying benefits for free school meals.

We can offer you a half termly payment option if your child is offered a seat. More information is available online as you make your payment at www.suffolkonboard.com/pay.

We will not offer a spare seat on a closed contract school bus service if a relevant public bus service is available in the area. You will need to contact the operator directly for the price of seats on any commercially operated public transport routes, or routes run by schools. The contact details for bus companies operating in Suffolk are available online at www.suffolkonboard.com/operators.

If you would like us to check if we can offer you a spare seat, please complete the online form at www.suffolkonboard.com/optin or you can call us on 0345 606 6173.

You can opt-in for a spare seat from 1 July 2026. Applications for spare seats will not be assessed until all the on time applications for eligible pupils have been processed. On time spare seat applications will be assessed from August 2026. For full details on the priorities for allocating spare seats, please refer to the guidance on www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel. We recommend that you plan alternative arrangements for your child to travel to and from school in case it is not possible for us to offer them a spare seat.

Review/Appeals Process

If your child is not eligible for SCC funded school travel and you believe that you or your child's circumstances need special consideration, you have a right to challenge our decision.

Further information on the Review/Appeals process is available online at www.suffolkonboard.com/appeals.

Roman Catholic travel

Children starting at Roman Catholic schools are not entitled to SCC funded school travel unless it is their nearest suitable school and the distance criteria is met. There may be exceptions to this if your family has a low income, please see the eligibility table on page 44.

Sustainable modes of travel

SCC has a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMoTS) for schools and colleges available at www.suffolkonboard.com/smot. The aim of this is to provide your child with the opportunities to travel safely to, from and between early years settings, schools and colleges in a sustainable way. This can help promote the benefits of exercise, independence and accessibility to improve your child's quality of life and also the quality of the local environment. Travelling to school in a sustainable way can also save you money.

Sustainable modes of travel can include:

- Walking, cycling and scooting
- Park and stride (for example, parking further away and walking the last five minutes to school), or using a combination of modes
- Using public transport (bus and train)
- Using demand responsive transport (Connecting Communities, Katch)
- Car sharing

All schools in Suffolk should have a School Travel Plan (STP) which aims to encourage more walking or cycling, improve safety on the school journey and raise awareness among pupils and parents of the harmful effects of increasing car use on children's health, safety and independence. Schools should review their STPs regularly.

Choices for 16 to 19 year olds in Suffolk

There is lots of information and advice for young people in Suffolk at www.thesource.me.uk.

Options after 16

Young people need to stay in some form of learning until they are 18 under the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) legislation. This means that they will need to think about whether to:

- Remain in full-time education (such as school sixth form, college or sixth form college).
- Go on to work-based learning (such as an apprenticeship or supported internship).
- Be in full-time work alongside part-time learning leading to an accredited qualification.
- Take up volunteering for 20 hours or more and do this alongside part-time learning which leads to an accredited qualification.
- Be self-employed, combining this with part-time learning leading to an accredited qualification.

To find out more about RPA and how this affects your child visit www.thesource.me.uk.

Wherever your child chooses to study they will need to apply in good time. It is best to contact local providers directly or look at their websites for detailed information and dates for open and information events.

Options in Suffolk

Please note that if you live near the county border your nearest provision may not be in Suffolk

Apprenticeships	Apprenticeships give young people the chance to work for an employer, learn on the job, improve their skills and earn a salary while being supported by training providers. There are currently over 200 types of apprenticeship offered in Suffolk ranging from administration and financial services to sports and working with children and young people. Further support and information is available from Apprenticeships Suffolk visit apprenticeshipssuffolk.org.
Further Education (FE) colleges	The three FE colleges in Suffolk are East Coast College in Lowestoft, Suffolk New College in Ipswich (including Suffolk Rural at Otley and On the Coast at Halesworth and Leiston) and West Suffolk College in Bury St Edmunds. All offer a wide range of vocational and technical courses (for example, T-levels) and qualifications. Young people can study full-time or part-time. Colleges provide a different learning environment; they also provide the support and help of a personal tutor.
School sixth forms	Young people already at a school with a sixth form may choose to remain, or they could go to a sixth form at another school. School sixth forms vary widely from each other in terms of size and range of courses, and this could affect their choices. You should contact the school sixth form directly for details of the application process including any closing date, for further information or a prospectus. If you are refused a place, you have a right of appeal against that refusal.
Sixth Form Colleges – 16 to 19 providers	Alternatively, young people can choose to attend one of the 16 to 19 providers – One Sixth Form College in Ipswich, Lowestoft Sixth Form College or Abbeygate Sixth Form College in Bury St Edmunds. These Sixth Form Colleges are dedicated to age 16-19 study but are not attached to a school. They offer A levels you would find at school sixth forms as well as some of the foundation/vocational/technical courses you would find in an FE College. You

	should contact them directly for details of their application processes including any closing dates, for further information or a prospectus. If you are refused a place, you have a right of appeal against that refusal.
Independent Training Providers	Independent training providers offer a range of study programmes that can include qualifications including retakes of Maths and English, training, work experience placements, enrichment activities and skills development as well as apprenticeships. They often have more than one intake in a year.
Self-employment	Some young people may also consider starting their own business enterprise alongside part-time education or training. There is lots of information and support available through business organisations and online support. Further information on starting a business is available online at www.thesource.me.uk.

Additional information to explore options in further detail can be found at

- thesource.me.uk/yourfuture/choicesat16/#options

Further sources of information and support can also be found at:

- nationalcareers.service.gov.uk
- www.icanbea.org.uk
- apprenticeshipssuffolk.org

Opportunities for young people with additional needs

There is lots of information about opportunities for young people with additional needs at thesource.me.uk/home/extra and you can find out about the Suffolk Local Offer on the Suffolk County Council website at www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk.

The Transitions guide provides guidance to support transition planning for parents and carers of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. This can be found at suffolklocaloffer.org.uk/preparing-for-adulthood.

You can also find information about the full range of services that we provide for families and carers who support young people with additional needs and disabilities at www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk.

Post-16 Travel Policy

Please note that the current Post-16 Travel Policy is available at www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel. This policy details the arrangements that will apply during the school year commencing September 2025. SCC is required to consult on its Post-16 Policy for the 2026/2027 school year and will publish this on its website by 31 May 2026.

Currently we provide a subsidised travel scheme for young people aged 16 to 19 years old, known as post-16 travel. Young people who are offered post-16 travel have to make a payment towards the cost each term. The annual charge is currently £1,050. The termly charge is £350 per child per seat.

We will give a 50% reduction to the relevant charge for a spare seat for a young person whose family has low income and is in receipt of qualifying benefits for free school meals.

The charge for post-16 travel and spare seats is reviewed annually and may increase from September 2026.

Post-16 travel will be offered to young people who:

- Attend either their nearest school sixth form or post-16 centre that offers the course that will help them to progress with their chosen pathway **and**
- Are studying in Years 12 or 13 but are under 19 years old (or are completing a course that started prior to their nineteenth birthday) **and**
- Are undertaking an approved full-time course of further education **and**
- Are resident in Suffolk **and**
- Live at least 3 miles from their nearest school sixth form or post-16 centre they wish to attend.

The only exception to this is if the young person is studying something specific that cannot be studied at their nearest school sixth form or post-16 centre. This may include:

- the majority (that is 50% or more) of the student's programme that cannot be studied at their nearest school sixth form or post-16 centre – usually this will mean two of four subjects are not available.
- more than 50% of the A-level offer is available at the nearest provider but the student requires a particular A-level subject to access Higher Education for a specific career path and no comparable equivalent is available at the nearest provider.

This will need to be verified and agreed by the Passenger Transport Team.

Spare seats

If there is no public transport available to the young person's nearest school sixth form and there is a closed contract school bus to that school that has spare seats on it, we make them available to families living on the route who don't qualify for post-16 travel.

The charge for spare seats travel is currently £350 per seat per term for a young person between their home and school sixth form or post-16 education centre. The charge for post-16 travel and spare seats is reviewed annually and may increase from September 2026.

We will give a 50% reduction to the relevant charge for a spare seat for a young person whose family has low income and is in receipt of qualifying benefits for free school meals.

Please Note: Public Service Vehicle Access Regulations (PSVAR) limit the number of spare seats we can offer. Spare seats can only be offered on current closed contracts for up to 20% of the seat capacity of the vehicle, this is in line with the Department for Transport's (DfT) exemptions for PSVAR. This means that there may be some unallocated seats on a vehicle, but we are not legally permitted to sell them if this would exceed the 20% threshold.

Further information about spare seats can be found online at www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Travel to a post-16 centre for students with SEND or mobility difficulties is assessed against the Post-16 Travel Policy and the guidance on spare seats. The charge for SEND transport is currently £780 per year for the school year. The termly charge is £260 per young person per seat.

We will give a 50% reduction to the relevant charge for a spare seat for a young person whose family has low income and is in receipt of qualifying benefits for free school meals.

The charge for post-16 travel and spare seats is reviewed annually and may increase from September 2026.

16-19 bursary fund

There is no exemption to these costs for post-16 or spare seat travel for families on low income. Young people may be able to get a bursary to help with education-related costs if they are aged 16 to 19 and are:

- Studying at school or college (not university) in England.
- On a training course, including unpaid work experience.

The bursary is money that your child, or their education or training provider, can use to pay for things like:

- Clothing, books and other equipment for your course.
- Travel arrangements and meals on days you study or train.

You can go online at www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund for more information or contact the college or training provider to find out more.

Beyond 19

Higher Education (HE)	The University of Suffolk (UoS) offers a wide range of full and part-time degree courses across the county. The UoS campus is based at the Waterfront building in Ipswich, but some HE courses are also delivered locally through the HE bases in each of the FE colleges. All universities offer distance learning and part-time courses. More information on the national HE offer can be found at www.ucas.com.
Further Education (FE) colleges	All three FE colleges offer a wide range of full and part-time courses throughout the county. These courses cover technical as well as academic and leisure learning.
Apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships	Apprenticeships provide people of all ages with the chance to work for an employer, learn on the job, improve their skills and earn a salary while being supported by training providers. There are currently over 200 types of apprenticeship offered in Suffolk ranging from administration and financial services to sports and working with children and young people. Further support and information is available from Apprenticeships Suffolk visit apprenticeshipssuffolk.org. This could include Level 3 or 4 qualifications and/or a degree.

Employment including self-employment and own business start-up	Further information on local career choices and employers is available from www.icanbea.org.uk and local organisations such as the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce and Menta at menta.org.uk.
Adult Learning Service	The Adult Learning Service in Suffolk provides a range of accredited and community learning opportunities for adults aged 19 years and over. For more information, please see visit learnsuffolk.org.

Further information

Young people aged 16-19 in Suffolk can get help and advice on courses, jobs, CV building, apprenticeships, careers, money, free time, life, housing and health from www.thesource.me.uk.

If you are 16-19 and not in education, employment or training (NEET), you can get one to one help and support from a Youth Support Worker to explore your options. Look at the help and support pages available at www.thesource.me.uk to find someone in your area.

Help and advice on apprenticeships for parents and carers and young people is available at apprenticeshipssuffolk.org.

Other useful information

Term dates

The school term dates for all Suffolk County Council's maintained schools for 2026/2027 are:

	Term begins	Term ends	Half term begins	Half term ends
Autumn Term 2026	Tuesday 1 September 2026	Friday 18 December 2026	Monday 26 October 2026	Friday 30 October 2026
Spring Term 2027	Monday 4 January 2027	Thursday 25 March 2027	Monday 15 February 2027	Friday 19 February 2027
Summer Term 2027	Monday 12 April 2027	Wednesday 21 July 2027	Monday 31 May 2027	Friday 4 June 2027

- **Christmas Holidays:** Saturday 19 December 2026 to Sunday 3 January 2027
- **Easter Holidays:** Friday 26 March 2027 to Sunday 11 April 2027

The total number of days for the school year is 195. All maintained schools set five teacher training days called Professional Development (PD) days, which means there are 190 actual teaching days in the school year.

Suffolk County Council recommends the following PD days: Tuesday 1 and Wednesday 2 September 2026, Friday 23 October 2026, Monday 4 January 2027 and Monday 12 April 2027. Most schools in Suffolk follow these dates but you should contact your school to confirm.

Please note: academies, voluntary aided and free schools can set their own term dates so please check with your child's school in case these differ from those set by us. All term dates for community and voluntary controlled schools are on Suffolk County Council's website at www.suffolk.gov.uk. Where a school has chosen different term dates to Suffolk County Council this information will be available from the school.

Charging and remissions policy

Schools have their own charging and remissions policy for activities such as music tuition, school journeys in school hours, activities outside of school hours or purchase of materials. For more information contact the school directly.

Fair Access Protocol (FAP)

The FAP is designed to ensure children who are considered hard to place and/or vulnerable are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible and that no school is asked to take a disproportionate number of children who have challenging behaviour or who have been excluded from other schools. The FAP is published online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/FAP.

Children in care, children who were previously in care and children adopted from state care outside of England

The School Admissions Code requires that children in care (looked after children) and children who were previously in care (children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order, immediately following having been looked after, including 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 result of being adopted) must be given the highest priority in the oversubscription criteria for all schools. This is because these children are particularly vulnerable.

We work with social workers, the Suffolk Virtual School for children in care and schools to make sure children in care can be admitted to the appropriate school, even if it is outside the normal admissions round and/or above the Published Admission Number (PAN) for the school. The School Admissions Code allows us to direct a maintained school to admit a child in care and to ask the Secretary of State to intervene in the case of academies and free schools. All efforts will be made to make sure the child has a place at a suitable school as soon as possible before a decision about a direction is made.

Private fostering

You may be private fostering if:

- You are caring for someone else's child for more than 28 days.
- You do not have parental responsibility for the child.
- You are not a relative such as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether full blood, half blood or by marriage or civil partnership).

If this situation applies to you then it is a legal requirement that you contact Suffolk County Council to speak to Social Services on 0808 800 4005. More information is available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/privatefostering.

Free school meals

Your child may be entitled to a free school meal at lunchtime, if you receive any of the following benefits:

- Income Support.
- Income based Job Seeker's Allowance.
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance.
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit.
- Child Tax Credit (but no element of Working Tax Credit) and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenues and Customs) that does not exceed £16,190.
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Working Tax Credit (during the four-week period immediately after your employment ends or hours are reduced)
- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400 (£616.67 per month), as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods).

To qualify for free school meals in a nursery:

- Your child must attend a maintained school nursery as a registered pupil (your provision can advise you whether it is a maintained or a private setting).
- Your child must receive education before and after lunch on the same day.
- You must be in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits listed above.

If you are not entitled to claim most UK welfare benefits (also known as having 'no recourse to public funds'), your child may still be eligible for free school meals. Contact the Free School Meals Team to determine if they are eligible at freeschoolmeals@suffolk.gov.uk.

The advice from the government, as of August 2025, is that the roll out of Universal Credit is currently expected to be completed in March 2026. The Department for Education states children receiving free school meals since 1 April 2018 will continue to receive them during the rollout, even if family income rises.

After rollout ends, children who no longer meet the criteria will still receive free school meals until the end of the 2025/2026 school year.

From September 2026, all households on Universal Credit will qualify for free school meals, regardless of income. Parents will still need to apply to receive free school meals for their child.

All children in the Reception Year, Year 1 or Year 2 are entitled to Universal Infant Free School Meals regardless of family income. We recommend you apply for free school meals if you are on any of the benefits detailed above and you believe your child may be eligible. This will ensure that your child's school will receive additional funding called Pupil Premium funding which is intended to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged children in state funded schools in England.

Schools receive:

- £1,515 per year for each eligible child in the Reception Year to Year 6.
- £1,075 per year for each eligible child in Year 7 to Year 11.

Schools decide how best to spend this money to support their pupils, but this could include help with the cost of school trips, uniform costs or additional learning support in school.

If your child is starting Reception in September, please wait until you receive confirmation of their school place before you apply for free school meals.

To check if your child is eligible, apply online for an immediate response at www.suffolk.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children

We will consider Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children moving into an area as ordinarily resident in that area when they apply for a school place.

Useful contacts

Admissions Team

The Admissions Team are able to help you with queries about the admissions process.

Phone: 0345 600 0981 (local rate)

Email: admissions@suffolk.gov.uk

Website: www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions

Consortium of Selective Schools in Essex (CSSE)

Opening hours: Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 3.30pm.

Phone: 01245 348257

Email: admin@csse.org.uk

Website: csse.org.uk

Department for Education

The government department responsible for education and children's services in England. Normal opening hours are Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 5.00pm.

Phone: 0370 000 2288

Website: www.gov.uk/dfe

Education Appeals Office

Who to contact if you've been refused a place for your child at your preferred school in Suffolk, and about the Permanent Exclusion Reviews. Some academies arrange their own appeals instead of using this service.

Phone: 01473 264218, 01473 264219 or 01473 264227

Email: statutory.appealsoffice@suffolk.gov.uk

Website: www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions

Neighbouring local authorities

Cambridgeshire County Council

Address: Admissions Team, OCT2605, New Shire Hall, Emery Crescent, Enterprise Campus, Alconbury Weald, Huntingdon, PE28 4YE

Phone: 0345 045 1370

Email: admissions@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Website: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/admissions

Essex County Council

Address: School Admissions, County Hall, Market Road, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH

Phone: 0345 603 2200

Email: admissions@essex.gov.uk

Website: www.essex.gov.uk/admissions

Norfolk County Council

Address: School Admissions, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH

Phone: 0344 800 8020

Email: admissions@norfolk.gov.uk

Website: www.norfolk.gov.uk/admissions

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)

Ofsted inspect services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. You can find inspection reports for the schools you are interested in on their website or you can ask the school for a copy. Many schools also publish their inspection reports on their websites.

Website: www.gov.uk/ofsted

Passenger Transport

For all queries about travel to school.

Phone: 0345 606 6173

Website: www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel

Suffolk Family Information Service (FIS)

The Suffolk FIS offers free and impartial advice to parents and carers about finding childcare, the funded early education entitlement and other family services for 0-19 year olds.

Email: suffolkfis@suffolk.gov.uk

Phone: 0345 60 800 33 (please note a voicemail service is in operation)

Website: www.suffolk.gov.uk/family

Suffolk Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (Suffolk SENDIASS)

The Suffolk SENDIASS team offers impartial information, advice and support to children and young people (up to 25 years old) with special educational needs and disabilities, and their parents and carers, about education, health and social care.

Whilst they cannot recommend schools, they can help families to think about what to consider when choosing a school for their child.

They have lots of information, resources, and frequently asked questions to help families on their website at www.suffolksendiass.co.uk.

You can also contact them directly:

Phone: 01473 265210

Text: ADVICE4ME to 87007

Email: enquiries@suffolksendiass.co.uk

Glossary and definitions

Admissions Authority

Suffolk County Council is responsible for admissions to community and voluntary controlled schools. The governing body or academy trust is responsible for the admissions to voluntary aided, free schools and academies.

CAF1

The normal year of entry paper application form.

Catchment area

A catchment area is a geographical area which is used by some schools to give applicants a priority for a place at that school. The catchment area will be part of the school's oversubscription criteria which is used to rank applications. Some voluntary aided, free schools and academies do not have catchment areas. We cannot guarantee a place at your child's catchment area school. **We will only provide SCC funded school travel to your child's catchment area school when it is the nearest suitable school to their home that would have had a place available for them and they meet the distance criteria.**

Co-ordinated admissions

Admissions are co-ordinated by local authorities for the normal admissions round only, to ensure that children across the county are offered a single school place on the same day.

Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan

An EHC plan is the result of an assessment we have made about a child's special needs and the extra support they need.

Infant class size legislation

The legislation that states it is against the law for children in an infant class, which is defined as a class in which the majority of children will reach the age of five, six or seven during the school year (Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2) to be taught in a class of over 30 pupils with a single qualified teacher.

Late application

This is an application for the normal year of entry made after the relevant closing date for applications. This may be due to reasons outside of your control.

Nearest suitable school

The nearest suitable school with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child, and any special educational needs that the child may have. It does not include independent schools.

Normal admissions round

The set period of time when applications and decisions are made for children to start school full-time, or to move on to their next school, in the following year.

Normal year of entry

The normal year of entry for full-time pupils in the age range served by the school.

Ordinarily resident

By ordinarily resident we mean the place where your child usually lives. We consider this to be where they sleep overnight. We may need proof of this address. If you use another address to give the impression that your child lives at a different address to where they are ordinarily resident, such as a second home or a grandparent's address, so that you have a higher priority for a place at that school; we consider this to be a fraudulent application. Where a child lives at two or more addresses, each for part of the week, the address at which the child is ordinarily resident will be considered to be the address that the child lives at for most of the week (excluding weekends and school holidays). Separate evidence in writing from each parent must be provided to confirm the child's living arrangements at the time of application.

In cases where the child spends an equal proportion of the school week at two or more different addresses, evidence of which is to be considered the main contact address will be required to support the application. Agreement in writing by the parents will be required to state which address is to be used as the ordinarily resident address. This address will then be used when processing all school preferences expressed. It is not acceptable to use one address for one school preference and another address for another school preference.

Out-catchment school

A school which is not the catchment area school.

Oversubscribed

A school becomes oversubscribed when the number of applications is greater than the number of places available.

Oversubscription criteria

The rules used to decide which children have the highest priority for places when a school has more applications than places available.

Own Admission Authority (OAA) schools

These schools sometimes have their own admissions policy. The governing body or academy trust makes decisions on applications. These can be voluntary aided, free schools and academies.

Parent

For the purposes of education law, section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines a 'parent' as:

- all natural (biological) parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person (this could be a step-parent, guardian or other relative)
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

A person has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child.

Published Admission Number (PAN)

This is the set number of places at a school in any one year. It is based on a national formula which decides how many children can go to a school without causing overcrowding. Although the PAN applies to the year of entry at a school, this number would normally be applied across all year groups in the school. There may be times where this is not possible.

Preference

Naming a school that you would like your child to attend.

Prospectus

The information guide published by the school.

Siblings (for Suffolk County Council's admission oversubscription criteria)

Where the child has a sibling in the school or a sibling has already been offered a place at the school, and where the sibling will still be attending the school at the time of admission but not in a specialist unit or a specialist resource base for Hearing Impaired provision, a nursery or in the sixth form. Priority will be given, where necessary, to applications where there is the smallest age gap in calendar days between the child's date of birth and the date of birth of any sibling already attending the school, or who has been offered a place at the time of application.

The term 'sibling' includes: natural, half, step, and adopted brothers and sisters; a child of the partner of the parent; and children who are fostered into the family. In all these cases, the child and their sibling will both be living at the same address (that is where the child is ordinarily resident) in a single family unit. This means that children from different family units, where those separate families are living together at the same address, are not considered siblings under this criterion.

For example, if another family moves into your house with their children, they will not be considered as your children's siblings for admissions purposes.

Summer born children

Children born from the beginning of April to the end of August.

Supplementary Information Form (SIF)

The form you may need to complete if you are applying for a voluntary aided, free school or academy which asks for extra information to enable the admissions authority to rank your application against their school's admission oversubscription criteria. SIFs are available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions or from the school direct.

Comments, compliments and complaints

Our aim is to make sure your child gets the best education possible. If you have any comments, compliments or complaints about your child's education, it is best to discuss this with a member of staff or the headteacher at your child's school. This can be put in writing if you prefer.

Most issues can be resolved without any further action. If you are not happy with the outcome, you should ask the school for details of their complaints policy.

If your complaint relates to a service you have received from Suffolk County Council you can contact Suffolk County Council's Complaints Team (Customer Rights). Further information can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/feedback.

Website: www.suffolk.gov.uk/feedback
E-mail: customerrights@suffolk.gov.uk
Telephone: 0345 266 1821

Comments or compliments about our services can also be sent to Suffolk County Council's Complaints Team (Customer Rights).

Data Protection

Our Privacy Notice is available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/CYPprivacynotice. This privacy notice tells you what information Children's Services collects and uses, and your rights regarding your information.

You can request a paper copy by contacting us on 0345 600 0981 (local rate).

We have been careful to make sure the information within this publication is accurate at the time of printing. We cannot rule out the need for changes before the start of the 2026/2027 school year. Any changes will be up-dated at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.