

SECTION 6.0: QUESTIONS PARENTS FREQUENTLY ASK

1) What is my catchment area school?

Each home address within Worcestershire has been designated a school, which serves that area. In many cases, it may be the nearest school, but this is not always the case. Each school will have a map showing its own catchment area, which you may view. Alternatively, you can contact the Local Authority or visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk

2) Does my child have to attend my catchment area school?

No, parents are free to express a preference for whichever school they wish their children to attend. However, where there are more applications than places available at that school, an oversubscription criteria has to be applied. **In Worcestershire, catchment area has a high priority.** So, if you apply for a school other than the catchment area school, your child would have a lower priority, but may be able to obtain a place, if there are still places available.

Parents should also note that if they gain admission for a child to a High school of their preference, (other than the catchment area school) it does not mean that younger siblings will automatically gain admission to the same school. Should the school be oversubscribed at the time of application for a younger sibling, catchment area children have a higher priority on the oversubscription criteria.

3) Does this mean that I can choose the school my child attends?

No, this is an issue, which can cause misunderstandings from parents. The right to “express a preference” is entirely different from “choosing” a school. It is a legal requirement that school places are allocated in strict accordance with the oversubscription criteria. This may mean that some parents, who have expressed a preference for a particular school, may need to be turned down, if there are too many applications.

4) Will I be guaranteed a place in my catchment area school then?

Not necessarily. Although catchment areas are generally drawn up to take account of local need and the size of the school and other schools in the area, the number of children eligible to apply for school places each year, can vary widely, and there may be occasions where some schools may not be able to take all of its catchment area, in a particular year.

In such situations, other parts of the oversubscription criteria also need to be taken into account (e.g. siblings, special reasons such as medical grounds, feeder schools or distance from the school – in descending order of priority).

Even if you move address into a school's catchment area, no guarantee of a place can be given because the school may already be full in that particular year group.

5) Who decides upon the oversubscription criteria?

It depends upon the legal status of each school. For Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, the admissions criteria is determined by the LA and approved by

the County Council and Worcestershire Admissions Forum. For Voluntary Aided schools and Foundation Schools, the criteria is decided by the school's own governing body.

Details of the status for each school, as well as the oversubscription criteria themselves are given in this booklet.

6) What will happen if my child is refused a place at the school of my preference?

If your child is refused a school place, you will also receive information about your right of appeal and whether you wish to wait for a place at that school on a waiting list. We will also advise you on the current position regarding the availability of places at other schools.

7) Are there any issues I should be considering in deciding upon which school I should apply for?

The issue of deciding which is the best school for your child is a personal one, and nobody should advise you. The final decision is yours. As a general rule, it is suggested that you visit a number of schools in your locality, think about its size, its location, how classes are organised, take account of how your child will get there, and consider issues for the future, such as what will happen when the children transfer to a Middle/High School, (particularly important if you live outside the catchment area), or if you have younger children, what is the likelihood of them being admitted or refused?

8) Is there transport assistance available from the LA?

Generally, travel assistance is limited to those pupils, who attend their catchment area school, and who also reside in excess of the statutory walking distance, which is two miles for children under the age of eight, and three miles for older children.

More details of the transport policy are also given in [section 8.0](#) of this booklet.

9) I am thinking of moving address, when should I contact the LA?

As soon as possible. Some parents consider moving address purely because of school catchment areas. It is useful for parents to know the position regarding local schools before they enter into formal contracts, in case that has a bearing upon their eventual move.

10) How do I apply for a school place?

It depends upon what school or year group you are applying for. All schools in the county have supplies of application forms.

For places in Voluntary Aided or Foundation schools, or for places in the older year groups in Community or Voluntary Controlled schools, parents may obtain a form and booklet from the relevant school.

For places in the intake year of each school, or you are not yet sure which school you will be applying for, you should contact the Pupil Admissions and Transfers Section, or visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk

11) Can I apply electronically?

Yes, you can apply online up until the end of the closing date if you are making an application for an intake year group,

If you wish to make an application for the intake year group online visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk Also available to download are application forms and relevant information for transfers into existing year groups.

12) How and when will I find out the outcome of my application?

Parents applying in the normal round of admissions will be posted an offer letter of a school place by second class post on 3rd March 2008. For applications received after this time a letter of notification will be sent as soon as possible.

For pupils resident in Worcestershire, the offer letters will be sent direct to parents at the child's home address, by the Pupil Admissions and Transfers Section, even if it is on behalf of the governing body of a Voluntary Aided or Foundation School, or a school in a neighbouring LA.

For pupils not resident in Worcestershire, the offer or refusal letters will be sent direct to parents by the home LA, even if it is for a school in Worcestershire.

In the few cases, where it may not be possible to offer a place at any of the preferences nominated on the application form, a place will be offered at the nearest school with available places.