

General Information

Within Renfrewshire Council there are a number of primary and secondary schools. To get information on schools, you can contact your local school or:

Education and Leisure Services
Renfrewshire Council
South Building
Cotton Street
Paisley PA1 1LE
Phone number 0141 842 5663

Normally, your child will go to the local primary or secondary school for their area. This is known as the delineated or catchment area. The school or Education and Leisure Services (phone 0141 842 5625) can give you details of the area it covers.

Denominational and non-denominational schools

In most parts of Renfrewshire there are Roman Catholic schools (denominational). You must register your child either at the local denominational school or at the non-denominational school for your area.

Additional support needs

For advice and information if your child has additional support needs, as defined in the Additional Support for Learning Act 2004, please contact:

Psychological Service
Abbey House
Seedhill Road
Paisley PA1 1NQ
Phone 0141 840 3777

Your child may be given support to:

- continue in the local school;
- be educated in a special unit based in the school; or
- be educated in a separate special day school or residential school, either within Renfrewshire or in another authority, if it will be better for your child.

Decisions on how the additional support needs of your child might best be met will be made only after full discussion with you.

Pupil travel

We provide free transport for all primary pupils who live more than 1.6 kilometres (one mile) from their local school and to secondary pupils who live more than 3.2 kilometres (two miles) from their local school. The distances are based on the recognised shortest safe walking route. This policy is more generous than the legal minimum and it may be reviewed at any time. We may provide transport for children with additional support needs for more information, phone 0141 842 5663.

School Catering

A midday meal or snack is provided in all primary, secondary and special schools. Freshly prepared, nutritional lunches are available. Pupils can also bring packed lunches.

Children of parents receiving Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance are entitled to a free meal at lunchtime. You can get information and application forms from:

- any school;
- Education and leisure services
Finance Section -
phone 0141 842 5640
- Paisley area office at 1 Cotton Street, Paisley
phone 0141 840 3388; or
- Johnstone area office at 16/19 McDowell Street, Johnstone,
phone 01505 320012.

Registering your child

For primary education

Entry to primary schools is on a once-a-year basis at the start of the new session in August each year. Registration takes place in mid January in your local school. Adverts appear in nurseries, schools and newspapers in January providing details on how to register your child.

Moving into Renfrewshire

If you are moving into Renfrewshire and your child has already been to a school elsewhere, you should contact Education and Leisure Services with proof that you now live in the area. This is usually a Child Benefit certificate, a copy of concluded missives (see note below), a tenancy agreement or a rent book (for a rented property), and a Council Tax notice for the property. Staff will then go ahead with finding education for your child.

Note: Missives are formal letters that the seller and buyer exchange which prove that you have entered into a legal agreement to buy the house.

Entry age

Your child will be admitted to school in August if his or her fifth birthday falls between 1 March of that same year and the last day of February of the following year.

You can, however, ask for your child to start school early if their fifth birthday falls after the last day of February. A separate leaflet, Early Entry, is available from Education and Leisure Services phone 0141 842 5698.

Transfer from primary to secondary school

A group of primary schools in an area are normally linked with a secondary school. All secondary schools have a delineated or catchment area which includes their linked primary schools. Pupils transfer from primary school to secondary school between the ages of 11 and 12 (in most cases). Your local primary school can tell you the name of the secondary school to which your child should normally transfer after the primary 7 stage.

Placing Requests

You may ask for your child to go to a school other than your local school. This is called making a placing request. The procedure for making a placing request and the reasons for refusing or granting any request are set out in law. You do not have to give reasons for your choice of school.

There are strong educational reasons for making sure that the transfer or entry of children to a school happens at the start of a school session in August, so it is better to make placing requests by 1 February before the start of a session. Parents who are moving to a new area may have to make requests at other times.

If you want to apply for more than one school, you must give us your first choice. This is referred to as the 'specified school'. The specified school is important because we only have to consider your first preference. If we grant your placing request, we will write to you asking you to contact the school to arrange to enrol your child. However, it is not always possible to grant every placing request to a particular school.

If you want to make a placing request, please fill in the attached form. You must fill in one form for each child.

Please send us - Education and Leisure Services - not the school, the filled-in placing request for each child. Please also tell the head teacher of your local school that you are making a placing request.

We will acknowledge placing requests within five working days of receiving the form.

How decisions are made

The director of Education and Leisure Services makes decisions about placing requests that are handed in by 15 March, for the new session which begins in August. We will consider all requests. If there are more requests than places available for a particular school, or a particular stage in a school, the director will make decisions based on our priorities for admission.

Transport

By law, we must make arrangements to get your child to the catchment school if he or she is eight or over and lives more than 4.8 kilometres (three miles) from the school.

You should be aware, however, that if we grant our placing request, we do not have to provide a school bus pass or any other help with transport.

Guidelines and conditions

By law we are allowed to produce guidelines on how we will prioritise admissions to schools.

If there are places available in a school, we will give priority to those children who live in its delineated or catchment area. This includes children who are considered suitable for primary education before the normal entry age.

For placing requests we give priority in the order below.

1. Children who have older brothers or sisters at the school.

We then give children in Renfrewshire priority in the order below.

2. For Catholic schools, children from outwith the delineated or catchment area who have been baptised in the Roman Catholic Church and whose parents have the same religious beliefs as the school.
3. Medical reasons, supported by the family doctor and a community medicine specialist, that say that the child could only be educated with difficulty in another school because of his or her medical condition.
4. In the case of secondary schools, those children transferring from an associated primary school in its delineated or catchment area.
5. In the case of single-parent families where refusing the placing request would seriously affect the child's care and wellbeing.

6. If the child's educational wellbeing would be affected in relation to the availability of subjects previously studied in another school.
7. All other children who live in the council area whose parents have made a placing request.

We then give children from outwith Renfrewshire priority in the order of categories 2 to 7, which are numbered 8 to 13. We grant placing requests in the order of priority listed. At the final stage, there may be more requests of the same priority than places available. We will then offer places through a ballot.

Why we may not grant placing requests

Once you have told us, in writing, that you want your child to go to a particular school, we can only refuse your request for certain reasons set out by law in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. We do not have to admit your child to the school of your choice in the following circumstances.

- if the school would have to employ an extra teacher or spend a lot of money, for example, if we would have to provide an extra classroom.
- if your child's education would suffer as a result of changing school.
- if education in the school you want would not be suitable to the age or ability of your child. This might apply if you want your child to be admitted to a stage of education that he or she is not ready for yet or to a school which cannot meet your child's needs.
- if we think that your child can only be educated in the school you want at the expense of the other pupils' education.
- if the school you want has been provided specifically for children with special needs, and we don't think that your child needs the special equipment or specially trained staff we have provided in that school.
- if we think that your child would be likely to disturb the order and discipline in that school, or the educational wellbeing of other pupils at the school.
- if you want your daughter to go to a boys' school, or your son to a girls' school.
- if accepting the request would prevent us from reserving a place at the school for a child who is likely to move into the area.
- if accepting the request would make it necessary for us to create an extra class or employ another teacher at a future stage of your child's primary education.

If we refuse your placing request

If we refuse your placing request, or if we have not given you our decision on your request by 30 April (or within two months for requests made at other times of the year), you may make an appeal to an appeal committee.

You can only appeal against a placing-request refusal once in a 12-month period. This does not mean that you cannot make another placing request. It just means that if we refuse your first placing request and you appeal to the appeal committee, you cannot appeal to the appeal committee again on another placing request within a 12-month period.

You must appeal in writing to the director of Education and Leisure Services. By the time of the appeal, you will know why we refused your placing request. At the appeal hearing you will have the chance to present your case in person or through a representative.

If the appeal committee agree that we were right to refuse your child a place in the school you want, you have 28 days from receiving the appeal committee's decision to appeal to the Sheriff Court.

In case places become available in the school you want, we will keep your request open until 1 September of the year you made it unless you tell us you want to change your request to another school.

Although the information in this document is correct at this time of printing, it is possible that arrangements could change either before the start of or during the course of, the school year in question, or in relation to later school years. This information leaflet only provides general guidance about placing requests.