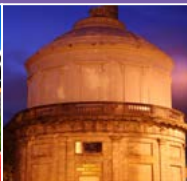


A Guide for Parents/Carers and Young Persons on Admission to School and Placing Requests



**PERTH &
KINROSS
COUNCIL**

Education &
Children's Services



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General Information for *Parents/Carers and Young Persons

* *The term 'parent/carer' covers the person who is legally responsible for the child.*

The policy of Perth & Kinross Council Education Authority is to assign each school a defined zone known as a catchment area. Each home address has a catchment school for both primary and secondary education. The catchment schools are dependant on pupils' home addresses. Although we try to provide enough places for all children in the catchment school, living within a catchment area does not guarantee a child a place at that school.

If your child is due to commence primary school or transfer to secondary school in the Perth & Kinross Council area and you are unsure of the catchment area, Education & Children's Services can advise you.

Parents/carers have the right to request that their child attends a school of their choice. These rights include children already in attendance at a school.

When considering a school for your child, you should:

- find out about your catchment school;*
- have a discussion with the Headteacher.*

If you decide that you wish your child to attend a school other than the catchment area school, you should contact the Headteacher of that school to have an initial discussion and if necessary arrange a visit. If you wish to continue with your request, you should submit a Placing Request Application Form to Education & Children's Services. Please note if you submit multiple placing request applications the Council is only obliged to consider your first preference. Therefore, you must clearly mark the order in which you wish your applications to be considered. You should be aware that all requests will be dealt with in order, with all first preference placing requests being considered before any others.

You should also be aware that when making a placing request for a school other than your child's catchment school that this request will be considered as your first choice of school. You are therefore giving up the right to your child's place in the catchment school and if your placing request is unsuccessful it cannot be guaranteed that a space will still be available at the catchment school as all places could be filled by children whose first choice of school is the catchment school.

Application forms can be downloaded from our website www.pkc.gov.uk/schools or can be obtained from Education & Children's Services, Perth & Kinross Council, Pullar House, 35 Kinnoull Street, PERTH, PH1 5GD, tel 01738 476200, or from any Perth & Kinross Council school by emailing ECSSchools@pkc.gov.uk

Every year, information on entry to primary school, transfer to secondary school and placing requests is placed in the local press normally during the month of December.

Entry to Primary School – New School Session

If you are making arrangements for your child's entry into primary education from the beginning of the new school session, which in Perth & Kinross Council normally begins during the month of August, you should visit your catchment area school during the month of January to register your child for entry. If your preference is for a different school, you should contact the Headteacher of that school to discuss and arrange a visit.

Transfer to Secondary School

Parents/carers of children who are transferring to begin secondary school education in the August of any one year will receive a letter during the month of January offering a place to their child at the secondary school in whose catchment area he/she lives. Parents/carers can then decide whether or not to request to send their child to another secondary school.

When to Make Your Placing Request – New School Session

In Scotland, the Education Authority must answer your placing request by 30 April provided your request was received by 15 March. Where your request is received after 15 March, the Education Authority has two months from receipt of your request in which to make a decision. That decision will be made after all placing requests received by 15 March have been considered, by which time all spaces at the school you want may have been filled.

Changing Schools During the School Session

If you wish your child to change schools during the school session, you should advise your child's Headteacher of your intention to make a placing request for a different school. Advising the Headteacher of your child's current school can provide an opportunity to discuss matters that are troubling you and which the Headteacher may be able to resolve.

This can also assist the continuity of your child's education as changing schools can be unsettling for children and requires careful thought.

If you wish your child to be placed in a different school during the school year, the Education Authority must reach a decision within two months from the time your request was received. In normal circumstances, the Education Authority will respond to your request in writing. However, if the Education Authority does not respond to your request within two months, the Education Authority is deemed to have refused your request. If this were to happen to you, you could appeal to Perth & Kinross Education Appeal Committee within 28 days of your deemed refusal. Information on Perth & Kinross Council's Appeals Procedure will be sent to you on request.

Changing Address During the School Session

If you move home during the school session and you wish your child/children to remain at their present school, you are still required to complete a placing request form if your new address falls outwith the catchment area of the school your child(ren) currently attend(s).

Travelling to School

When a placing request is granted, parents/carers must accept full responsibility for all costs and arrangements for transporting their child to and from school.

Parents/carers should consider this carefully before making a placing request, taking into account the cost and time required to transport their child to and from school. Parents should not assume that existing transport will remain in place as this may be subject to change nor should they assume that public transport will be available either now or at any time in the future to facilitate transport for placing requests. Parents require to carefully consider the long-term implications of choosing to send their child to a school which is not their catchment school.

Choice of School by a Young Person

Pupils who have reached the official school leaving age of 16 may choose which school to attend. The rules, which apply to parents/carers, also apply to the young person.

The Placing Request Process

In accordance with the provisions of the legislation, parents/carers have the right to make a request that their child be placed in a school of their choice other than the school which normally serves the catchment area in which they reside. Parents'/carers' wishes will be met where possible. If the number of places in any particular school is limited, priority for admissions shall be determined on the following basis:

Priority 1

Children normally resident within the catchment area of a specified school.

Where the number of requests for admission to the specified school by children normally resident within the catchment area exceeds the number of places available, then priority will be determined as follows:

- (a) Children having a brother or sister (or relative permanently living at the same address as part of an extended family*) in attendance at that school.*
- (b) Thereafter places will be allocated according to the single criterion of walking distance# from the specified school, with priority being given to those whose normal place of residence is closest to that school.*

NB: Within denominational schools places will be allocated first to children who have been baptised in the appropriate faith (ie Roman Catholic and Episcopal Church).

Priority 2

Children not normally resident within the catchment area of the specified school, but having a brother or sister (or relative permanently living at the same address as part of an extended family) in attendance at that school.*

Priority 3

Children not normally resident within the catchment area of the specified school and having no brothers or sisters in attendance at that school.

** provided that the member of the extended family for whom the placing request has been made has lived within that extended family for a period of at least 2 years.*

In relation to Priorities 2 and 3, when it is necessary to refuse only some places because the number of requests exceeds the number of places available, priority will be determined as follows:

- (a) *between children within Priority 2, priority will be determined by walking distance[#] from the specified school, with priority being given to children whose normal place of residence is closest to that school;*
- (b) *between children within Priority 3, priority will be determined by the single criterion of walking distance[#] from the school with priority being given to children whose normal place of residence is closest to that school.*

Placement may be recommended within a special school or provision when a child's educational needs cannot be met in their catchment school. This will be based upon the assessment of the child's educational needs by their parents/carers, teacher, health professionals and education psychologist.

The Authority may also determine that particular pupils are to be placed in any school in order to meet specific educational or other exceptional needs, as determined by the Authority. These placements will take priority over any of the 3 priorities above.

Placing requests will normally be granted except where there are circumstances defined in the Act which justify the Authority's refusal of such a request.

Parents/carers who have made successful placing requests for their children at other schools of their choice have to make their own transport arrangements and meet the cost thereof.

Any pupil who attends a primary school other than the one proposed by the Authority (ie as the result of a placing request) and who is due to transfer to a secondary school will be offered a place at the secondary school in whose catchment area he/she lives.

[#] walking distance will be measured by the shortest available walking route as defined by the Council and will be calculated using the Council's Geographical Information System (GIS) tools and Ordnance Survey large scale digital mapping. In any case of dispute over the distance between home and school, Education & Children's Services' decision will determine the distance involved.

Refused Requests

Where it is necessary to refuse the placing request, parents/carers will be notified of the decision in writing along with the reasons for refusal. The Education Authority does not have to grant your choice of school.

The wording of the reasons that the Education Authority can refuse your placing request is set out in Section 28A(3) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, as inserted by Section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1981, as amended by Section 33(3) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1996, as inserted by Section 44 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000. The reasons for refusal set out in Section 28A(3) are:

- (a) *if placing the child in the specified school would:*
 - (i) *make it necessary for the authority to take an additional teacher into employment;*
 - (ii) *give rise to significant expenditure on extending or otherwise altering the accommodation at or facilities provided in connection with the school;*
 - (iii) *be seriously detrimental to the continuity of the child's education;*
 - (iv) *be likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline in the school; or*
 - (v) *be likely to be seriously detrimental to the educational wellbeing of pupils attending the school; or*
 - (vi) *assuming that pupil numbers remain constant, make it necessary at the commencement of a future stage of the child's primary education, for the authority to elect to create an additional class (or an additional composite class) in the specified school or take an additional teacher into employment at the school;*
 - (vii) *though neither of the tests set out in sub-paragraphs (i) and (ii) above is satisfied, have the consequence that the capacity of the school would be exceeded in terms of pupil numbers;*
- (b) *if the education normally provided at the specified school is not suited to the age, ability or aptitude of the child;*
- (c) *if the education authority have already required the child to discontinue his attendance at the specified school;*
- (d) *if, where the specified school is a special school, the child does not have additional support needs requiring the education or special facilities normally provided at that school; or*

- (e) *if the specified school is a single sex school (within the meaning given to that expression by section 26 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975) and the child is not of the sex admitted or taken (under that section) to be admitted to the school;*
- (f) *if the acceptance of a placing request for a child who is resident outwith the catchment area of the specified school would prevent the Education Authority from retaining reserved places at the specified school or in relation to any particular stage of education at the specified school.*

Waiting Lists

When placing requests have been refused, the Education Authority will maintain a waiting list in priority order. Should places become available before the first day of the new school session in August, places will be offered in order of the waiting list. From then on it will be the responsibility of parents/carers to maintain regular contact with the school to check if a space has become available. Otherwise it will be assumed the space is no longer needed.

Zoned Pupils

If no space is available for your child in their catchment school, the Education Authority will look to zone your child to the closest school with available space. The Education Authority will provide and meet the costs of transport if this school is more than 2 miles (primary school) or 3 miles (secondary school) from your home address.

What You Can Do if Your Placing Request is Refused

If your request has been refused, Education & Children's Services will send further information at that time advising you of your options which include presenting your case at an Appeal Committee. If you would like further help and guidance you should contact staff at the Education Authority. They will also be able to give you information on available spaces in other schools you may be considering.

Details of Perth & Kinross Council's Appeals Procedure will also be made available to you.

If you decide that you wish to appeal against the decision of Education & Children's Services, you should do so in writing within 28 days of receiving the refusal letter to:

The Clerk, Perth & Kinross Education Appeal Committee, Education & Children's Services, Perth & Kinross Council, 2 High Street, PERTH, PH1 5PH

Tel 01738 475144 • Email Committee@pkc.gov.uk

Contact:

Education & Children's Services
Perth & Kinross Council
Pullar House
35 Kinnoull Street
PERTH
PH1 5GD

Tel 01738 476200
Fax 01738 476210
Email ECSSchools@pkc.gov.uk
www.pkc.gov.uk/schools

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You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

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