Step-by-Step Guide to Year R School Application

Hampshire County Council
Virtual School

Please read in conjunction with 'Applying for a school place' guidance: Virtual School Moodle: Admissions

Step 1: Review relevant guidance

Please see Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK; in particular 'Securing appropriate education' (page 11) and 'School admissions' (page 13).

Also School admissions code - GOV.UK; in particular 'Oversubscription criteria' (page 10; points 1.7-1.8).

Step 2: Find an appropriate school

Looked after children should attend a school graded as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. If you are considering applying for a school which is not graded as such, please contact the Virtual School for further advice before applying.

Use one of the following links to locate schools local to the child:

Search for schools, colleges and multi-academy trusts - GOV.UK (select to search by location, and enter the postcode for current placement to find information about nearest schools).

For Hampshire schools, you can also search via Find a school in Hampshire to find nearby schools and narrow this by age using the left hand filters. The link here will also enable you to check the catchment school for the child's address: School Catchment Finder | Hantsweb

Depending on the child's circumstances, you will also need to consider input from carers and/or parents as relevant to the legal status of the child. Once a school has been identified, check their admissions policy via their school website, which will set out the application process. Most school admissions will be managed via the local authority process below. If the school admissions policy directs application not via the LA, please follow the process set out within the school's policy.

Step 3: Complete the school application form

The national deadline for Year R applications is **15th January 2027. School applications must be completed by the social worker** for most looked after children. In cases where parents retain/share parental responsibility (e.g. Section 20), best practice is for the social worker to complete this with the parent. Applications can be made starting from 1st November 2026.

For children who currently reside in Hampshire, complete the online application form accessed via School admissions | Education and learning | Hampshire County Council under 'Year R admissions'. You need to select '***Make an application***' and register an Education Portal account. **Please ensure you select the box to inform admissions that the child is a LAC when completing the form.**

Further guidance around the Hampshire online form and admissions process is here: Applying for a reception place (Year R) | Education and learning | Hampshire County Council

If the child resides in a different local authority, you need to follow the admissions process for that LA, usually available via their website. Contact Hampshire's Virtual School for advice around this if needed.

Step 4: Receiving the outcome of the application and accepting the offer of a place

You will be sent an e-mail confirming the outcome of your application on the notification date, which is **16th of April 2027**. You can also log into the online system to view the outcome.

LAC should be prioritised for admission by all maintained schools, and so the first preference of school should be allocated. If for any reason this has not happened, please contact the admissions team and Virtual School. To accept the offer of a school place, please follow direction given by admissions and/or the receiving school. Please contact the admissions team or intaking school for further advice around this as needed.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What if a child has an EHCP?

If the child has a **finalised** EHCP, the local authority SEN team will manage the application process. You will need to liaise with the relevant SEN team around choice of school, and you should consult with the Virtual School in this process. If a child is going through the EHCP assessment process but **does not** have a finalised EHCP, **you must complete an online application** for them via the normal admissions process outlined above in the meantime.

What if I need to make a late application?

In most cases, late applications for LAC in Hampshire should be processed as for on time applicants. Please contact the admissions team for further advice.

What if I need to change the school choice after application due to a placement move?

Please contact the admissions team for further advice around this, as it will depend on where the child is in the process. We strongly recommend that you do not withdraw any allocated school place until a replacement school place has been offered.

Can I ask the foster carer to complete the application form?

Whilst you may wish to gain their input into school selection, the application itself cannot be delegated to foster carers. The social worker needs to complete the application form for most LAC. Application forms being completed by a party who does not have parental responsibility will lead to delays in the admissions process for the child.

What if we want to consider deferring the child's place until later in the school year, or decelerating their admission to September 2028?

Please note that deferment or deceleration should only be considered in exceptional cases. Contact the Virtual School as soon as possible if this is being considered, as this should not be actioned without further advice from us.

Who do I contact for further advice?

Hampshire Admissions Team: admissions.team@hants.gov.uk or 0300 555 1377

Virtual School Early Years Team: Education Liaison Officer: Imogen Smith imogen.smith2@hants.gov.uk (general advice on admissions for LAC) **OR** Education Adviser: Amanda Rowe amanda.rowe@hants.gov.uk (advice on admissions for LAC with complex SEND/EHCP)