

What is a change of preference?

A change of preference is the addition of schools which were not originally requested, or the re-ordering of schools on the list which were originally requested. A maximum of three new schools can be added to an application at any one time.

For example, Abby's parent made the following application:

- 1. Fitzharrys School*
- 2. John Mason School*
- 3. Larkmead School*

She has been offered a place at Fitzharrys School. Her parent then emails and asks for John Mason School to be her new first preference and for Aureus School to be added as a new second preference. Her application changes to:

- 1. John Mason School*
- 2. Aureus School*
- 3. Fitzharrys School*
- 4. Larkmead School*

Note, Abby now has four preferences listed but only one new preference was added as a change of preference.

When and how will changes of preference be considered?

Changes of preference will be considered by the Admissions Authority (AA) for the schools requested at the next available opportunity. They will be considered using the school's published Admissions Rules alongside other applications (e.g. children on the Continued Interest list).

What happens if a place cannot be offered after a change of preference?

Once a change of preference has been considered notification will be made in writing. If a place cannot be offered, the child's parent will be able to add his/her name to the Continued Interest list and/or appeal for a place at the school. The child's name can only be added to the Continued Interest list if this does not exceed the limit of a maximum of three Continued Interest lists [see our policy on Continued Interest lists].

What happens if a place can be offered after a change of preference?

Once a change of preference has been considered notification will be made in writing. If a place can be offered and this school is listed higher on the application than the school originally or previously offered, the place originally or previously offered will be taken away and offered to another child. It is not possible for a child to hold simultaneously an offer of a place at more than one school.

Using the above example, Abby has now been offered a place at John Mason School. Her preference for Aureus School is not needed and her offer at Fitzharrys School is withdrawn and is offered to another child. Her parents are not given the opportunity to 'choose' between Fitzharrys and John Mason Schools.

If a child was on the Continued Interest list for a school which is now lower on his/her list of preferences than the new school offered as a change of preference, his/her name will be automatically removed from the Continued Interest list.

For example, Brendan's parent asked for the following preferences:

- 1. The Warriner School*
- 2. North Oxfordshire Academy*
- 3. Banbury Academy*

He was offered a place at Banbury Academy and his parent asked for his name to be added to the Continued Interest lists for The Warriner School and North Oxfordshire Academy. His parent also asked for North Oxfordshire Academy to be his new first preference and The Warriner School to move down to second preference. A place is later offered at North Oxfordshire Academy (his new first preference). His name is automatically removed from the Continued Interest list for The Warriner School (it is now only a second preference and he has been offered his first preference). His place at Banbury Academy is taken away and offered to another child.

What happens if a child was receiving or due to receive transport to the alternative school?

Eligibility for free home to school transport is assessed at the time an offer is made and is generally only available to the nearest school. If transport was offered to an alternative school it will not automatically continue if a place is offered at a higher preference school after a change of preference request has been considered.

Using the above example, Brendan was offered free transport to Banbury Academy because it was his nearest available school at that time and over 3 miles away. When he is offered a place at North Oxfordshire Academy he is not offered free transport because it is his nearest available school at the time the offer is made and less than 3 miles away.