Applying for primary school or junior place for September 2026

When and how do I apply?

Applications are open between 1 November 2025 and 15 January 2026 (national closing date). There is no advantage in applying early, all applications made by the national closing date are treated equally.

If you live in Leeds, you apply online at www.leeds.gov.uk/apply.

If you don't live in Leeds, you must apply to your home local authority (whoever empties your bins) but you can still ask for Leeds schools. We will work with other local authorities if you ask for schools in their area.

Do I have to include 5 schools?

You should apply for 5 schools to give your child the best chance of getting a place at a school you want. Asking for only 1 school, or the same school 5 times, does not increase your chances of being given a place at that school.

You need to list the schools in your order of preference when you apply. Schools don't know your preference order so this doesn't have any impact on whether your child will be offered a place. On offer day if a place is available at more than 1 school on your list, we offer you the highest school on your list.

An example of how preferences work

Billy and Sam live next door to each other and 0.5 miles from School A. Both children's home addresses fall into the catchment area of School E. They each apply for a reception school place by the national closing date. Their applications are

Billy's application	*Sam's application*
1) School A	*1) School A* *2) School B* *3) School C* *4) School D* *5) School E*

Billy's family only list one single preference but Sam's family list five preferences. On national offer day, Sam qualifies for a place at School E, preference 5. Sam did not qualify for a place at schools A to D and the reason was the places were filled by applicants who met higher admission criteria for each of these schools, for example children who have a sibling at the school or live closer.

Billy's application does not qualify for a place at School A and the reason was all the places were filled by applicants who met higher admission criteria. As the family only listed one preference, Billy was offered a place at the closest school to home with a space after all preferences had been considered across the city. This was at School J which is 1.5 miles away. Billy could not be offered a place at school E, even though the family lives in the catchment area, because it was not on their preference list and all places had been filled by applicants who included it on their preference list.

Using all 5 preferences gives you the best chance of securing an offer at a local school.

How do I check if my address gives priority for any Leeds schools?

You can check this on our website www.leeds.gov.uk/apply.

If you live in a school's catchment area, we recommend you include it as one of your 5 preferences. Not all schools have catchment areas.

Living in a school's catchment area does not guarantee your child a place at that school, it provides a higher priority for admission to that school.

Make sure you use the right address.

Every year, we see applicants using false and fraudulent addresses such as the address of a childminder or relative or even renting a property close to a popular school for a short period of time. These are all fraudulent addresses.

We do checks and if an application is found to be fraudulent or intentionally misleading, we will withdraw the offer of a place, even if a child has started at a school. Find out more at www.leeds.gov.uk/apply

How do I know if my child has a reasonable chance of being offered a place?

Each school has its own set of rules which are used to decide which children to offer a place to. This is called their admissions policy.

You should read the admissions policy for each school you want to apply for. This will help you to check what chance your child has of getting a place.

You can check the admission policy criteria at step 4 on our webpage www.leeds.gov.uk/apply

To work out whether your child has a good chance of getting an offer at a school, you should

- check which priority of the admission policy your child falls under and
- check if children in that same priority got a place in previous years

How do I check if I need to provide extra information?

If you think your child should get a place due to a specific admission criteria, you may need to submit extra information to support your application by the closing date.

You may need to submit extra information if your child:

- has spent time in care (fostered, adopted or looked after)
- needs to show proof of religion
- qualifies for a specific admission criteria

If I only provide 1 preference and you can't offer my child a place at this school, will you allocate me a place at my local or closest school?

No. We cannot do this as we are not allowed to reserve places. Places will be given to those who ask for them, this means your local school places may be full, allocated to children who listed the school as a preference.

My neighbour's child qualified for a place last year, so won't my child be guaranteed a place at the same school?

No child is guaranteed a place at any school. Your neighbour's child may have met different admission criteria, or there may have been a different number of applications that year.

You should look at the school's admission criteria to help you decide if there is a reasonable chance of your child being offered a place.

Do I need to apply if my child has a sibling?

Yes, you still need to apply. Not all schools provide a higher priority for siblings. Siblings in year 6 or at the school's nursery may not be included in the admission policy definition.

You should read each school's admissions policy to see if your application will meet their sibling criteria. Make sure you include sibling information on your application.

Do I need to apply if my child currently attends the nursery?

Yes, you still need to apply. Attending a school's nursery does not usually offer any admission priority. All places are offered according to the school's admission policy criteria.

How do I find out more about a school?

Schools may hold open days or have virtual tours. Look at each school's website for more information or contact them to ask questions.

How will my child travel to school?

Think about how your child may travel to school. Bus routes may be withdrawn or changed at any time. School buses fares will apply.

Only a small number of children are entitled to free travel assistance. The fact that an older sibling had a free bus pass does not mean your child will automatically be eligible for one. To see whether your child might qualify for travel support, read the Leeds Children's Services Transport Policy www.leeds.gov.uk/schooltransport Your 'nearest qualifying school' under the transport policy may be different to your nearest school for admission purposes.

Some school bus services require a Priority PhotoCard in addition to the bus fare. The PhotoCard entitles the pupil to a place on the bus service named on the card. There are annual closing dates to apply for / renew a PhotoCard each year. If you apply after the closing date, there may not be any spaces remaining on the bus service your child needs. Find out more at MyBus Primary School | Metro (wymetro.com)

What happens if my circumstances change after I apply?

You need to tell us immediately if there are changes in your circumstances that affect your application **before your child starts at the school**.

You must let us know if:

- you have moved home
- your child's sibling has left or joined a school you've applied to
- your child has left a feeder school

If you do not tell us about changes, we may withdraw your school offer. If you're unsure if a change affects your application, please contact us.

What happens if we are expecting to move home after the national closing date?

You should apply by the deadline date from your current address. You must tell us as soon as you move home and send us all the address evidence we

ask for. You can send this as soon as you have it but no more than a month after you've moved. If you want us to amend the application before offer day, we must receive all your address evidence, and any new school preferences, by 28 February.

If you **live outside the UK** and are planning to move to Leeds soon, you can apply for a reception or junior school place in advance, but we need to use your international address until your child has arrived in Leeds. You will need to provide us with address evidence when your child arrives in Leeds. The address evidence we need is set out on our website https://www.leeds.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-admissions/making-changes-to-your-application

When do we find out what school place our child has been offered?

We offer primary school places on 16 April 2026 (national offer day).

If you applied through our online application portal, we'll email you with your child's offer. We'll send the email during the working day.

If you applied in any other way, you'll receive an offer letter to your registered home address (a few days after offer day).

What happens if I apply after the national deadline?

Applications submitted after the deadline may be treated with a lower priority than applications submitted on time. If you submit your application:

- between 16 January and 12 February, some Leeds schools will treat the application as on time - check if this date applies by reading the school's own admissions policy
- between 13 February and 28 February, your application will receive a lower priority than those submitted on time - unless we agree you had exceptional reasons for missing this date – but you will get an offer on national offer day
- on or after 1 March, you will not receive a school offer until May after all other school places have been given out on offer day

If you have exceptional reasons why you could not submit your application by 15 January, you must tell us by email. Not receiving a reminder to apply is not an exceptional reason.

Do I need to apply if my child has an EHCP?

No. If your child has a current Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), you do not need to apply via our portal as the EHCP process is separate from the school admission process. Your child's EHCP will name the school they will attend in September.

Compulsory school age for reception pupils

Most children start school full time in the September after they turn 4. Until a child becomes compulsory school age, they can attend school part-time or delay the start until later in the academic year (such as after Christmas or Easter break). If you want to do this, discuss your plans directly with the allocated school.

Children born between 1 September and 31 March cannot be given permission to start reception a full year later because they become compulsory school age within their chronological reception year.

My child is summer born and I'm not sure they are ready for school, what do I do?

A child can only start school one year later if they are summer born, this means they were born between 1 April and 31 August. They can start school when they would have been due to start year 1.

If do not wish your child to go straight into Year 1, you can ask for permission to apply for a reception place next year.

You still need to apply for a Reception place in the chronological age group, in case you do not get permission. When you make the application, to ask for permission, you will also need to submit a written request.

The decision whether to give you permission may be made at individual school level, meaning one school can agree and another refuse.

We have a leaflet about making a request for your summer born child to start reception a year later and the longer-term consequences. You can ask for this by emailing startingprimary@leeds.gov.uk

I am thinking about home education for my child, where can I find out more?

Teaching your child at home, instead of sending them to school full time is called elective home education. If your child is of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16 years old) and you want to teach them at home, you should contact us for more information, please phone 0113 378 5028 or email EHE@leeds.gov.uk

You can teach them yourself or employ a tutor to support you. You will be fully responsible for making sure that they receive a suitable, full-time education for their age, aptitude and skills and special educational needs (if

any). If you educate your child at home, you will not get any financial help from us.

We need to safeguard all children and to make sure they are getting a suitable education at home. To do this, we will arrange a home visit at least once a year to see you and your child and we will ask you to provide an education plan.

You can read more about home education here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education

Useful numbers and contact details

Leeds City Council website: www.leeds.gov.uk/apply

Admissions team: For all admissions enquiries please contact 0113 222 4414 or email startingprimary@leeds.gov.uk

Transport: For application forms, guidance notes, Leeds Children's Transport policy, Under-16 Photocards and information about bus travel can be obtained at: https://www.wymetro.com/schools/your-school/

If you need information on your 'Nearest Qualifying School' or have other general school transport questions please contact the Leeds Education Transport Assessment Team on 0113 348 1122 or educationcustomerservices@westyorks-ca.gov.uk.

Elective Home Education: For information on Elective Home Education please contact 0113 378 5028

School meals: For information and applying for free school meals please contact 0113 222 4404.

School uniforms and other expenses parents should contact the school their child will be attending for information about help with school uniforms. There is also the Leeds school uniform exchange

Special Educational Needs Information: For children with an existing Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) contact your SENSAP casework officer by phone 0113 378 5256 or via SENSAP@leeds.gov.uk.

For general information and advice, Leeds SENDIASS offers confidential, impartial, free, high-quality information, advice, and support to families whose children have Special Educational Needs. Find out more at https://sendiass.leeds.gov.uk or you can contact them by phone 0113 378 5020 or email sendiass@leeds.gov.uk

Family Information Service: For information on childcare outside school, find out more at Home | Family Information Service Leeds or by phone 0113 378 9700 or email family.info@leeds.gov.uk