Placing in School Procedures for new P1 & S1 Intake

This guide applies to all mainstream primary and secondary schools. To find out about applying for a place for a child with additional support needs, please see **Appendix 1**.

Before you read this guide, please take note of the following key messages.

- Each address has one non-denominational catchment school and one Roman Catholic catchment school for both primary and secondary stages. You should choose your preferred school of the two.
- Catchment school places are allocated to children based on their main residence with their parent or legal guardian.
- All allegations of false addresses will be investigated, and places will be withdrawn if you have used a false address to gain a school place.
- The Council aims to provide places for P1 and S1 pupils at one of their catchment schools, if they apply and provide satisfactory proof of residence in the catchment area by 24 December in the year before they begin primary or secondary school and are still living at the same address at the start of session.
- Attending a nursery class in a primary school does not guarantee your child a place in that school.
- Where a Roman Catholic school is oversubscribed with catchment children, priority is given to catchment Roman Catholic children who are baptised, and where parents have provided the baptismal certificate, by 24 December in the year before they begin primary or secondary school.
- If you make a placing request for a non-catchment school and it is successful for one child, this does not guarantee that requests for younger children will be successful. This could mean that your younger children would attend a different school to their older brother or sister.
- Places will be reserved for catchment children after the start of session throughout the year, where it is possible to do so.

HAPPY TO **TRANSLATE**

ترجمے کے لئے حاضر আনন্দের সঙ্গে অনুবাদ করব

يسعدنا توفير الترجمة MOŻEMY **PRZETŁUMACZYĆ** 很樂意翻譯

You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats if you ask us.

Please contact Interpretation and Translation Service (ITS) on 0131 242 8181 or ITS@edinburgh.gov.uk and quote reference number **26-0880**

ITS can also give information on community language translations. You can get more copies of this document by contacting us at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/transactionscontact

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Starting primary school and moving on to secondary school are two very important milestones both for children and their parents.

This guide details what action parents need to take and the procedures the City of Edinburgh Council follows.

All our schools offer a high-quality educational experience and contacting your local catchment school will give you a chance to find out more about the school, staff and the curricular and extracurricular opportunities available.

You can download the Council's school admissions policy from our website at **www.edinburgh.gov.uk/schoolsadmissionspolicy**

Section 1: Catchment areas

Edinburgh is split into catchment areas for each primary and secondary school. Children living within a school's catchment area are given priority for a place.

Your address has:

- a **non-denominational** primary school
- a **Roman Catholic** primary school
- a **non-denominational** secondary school
- a **Roman Catholic** secondary school

A small number of addresses have two non-denominational catchment schools and your child has the right to go to either school.

Roman Catholic schools are open to all children regardless of faith. However, if there are more children in the catchment area than the number of places available, we will give priority to baptised Roman Catholic children (see Section 5).

The city also has a dedicated Gaelic primary school, Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce. It is open to children living in the City of Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Lothian and West Lothian.

Find out your catchment schools at **www.edinburgh.gov.uk/catchmentmaps**

Reserving Places

In the Primary 1 year group, where possible, one place per class (and one place per teacher, where team teaching is in place) is reserved for incoming catchment children for the entire school year.

In the Secondary 1 year group, where possible, one place per 40 pupils is reserved.

However, where out of catchment places are granted by an Appeal Committee or a Sheriff, this may result in fewer reserved places being available.

Children living in two homes

As a rule, the address used to determine the appropriate catchment area for the child is the main address as held on the pupil's nursery or primary school record. This is the address of the parent or legal guardian the child resides with for most of the school week.

Where the child spends an equal amount of time with both parents/legal guardians, or if it is unclear where the child's sole or main residence is, we will allocate a place based on the main contact address held on the child's education record.

Section 2: Registering for primary school (P1)

When your child can start school

In October each year, we send an email (or letter) to parents about the procedures for starting school, if the child attends a nursery school or class run by the City of Edinburgh Council or one of our partner nurseries. Normally this is sent to the recorded 'main contact' on the pupil record.

The table below shows which year children will start primary school:

Child born between:	*Child will start school in:*
1 Mar 2022 – 28 Feb 2023	August 2027
1 Mar 2023 – 29 Feb 2024	August 2028
1 Mar 2024 – 28 Feb 2025	August 2029
1 Mar 2025 – 28 Feb 2026	August 2030
1 Mar 2026 – 28 Feb 2027	August 2031

Delaying entry to P1 or starting school early

Children in Scotland usually start school between the ages of 4 years 6 months and 5 years 6 months old. All children who are 4 years old at the start of the school year can defer and start primary one the following year. Find out more at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/deferredentry

If your child is not of school age, a request for early admission to primary school can be made. Find out more at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/earlyadmission

How to register your child

If you want your child to go to a school run by the City of Edinburgh Council, you need to register using our online registration form. Registration opens on 30 October 2026 for children starting P1 the following year. Visit **www.edinburgh.gov.uk/p1registration** to complete the form.

You are required to select your preferred catchment school – your non-denominational catchment school, your Roman Catholic catchment school, or the Gaelic primary school, Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce. If you also want to apply for a school in different catchment area, you can make a **placing request** when you register. See Section 4 for more information about placing requests.

Most families do not need to upload any evidence when you register. However, you need to provide evidence in these cases:

- if your child is not attending a local authority or partner provider nursery, you must upload your child's birth certificate.
- if you are not liable for Council Tax, you must provide **two** forms of proof of your address (e.g., tenancy agreement; benefits award letter; utility bill). If you can't do it when you register you can provide this later.
- If your child is baptised in the Roman Catholic faith, you must upload proof of this (i.e., certificate of baptism).

The P1 intake limits are decided in January each year based on the number of catchment children registered at each school during the registration period, so we normally ask parents to register within 3 weeks of registration opening.

It is important that you register your child for school, even if you do not want your child to attend the catchment school, or if you plan to defer for a year.

The registration process is in place to check and confirm your child's age and address and helps the City of Edinburgh Council manage the expected intake figures.

Please note that you may only register at the catchment school for your **current address**. If you are going to move within the City of Edinburgh area or are moving to the city before the start of session, please see Section 9 for details.

You can visit the school's website to find out more about your catchment school. Schools also hold an annual open day on 4 November 2026. This is a great chance for you to visit and find out what your catchment school is like. Find out the opening hours by visiting the school's website.

Roman Catholic schools

If your child is not baptised in the Roman Catholic faith, you can still choose to register at your catchment Roman Catholic school, but a place is not guaranteed.

If you have any exceptional grounds for consideration and you feel your child should be given priority over others, you can tell us when you register.

See Section 5 to find out how we deal with these requests.

Section 3: Moving from primary to secondary school (S1)

Allocating a secondary school place

If your child attends P7 at a primary school run by the City of Edinburgh Council, in early November we send an email (or letter) to parents about the procedures for moving to secondary school. Normally this is sent to the recorded 'main contact' on the pupil record.

If you live in the City of Edinburgh Council area, or within the catchment area of a school run by us, we will automatically reserve a place for your child at one of your catchment schools (see Section 1). The catchment school is based on the address held on your child's school record. **You do not need to register.**

The school we allocate depends on the primary school your child attends:

- we'll allocate your catchment non-denominational high school if your child attends a non-denominational primary school
- we'll allocate your catchment Roman Catholic high school if your child attends a Roman Catholic primary school.

Roman Catholic schools

We cannot guarantee places at Roman Catholic schools as often there are more requests than places available.
You need to tell us if:

- your child has been baptised in the Roman Catholic faith (and provide proof)
- an older brother or sister is already attending
- you have any exceptional grounds for consideration, and you feel your child should be given priority over others

Visit **www.edinburgh.gov.uk/placingrequest** and complete the online form after you receive your allocation email/letter in November. You should apply before **24 December** in the year before your child begins secondary school.

See Section 5 to find out how we deal with these requests.

Specialist provision

Pupils at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce transfer to James Gillespie's High School to continue Gaelic study.

We have specialist provision for children who are highly able in dance, music or football. Please see **Appendix 2** for more information.

Changing your preferred catchment school

You can ask us to change the allocated catchment school if:

- your child is allocated a place at a Roman Catholic school and want to request a place in your non-denominational high school.
- your child is allocated a place at a non-denominational school, and you want to request a place in your Roman Catholic high school.

If you live in an area with two non-denominational secondary schools, you will be asked to tell us your preferred school.

Visit **www.edinburgh.gov.uk/placingrequest** and complete the online form when applications open in November. You should apply before **24 December** in the year before your child begins secondary school. Late requests will still be considered but there is no guarantee that we can make changes after this date.

If you are going to move within the City of Edinburgh Council area or are moving to the area before the start of session, please see Section 9 for details.

Children in home education or attending an independent school

If your child is in home education or attends an independent school at primary level, you can ask us for a place in your preferred catchment secondary school by completing the placing request form. You will be asked to provide your child's birth certificate and proof of address.

Section 4: Making a placing request for a non-catchment school

If your first preference is a school in another catchment area, you can request a place. Parents registering their child for P1 can add a placing request to their enrolment form when they register. Parents of P7 children visit **www.edinburgh.gov.uk/placingrequest** and complete the form. Applications open in November each year, and we make the first decisions in March the following year. The closing date for applications is **24 December** in the year before your child begins primary or secondary school. If your request is successful, your child's place in your catchment school will be **withdrawn**, so do not make a placing request if your first preference is your catchment school.

Placing requests for non-mainstream and specialist sports and arts provision are dealt with differently. See **Appendix 1** to find out how to apply for a non-mainstream place for a child with additional support needs. **Appendix 2** gives details about how to apply for our specialist dance, football and music schools.

Reasons for your request

We ask you to tell us if there are any exceptional reasons for your placing request:

- Child is care-experienced (such as foster or kinship care)
- Child is on the Child Protection Register
- Child is adopted
- Child has experienced the loss of a parent
- Child has complex physical and/ or medical needs
- Parent's occupation affects where child attends
- A situation involving the police affects where child attends
- Complex family circumstances affects where child attends

If there is one or more exceptional reason from this list, you can then give a written statement with more information and include why you are requesting that school.

All mainstream schools can support a wide range of children's needs.

It is very important that you give us all relevant information in support of your request, so it can be considered in full. This can include medical evidence and reports from any other services or agencies that may have been involved with your child.

Making your request on or before 24 December

If you are applying for a non-catchment school, you can only apply for one school at first. This is always treated as your first preference. If you apply for more than one school, we will treat your earliest application as your first preference.

How we deal with your request

Non-catchment placing requests will be granted if there are places available after all children living in the catchment area have been accommodated and additional places have been reserved within the agreed intake limit. Section 1 explains why we reserve places in every school for incoming catchment pupils.

Additional classes will not be created for non-catchment children.

If there are more requests than places available, several factors determine which children can be offered places and we create a waiting list for children we cannot offer places to. If there are any exceptional cases, these are presented to the Committee on Pupil/Student Support for consideration. See Sections 6 and 7 to find out how we make these decisions.

If your request is successful

You will be sent an email and at the same time we will let the school know. Your child's place at your catchment school will then be withdrawn.

If you make a placing request and it is successful:

- you will not receive support with travel expenses
- a future placing request for the same school for a younger brother or sister is not guaranteed to be granted. **This could mean that your children will have to attend different schools.**

If a place is granted in P1, this does not lead to an automatic place in the associated secondary school, and you will need to make a further placing request for S1.

If your request is unsuccessful

You will be sent an email telling you:

- the reasons for turning down your request (required by law)
- the school we've allocated to your child
- your right of appeal against our decision

At this stage, you can make a second preference request for an alternative school which has available places. You should be aware that many schools will already be full by this time.

Late requests / second preference requests received after 24 December

If you make a placing request after 24 December, it will still be considered. However, exceptional reasons are not considered and in most cases, your child will be placed on a waiting list below requests received on time.

Late and second preference requests are dealt with as follows:

- decisions on requests received between 25 December and 15 March the following year will be notified before the end of April.
- decisions on requests received after 15 March will be notified within two months of the application being made.

Section 5: Roman Catholic schools

In January each year, we will know how many places are available in each school. Sometimes there are more registered children within the catchment area of a Roman Catholic school than the number of places available.

When this happens, we give priority to catchment children baptised in the Roman Catholic faith, where proof of this has been provided. We do not create additional classes for other children if all baptised Roman Catholic children can be placed.

If we can't offer a place, we will reserve a place at their non-denominational catchment school.

Baptised Roman Catholic children

We aim to place all catchment children who are baptised in the Roman Catholic faith. This applies only if by 24 December in the year before they begin primary or secondary school:

- baptism has already taken place, and
- proof of baptism is provided.

Children not baptised in the Roman Catholic faith

If your child is not baptised in the Roman Catholic faith you can still apply but a place is not guaranteed.

Roman Catholic catchment school requests received on or before 24 December

If there are more requests than places available, several factors determine which children can be offered places and we create a waiting list for children we cannot offer places to. If there are any exceptional cases, these are presented to the Committee on Pupil/Student Support for consideration. See Sections 6 and 7 to find out how we make these decisions.

The first decisions are normally notified to parents in March each year. We will tell you if your child has been given a place or not. If we cannot offer your child a place initially, we will tell you:

- the reasons for turning down your request (required by law)
- the school we've allocated to your child
- your right of appeal against our decision

Section 6: Committee on Pupil/Student Support

All reasons given are reviewed by Senior Education Officers and are presented to the Committee on Pupil/Student Support.

The Committee's role is to decide if there are exceptional circumstances which apply to each individual child. The Committee can determine the priority order on waiting lists for that child.

The Committee **cannot** grant individual requests even when they have decided that exceptional circumstances exist; places can only be awarded in these circumstances by the Placing in Schools Appeal Committee.

Children granted exceptionality by the Committee are given priority on waiting lists over children without exceptional grounds. **This gives these children a higher chance of being granted a place in the requested school by the start of the new school session but does not guarantee a place.**

Section 7: Waiting Lists

A waiting list is created for the children who will not be granted places in the initial school allocations in March each year.

This section details how we prioritise requests to decide the order of each waiting list.

The priority order for waiting lists is:

Non-catchment placing requests

1. Children with exceptional circumstances (as agreed by Committee)
2. Non-catchment children who will have older brothers/sisters who are attending the requested school in the next session
3. Non-catchment children who are resident within the City of Edinburgh Council area but who **do not** have brothers/sisters who will be attending the requested school in the next session
4. Non-catchment children who are **not** resident within the City of Edinburgh Council area and who will not have brothers/sisters attending the requested school in the next session.

Roman Catholic Schools

1. Catchment children who are baptised in the Roman Catholic faith
2. Catchment exceptional children
3. Catchment children who will have older brothers/sisters who are attending the requested school in the next session
4. Catchment children who **do not** have brothers/sisters who will be attending the requested school in the next session
5. Non-catchment children with exceptional circumstances (as agreed by Committee)
6. Non-catchment children who will have older brothers/sisters who are attending the requested school in the next session
7. Non-catchment children who are resident within the City of Edinburgh Council area but who **do not** have brothers/sisters who will be attending the requested school in the next session
8. Non-catchment children who are **not** resident within the City of Edinburgh Council area and who will not have brothers/sisters attending the requested school in the next session.

Ordering the waiting list

If there is more than one placing request in any of the four categories above, the shortest, safest walking distance from each child's home to the nearest school gate is measured using an electronic mapping system. Children living closer to the school in each category are placed above those living further away.

We cannot guarantee that a place will become available before the start of the school session. If your child is still on the waiting list at the start of the school session in August, this will be passed to the Head Teacher and if a place becomes available for your child this will be offered to you by the school.

Section 8: Confirming your child's place

Parents registering their child for P1 will be contacted to confirm when the registration is successful. Placing requests and requests for catchment RC schools are notified separately as stated in sections 4 and 5.

Schools will normally contact parents before summer to confirm acceptance of places and provide information about the school. However, children are not considered to be fully enrolled until the start of the school term.

If you have a catchment place and then move out of the area before the start of term, the place will normally be withdrawn, and an alternative place allocated in your new catchment school, dependent on availability (see Section 9).

Addresses are routinely checked and if we find you have moved out of the catchment area, your place may be withdrawn.

If you no longer require a place, please advise the school.

If placed at one of your catchment schools, assistance with travel is available if the distance between your home and the school gate is:

- two miles or over for primary schools
- three miles or over for secondary schools

All children and young people under 22 years old are eligible for free nationwide bus travel. As a result, public bus passes are no longer provided.

Visit **www.edinburgh.gov.uk/schooltransport** for more information on school transport. Visit **freebus.scot** for more information on Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme.

Section 9: Change of address/moving to Edinburgh area

This section tells you what will happen if you change address within the City of Edinburgh area or are moving to Edinburgh before the start of session in August.

What to do if you know when and where you are moving

The Change of Address form opens in November and closes on 31 July the following year. Complete it as soon as you know your new address. You can apply in advance of your move, provided you are moving before the school year starts in August.

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/changeofaddress

Armed Service children

Catchment places for children of serving members of the Armed Forces can be held for up to 18 school weeks after the start of term in August. You must have proof that you are being posted to Edinburgh.

What you need to provide

You will need to provide the following information:

- proof of address – normally proof of purchase or your signed tenancy agreement for the new property, or proof of posting for Armed Service families
- your child's birth certificate (if moving from outside Edinburgh)
- proof of Roman Catholic baptism (if the Roman Catholic school is preferred, and it has not already been provided)

How we process your change of address

We aim to respond to your application within a month of receiving it. In some cases, we may need to ask you for further information before we can progress your application. You must provide this within one month of our request.

When we've verified your evidence, we'll offer a place in your catchment school, if one is available.

Once you move in, we need to verify this. If you are liable for Council Tax at your new address, we'll check our records to confirm this. If you are not liable for Council Tax at your new address, we'll confirm what information you need send to us. You'll have one month to provide this.

You may also need to provide evidence you left your old property.

Once we've verified your move, we'll offer a place in one of your catchment schools if one is available. If you apply **after** 24 December, we cannot guarantee this.

If you apply less than four weeks before the start of term, there will be less time to provide any evidence. We must confirm your residence before the start of term.

All places offered are **provisional**. If we can't confirm you are resident at the new property, we may withdraw the place offered. If this happens, we'll find an alternative school for your child.

What happens if a place is not available

If a place is not available in your catchment school by the end of May, we'll place your child in the closest alternative school with an available place.

If there is still no place available by the end of June, we will formally refuse your request in writing, giving the reasons for turning down the place. We'll place your child on a waiting list. Children living in the catchment area have priority over non-catchment children.

Non-catchment placing request

If you want your child to go to a school outside your new catchment area, you need to make a placing request (see Section 4). You can do this only once we have confirmed your **provisional place**.

Moving address after 31 July

If you are moving to or within Edinburgh after 31 July, you must apply to your catchment school directly when the school term starts in August.

Section 10: Fraud prevention

The City of Edinburgh Council is obliged to make random spot checks as part of fraud prevention and we may ask you to provide proof of residence at any time before the school session begins.

The City of Edinburgh Council's Customer Fraud Team may investigate claims of false addresses being used to gain a school place and, if proven before the start of the school year, the place will be withdrawn.

Please advise us if you are aware of a school place which has been obtained fraudulently at: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/reportfraud

All claims will be investigated and dealt with appropriately.

APPENDIX 1: Children with additional support needs

Children have additional support needs if they require something which is extra or different to what is normally provided for other children of the same age. **All our mainstream schools can provide for a wide range of additional support needs.**

The 2000 Standards in Scotland's Schools Act states that children should attend mainstream schools, unless there are exceptional reasons not to do so. Most children with additional support needs in Edinburgh attend mainstream schools and some attend special schools or special classes.

Further information about additional support needs is also available online at **www.edinburgh.gov.uk/inontheact** and from the Education Resource Group which can be contacted by e-mail at **educationresourcegroup@edinburgh.gov.uk**.

APPENDIX 2: Children highly able in dance, music or football

We offer the following specialist provision for talented children, allowing them to receive specialist tuition in their chosen field alongside their academic studies.

These are all based at Broughton High School, except for the Heart of Midlothian Performance School, which is based at Balerno Community High School.

Applicants must follow the course application process to apply for a place, rather than following the placing process outlined in this guide.

When a place is offered and accepted the school will inform the School Placements team to update the allocated school – a separate application form is not required.

The City of Edinburgh Music School

This is a national centre of excellence and **entry is by audition only**. Specialist music education is delivered in a range of musical styles. All instruments and all styles of music are considered equally. Applications must be made directly to the Music School at: **www.edinburghmusicschool.co.uk**

The City of Edinburgh Dance School

Dance School **entry is by audition only** into S1. Pupils study a range of dance styles as well as choreography, History of Dance and Dance Appreciation. Auditions take place in January, and places are limited. Applications must be made directly to the Dance School at: **www.broughton.edin.sch.uk/specialist-schools**

Football Performance Schools

There are two Football Performance Schools in Edinburgh. Each programme is designed for elite young football players, both boys and girls, and runs from S1 to S4. It offers talented young footballers the opportunity to develop their physical, mental and technical ability within the daily curriculum.

The **Hibernian Community Foundation** delivers specialised programmes in schools, including the **Football Performance Academy** based at Broughton High School. For more information, please contact the school by emailing **admin@broughton.edin.sch.uk**

The **Heart of Midlothian Football Performance School** is based at Balerno Community High School. The players involved in this programme are already working within the Heart of Midlothian Academy structure and are selected by them for the programme. For more information, please contact the school by emailing **admin@balernochs.edin.sch.uk**