

Transferring to Secondary School September 2018

Guidance for Parents & Carers

- This is to explain the transfer to secondary school procedure. We appreciate this can be a really anxious time, but we are here to try to help parents understand the decisions they need to make, what they need to do and when they need to do it.
- These notes are relevant to Sutton residents and parents who are interested in Sutton schools. If you don't live in Sutton there might be some differences and it is important to get a copy of your home local authority's school admissions booklet in September.
- **You must apply online if you can at www.sutton.gov.uk/admissions. This is a safer and more convenient option, and there are other benefits shown at paragraph 16 below.**

The Pan-London Coordinated Admissions System: *the background*

1. Since September 2005, all 33 London Local Authorities and 4 local authorities that border London have co-ordinated admissions to their schools.
2. The system is a voluntary extension of the requirement by the government that all councils co-ordinate admissions to their schools within their area.
3. To give you some idea, some 60,000 pupils living in London transfer to secondary school each year – between 12,000 and 15,000 pupils travel across borough boundaries to do so.
4. Previously parents in London who applied to several schools, often in more than one Local Authority, may have received more than one offer, which meant that others received no offer at all.
5. Pan London co-ordination makes the admissions system fairer and improves outcomes for parents. This is because each family only receives one offer across the participating boroughs whereas previously they would have received a response from each authority they applied to, maybe receiving more than one offer, whilst others received none.

Making your application: *step by step*

6. If you are considering a school with a selection or aptitude test, please register for this test (further information on Sutton schools requiring early registration and testing is shown at paragraph 31). If you are considering such schools outside of Sutton, please contact the schools directly for more information.
7. You will receive a leaflet in the first week of September from the school. If you aren't a Sutton resident you will need to contact your home local authority.
8. Find out as much as you can about the schools that you are considering:
 - get the school prospectus
 - go to open days
 - look at the Local Authority online booklets.
9. Whilst it is important to talk to as many people as you can, please make up your own mind about a school. There will be always be parents who have had bad experiences at schools, so do find out for yourself by visiting the schools.
10. Each of our schools has an open evening and some are happy to allow parents to visit at other times. Go and see the schools and talk to current pupils to see what they think of the school. Open evenings do get very busy so go prepared with a list of things you want to find out.
11. Identify any schools that need a supplementary form (see paragraphs 27-33).
12. Consider the admission criteria for each school in order to assess the likelihood of being offered a place.
13. For example, look to see if there is a sibling or distance priority and how these work. Make sure you don't waste a preference. For example look at the distances schools have offered to in previous years, which are given in the online booklet, to assess the likelihood of your child being offered a place on distance. The distances vary from year to year and those in the booklet are only a guide but will give you some idea. You can find out your own distance and compare it against previous years' by going to www.sutton.gov.uk/schooldistance.
14. Ask yourself what you will do if your preferred school cannot offer a place. And consider alternatives as a backup, such as single sex schools if you have only selected mixed schools or vice versa. Schools outside Sutton may be an option for you if you live close to a borough boundary.
15. Only once you have all of this information should you apply.
16. **Please apply online at www.sutton.gov.uk/admissions. You will be able to apply online from 1st September 2017. You need an email account to apply online. The system will give you the option to set up an email address if you don't already have one. Last year 96% of applications were made online. Benefits include:**
 - You can start an application and amend it up to the closing date
 - If you don't have access to a computer at home, internet access is available in Sutton libraries and some primary schools
 - The system will use the information you provide and there is no scope for errors made in data entry elsewhere
 - You can print a copy for your own records
 - No form to go missing in the post.
 - You get an email acknowledgement and reference number.
 - You will receive your outcome a day or two earlier than those making a paper application.

17. You must apply online if you can. If you use a paper form instead of the online system, you must complete the application form for the Local Authority in which you live, regardless of the location of the schools you wish to apply for or where your child currently attends school. Please only complete one application.
18. When applying online remember to press the SUBMIT button when you have completed your application. You will receive an e mail confirmation only once your application has been submitted. Please check for receipt. (NB You may need to check your junk e mail folder)
19. On the application you will be asked to provide details of your child, including their address and their current school.
20. The address must be your child's normal place of residence, and not a temporary, childminder's, relative's or business address. Because this is really important we will follow up with our own checks.
21. Please don't be tempted to lie or use a relative's address, because we normally find out. Each year we withdraw applications and even sometimes offers because someone has used a fraudulent address. We say this as a reassurance and a warning. You might be surprised that the main source of information we have is other parents who rightfully are upset when they see other children being offered a school place above their own, because a parent has lied on the form. So please don't do it.
22. Where custody of a child is shared between parents we will use the address at which the child spends the majority of their time. If there is a genuine equal share custody arrangement, we would normally use the address of the parent who is claiming Child Benefit, however, we will seek other evidence to determine this.
23. You must name the schools that you wish to apply for, wherever they are in the country, and these schools must be ranked in the order that you prefer them. This is very important because if your first preference school can offer a place, other lower preference schools will be discarded and will not be considered further. You will only receive one offer and this will be for the highest preference school for which your child is eligible. No school will know where they have been named on your application. It used to be the case that some schools would consider 1st preference applications before any others. This is no longer true. Think about the order of your preferences carefully. (Independent schools should not be named on the application and should be applied to separately).
24. If you live in Sutton you can name up to 6 schools. You get no priority by naming only 1 school or by naming the same school 6 times. Please try to use all 6 preferences. Naming less schools does not increase your chances of being offered your highest preference school.
25. There is no guarantee of your child being offered a place at your nearest school and there is also no guarantee of being offered a school place on 1 March although this tends only to happen where parents haven't been realistic in their preference schools.
26. You must apply online or return the application form to your home Local Authority by 31 October 2017. If you must make a paper application, we would recommend that you try to get your form in to the Local Authority by 24 October to allow time for processing and checking before the closing date.

Making your application: *supplementary forms*

27. Some schools require a supplementary form or online registration to gather additional information they need in order to apply their admission criteria. Failure to return a supplementary form by the date it is required will mean that the school will be unable to consider your child's application fully and your child may not be included in their tests.
28. You can find out if a school requires a supplementary form by:
 - contacting the school
 - looking in the Local Authority online booklet on the Local Authority's website
 - contacting the Local Authority for the school
29. Supplementary forms for Sutton schools will be available from the school websites, contacting the schools direct, or through links from Sutton's website
30. If you fill in a supplementary form for a school, the school must be named as one of your 6 preferences on your application form. If you only fill in a school's supplementary form and do not name that school on your application form, it cannot be considered as a valid application. If you include a school on your application that requires a supplementary form and don't fill in the form, the school will not have all the information they need in order to apply their admissions criteria and it is likely that your child will be ranked lower than other applicants who have completed the supplementary form.
31. Supplementary forms are normally returned direct to the school but you should check the closing dates as they may be different to the closing date for the application form. Schools requiring forms are shown in the table below:

The following Sutton schools **require** a supplementary form or online registration:

Nonsuch High School for Girls
St Philomena's Catholic High School for Girls
Sutton Grammar School
The John Fisher School
Wallington County Grammar School
Wallington High School for Girls
Wilson's School
Glenthorne High School (Banding test)

The following Sutton schools **may require** a supplementary form or online registration:

Carshalton High School for Girls (Music or Sport aptitude places only)
Glenthorne High School (performing arts aptitude places only but in addition to the Banding Test Registration)
Greenshaw High School (selective places only)

32. The dates supplementary forms need to be returned, and test dates, are shown in the table below:

SCHOOL	CLOSING DATES FOR SUPPLEMENTARY FORMS	TEST DATES
Carshalton High School for Girls (Music or Sport)	29 th September 2017	7 th or 11 th October 2017
Glenthorne High School (Performing Arts) (Banding Test)	29 th September 2017 31 st October 2017	14 th October 2017 25 th November 2017
Greenshaw High School (Selective)	18 th August 2017	19 th September 2017*
Nonsuch High School for Girls	18 th August 2017	19 th September 2017*
Sutton Grammar School for Boys	18 th August 2017	19 th September 2017*
Wallington County Grammar School	18 th August 2017	19 th September 2017*
Wallington High School for Girls	18 th August 2017	19 th September 2017*
Wilson's School	18 th August 2017	19 th September 2017*
St Philomena's Catholic High School for Girls	1 st November 2017	N/A
The John Fisher School	31 st October 2017	N/A

33. Please note the earlier dates for return of supplementary forms. Children who sit the tests will be sent the result before the closing date for applications, so that you only need name these schools if your child passes the test and is eligible for consideration. However you will only know if your child has passed the test, and not whether they will receive an offer; more children pass the tests than there are places available, so an offer cannot be guaranteed.

34. The closing date for applications is 31st October, and it is vital that you get your form in on time and preferably before 24th October. If the application is received after 31st October it will not be considered until after 1st March at which time most schools will be full.

35. The Local Authority **does not** acknowledge receipt of applications. However **if you apply online you will receive an automated acknowledgement once you submit the application** If you would like an acknowledgement and you are completing a paper application form, please include a Stamped Self Addressed Envelope, which we will stamp as received, and return to you straight away.

36. If using an A4 envelope for your paper application, this will cost more than a standard letter. Please check with the Post Office that you have paid the correct postage. The Local Authority will not take responsibility for forms received late or returned because of insufficient postage. It is safer for this reason to apply online.

Transfer to secondary school: *the next steps*

37. By working together with any other local authorities where you have applied for schools, your home local authority will work out the best single offer that can be made guided by the order in which you ranked them on your application form.

The offer process: *how it works*

- Each Sutton school will consider its applicants against their admissions criteria and produce a list naming the applicants in rank order.
- For a school such as Overton Grange, Carshalton Boys and Stanley Park High, Looked After Children will be ranked first, Medical/Social cases would be ranked second, siblings will be ranked third and the remaining applicants will be ranked by distance.
- No school will know where you have placed them in your preference order – they will treat each application equally.
- This means that, for example, if you live 50m from a school and name it as 6th preference, and someone else lives 100m from a school and names it as 1st preference, if the school allocates places according to distance, you get a higher priority because you live closer.
- Once each school has ranked their applications, the Local Authority will compare these lists to see which schools can offer your child a place.
- It is at this stage your preference order is considered. You will only receive one offer and, if a child is ranked high enough on more than one list to be eligible for more than one offer, the Local Authority will identify which is the highest preference of these schools.
- As higher preference offers are made, lower ones are withdrawn, thus freeing up places for other children.
- This process is repeated between LA's until all multiple offers are eliminated and each child has no more than one offer.
- Where it has not been possible to offer a preferred school, applicants are considered for schools with vacancies.

38. Your home Local Authority will send the outcome of your application on 1st March by first class post; this means you are likely to receive the outcome on the 2nd or 3rd. If you have applied online you will receive an email on the evening of 1st March with your outcome.
39. You will be told how to accept or refuse the place, how to get more information, how to appeal and how to be included on waiting lists for other schools.
40. Your child will automatically be placed on the waiting list for higher preference schools, unless it is a grammar school and they did not pass the test.
41. We advise you to accept the offer of a place you receive. You can keep it until you gain a preferred option elsewhere. If you turn down an offer there is no guarantee that you will receive another one and accepting it will not prejudice your child's place on any other waiting lists or jeopardise any appeal you may lodge.
42. Historically, around 5% of applicants do not receive a preference school offer. The majority of these will be offered an alternative, but a small number do not receive any offer

on 1st March. If you are in this position, please do not panic; the offer process continues for several months after this, and many offers are made from waiting lists. You will be able to name additional preferences and lodge appeals for your preferred schools.

43. So finally, whilst the whole process may appear daunting, and it can be a stressful time for you, there are sources of help available to give advice during the application stage and after offers have been made.

Transfer to secondary school: *help & advice*

Sutton Information, Advice & Support Service (formerly Parent Partnership Service)

(spps@sutton.gov.uk 020 8770 4541)

- provides independent advice to parents and carers who are having particular difficulty in understanding the admissions procedure, such as:
 - Visually or hearing impaired
 - Those for whom English is not their first language
 - Those with difficulties with literacy

Sutton School Admissions Team

(www.sutton.gov.uk/admissions - admissions@sutton.gov.uk)

- general help and advice to parents on the process and how the system works

Schools

- your current primary school will be able to advise you of suitable options for your child
- secondary schools can guide you how their places were allocated in previous years and to what extent you may meet certain criteria

Central government resources

(<https://www.gov.uk/schools-admissions>)

- The GOV.uk website provides a lot of information regarding applying to schools, details of individual schools and links to Ofsted reports. Please remember that some Ofsted reports may be some years out of date and schools will have addressed any issues raised