



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Your Guide to Moving School part way through the school year

In-Year Applications for the academic year 2024 to 2025



Contents

1. [What you need to know before applying](#)
2. [Key Facts](#)
3. [Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan \(EHCP\)](#)
4. [How early can I apply for my child to be considered for a school?](#)
5. [Moving schools within Wokingham or the local area](#)
6. [New to the area or Moving House](#)
7. [New to the country/returning to the UK from overseas](#)
8. [Returning Crown Servants](#)
9. [Types of schools](#)
10. [Which schools to apply for](#)
11. [How many schools to apply for](#)
12. [Catchment/Designated area](#)

13. [Deciding which school\(s\) to include as a preference](#)
14. [Published admission number \(PAN\)](#)
15. [How to apply for a school place mid-year: Primary, infant and Junior Schools](#)
16. [How to apply for a school place mid-year: Secondary Schools](#)
17. [Applying to schools direct - Primary, Infant and Junior Schools](#)
18. [Applying to schools direct - Secondary Schools](#)
19. [Applying for Looked after and previously looked after children](#)
20. [Applying on Serious medical, physical, psychological, or social needs](#)
21. [Parent or carer details](#)
22. [Private fostering arrangements](#)
23. [Misleading Applications](#)
24. [Siblings](#)
25. [Twins and Multiple Births](#)

- 26. [Evidence required to support an application](#)
- 27. [What happens after you have applied](#)
- 28. [Waiting lists](#)
- 29. [Confirming acceptance of the school offer](#)
- 30. [Making further applications](#)
- 31. [Fair Access](#)
- 32. [School Place Appeals](#)
- 33. [Home to School Travel Assistance](#)
- 34. [Eligibility for Travel Assistance](#)

1. What you need to know before applying

You can apply for In-Year admission for a school in Wokingham because, for example;

- Your child is arriving from overseas
 - You have moved to Wokingham from another part of the country
 - You are moving to a new address within the Borough
 - Your child already attends a school in the Borough, but you wish to transfer your child to another local school
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- **You need to be aware that all schools in Wokingham are heavily oversubscribed. Many year groups in our schools will already be full with local children and it is not always possible to offer children a place at their preferred school during an academic year.**
 - **If you are considering moving to Wokingham, there is no guarantee of an immediate school place, and you may be offered a school that is not your preference and not close to your home.**
 - **You should also bear in mind that it is not always possible to offer siblings the same school during an academic year. If you have two children or more, they may sometimes be offered different schools if there are no available spaces in one of the year groups in the school that you want.**
 - **Due to the high demand for school places in Wokingham, you should only make an application if you will be able to take up the offer of a place immediately.**
 - **If a school that you have requested is not able to offer a place and your child/children are out of school, we will try to offer you a place at the nearest Wokingham school to your home with a vacancy at the time. This may not be the school nearest to your home. Your child will automatically be added to the waiting list for all preferred**

schools that have been unable to offer a place and you will be given the right of appeal and advised about waiting list procedures.

- We do not encourage moving from one local school to another school mid-year because research shows it can have a negative effect on a child's progress. Consider whether it is necessary to move schools and speak to your child's current school before completing an application. If your child has already started their GCSE exam courses, it is unlikely that another school will be able to match your child's options or exam boards, which may affect their final grades.
- Applications should only be submitted after reviewing the relevant admission guide or additional information can be found in our parents' guide for primary schools and our guide for secondary schools.

2. Key Facts

- You may make an In Year application at any time of year as there are no closing dates for this type of application.
- We will not process in-year applications for school preferences outside of Wokingham. You will have to apply to the appropriate Local Authority to gain admission to a school out of the Wokingham Borough.
- The schools you would like to apply to will depend on whether you will need to apply via Wokingham Borough Council School Admissions or directly to the school themselves. Some schools process their own applications. Check whether the school is "managing their own in years" in sections 17 and 18 of this guide. If it is, you should contact the school directly to enquire about a place for your child.

- If your child does not secure a school place, you should inform the School Admissions Team at schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk as we track children for safeguarding and Children Missing Education purposes.
- Please note we do not process applications for post-16 students (sixth-form, college or training); you should contact the school or college directly for further information.
- If a school doesn't have enough places for everyone who applies, the admission rules for that school will be used to decide who will get a place (over subscription policy). Go to the [admission arrangements page](#) to find out more.
- Applications should only be submitted if you can provide the required supporting evidence.
- In-year applications can take 15 school days to process but there may be a delay processing the application due to the volume of applications that are currently being processed. The school admissions team will notify you of the outcome to your application as soon as possible via email. If the application is to be referred to the In Year [Fair Access process](#), then an outcome of that process may take longer than 15 school days.
- The offer of a place in a Wokingham Borough school must normally be taken up within the first half term that the school place is allocated. Failure to take up the offer of a place during this time will mean that the offer is withdrawn, and the place released for another child. Exceptions can only be made where the parent provides documentary evidence that the delay is unavoidable, through no fault of their own, or in the case of Crown Service, service families or looked-after children.

3. Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

If your child has an education, health and care plan (EHCP) the school application and placement process will be dealt with through the special educational needs' disability team. Parents can contact the special educational needs and disability team via email at sen@wokingham.gov.uk

It is not possible for a parent to apply for a place at a special school, within a specialist resource center or learning center through this application process.

The Local Offer website gives further information regarding the local provision for children and young people with a disability or special educational needs. More information can be found on; [Education and special educational needs - Wokingham Borough Council](#)

If your child is undergoing an education health and care needs assessment which is not yet complete, please apply following the guidance in this document and via the [Council's Citizen Portal](#). Your application will be withdrawn if an EHCP is subsequently agreed.

4. How early can I apply for my child to be considered for a school?

Applications will be processed no more than half a term (approximately 6 weeks) in advance of the date the place is requested for.

For all school places **required from the beginning of September 2024 onwards (autumn term)**, you will need to make an in-year application. You can apply from 5th June 2024 onwards. The schools will close for the summer break from July until September so you may not receive outcomes to your applications before they re-open in September. It is also unlikely that your child will start in a school on the first day of the new term in September. Schools will need to see how many children have left over the summer and will then need some time to update their waiting lists to see who is eligible for their offer.

5. Moving schools within Wokingham or the local area

If you are applying because you want a different school for your child, you should only apply if you wish for your child to move within the next six weeks. Your child would be expected to continue attending their current setting whilst the application is being processed. If we can offer one of your listed preferences, your child would be expected to take the place up at the new school, as close as possible to the new school term.

You should tell your child's current Headteacher if you wish to move them to a new school. We have seen an increase in the number of In-Year applications that parents make for their children to change schools due to unresolved problems and not because they are moving to a new house. We want to encourage parents to speak to their child's teacher/Head teacher before making a request to transfer elsewhere. Moving schools does not necessarily resolve all perceived issues and may actually cause further problems. We would highly recommend that you explore all available options with the current school before deciding to move your child permanently.

If we are unable to offer your child one of your listed preferences, they will be placed on the waiting list for your preferred school(s) and will be expected to continue at their current School.

6. New to the area or Moving House

You can apply for In-Year admission six weeks in advance of the place being required. If you have already moved to the area and your child does not have a school place, you must make an application immediately as your child is missing education.

If you are moving into the area and wish to apply for school(s) in Wokingham, you can apply as soon as you know you will be moving. If you do not have the required evidence, you can still apply for a new school, but the application will be considered from the child's current home address until appropriate evidence is provided.

The majority of areas in Wokingham are heavily oversubscribed and if we are unable to offer one of your listed preferences and you have not yet provided the required evidence, an alternative school with places available may not be offered until you have sent the required evidence.

You can also apply if your child attends a local school, but you have moved address within the Borough and wish for them to be considered for an alternative school.

7. New to the country/returning to the UK from overseas

Foreign national children resident in the UK normally have the right to attend state-funded and independent schools in England.

It is the responsibility of the parents of foreign national children to check that their children have a right under their UK entry conditions to study at a school before applying for a place. You should refer to the government guidelines before applying <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-admissions-applications-from-overseas-children>. British Nationals arriving/returning from overseas should also follow the same guidance

In-Year applications will not be considered any earlier than 6 weeks before arrival to the United Kingdom. This is because places cannot be reserved for children who are not ready to take up their place at a school. Applications received before this will not be processed, except for children of crown servants, service families or looked-after children.

8. Returning Crown Servants

Families of crown servants returning from overseas to live in the Wokingham Borough may apply for a place in advance of their move, provided the application is supported with the required evidence. A school will be offered in advance of a move and held until the appropriate time. In the case of returning Crown Servants who already own property within the Borough

or Service Personnel, evidence of posting e.g., Assignment Order or a letter from the Commanding Officer or garrison headquarters confirming the living arrangements will be required.

9. Types of schools

Schools have different bodies that make decisions about a school's policy and admitting pupils, depending on the type of school that they are. The responsible body is known as the 'admissions authority'.

The Admission Authority for each school is responsible for setting its admission arrangements and deciding which children are given priority for a place, in accordance with the published admission criteria.

Community and Maintained Schools

Wokingham Borough Council is the admission authority for these schools and makes decisions about the policy they use for school admissions. **These schools use the Wokingham Borough Council admissions policy. (WBC Maintained)**

Academy Schools (Non – Maintained Schools)

Academies receive funding directly from the government and are usually run by an academy trust. They have more control over how they do things than community schools, who are guided by the local authority. Academies are inspected by Ofsted. They have to follow the same rules on admissions, special educational needs and exclusions as other state schools and students sit the same exams. **Academies set their own admissions policies and term times.**

Voluntary Aided Schools (Non – Maintained Schools)

Voluntary Aided (VA) Schools are funded by the local authority but have more freedom to change the way they do things - sometimes they are supported by representatives from religious groups. The admissions authority for these schools is

usually the school's governing body. **The governing body of the school is responsible for deciding on admissions to the school.**

Free Schools (Non – Maintained Schools)

These are schools set up by non-profit agencies and set their own policies. They operate in a similar way to an academy school in relation to school admissions. **Free schools set their own admissions policies.**

10. Which schools to apply for

You can apply for a school place at any maintained or academy (non-fee paying) mainstream school online via our [website](#)

If you live near the Borough boundary, you may wish to consider applying for schools in neighboring authority areas such as Reading or Bracknell, as they may have schools closer to your home address.

IMPORTANT - If you do not name the nearest suitable schools in your original school place application, your child is unlikely to be eligible for travel assistance. The nearest schools may not be a Wokingham school or your catchment/designated area school. Your nearest suitable school may not always be the school of your choice and won't take into account your preferences for types of school, for example a single-sex school, or grammar school. In some parts of the Borough, it may be a school in another educational authority, outside of Wokingham, such as Reading Borough Council or Bracknell Council for example. Please check if schools in neighboring Local Authorities are closer to your home address if transport is important to you. See the [home to school travel assistance section](#) for more information.

11. How many schools to apply for

You can name **four** schools on your application in order of preference. **It is strongly recommended that you use all four preferences, and that you name all of your nearest schools.**

If you only apply to one school, you will only be considered for that school. You may then be allocated a Wokingham school that is not one of your preferences, that is further from your home address and to which you may not be entitled to travel assistance should your preference be unsuccessful.

12. Catchment/Designated area

This is sometimes called “Designated Area”. In essence, it is a geographical area in which children live. They are given priority for admission to a particular school. School catchment areas are used by most schools in their admission policy as one of their oversubscription criteria.

Your home address may not be in the designated area of the school nearest to your house. It is important that you check which catchment areas include your home address before submitting your application, using our [Schools designated areas map](#).

Please be aware that this is for guidance only. For confirmation of your catchment school, contact the School Admissions team for Wokingham Borough Schools, or the schools directly for all Non-Maintained Schools, for example Academy Schools.

There is no guarantee of an offer of a place at your catchment school as it may be full or oversubscribed in your child’s year group.

13. Deciding which school(s) to include as a preference

When deciding which schools to apply for, we strongly encourage you to consider schools that are nearest to your home address, **including schools that may be in other boroughs**. As well as being easier to get to, such schools are more likely to be able to admit your child.

It is also important that you consider the **admissions criteria** for each school, so you understand how places are allocated and who gets priority when a school is oversubscribed. Different schools have different admissions policies, and these may affect the chances of your child being offered a place.

The regulations allow for a parent to express a preference for a school; this is not the same as being able to 'choose' which school your child attends. You should not make any assumptions that your child is entitled to a place at a preferred school, at a school within your designated area or at the school nearest to your home address. You are not guaranteed a place at a preferred school, and it is important to be realistic when considering which schools, you name as preferences.

Siblings: If you believe your child is eligible for sibling priority at one of your preferred schools, you must include the sibling's details on your application. If you don't, your child may be given lower priority for a place at the school. Include stepbrothers, stepsisters or fostered or adopted children living at the same address as your child because they will be considered as brothers and sisters too.

Reasons for your preference: It is important that you tell us anything that could affect our decision, for example if there are specific social or medical reasons why your child must go to a particular school, you must send us a letter from your child's pediatrician/consultant or relevant professional from Children's Services, as appropriate. This letter would need to explain why the school named is the **only** school to meet your child's needs and why no other school could provide the appropriate support.

14. Published admission number (PAN)

Each school has an agreed maximum total number of pupils for each of its year groups. This number is based on building space availability or (for some first/primary schools) on legal class size limits and has been agreed by the school's governing body.

As a parent you may see that more children join a school which takes it over its PAN. This is often, however, due to circumstances outside the control of the school, and is often due to there being successful appeals or if the Local Authority needs to activate the Fair Access Protocol.

A school cannot just decide to admit over its PAN. Schools must consider the physical capacity of the school within current class sizes/structure and overall net capacity, in order to accommodate any additional pupils. The school needs to consider whether it would require any additional resources to meet pupils' need. The admission of the additional pupil/s may also require additional funding and could have an adverse financial impact on the school, which all needs to be considered. It is for these reasons, amongst others, that schools only admit over PAN in exceptional circumstances and where it will not negatively impact the school.

Some schools may consider initially, to allocate above their admission number, based on historical trends relating to the number of declines usually received following National Offer Day. In this circumstance the school will generally not allocate any additional places until numbers have fallen below the agreed admission number.

The Local Authority seeks to maintain a viable school system across the Borough. Whilst the Council remains supportive of meeting individual parental preference where this is reasonable, it also has a much wider remit of ensuring that no school can expand at the expense of another (reducing parental choice), that in-year admissions do not impair future access to a

school for particular children or communities, and that the ability to effectively manage localised fluctuations in demand is maintained.

15. How to apply for a school place mid-year: Primary, infant and Junior Schools

If you want to apply to one of the Primary/Infant/Junior schools below, then you will need to make an [in-year application](#) to Wokingham Borough Council Online using the [citizens portal](#).

[Aldryngton Primary School](#)

[All Saints Primary School](#)

[Bearwood Primary School](#)

[Beechwood Primary School](#)

[Crazies Hill Primary School](#)

[Emmbrook Infant School](#)

[Emmbrook Junior School](#)

[Farley Hill Primary School](#)

[Finchampstead Primary School](#)

[Floreat Montague Park](#)

[Gorse Ride Infants School](#)

[Gorse Ride Junior School](#)

[Grazeley Parochial Primary](#)

[Hawkedon Primary School](#)

[Highwood Primary School](#)

[Hillside Primary School](#)

[Keep Hatch Primary School](#)

[Lambs Lane Primary School](#)

[Loddon Primary School](#)

[Polehampton Infant School](#)

[Polehampton Junior School](#)

[Radstock Primary School](#)

[Rivermead Primary School](#)

[Robert Piggott CofE Infant](#)

[Robert Piggott CofE Junior](#)

[Shinfield St Mary's Junior](#)

[Sonning Primary School](#)

[South Lake Primary School](#)

[St Dominic Savio Catholic](#)

[St Nicholas CofE Primary](#)

[St Paul's CofE Junior School](#)

[St Sebastian's CofE Primary](#)

[The Colleton Primary School](#)

[The Coombes Primary School](#)

[The Hawthorns Primary School](#)

[Walter Infant School](#)

[Willow Bank Infant School](#)

[Winnersh Primary School](#)

[Woodley CofE Primary School](#)

[Willow Bank Junior School](#)

[Wheatfield Primary School](#)

[Windmill Primary School](#)

[Whiteknights Primary School](#)

16. How to apply for a school place mid-year: Secondary Schools

If you want to apply to one of the Secondary schools below, then you will need to make an in-year application to Wokingham Borough Council Online

➤ [The Bulmershe School](#)

➤ [Maiden Erlegh](#)

➤ [The Holt](#)

17. Applying to schools direct – Primary, Infant and Junior Schools

The following schools administer their own in year admissions and will want applications direct, so please refer to the school's website to apply for a place at the school or to view the school's admission arrangements:

[Alder Grove Primary](#)

[Nine Mile Ride Primary](#)

[St Teresa's Catholic Academy](#)

[Charvil Piggott Primary](#)

[Oaklands Infant](#)

[Wescott Infant](#)

[Earley St Peter's Primary](#)

[Oaklands Junior](#)

[Westende Junior](#)

[Hatch Ride Primary](#)

[Shinfield Infant/Nursery](#)

18. Applying to schools direct – Secondary Schools

The following schools administer their own in year admissions and will want applications direct, so please refer to the school's website to apply for a place at the school or to view the school's admission arrangements:

[The Emmbrook School](#)

[Oakbank Secondary School](#)

[Waingels College](#)

[Bohunt School](#)

[St Crispins School](#)

[Forest School](#)

[The Piggott School](#)

19. Applying for Looked after and previously looked after children

If you are making an application for a previously looked after child who was in state care outside of England and ceased to be so as a result of being adopted, you will need to include with your application, evidence of the following:

- that your child has been adopted and;
- that your child was previously in state care outside of England (in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society) immediately before being adopted.

Evidence must be sent to the Admissions Team as priority cannot be given without it. The applicant should note, that by applying under Criterion A they understand that Wokingham Borough Council School Admissions Team may obtain

additional confirmation of the child's 'Looked After'/'Previously Looked After' status, either via the Local Authority where the child was taken into , or the residential authorities' duty/triage/social care department.

20. Applying on Serious medical, physical, psychological, or social needs

You can request priority for a place at your preferred school if your child or a family member living at the same address has an exceptional medical and/or social need that makes attendance at a particular school essential. **Please note not all schools consider medical or social needs in their oversubscription criteria so you will need to refer to each school's admissions policy for more information.**

The application will be considered by the relevant admission authority.

'Medical need' does not include mild medical conditions, such as asthma or allergies. 'Social need' does not include a parent's wish that a child attends the school because of a child's aptitude or because their friends attend the school or because of routine child-minding arrangements.

You MUST tick the appropriate box on the application form to show that you wish your application to be considered on medical and/or social grounds.

Submit supporting evidence from a professional, such as a doctor and/or consultant for medical need or a social worker, health visitor, housing officer, the police or probation officer for social need. The supporting evidence must confirm the child or family's medical and/or social need and set out why that need makes it essential that your child attends the named school rather than any other.

Providing evidence does not guarantee priority at the preferred school. Decisions will be made based on the merits of each case and whether the evidence demonstrates that a placement should be made at a particular school above any other.

21. Parent or carer details

The application should be made by the parent who the child normally lives with and who has parental responsibility for the child (this means legal responsibility for making decisions about the child's welfare, education and so on).

22. Private fostering arrangements

If you are looking after someone else's child, this could be a private fostering arrangement and the Local Authority need to be notified.

Private fostering is an arrangement made by the child or young person's parent or guardian and not the Local Authority.

Private fostering is when a child or young person under the age of 16 (18 if the young person has a disability) is looked after for 28 days or more by someone who is not a close relative, guardian, grandparent, uncle, auntie, brother, sister and step-relatives.

The Council has a duty to assess and monitor arrangements to make sure the child is safe, and their needs are being met. There is a legal obligation that you and /or the parent notify the Local Authority of this arrangement

23. Misleading Applications

We are required to make sure that applications are genuine. If your child moves into the home of a friend or relative during the process, or you provide an alternative address as a deliberate device to improve your child's priority for a school place, or other details are provided on the application form which prove to be untrue – this may be considered a misleading application. If we have allocated a place and discover that the information is false, we may withdraw the school place offer for the child, even if the child has already started at the school.

24. Siblings

If you apply for admission and one of your children already attends a school, you must make sure you name the siblings on the application, for it to be considered under the appropriate category. Failure to do so may result in your application being ranked in the wrong category.

We define siblings as brothers or sisters living in the same house as their primary place of residence. This includes half, step and foster brothers or sisters at the same address, but does not include full, half, step and foster- brothers or sisters living at different addresses as their single permanent home address.

A sibling link is where your preference is considered under a higher priority for a school place than applicants who do not have a sibling who will be on roll at your preferred school at the time of admission.

For most schools, siblings are considered after children who are resident in a school's catchment area and so will not always be successful in obtaining a place.

Having children of similar ages at two different schools can be difficult. Some parents/carers find that they are successful in obtaining a place for their eldest child but are unsuccessful for their younger children in future years.

If you obtain a place for one of your children at a school, this does not mean that places can be guaranteed for their siblings either currently or at a later date.

25. Twins and Multiple Births

Where the parent has made the same preferences of school and, through the normal operation of the admission arrangements, the last available place has been allocated to one twin or child from a multiple birth, the other twin or

children from the multiple birth will be offered a place at the school. In such circumstances, both the published admissions number and the infant class size limit would be exceeded. The other sibling(s) would remain as exceptions to the Infant Class Size Legislation for the time they are in an infant class or until the number in the year group falls back to the PAN

26. Evidence required to support an application

If the reason for applying for your child's school place requires you to submit supporting evidence, you should only apply when you can provide the necessary documents. If you are eligible to apply but cannot provide the evidence, please do not submit an application. You should email the School Admissions team explaining why the evidence cannot be provided. Please email schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk

The application will not be accepted if you apply but do not provide the required documents.

The evidence should name the parent/carer applying for admission

Where you use an address in an application, we may request further proof from you that your child is ordinarily resident at the stated address. We will request to see both entry and exit proof when we query your address.

Buying a new home

- A solicitor's letter confirming exchange of contracts
- If purchasing a new build, in addition to the above, provide evidence that the family will be living there before the child's expected start date, for example, a letter from the developer confirming a build completion date. Documents evidencing the ownership or purchase of a plot of land will not be accepted.

- A copy of the applicants updated driving license, proof of registration at the local Drs/Dental surgery; Letters addressed to the applicant at this address; utility bills; banks statements (financial details redacted), etc. Please note supplying only utility bills is not sufficient, as maintaining a house is not proof of occupation.

Renting a property

- Signed tenancy agreement, usually for a period of 12 months or more (the period of the tenancy must extend beyond the date of the child's admission)
- A copy of the applicants updated driving license, proof of registration at the local Drs/Dental surgery; Letters addressed to the applicant at this address; utility bills; banks statements (financial details redacted), etc. Please note supplying only utility bills is not sufficient, as maintaining a house is not proof of occupation.

Returning to owned property

- Evidence of ownership of the property, i.e., the current financial year's council tax letter or recent utility bills (gas, water, electric)
- Date of intended move and evidence that the property is available to move into, for example, a signed tenancy agreement showing the end date of the tenancy
- A copy of the applicants updated driving license, proof of registration at the local Drs/Dental surgery; Letters addressed to the applicant at this address; utility bills; banks statements (financial details redacted), etc. Please note supplying only utility bills is not sufficient, as maintaining a house is not proof of occupation.
- If you are a member of the armed forces and are subject to a posting or marching out order, please provide a copy of this order.

Places can only be allocated once proof of residence has been provided.

New to the country - foreign national children and children resident outside England

In-Year applications will not be considered any earlier than 6 weeks before an anticipated move to the United Kingdom. The following should be provided when submitting an application.

- Copy of child's Passport. You only need to provide the picture page. This is required to check the child's details so an education record can be created on our system.

27. What happens after you have applied

We will contact you to confirm the result of your application. If you have been refused a school place, we will explain the options available.

How long does the school application process take?

Once an in-year application is submitted to us, the schools we manage in-year admissions for work to the following timescales:

- Up to 10 working school days for us to respond to the application and check where capacity is available once all the required information has been provided, such as passports or visas
- The school will confirm the start date with you
- In complex cases another 10 working school days may be required if the case needs to be taken to the Fair Access Panel to source a place for your child. The panel makes sure children who are having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, are allocated a school place as quickly as possible, minimising the time your child is out of school. If a child is placed via the panel route, then the child should be offered a start date within seven school working days

All applications will be processed as quickly as possible, but we need this time to work with schools to ensure there's enough space, equipment and staff to welcome new children into the classes.

If you are applying for your child to attend school in years 5, 6, 7, 8 or 9, your application may need to be processed via Fair Access due to a lack of school places in these year groups. You will be notified if your case is going to fair access.

28. Waiting lists

If you're not offered the school, you listed as your first preference you will automatically be added to the waiting list for any schools you listed as a higher preference. If we can offer you a place from the waiting list at a school, you listed as a higher preference we will allocate this school to you. In this instance we will remove the place we originally offered you. Please note that we will not contact you in advance of doing this.

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

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.

Waiting lists are closed at the end of each academic year and you will need to re-apply from 5th June onwards in order to remain on the waitlist for any preferred schools.

Voluntary aided and Academy schools may have different arrangements for their waiting lists. Please check with the appropriate school.

29. Confirming acceptance of the school offer

You will receive the outcome to your application via email or post. You will not receive an outcome to your In Year application via the parent portal. The offer letter will inform parents that they are required to accept or decline the place offered within 14 days from the date of the letter. Failure to accept the place offered will result in one further written reminder and failure to respond within the required timescale will result in the offer being withdrawn.

Any offer of a school place will be made to start during the current half-term or during the next half-term. Failure to start within this timescale will result in the offer of a school place being withdrawn.

The letter of offer will specifically request parents to advise the School Admissions Team if the place is not being accepted for any reason. If the child is living in the Wokingham borough and the parent is not accepting the offered place, they should advise what alternative arrangement has been made for the child.

30. Making further applications

If you are unhappy with the school at which a place has been provisionally offered for your child, you need to email the admissions team regarding amending your preference list.

Your child's waiting list position at your preferred schools, or the outcome of an appeal that you decide to make, will not be affected by your child having an alternative school place.

31. Fair Access

The purpose of Fair Access Protocols is to ensure that, outside the normal admissions round, unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are found and offered a place quickly, so that the amount of time any child is out of school is kept to the minimum. When vulnerable and/or hard to place children from groups specified by the Department of Education are having difficulty in securing a school place in-year and it is demonstrated that reasonable measures have been taken to secure a place through the usual in-year admission procedures, then the Council must process these children through a local agreement called a **Fair Access Protocol (FAP)**.

The operation of Fair Access Protocols is outside the main admission rounds and is triggered when it has been determined that a school placement cannot be made under the in-year admission procedures.

To consider the criteria to trigger a Fair Access Placement, legislation that applies to admissions must firstly be taken into account. As set out in guidance issued by the DfE (July 2021), Fair Access Protocols must not be used to circumvent the normal in-year admissions process.

All schools are highly experienced in dealing with children that may present a specific need, whether that be medical, physical, educational, emotional and/or behavioural. The majority of primary & secondary in-year applications are processed quickly and children are placed in a school as soon as possible, including those with a specific need. Referrals for a Fair Access Placement will only apply to applicants that meet the fair access protocol criteria, and this will be determined by the Local Authority.

Fair Access Protocols do not apply to all children seeking a school place. The Protocol can only be applied to the placement of children in prescribed groups and where a place cannot be secured via the standard in year admissions process.

Parents/carers cannot apply for a fair access application, cases are determined by the admissions authority.

There is no duty for local authorities or admission authorities to comply with parental preference when allocating places through the Fair Access Protocol.

32. School Place Appeals

When you apply for a school place for your child you will have listed up to four preferences. Officers from the Admissions Team in the Admission Authority will have allocated a place using the Authority's admission criteria. If your child has not been offered a place at the school of your preference you have the right to appeal against the Admission Authority's decision.

Appeals can be made in relation to any school year group up to and including the age of 18. The law gives you the opportunity to put your case to an Independent Appeal Panel known as the IAP, whose decision is made independently of the Admission Authority.

The appeal hearing is your chance to put your side of the argument – to have your say. Section 86, of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 allows you to express a preference, and give reasons for that preference, regarding the school you would like your child to attend.

However, you do not have an absolute right to choose a school because the law states that the Admission Authority need not meet your preference if the Year Group has reached its Admission Number and, as a result, compliance with your preference would “prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources”.

This means that, for example, the school would have trouble in accommodating an extra child in the classroom because of space or the number of desks or computers available, or that there would be Health and Safety issues in play areas, science laboratories, or technical areas.

Appeals are a legal process, and some families can find this a stressful experience. Therefore, before starting the appeals process, you should consider the alternatives:

- Accept the school place you have been offered If you are a Wokingham resident, you will have been offered a school place. Accepting this place will guarantee that your child can start school, even if no places become available at your preferred school. This will not affect your right to submit an appeal or your child's current position on a waiting list.
- Remain on the waiting list for your preferred schools. Your child's name will automatically be added to any waiting list where your application has been unsuccessful. When a place becomes available, it will be offered to the child who is at the top of this list at that time. The waiting list is ordered in accordance with each school's admissions policy.
- Apply for an alternative school. If you wish to apply for a school that was not on your original application, you can do this by contacting the admissions team schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk

For detailed information about the appeals process and how to submit an appeal please read our parents' guide to school admissions appeals.

If you wish to appeal for one of the following schools, please contact the school directly as the Local Authority does not manage the appeals process for these schools.

Alder Grove Primary School

**All Saints Church of England Aided
Primary School**

Beechwood

Bohunt Wokingham School

Coombes Primary School

Crazies Hill Primary

Earley St Peter's

Emmbrook Secondary School

**Finchampstead Church of England
Aided Primary School**

**Grazeley Parochial Church of
England Aided Primary School**

Hatch Ride Primary

Keep Hatch Primary School

Maiden Erlegh (Wokingham)

Nine Mile Ride Primary School

Oakbank Secondary School

Oaklands Infant School

Oaklands Junior School

**Polehampton C of E Infant & Junior
Schools**

Shinfield Infant and Nursery School

Shinfield St Mary's Junior School

Sonning Church of England

St Crispin's School

St Nicholas Primary School

St Sebastian's

The Emmbrook Secondary School

Waingels College

Westcott Infant School

Westende Junior School

33. Home to School Travel Assistance

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children regularly attend school. This includes making any necessary travel arrangements, except where there is a duty on the local authority to do so.

The Council is committed to promoting children and young people's independence, social, and life skills essential for their preparation for adulthood. These goals underpin our Home to School Travel Assistance Policy because, where possible, children and young people, including those with special educational needs and/or disability, will be encouraged and supported to travel independently.

Our Service

The Home to School Transport Service is part of the Community Transport Unit within the council, that is responsible for running a smooth and effective transport service to the highest possible standards. We are your first point of contact for anything related to your child's transport.

For more detailed information regarding school transport and eligibility please refer to Wokingham Council's full travel assistance policy, found on our website

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-information-and-services/school-and-college-transport/>

You are strongly encouraged to read the travel assistance policy before making a school place application.

Applications for Home to School Travel Assistance can be found on our website:

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-information-and-services/school-and-college-transport/>

34. Eligibility for Travel Assistance

Statutory Walking Distances

The Council has a duty to provide Travel Assistance for children whose homes are outside the statutory walking distance to the nearest suitable school, which is:

- More than 2 miles (if the child is below the age of 8) or
- More than 3 miles (if the child or young person is aged 8 to 16)

Extended Rights

There are some additional rights to travel assistance for children aged 8 and over if they are eligible for free school meals, or a parent with whom they live receive maximum Working Tax Credits. Travel assistance may be considered in the following circumstances:

- If they are aged 8 to 10 years, attend their nearest suitable school and it is more than 2 miles from their home; or
- If they are aged **11 to 16 years**, and attend one of their three nearest suitable schools which is between 2 and 6 miles from their home; **or**
- If they are aged 11 to 16 years, attend a school that is between 2 and 15 miles from their home that their parents/carers have chosen on the grounds of their religion or belief and, having regard to that religion or belief, there is no suitable school nearer to their home.

The introduction of Universal Credit has not changed the way eligibility for extended rights to home to school transport is determined. It will remain the case that children will be eligible for extended rights if they meet the criteria set out above.

If a parent is struggling through financial hardship to get a child to school, then they should contact the Council so that they can be signposted to possible sources of additional help.

A nearest suitable school

The nearest suitable school for transport purposes means physically, the nearest qualifying school the pupil is eligible to attend where there is an available place that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child, and any SEND that the child may have. This may include schools in neighboring Borough's such as Reading, Bracknell and Hampshire for example.

Qualifying Schools

Qualifying schools are all types of schools or other educational establishment that are state-funded, namely:

- Community, foundation or voluntary schools;
- Community or foundation special schools;
- Non-maintained special schools including residential (where deemed appropriate);
- Pupil referral units; and
- Academies, including free schools and University Technical Colleges (UTC).

When a child cannot be offered a place at the nearest school to the home address, the Council will, subject to the criteria set within the transport policy and the qualifying distance being met, provide transport to the **next nearest Wokingham**

school with space to admit. **For transport to be provided in this instance the parent must provide evidence that they have applied for and been refused a place at the school which is the nearest school for their home address and any other schools closer than the school offering admission. This includes schools in neighbouring boroughs.**

For pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities an independent school can also be a qualifying school where this is named on the child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan), or where it is the nearest of two or more schools named.

IMPORTANT - If you do not name the nearest suitable schools in your original school place application, your child is unlikely to be eligible for travel assistance. The nearest school may not be a Wokingham school or your catchment/designated area school. Please check if a school in a neighboring Local Authority is a closer school to your home address if transport is an important factor in getting our child to school.

You can name four schools on your application in order of preference. It is strongly recommended that you use all four preferences, and that you name all of your nearest schools.

If you only apply to one school, you will only be considered for that school. You may then be allocated a school that is not one of your preferences, that is further from your home address and to which you may not be entitled to travel assistance should your preference be unsuccessful.

Parental Preference

The Council has no statutory duty to provide travel assistance if a child is attending a school on parental preference grounds. This means the schools applied for are not the nearest schools, or one of the 3 nearest eligible schools in the case of extended criteria (low income). **In cases of parental preference, parents/carers are responsible for making their own travel arrangements.**

The Council will not approve applications for travel assistance following a parent's decision to change schools (even if the decision is supported/encourage by the existing or receiving school) unless:

- The school they transfer to is the nearest school and the standard eligibility criteria are met.

Please note, the relevant educational setting in relation to an eligible child will be either a qualifying school or the place, other than a school, where they are receiving education.

Children below statutory school age

There is no statutory duty to provide Travel Assistance for those under the age of 5.

- **Travel assistance will not be provided for the following journeys:**
 - ✕ Journeys to and from breakfast or after school clubs
 - ✕ Trips and journeys during the school day which are in the curriculum.
 - ✕ To or from a venue that isn't the normal home address, for example the address of a childcare provider or a short break placement (unless there is a legal order in place, or a statutory care plan agreed by us)
 - ✕ If a child is unwell and has to be collected from school during a school day
 - ✕ If a child is excluded during a school day
 - ✕ For medical appointments or other approved activities which affect the start or end of and during the school day
 - ✕ If a child has missed the contracted transport
 - ✕ For transitional/integration placements in schools/colleges

- ✖ For attendance at work experience programmes
- ✖ If a child is withdrawn from school by their family and placed in an alternative education setting
- ✖ To fall in line with other family members travelling in the same/similar direction
- ✖ Work commitments or domestic difficulties of families including taking other children to school or an allocated pick-up point
- ✖ Where parents/carers are unwilling, or unavailable to escort their child to school or an allocated pick-up point.
- ✖ A family being unable to transport their child to school only on the sole grounds that they are a single parent family.
- ✖ Children in temporary care, including foster care (these cases should be referred to the children's social care team to consider available support)
- ✖ An inability to afford existing transport arrangement, e.g. Resulting from loss of employment
- ✖ Family breakdown and fragmentation.
- ✖ Long-term or temporary medical conditions without sufficient medical evidence from an appropriate medical professional