

In-year school admissions



A guide
for parents

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In-year application is the name we give to any application for a school place that we receive:

- after the normal time to make an application for a school place has ended
- for year groups other than the normal year of entry, for example, Year 4 or Year 9

This guide is designed to help you make an in-year application if you are resident in Thurrock and fall into one or more of the following categories:

- You have moved within the borough and would like to change to a more local school
- You have moved to Thurrock, either from another part of the country or from abroad
- You wish to move from home education to school education
- You wish to move from a fee-paying school to a state funded school
- You wish to change schools

If any of the above applies, you will need to complete an in-year application form. This can be downloaded from the school admissions pages on the Council website at:



thurrock.gov.uk/admissions



What you should consider before applying for a place at another school

If you simply want to change schools you should think carefully about whether this is really necessary and in your child's best interests.

It is generally in a child's best interest to remain at the same school. Whatever the stage of education your child is in, changing schools can cause disruption. You should ask yourself the following questions before making a decision.

Is my child having problems at their current school?

If your child is having problems, a change of school is not always the answer. You should discuss any concerns with your child's headteacher before you apply for a transfer. There are many support agencies that will be able to help. The headteacher of your child's school will be able to advise what help is available.

Does my child have a statement of special needs?

If your child is receiving extra support through a special needs statement, or is undergoing a formal assessment of special educational needs, you should speak to your child's current headteacher and SEN case officer before applying to transfer school. A change of school could mean that there was a delay in completing the assessment or in setting up support in a new setting, or that some types of support would not be available.



Is my child in key stage 4 (years 10 or 11)?

If your child is in year 10 or year 11, you should think very carefully before moving them for any reason. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is different in each secondary school. A different school is unlikely to be able to offer all the same subject options, such as GCSEs and BTECs, for which your child has studied and completed coursework. Even if they do, they may use different examination boards or syllabuses. You need to speak to the school you are interested in about options and exams before making a request to transfer.



Do I receive assistance with my child's travel to the current school?

You should also bear in mind that if you do choose to move your child from one school to another you will not automatically qualify for home to school transport. If you want to ask about entitlement eligibility you should e-mail Awards@thurrock.gov.uk for help.



Finding a place for your child

The Admissions Team will help you to find a school that has a place. It might be difficult to find a place at the school that you want in the middle of the school year as it may be full up and also have a waiting list. If you are applying for a place for more than one child at the same school, and it is not possible to find a place for all of them at the same school, the Admissions Team can help you with details of schools that have places.

We cannot normally hold places open for families that are planning to move to Thurrock and cannot guarantee a place will be available at the school you applied for. You should contact the Admissions Team when you decide to move house to find out which schools have spare places.

You need to know that, if a place is available at the school you applied for, your child will need to start on the agreed date. We cannot hold a place open after that.

When you apply during the school year, it is often difficult to get a place at the school you want. Some schools are very popular and they have long waiting lists. You can ask for a place in any Thurrock school, of course, but we strongly advise you to speak to the Admissions Team first so that you know where there are likely to be spaces. You can also apply to schools outside Thurrock on the same application form.

You can find the list of admissions criteria – the rules schools use to offer places - in the primary and secondary admission information booklets on the Thurrock Council website.

thurrock.gov.uk/admissions



Completing your application

It is important to read the admissions criteria for the schools you are interested in applying for, as this will help you understand how places are allocated.

You can get the criteria and form;

- **on the website of the local authority where the school is located**
- **directly from the school itself**
- **on the school's website**



Some schools will ask you to give extra information on a supplementary form.

You are asked to name up to 4 primary or 6 secondary schools on the form. You must use the Thurrock form, even if you are applying for a school or schools outside Thurrock. Please remember that you are applying for schools at a time when places have already been allocated, so you will need to be aware that the schools you prefer, or are the closest to your home, may not be able to offer a place. You should always try to speak to the Admissions Team in the local authority where the school you are interested in is located so that you can find out if there are any places available.

Parents/carers are responsible for making sure that their children receive an education if they are of statutory school age, 5 – 16 years old. We strongly advise you to make the full number of choices of school, and to talk to the Admissions Team who can give you advice so that your child gets a school place as quickly as possible.

Please fill in the form fully and accurately. If you do not, it could mean that it takes longer to complete the application process. You will need to fill in a separate form for each child. It may not always be possible to offer places to all your children at the same school. There may not be spaces in every year group at the same school. In most cases if one child is offered a place, other children will receive sibling priority on the waiting list for the same school. However, some schools are very popular and there are very few spaces throughout the year.

You are strongly advised to read the admission criteria for the schools. The criteria and form can be obtained either on the website of the local authority where the school is located or directly from the school, on the school's website. Some schools will require you to complete and submit supplementary information.

If you are applying for a school or schools outside Thurrock you must use the Thurrock form. You should speak to the Admissions Team in the borough where the schools you are interested in are located, in order to find out where there are likely to be vacancies.

You will be asked to provide proof of residence in Thurrock.



Processing your application

If you name schools located outside Thurrock, we will notify the local authority in line with the rules for in-year admissions arrangements.

Offers

We will do our best to let you know if you have the offer of a place at one of your preferred schools within 15 school days of receiving your application. If it is possible to offer your child a place at one of your preferred schools, the Admissions Team will notify you in writing.

Starting at the new school

When you have accepted the offer of a place, we will pass your child's details to the school who will contact you to arrange a date for your child to start.

When your child starts school will depend on the reason for your in-year application; these arrangements will be discussed between you and the school. If you have recently moved to the area, the school will normally arrange a start date as soon as possible. Schools will often invite the parents/carers and children to a pre-admission meeting before the child starts school. This meeting is an opportunity for you and your child to provide any information that the school needs to know in order to plan for admission.

Refusals

All schools have a fixed number of places available. This is called the published admission number. If it is not possible to offer your child a place at one of your preferred schools, the Admissions Team will write to you within 15 school days.





Appeals

You have the right of appeal against a decision not to offer a place; details of the appeals procedure will depend on the type of school and this will be explained in the refusal letter.

You may also find it useful to contact ACE Education Advice & ACE Education Training at 36 Nicholay Road, London, N19 3EZ

They provide free, independent advice on admissions and appeals. For further information, please visit www.ace-ed.org.uk.

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children receive an education while they are of statutory school age. You are, therefore, strongly advised to use all your preferences and take advice from the Admissions Team on realistic preferences to avoid delay.

Thurrock Council has a statutory duty to provide your child with a suitable education (defined as efficient full-time education suitable to a child's age, ability and aptitude) and does not have a duty in law to offer a place at a school which is full.

Waiting lists

You can ask for your child's name to be put on a waiting list for schools that you applied for and that were not able to offer a place. Your child's name will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with the published admission criteria.

Thurrock Council only has information about waiting lists for schools in its area. For schools located outside Thurrock you will need to contact the relevant local authority or school.

It is also important to remember that a waiting list position can go up and down. If, for example, a child who lives closer to the school or who meets one of the other main rules for getting a place is added to the waiting list they will take priority on the list.



