



# **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Wokingham Borough Council Co-ordinated Scheme for Admission to Infant, Junior and Primary Schools 2024/2025**

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# Timetable for Co-ordinated Admissions Schemes

## 2024/2025

Please note that dates may change to the next working day if the School Admissions Code is revised permitting national closing dates to be adjusted if the date falls on a weekend.

Admissions Round	Reception	Junior (Year 2 into 3)
Birth range	01/09/19 - 31/08/20	01/09/16- 31/08/17
Rounds open	13 November 2023	13 November 2023
Final closing date for receipt of applications	15 January 2024	15 January 2024
Deadline for house moves and additional supporting evidence	15 January 2024	15 January 2024
Unranked preferences forwarded to Wokingham Borough Own Admission Authorities	07 February 2024	07 February 2024
Ranked preferences from all schools to be returned to Wokingham LA	15 March 2024	15 March 2024
Final offer exchange with other Local Authorities	31 March 2024	31 March 2024
National Offer Day & Notifications sent	16 April 2024	16 April 2024
Acceptances and refusals of any offer should be made by this date	1 May 2024	1 May 2024
Any appeal should be received by this date. <i>(20 school days following notification that application was unsuccessful)</i>	15 May 2024	15 May 2024
Appeals received on-time should be considered by this date <i>(40 school days)</i>	20 July 2024	20 July 2024
Rounds Close (Applications will need to be made via the in-year process after this date)	31 August 2024	31 August 2024

# The Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme

## 1. Reasons for a co-ordinated scheme

Under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, local authorities are required to formulate and determine co-ordinated schemes for primary school admissions. These regulations specify what must be included in a co-ordinated scheme and the Secretary of State has also issued a School Admissions Code which includes some mandatory provisions.

This scheme complies with the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021 and all current legislation regarding school admissions. This scheme is reviewed annually.

## 2. Aims of a co-ordinated scheme

This scheme is a co-ordinated scheme for normal admissions to infant, primary and junior schools (“the scheme”) and it applies to all mainstream state-funded primary, infant and junior schools in the Borough of Wokingham who admit children at the start of Reception as the normal year of entry or year 3 for entry into a junior school.

It aims to ensure that within the operation of an equal preference system:

- each applicant only receives one offer of a school place;
- each applicant is offered the highest ranked preference school that is available; and
- a single offer is made for all applicants on the same day.

The arrangements outlined in this scheme only apply to children of compulsory school age (i.e., those children starting the reception class in the year that they will become five) or summer born children who have deferred entry. **They do not cover any nursery settings that schools may have, even if this forms part of the school site.**

The admission of children with an Education, Health and Care plan are covered by different admission regulations. Following negotiation, if a mainstream school has been named, a place will be allocated for these children before considering other applications.

The scheme will not be used to decide which children are eligible for a place at a school. The admission arrangements published by a school's admission authority will be used to determine a child's eligibility for a place at a school.

The scheme sets out how applications must be made and the scheme will be used to decide which place an applicant will be offered if: the child is eligible for a place at more than one school; or if the child does not qualify for a place at any of the schools for which the applicant has expressed preferences.

### **3. The schools and admission authorities to which this scheme applies**

The scheme applies to all mainstream community, foundation, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled, infant, primary and junior schools maintained by Wokingham Borough Council ("the Council") and to all academies in the Wokingham Borough.

For all community and voluntary controlled schools maintained by the Council, the Council is the admission authority. For all foundation and voluntary aided schools maintained by the Council, the school's governing body is the admission authority. For all academies in the Wokingham Borough, the admission authority is the academy trust. For the purposes of this scheme, the term "Wokingham Borough Schools" refers to all community, foundation and voluntary schools maintained by Council and to all academies located in the Borough of Wokingham

### **4. Admission to middle schools in other local authorities**

These arrangements will be managed centrally by Wokingham Borough Council. An In Year application form needs to be completed by parents wishing to apply for a place for a middle school in another local authority. Each local authority will accept applications in the same way as it would for its own normal admissions round. Co-ordination will be held with the maintaining local authority who will apply their co-ordinated scheme. The maintaining local authority will inform Wokingham Borough Council if a place is to be offered in one of its schools and Wokingham Borough Council will inform the parent of the outcome of the application.

## 5. Admission to Junior Schools

These arrangements will be managed centrally by Wokingham Borough Council. Parents of all Year 2 pupils, living in the Wokingham borough, will be able to apply online from 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

Consideration will only be given to any preference expressed for a junior school. Parents are required to submit an in-year application for primary school preferences up to half a term in advance of the place being required (after the May half-term 2024 for a place in September 2024) in accordance with the in-year co-ordinated scheme.

Parents of children living outside the borough may apply for a Wokingham borough school using the application provided by their home authority.

## 6. Multiple offers

Multiple offers are eliminated under these arrangements, but parents remain free to make applications to the independent sector. There is one exception where a proposed new academy is included in the scheme to enable parents to express a preference for the school. The school will be removed for allocation and offer purposes from the scheme where the Department for Education has not given final approval for the school to open by a date to be agreed with the proposer but by the date specified. In such cases, the applications for the proposed new school will be considered outside the scheme in accordance with Section D.

Co-ordination will take place with other local authorities who will be asked to share information on their residents who apply for schools in the Borough and conversely Wokingham will share information on parents living in the Borough applying for schools outside the Borough, to ensure where possible, that only one offer will be issued.

## 7. The Equal Preference System

All Wokingham Borough schools and academies have equal preference admission policies. Wokingham Council, as the Local Authority, will apply the admission rules and give each child a single offer on the same day.

When you apply for a school place you are advised to list **FOUR** schools. The school that you name as your highest preference would normally be the one you really want.

The admission policy for each school is applied to your child's application along with all the other applications for the same school. At this stage, it does not matter whether you have listed the school as preference 1, 2 or 3, all applications are considered equally against each school's policy. It is where your child is placed within that policy that counts.

All applicants for each school are put into order according to the criteria in that school's policy. Places at the school are filled in order up to the published admission number. The answer for each preference will either be a yes (place available) or no (place not available).

If more than one school can offer a place, then we look at the order of preferences. You will only get one offer; this will be the highest of those that can offer a place. If all four schools can offer a place, you will be offered your top preference.

Parents applying to Wokingham Borough Council using the citizen portal, will be able to view the offer online of a school place on the offer date prescribed in the council's timetable. If a place cannot be offered at any of the preferred schools, a place will be offered at:

- a) **the designated area school (if there are places available) or**
- b) **the nearest or most accessible school with places.**

If a place at a preferred school cannot be offered by Wokingham Borough Council to cross-border applicants, an alternative place will not be considered as the home local authority will be making an offer.

If Wokingham local authority and another local authority can both offer places, the authorities will determine the place to be allocated based on the ranked preferences.

Preferences may also be expressed for new academies where there is agreement by the sponsor to do so. The Scheme for new school inclusion in the co-ordinated schemes is included in Section D.

## 8. The Common Application Form

Wokingham Borough residents can make applications online, via the [Council's Citizen Portal](#) or complete and return a paper form which can be download from our website, or a copy can be requested by contacting [schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk).

Whichever of these options is chosen, this form is known as a [Common Application Form](#).

The Common Application Form for normal admissions is a form for applicants to express their preferences for places both at Wokingham Borough Schools and at schools maintained by other local authorities and academies in other local authority areas.

Those potential applicants who may wish to home educate their child from Reception or enrol their child in an independent school from Reception are requested to inform the Council if this is the decision, they have taken in lieu of completing the Common Application Form.

## 9. Multiple applications

Only one Common Application Form can be processed for any given child. If more than one form is received for the same child and the preferences expressed are different on each form, the applicant(s) will be required to submit a single Common Application Form.

If the Council receives more than one Common Application Form, for example both an online and paper application, and they differ, the Council will query this with the applicant.

If the Council receives a Common Application Form from more than one person claiming parental responsibility for the same child, and the content of these applications differ, the Council will inform both applicants. The Council will then not process any preference(s) that differ until the applicants are either in agreement, or until one applicant can show the legal right to have their preference(s) considered over the preference(s) of the other applicant. No school place will be allocated to the child until a single Common Application Form is submitted.



## 10. Preferences

The Common Application Form allows applicants:

- to express preferences for places at up to **four** schools;
- to give their reasons why they want a place at the school named;
- to rank their preferences in relation to each other; and
- to provide any other details that may be pertinent to the processing of their preferences, for example the permanent home address at which the child is ordinarily resident or the names of any older siblings that may attend the preferred school.

If applicants express a preference for a school in another local authority area, the application and any supporting information submitted with the application will be forwarded to the school's maintaining authority or, if it is an academy, to the local authority responsible for the area where the school is located.

Applicants are advised to consider their 'catchment' school, as well as any implications of home to school transport when expressing their preferences. Catchment areas are designated by the Council and are made available to applicants at [Schools and catchment or 'designated' areas - Wokingham Borough Council](#).

When choosing a school place, it is important for parents/carers to think about how their child will travel to and from school each day. Most families in Wokingham organise their own home to school journey. Those families may walk, cycle, use public transport, lift-share with other families or take their child to school in their family car.

If there is a school with places available which could meet the needs of a child and is closer to home than the school or schools listed on an application and/or which offer a child a place, the placement will be classed as **Parental Preference**, and the child is unlikely to qualify for travel assistance.

Whilst it is a requirement that parental preference is respected wherever possible in allocating school places, this requirement does not extend to guaranteed provision of transport. Where parents select alternative schools to their nearest schools, they accept responsibility for making their own transport arrangements for their children.

## 11. Supplementary Information Forms

**Some schools ask you to complete a SIF to provide extra information for the admissions criteria to be looked at fully. This is in addition to the Common Application Form being submitted. You must submit an application with the local authority, even if you have already completed the school's form**

It is vital that you submit any SIFs that are required for the schools that you apply for by their deadline. If you don't, this will significantly reduce the likelihood of your child gaining a place at the school.

A 'supplementary form' and is used by voluntary aided (church) or free schools to gather additional information that will enable the school to consider your application under its **faith or other criteria**.

**Only families applying for a place under this oversubscription criteria are required to complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF).**

The following schools in the Wokingham Borough require a supplementary Information Form to be completed and sent directly to the school. This can be downloaded by clicking on the school's name below or visiting the school's website directly.

- [St Teresas Catholic School](#)
- [Finchampstead CofE Primary School](#)
- [St Dominic Savio Catholic School](#)
- [Sonning C of E Primary School](#)
- [St Peter's CofE Primary School](#)
- [St Sebastian's CofE Primary School](#)

Out of borough schools may require SIFs, please ensure you check the schools' requirements before listing it on your application.

Where an academy or a voluntary aided or foundation school receives a SIF from a Wokingham resident it will not be regarded as a valid application unless the applicant has also completed the Common Application Form and that academy or school is listed as a preference on it.

## 12. The co-ordinated scheme for normal admissions

Normal admissions are those admissions which are usually determined by **16 April 2024** for places in the normal year of entry to an infant or primary school - the Reception year.

The Council will act as a clearing house for the consideration of preferences and the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities in response to preferences received via the Common Application Form.

The Council will provide information about applicants' resident in the Wokingham Borough and their expressed preferences for schools outside the Wokingham Borough to other local authorities for their consideration. The Council will likewise receive information from other local authorities on behalf of their residents' expressing preferences for Wokingham Borough schools.

The Council will provide details of all preferences expressed for voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies within the Wokingham Borough to those schools for their consideration. The Council will likewise receive completed ranked lists of all preferences from these schools and academies.

The Council will provide information on all preferences, including to whom offers can be made, to other coordinating local authorities in respect of their residents. The Council will likewise receive information on preferences, including to whom offers can be made, from other coordinating local authorities for Wokingham Borough residents.

On **16<sup>th</sup> April 2024**, Wokingham Borough Council will ensure that the results may be viewed on-line. Where a preference cannot be offered, parents will have access to summarised documents showing the reason why and offered the right to appeal the decision. Families who do not apply online will not be able to access the outcomes automatically and outcome letters will usually be posted.

Those children not offered places at schools ranked higher than the school offered will be placed on a waiting list for the relevant school(s).

A facility to accept or refuse offers online will be available. Parents will be advised that if they fail to accept an offer of a place by 1st **May 2024**, the offer will be withdrawn after one further written reminder being issued. This part of

the scheme is important in allowing early identification of spare places at oversubscribed schools, which can then be allocated to from waiting lists.

The scheme will not affect the duty of governors of academy, foundation, and voluntary aided schools to set and apply their own admission arrangements. Schemes are an administrative process to make school admissions easier, more transparent, and less stressful for parents. They are not designed to require all admission authorities in an area to operate the same oversubscription criteria and each local authority (or school governing body where relevant) will determine their own criteria and consult upon them accordingly.

### 13. Submitting the Common Application Form - Applicants living in the Wokingham Borough

If using the Wokingham Borough Council's online electronic Common Application Form available at the [Council's Citizen Portal](#), the Common Application Form is submitted electronically to Wokingham Borough Council's School Admissions team.

If using a paper Common Application Form, once completed, applicants should ideally scan and email all pages of the form as well as any other information they believe appropriate to [schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk)

If residents cannot use the [Council's Citizen Portal](#) or scan and email a paper form, then forms may also be handed in to Wokingham borough Council Offices at Shute End to be forwarded to the School Admissions team.

Any applications received directly by a school must be forwarded to the Council's School Admissions team prior to the deadline for applications.

### 14. Submitting the Common Application Form - Applicants living outside the Wokingham Borough

Applicants living outside the Wokingham Borough, who want their child to attend a Wokingham school, should apply using the Common Application Form **provided by their home local authority**. The applicant's home local authority will then forward any preferences for Wokingham Borough schools along with any supporting documents to the Wokingham Borough Council's School Admissions team.

Any applications submitted to the School Admissions team by an applicant who lives outside the Wokingham Borough will not be processed and instead will be forwarded to the applicant's home local authority.

## 15. Determining eligibility for places

The decision on which applicants are offered places at a school named as a preference on an application is the responsibility for the admission authority for that school. The Council will only make a decision with respect to the offer or refusal of a place in response to any preference expressed on an application where:

- i. it is acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority, or
- ii. an applicant is eligible for a place at more than one school, or
- iii. an applicant is not eligible for a place at any school that the applicant has named as a preference.

Preferences expressed for places at Wokingham Borough community or voluntary controlled schools will be considered by the Council and the eligibility for places at the schools concerned will be determined using the [Council's published admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools](#). The governing bodies of academies and foundation or voluntary aided schools determine the admission arrangements for their schools and must use those admission arrangements to determine a child's eligibility for a place at the school.

For those academies and foundation or voluntary aided schools whose admission authorities:

- delegate authority to the Council's School Admissions team – the school's determined admission arrangements will be used by the School Admissions team to prioritise applicants and to determine the applicants' eligibility for places;
- do not delegate authority to the Council's School Admissions team – the academy or school will themselves use their determined admission arrangements to prioritise applicants and to determine the applicants' eligibility for places and inform the Council's School Admissions team of all required information by the date required under this scheme.

Preferences expressed for places at schools outside the Wokingham Borough will be referred to the local authority that coordinates admissions in that area for eligibility to be determined under the school admission arrangements applicable in that area.

The number of eligible places available at each school will be no less than the Published Admission Number (PAN) that the Council believes has been determined for that cohort.

## 16. Allocating school places

### Applicants living in the Wokingham Borough

Places will be allocated at schools in the following ways under the scheme, depending on the number of schools at which a child is eligible for a place. In allocating places, all preferences expressed for maintained schools and academies will be taken into account.

The Council as the coordinating local authority for all applicant's resident in the Wokingham Borough, will allocate school places on behalf of all admission authorities operating within the coordinated scheme. Each applicant will receive no more than one allocation of a school place.

- If a child is eligible for a place at just one school named on the Common Application Form, the child will be allocated a place at that school.
- If the child is eligible for a place at more than one school named on the Common Application Form, the child will be allocated a place at the school the applicants have ranked as their highest preference.
- If the child is not eligible for a place at any of the schools named on the Common Application Form, the child will be allocated a place at their catchment area school, if places are available at that school. If a place cannot be allocated at the child's catchment area school, a place will be allocated to the child at the nearest Wokingham Borough school which has a place available.

If a child resident in the Wokingham Borough is allocated a place at a school maintained by another local authority, that authority will be notified of the allocation.

No places will be held in reserve for any school

## **Applicants living outside the Wokingham Borough**

Details about an applicant's eligibility for places at Wokingham Borough schools will be sent to the applicant's home local authority. That local authority will then determine which school place the applicant's child will be allocated using the co-ordinated scheme in operation in that authority.

The applicant's home authority will then notify the Wokingham Borough Council's School Admissions team of any places at Wokingham Borough schools allocated or not required.

## **17. Notifying the governing bodies and head teachers at Wokingham Borough schools**

Once the allocation of school places has been determined, the governing bodies of academies and foundation and voluntary aided schools and the head teachers of community and voluntary controlled schools will be informed of a list of the children who have been allocated places at their schools. This list may be amended by the Council at a later date. Schools should not contact parent/carers until after allocations have been made and applicants have been informed of the results by the Council.

## **18. Notifying Applicants**

Notifications about the school place their child has been allocated by the Wokingham Borough Council's School Admissions Team will be sent to applicants' resident in the Wokingham borough on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024, the National Offer Day for primary admissions.

Those applicants that applied using the online form will be informed electronically where possible, and these communications will likely be received before other applicants are informed by non-electronic means.

If the school place allocated is at an academy, voluntary aided or foundation school, or is in another local authority area, the notification sent to applicants will be on behalf of the school's admission authority. Applicants will be asked to

let the School Admissions Team know in writing by 1 May 2024 if they do not want their child to take up the school place allocated.

## 19. Nursery and Foundation One Admissions

Admission to nursery and Foundation One classes at state-funded schools, or other early years' providers at, or linked to particular schools, including co-located children's centres, does not guarantee or give any priority for admission to primary education at that school.

## 20. Timing of entry to Primary Education

Children reach compulsory school age the term following their fifth birthday:

- children born between 1 September and 31 December must be in full-time education by the start of the spring term
- children born between 1 January and 31 March must be in full-time education by the start of the summer term
- children born between 1 April and 31 August must be in full-time education at the start of the new school year

Most children start school full-time in the September after their fourth birthday. There are other options for parents of four-year-olds who feel their child is not yet ready for school.

### Parents have the opportunity to:

- Start their child in September on a full-time basis from their first day of attendance or
- allow their child to attend on a part-time basis until the start of the term after the child's fifth birthday or
- defer their child's entry to school until later in the school year. **This must not be beyond the start of the term after their fifth birthday or beyond the start of the final term of the school year**

Parents must discuss with the school how they would like their child to start school.



## Parents of summer born children (those born between 1 April and 31 August only) can also:

- request to delay their child's entry to school until the September after they turn five

All discussions around deferment should include any early years setting/s that the child attends in order that the arrangements made are in the best interest of the child's needs. **It is important to note that deferred entry to Year R is likely to have some implications for a child and these should be discussed fully with the school.**

Children born between 01 April - 31 August are not of compulsory school age until the beginning of Year 1 but parents wishing to defer their child's entry to school until the following September cannot hold a place offered for Year R; a new application for a place in Year 1 would be required (which may or may not be successful).

### Admission outside normal age group

Children are normally allocated to their chronological year group. Requests from parents for school places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully whether for gifted and talented pupils or for those who have experienced problems, for example, having missed education due to ill health.

Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances and will only be agreed by a panel of officers from Wokingham Borough Council where there is consensus between the parents, schools concerned (both current and preferred) and any relevant professionals asked for their opinion by the panel, that to do so would be in the pupil's interests.

### Summer Born Children and Delaying Admission to Reception

Most children start school in the September after their 4th birthday. However, children are not legally required to attend school until the term after their 5th birthday. If a parent is considering delaying when their child starts school, then different options are available to them depending on when their child was born.

- Children born September-December
- Children born January-March
- Children born April-August (Summer Born)

## Children born September-December

If a child is born between 1 September and 31 December, then parents must apply for a school place during the winter that they turn 4 years old.

A child would usually be expected to start school in the September following their 4th birthday, however their start can be postponed, or they can attend part-time during the Autumn term. This is called 'deferring' a child's admission to primary school. The latest parents can postpone their child's start is January. If parents would like to do this, they must:

1. Apply for a school place during the winter of their child's 4th birthday. The deadline for applications is 15 January after their 4th birthday.
2. Accept a school place offered.
3. Speak to the school about deferring their child's start to later in the year. Discuss both the possible benefits and disadvantages of your child starting later in the year.
4. If parents want their child to attend part-time then they should discuss with the school what might be the best schedule for their child.
5. The school will hold a child's place during the Autumn term of their reception year, depending on how long they decide to defer.
6. **A child MUST start school at least by the beginning of the Spring Term in January.**

## Children born January-March

If a child was born between 1 January and 31 March, then parents must apply for a school place during the winter before their 4th birthday.

A child would usually be expected to start school in the September following their 4th birthday, however parents can postpone their start or have them attend part-time during the Autumn and Spring terms. This is called 'deferring' a child's admission to primary school. The latest parents can postpone their start is April.

If parents would like to do this, they must:

1. Apply for a school place during the winter before their child's 4th birthday. The deadline for applications is 15 January.
2. Accept a school place offered.

3. Speak to the school about wishing to defer a child's start to later in the year. Discuss both the possible benefits and disadvantages of a child starting later in the year.
4. If parents want their child to attend part-time then they should discuss with the school what might be the best schedule for their child.
5. The school will hold a place during the Autumn and Spring term of a child's Reception year, depending on how long they decide to defer.
6. **A child MUST start school at least by the beginning of the Summer Term in April.**

### Summer Born Children (April-August)

If a child was born between 1 April and 31 August, then it is usual for them to start school in the September following their 4th birthday. It is expected that most families will start sending their child to school at this time, along with the rest of their child's nursery friends.

However, if parents are considering delaying their child's entry into reception, then they have several options available to them, and it is important that parents consider these carefully before deciding whether to delay admission.

In all cases parents should first apply for a school place in their child's normal age group. After this parents can decide whether to accept the place offered or whether to delay admission.

- Option 1: Postpone your child's start to later in the year
- Option 2: Attending school part-time
- Option 3: Delaying admission by a year

#### I. Summer Born Option 1: Postpone your child's start to later in the year

Summer born children are allowed to accept an offer of a school place but then postpone their start in Reception until later in the year. This is called 'deferring' a child's admission to primary school. **The latest parents can postpone their start is April.**

If parents would like to do this, they must;

1. Apply for a school place during the winter before their child's 4th birthday. The deadline for applications is 15 January before their 4th birthday.
2. Accept a school place offered.
3. Speak to the school about wishing to defer a child's start to later in the year. Discuss both the possible benefits and disadvantages of a child starting later in the year.
4. The school will hold a place during the Autumn and Spring terms of the child's Reception year, depending on how long they decide to defer.
5. **A child MUST start school at least by the beginning of the Summer Term in April.** They can then attend school either full-time or part-time for the rest of the year.

## II. Summer Born Option 2: Attending school part-time

Summer born children are allowed to attend school part-time during the whole of their first year. This means that a child can start attending gradually. As long as the child starts school by April in their Reception year then they are allowed to attend part-time, either for all of the year or for part of it.

If parents would like to do this, they must;

1. Apply for a school place during the winter before their child's 4th birthday. The deadline for applications is 15 January before their 4th birthday.
2. Accept a school place offered.
3. Speak to the school about their child attending part-time. Discuss both the possible benefits and disadvantages, and what might be the best schedule for the child.
4. From the September after the child's 4th birthday, they can either attend school part-time, or they can postpone their start date until the start of the Summer Term of their Reception year.
5. **A child MUST start school at least by the beginning of the Summer Term in April.**
6. The child can attend part time during the summer term as well, but they must attend school.

### III. Summer Born Option 3: Delaying admission by a year

If parents are considering delaying a child's admission by a full year, then they will need to request permission for them to start Reception a year later than their normal age group.

This is a big decision and is something parents should think about carefully as it usually means that the child will remain in a lower year group for the rest of their education. This may not apply for future applications to alternative settings or out of Borough schools.

It is important to remember that if parents do delay by a year, then they will not keep the school place originally offered to their child. This offer will be removed, and the following year parents will have to re-apply for a school place alongside all other applicants, and the oversubscription criteria will apply if there are more applications than places available at the school.

Each year a number of families who decide to delay admission discover that they no longer qualify for a place at their preferred school because the cut-off distance has changed, and they now live too far away. Parents should keep this in mind while making their decision about whether to delay admission.

If a Wokingham Borough resident or applying for a Wokingham Borough school, and parents would like to do this, they must;

1. Apply for a school place in their child's normal age group, during the winter before their child's 4th birthday. The deadline for applications is 15 January before their 4th birthday.
  2. Complete Wokingham borough Council's [Summer Born Deferral Request Form](#)
  3. Meet with the headteacher of the school, and any others you plan to apply for, to discuss the options available. Discuss both the possible benefits and disadvantages of the child starting school a year late.
- If you plan to apply for Wokingham Borough community or voluntary controlled schools, the Wokingham borough Local Authority will consider your request
  - If you plan to apply for academies, free schools or voluntary aided schools, the school will consider your request

- If you plan to apply for schools outside the Wokingham Borough, you will need to discuss their procedures with them directly.

### **If a request to delay admission is agreed**

1. The school admissions team will send an email/letter letting parents know which schools have agreed a request to delay admission.
2. After this, if parents still want to delay admission, inform the School Admissions Team at Wokingham Borough Council to withdraw the original application or withdraw any school place offered to your child.
3. The School Admissions Team at Wokingham Borough Council will withdraw the application/offered school place.
4. During the winter before your child's 5th birthday apply for a school place as part of the main admissions round. The deadline for applications is 15 January before their 5th birthday.
5. Clearly state on the application form that you are applying for a Summer-Born Reception place to start school in September.

## **21. Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**

Admissions arrangements for pupils with a statement of special educational need or EHC plan will continue to be managed by the Special Educational Needs Team. Parents are invited to complete the common application form, and where identified, preferences will be shared with the Special Educational Needs Team.

## **22. Applications made after the closing date but before offer date**

The closing date for applications for primary school places in the normal admissions round will be **15<sup>th</sup> January 2024**. **Changes to existing applications received after 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 will be considered as 'late' and processed after all on-time applications have been considered.**

Applications received after the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 may be considered as on time, under exceptional circumstances only, and when evidence is provided to support this. **For example;**

- If an older child transfers to another school after 15<sup>th</sup> January and you need to change your younger child's school preferences because of this.
- If any medical or social circumstances within the family change after 15<sup>th</sup> January that means you feel your child would need a place at a particular school,

Applicants who want their application to be considered after the 15<sup>th</sup> January as an “on-time” application under exceptional circumstances should contact Admissions Services and provide supporting evidence to: [schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk)

The ability to make vital amendments will be dependent on the stage of the process.

If no evidence is provided it will be reasonably assumed that an application could have been made by the closing date and the application will not be processed until after the offer date and main allocation of places.

## 23. Applications made after the offer date but before August 31, 2024.

All late applications will be processed by the application of the admissions criteria where necessary. Where possible a place will be offered at a preferred school with places available. If this cannot be achieved a place will be allocated at the designated area school (if there are places available) or the **nearest or most accessible school with places** to the home address if they live in the Wokingham borough. No offer will be made to those children living outside of the borough as it is the responsibility of the home authority to provide a school place. Parents retain the right of appeal.

## 24. Change of preference

Parents who wish to amend their application **before** the closing date will be allowed to do so if they put their request in writing to the school admissions team or amend their online application by the closing date.

Parents who wish to amend their application **after** the closing date should put their request in writing to the school admissions team. No consideration will be given to their request until after the offer date.

It should be noted that if an alternative school place has been allocated by the local authority as no parental preference received by the closing date could be met, any changes of preference can adversely affect access to assistance with school transport.

## 25. Applications after the normal admissions rounds (In-Year applications)

A separate scheme has been proposed to co-ordinate admissions outside of the normal admissions rounds.

Parents will apply for a place at a junior school by the same deadline as for first admission to infant and primary schools. Wokingham Borough Council will issue all offer and refusal electronic notifications as detailed in the authority's timetable. Parents will be offered the right of appeal if necessary.

All other details relating to late applications; waiting lists, oversubscription criteria etc. are as detailed in the infant/primary scheme.

## 26. Waiting lists - How children are placed on a waiting list

Where an application is unsuccessful and the applicant has not been allocated a place at a school ranked as a higher preference on their Common Application Form, the child's name will be placed on a waiting list for places.

Waiting lists will be maintained by the local authority for its schools where necessary, for children who were not offered a school place at a preferred school, until the end of the reception year to fill places that may become



available during the school year. No account is taken of the length of time spent on a waiting list.

Each waiting list will contain all the unsuccessful preferences, whether from 'on-time', 'late' or 'in-year' applications made before 31 December 2024 and ranked in accordance with the relevant oversubscription criteria for that school according to the applicant's current circumstances.

Positions on waiting lists may go up or down due to pupil withdrawals or new or revised applications received; therefore, waiting lists will be reviewed and revised:

- Each time a child is added to, or removed from, the waiting list.
- When a child's changed circumstances will affect their priority
- When parents respond to periodic requests to see if they wish to remain on the waiting list

**Wait lists will be closed at the end of a school year, and parents will need to re-apply for a place at their preferred school.**

**Children who are the subject of a direction by the local authority to admit or who are allocated to a school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over those on a waiting list.**

Parents will be able to apply online to Wokingham Borough Council for each year if they wish to be placed on the waiting list for that year. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that the school admissions team is informed in writing if they want their child's name to be removed from the waiting list or if their circumstances have changed from the original application.

When the normal round of admissions closes (August 31) for F2 Reception and transfer to year 3 in a junior school, the waiting list will aim to transfer to own admission authority schools by the October half term, unless the governing body indicates that they want the local authority to hold their lists and there is agreement to this.

Waiting list information will be available in accordance with the published timeline.

## 27. Waiting lists - Prioritisation

The school's over-subscription criteria will be used to prioritise the children on the waiting list according to the current circumstances of the child, to the best of the School Admission team's knowledge.

Each additional applicant, or change in circumstances of an applicant, will require the waiting list to be reordered in accordance with the relevant oversubscription criteria for that school.

## 28. Waiting lists - Allocation of places to those on the waiting list

If the number of allocated places (or the number on roll after the first day of the school year) falls below the admission number, the spare places will be allocated to the children with the highest priority for a place on the waiting list.

The admission authority for each school shall, should a place become available whilst the waiting list is in operation, make available a place to the applicant on the top of the waiting list on the day the place became available. The Council shall, as the coordinating local authority, oversee these waiting lists in partnership with schools that are their own admission authority and other local authorities.

The Council requires other admission authorities to inform the Council when places may become available, so that a coordinated allocation may be made by the Council on behalf of all schools within this scheme, and to ensure that each child is only allocated one school place.

## 29. Appeals

Applicants refused a place at the school have a statutory right of appeal. If a preference for a place at a school is refused, the applicant will be informed of the reasons and of their right of appeal. This right does not apply if they are allocated a place, but it is not in their preferred year group.

Applicants will only be able to appeal once in any one school year unless, in exceptional circumstances, the admission authority has accepted a second application because of a significant and material change in the circumstances of the parent/carer, child or school.

The timing of your application for a school place does not affect your right to make an appeal. You can appeal even if you have already accepted another school place and you can appeal for more than one school.

## 30. Appeals - Deadlines

Appeals against the decision not to admit a child should be sent on the appropriate appeal form **within 20 days** from the date of the on-line notification refusing a place.

The deadline for appeals against on-time decisions not to grant a child a place at the applicant's preferred primary or infant school is 19 May 2024.

Appeals lodged by the deadline will be heard in June or July 2023. Appeals lodged after 15 May 2024 will be heard in June or July 2024 wherever possible, but may not be heard until a later date, depending on the date the appeal was lodged.

Where there is more than one applicant appealing for a school, these will likely be heard as 'grouped appeals' for the first stage wherever possible.

Wokingham Borough Council will ensure that appeals are arranged for the Borough's community and voluntary controlled schools. The governing bodies of own admission authority schools must determine their own appeal arrangements, although they may choose to do so via the local authority. Applicants will be informed where the admission of additional children would breach the infant class size limit.

Appeals are normally heard for the year group applied for, to start in that year group; if a parent wishes to appeal for the next year group (applicable after the May half-term prior to a September start), a parent will be asked to submit a new application form for that year group. The later application will supersede the previous application. Wokingham Borough Council can then ensure that there are no new circumstances to take into consideration prior to the issuing of a letter refusing the school place.

## **31. Appeals for schools outside the Wokingham Borough**

Where the appeal is for a school in another local authority area, local appeal arrangements may differ from the above. If this is the case, applicants are advised to contact that local authority to further discuss the appeals process in their areas

## **32. Changes to allocations because of successful appeals**

The outcome of the appeals process may mean there are further variations to the allocation of places at some schools. All changes will be communicated between the various admission authorities operating within this scheme, including the Council, schools that are their own admission authority, and other Local Authorities

## SCHEME FOR NEW SCHOOL INCLUSION IN CO-ORDINATED SCHEMES

New schools may be included as part of the co-ordinated scheme where requested by the sponsor and with the agreement of the local authority. Parents will have the opportunity of applying for new schools as part of the co-ordinated admissions scheme where initial approval is given by the Secretary of State for Education prior to the production and publication of the Parent's Guide (publication required by 12 September in the year prior to entry).

Parents must apply to Wokingham Borough Council, by including the school(s) as a preference on the application form as part of the co-ordinated admissions scheme. The application must be returned, or submitted online, to Wokingham Borough Council by the national closing dates: January 15, 2024 (primary) or October 31, 2023 (secondary).

Parents living in the Wokingham borough applying online will be able to select the school(s) from the list of names. It will not be possible to select the school by the school number as this is only issued after the signing of the Funding Agreement.

Parents applying for the school living outside the borough, will be able to do so outside the co-ordinated admissions scheme by completing a paper application (which will be made available by the school) and only listing the school as a preference. Preferences for other state-funded (excluding special schools) Wokingham borough schools must be included on the application form available from the home authority.

Applications will be forwarded to the sponsor for ranking purposes in line with the dates within the scheme.

When final approval to open has been given by the Secretary of State for Education made by the issuing of the Funding Agreement prior to March 24, 2023 (primary) or January 29, 2023 (secondary); offers for the schools will be made by Wokingham Borough Council on behalf of the academy trust board of each school on national offer day and parents will be asked to confirm acceptance within 14 days.

If the Funding Agreement is not signed by the above date, the application for any proposed school will then be considered outside the co-ordinated

admissions scheme. Preferences expressed for the proposed new schools will not impact on the application to existing schools as part of the application process, other than by using a preference. Parents will receive an offer of an existing established school on the national offer day, taking into account the other school preferences listed on the application form, and parents will be notified separately regarding their application for the proposed new school(s) on the same date. As a result, parents may receive at least two school place offers and parents will be asked to accept or decline the offer for the existing established school place within 14 days. Letters will also be written by Wokingham Borough Council on behalf of the schools to those parents who applied living outside the borough.

Two school place offers may be held until final approval has been given to open. The school admissions team will notify parents holding a provisional place when a final offer can be made and it is at that point that parents will be asked to confirm which school place will be accepted; whether the child is to remain on any other preferred school waiting lists or what alternative arrangements are being made for the child's education. If accepting a place at a new school, the original school allocation will be withdrawn, and the waiting list will be used to allocate to the vacancy.

Parents living outside the borough will be notified when a final school place offer can be made and if accepted, the local authority will then notify the home local authority of the acceptance.

If unsuccessful, parents will be notified of their right of appeal and given details on how to do so.

## RELEVANT AREA

There is a statutory requirement for the local authority to set a 'relevant area' for consultation on school admissions matters, and to review it every two years. The relevant area may be either the local authority area, or may be a lesser or greater area, provided that every part of the local authority's area must be covered by one or more such areas.

The local authority has previously decided that the relevant area should be co-terminus with the Wokingham Borough boundary. This is in line with decisions taken by neighbouring unitary authorities. This existing arrangement has worked well and cross border issues have been addressed through reciprocal consultation and in some cases by attending each other's school admissions forums.

Consultation arrangements based on the Relevant Area, taking account of amendments to other legal requirements (introduced under the Education and Skills Act 2008), will be as follows:

Where Wokingham is the admissions authority, the authority will consult on its admission arrangements with:

- Wokingham School Admissions Forum (or alternative body if adopted)
- All Wokingham Borough maintained community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools
- All own admission authority schools within the Wokingham Borough
- All neighbouring Local Education Authorities
- Diocesan Authorities
- Relevant parents
- Other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed arrangements

In turn, where the governing body of a school in the borough is the admissions authority, consultation on admissions arrangements should take place with:

- The local authority
- Wokingham School Admissions Forum (or alternative body if adopted)
- All primary or secondary schools within the borough (except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools)

- Any other local authority whose area comes either within Wokingham's relevant area, or within 8 kilometres of the school if secondary, or 3.2 kilometres if primary
- Diocesan Authorities
- Other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed arrangements
- Relevant parents