



WHAT IS FAIR ACCESS?

A SHORT EXPLANATION FOR PARENTS

1. **My child needs a secondary school place in Leicestershire but the school year has already started.**

You should apply for a school via the Leicestershire Admissions Phone School Admissions service:

- Phone 0116 305 6684.
- Email admissions@leics.gov.uk.

2. **All the schools I have applied for in my local area are saying they are full. What happens now?**

The Local Authority will ask the secondary schools in the local area (Partnership) to use the Fair Access Process to decide on a school for your child. The schools act together to take it in turns to offer places to children needing a place once the school year has started. The schools meet together as a “Fair Access Panel”.

They will take into account your child’s personal circumstances as well as “which school’s turn is it next” in deciding who will offer the place. The process is designed to be “fair” to your child but also “fair” to all the other children in a year group that is likely to be full.

3. **I have asked for a place at a school and I know its not full but they are still saying “No”. Is this right?**

If your child has

- been out of school for some time
- suspended from his or her previous school

the school may say “No” to your request. In this case the Local Authority will send the case to the local group of schools to make a Fair Access decision. The local schools have to agree a place for your child. It might be in the school you requested or it might be in another local school.

4. **My child has special educational needs and needs a school place and the school year has already started.**

If your child has an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) it is the job of the Special Educational Needs Assessment Service at the Local Authority to help get a school place. You can contact the Local Authority Inclusion Service for help and advice at

- Phone Inclusion Team at 0116 305 2071
- Email: Inclusionpupilsupport@leics.gov.uk

5. My child has special educational needs but

- **does not have an Education and Health Care Plan,**
- **needs a school place and**
- **the year has already started.**

You should apply for a school place via the Leicestershire Admissions web site. Let them know about your child's special educational needs. The school that you then apply for can say "no" if they think that they are not the best school to meet your child's needs. The decision would then go to the group of local schools Fair Access Panel who will decide on a place.

6. What are the reasons for a school saying "we want this decision to be taken by our local Fair Access Panel"?

Leicestershire's Fair Access Protocol will include the following children of compulsory school age who have difficulty securing a school place:

- Children involved with the criminal justice system or Pupil Referral Units who need to be reintegrated into mainstream education;
- Children on a Child in Need/Child Protection Plan;
- Children in refuges and those in safe accommodation;
- Children who have been out of education for two months or more;
- Children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers;
- Children who are homeless;
- Children with unsupportive family backgrounds for whom a place has not been sought;
- Children who are carers;
- Children with special educational needs, disabilities or medical conditions (but without an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP))
- Children with a previous history of challenging behaviour in school with more than two periods of fixed term exclusion in the previous twelve months or who are judged to need significant extra support to maintain their school place.

7. I have applied for a place. I have not heard what is happening.

Contact School Admissions (see 1 above) The team will be able to tell you what is happening. Schools must respond to a request for a school place within seven working days. If the decision goes to the local Fair Access Panel they are expected to act quickly too.

Updated Feb 2023