

Definitions used in school admissions

Looked after children and previously looked after children

Looked after children are those who are in the care of a local authority as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 at the time of application. Previously looked after children, are 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.

Exceptional social or medical reasons

Because all our schools have similar facilities, there are very few exceptional reasons that mean that a child can only attend one particular school. For example, all schools can cope with common childhood complaints such as asthma or diabetes. Although child-minding and childcare arrangements are very important to a working parent, we cannot take account of these arrangements when offering school places. They will not be accepted as exceptional reasons. Some of our schools have an Additionally Resourced Centre. Priority 1(b) would not give your child access to an Additionally Resourced Centre.

If you think there are exceptional social or medical reasons that mean your child can only attend one particular school this is what you must do:

- You must tick the relevant box and add your reason notes to your online application.
- You must send us, by post or email, independent evidence from a reliable source (for example, a consultant psychologist) marked with your child's name and date of birth.
- If you do not send evidence your application will not be considered for priority 1(b) but it will be considered against the remaining admission criteria.

Next January and February the Cabinet Member Advisory Group will meet to consider any exceptional reasons supported by evidence from independent professionals and make recommendations to Cabinet Member. After Cabinet Member has made the decision we will write to you telling you the priority your application has been given. This is not an offer of a place. If you apply on time you cannot ask for exceptional reasons to be considered by Cabinet Member after the offers have been made unless the circumstances are new. If you are not offered a place at your preferred school you have the right of appeal.

If you make a late application because you could not apply on time, and you think you have exceptional social or medical reasons, you can send evidence to be considered by Cabinet Member. If your application is given priority 1(b) and the school you have applied for is full you will not be offered a place. Your child's name will be placed on the waiting list which is kept in strict priority order.

Catchment area

A catchment area is a defined area of the borough. Every community and voluntary-controlled school and some academies and voluntary-aided schools have a catchment area. Living in the catchment area for a school does not guarantee that a place will be offered. You can check catchment areas using our Online Maps service.

To qualify as living in the catchment area of a school, your child must live there when the application is made and when your child starts the school in September. If you live in Solihull, your address and your catchment-area school is likely to be printed on your booklet or letter. If you apply using a different address you will need to provide proof of your address. If you are renting a property, the tenancy agreement must cover the time of your application until the time of starting school.

When a child lives between two addresses due to family circumstances, the address used for offering school places will be the one the child normally lives at for most of the school week. (For example, if a child lives with Mum from Monday to Thursday and Dad from Friday to Sunday, Mum's address will be used.) If care is split equally parents can choose which address will be used.

Sibling / brother or sister attending the same school

Solihull community schools and voluntary controlled and some academies use this definition of a sibling. Other schools may use a different definition. You should check the admission arrangements for each relevant school.

The brother or sister must live at the same address and could be:

- a brother or sister sharing the same parents
- a half-brother or half-sister, where two children share one parent
- a stepbrother or stepsister, where two children are related by a parent's marriage or civil partnership (a formal arrangement that gives same-sex couples the same legal status as married couples)
- the separate children of a couple who live together, or
- an adopted or fostered brother or sister.

If possible we will offer twins and other multiple birth children places at the same school. If only one place can be offered we will tell the parents who can choose which child has the place.

Children of staff

Some, but not all, schools give priority in their admission criteria to children of staff in either or both of the following circumstances:

- a) where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and/or
- b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

Living outside the catchment area - how distance measured from home to school

Distance is measured in a straight line from the child's normal home address to the preferred school. Children living closer to the school are offered places first. Distances are measured by our admissions system. The admissions system uses six-figure grid references provided by the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG). The grid references provide a unique point on each property. This is the only measure we will use. Measurements taken from other websites, such as Google maps, will not be valid. You can find out the approximate distance from an address to a school from our Online Maps service.