



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Your Guide To Secondary School Admissions For Entry In September 2024

Application Deadline: 31st October 2023

Apply online, via the Council's [Citizen Portal](#)



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Key Dates at a glance

Admissions Round	Secondary Year 6 into Year 7
Birth range	01/09/12 - 31/08/13
Website opens and you can apply online	12 th September 2023
Closing date for applications	31 st October 2023
Deadline for house moves and additional supporting evidence	31 st December 2023
National Offer Day & Notifications sent	1 st March 2024
Acceptances and refusals of any offer should be made by this date	15 th March 2024
Waiting list information available	16 th March 2024
Any appeal should be received by this date. (20 school days following notification that application was unsuccessful)	29 th March 2024
Appeals received on-time should be considered by this date (<i>40 school days</i>)	15 th June 2024

1. When will your child move to Secondary School

If your child was born between 1 September 2012 and 31 August 2013, you will need to apply for your child to start secondary school in September 2024.

The age to which all young people in England must continue in education or training has been set by the Government. This is not the same as the statutory school leaving age, which remains at 16.

Pupils starting Year 11 or below will need to continue in education until at least their 18th birthday. This does not necessarily mean staying in school, it could be through:

- Full-time study in a school, college or with a training provider.
- Full-time work or volunteering combined with part-time education or training.
- An apprenticeship, traineeship or supported internship.

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

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), you should not complete the application form as your child's school placement will be dealt with by the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Team. To contact the SEND Team please email SENDSchoolAge@Wokingham.gov.uk

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 Your application will be withdrawn if an EHCP is subsequently agreed.

3. When to submit a school place application

You can submit your school place application between 12th September 2023 and 31st October 2023 via the [Council's Citizen Portal](#).

4. Who to apply to for a school place

You must apply to your home local authority, (the council you pay your council tax to). You can apply either online or by using a paper application form. Either way you apply you can name up to four preferences. You must name any school you wish to apply for regardless of which LA it is in.

You can only make one application. For example, if you live within Wokingham but want to apply for a school in Reading or Bracknell, you must name the school on your Wokingham application form. This means if you are a Wokingham resident you will need to apply to Wokingham Borough Council and must name any school that you wish to apply for, even if it is within another Local Authority.

You cannot list independent/ private schools on your application form. These are fee paying schools and you must apply to the school directly.

You cannot apply direct to other local authorities or schools. It is your responsibility to contact other admissions authorities to obtain information about their schools and the criteria that is relevant to admission at that school and to complete any additional forms that may be required.

Wokingham Borough residents should make applications to Wokingham Borough Council online, via the [Council's Citizen Portal](#) known as the Common Application Form (CAF).

5. 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. **Bulmershe Secondary School is due to become an academy on 1st October 2023**

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.**

6. Which schools to apply for

You can apply for a secondary school place at any maintained or academy (non-fee paying) mainstream school on your home authority's online system, as long you are applying for the school's natural year of entry. **This is year 7 for secondary schools.**

If you live near the Borough boundary, you may wish to consider applying for schools in neighbouring authority areas such as Reading or Bracknell, as they may have schools closer to your home address. You will still need to make your application through Wokingham Borough Council.

If you are submitting preferences for schools outside of Wokingham, it is essential that you also contact the Local Authority who maintains the school you are applying for, to check their closing date, supplementary information form and identification document requirements.

If you submit invalid preferences, such as an independent school or a school where the year group you are applying for is not the natural year of entry, these preferences will be discarded, and you may not be offered the opportunity to name other schools in their place.

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 getting your child to and from school may be an issue for you.

7. 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 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.

8. Catchment/Designated area

This is sometimes called “Designated Area”. In essence, it is a geographical area from 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.

Most schools have catchment area children as a high criterion. Children living within a school’s catchment area are ranked as a high priority for a place. There is, however, 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.

9. 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. Distances of proximity vary every year and you should consider using all four preferences, including local schools which have consistently reached your address in past allocations.

It is essential that you look at how places were allocated at Wokingham Secondary Schools over the last few years. Click on the links below to find out how places were allocated in 2023, 2022 and 2021.

- Secondary school allocation summary 2023 (PDF document)
- Secondary school allocation summary 2022 (PDF document)
- Secondary school allocation summary 2021 (PDF document)

If your nearest school is outside of Wokingham, you are strongly advised to check how places were allocated in previous years. For details of the number of applications received for Bracknell Forest and Reading Schools and how these were ranked against the relevant admissions criteria, please follow the links below;

- Bracknell Forest Schools
- Reading Borough Schools

Although you are not limited to designated area schools when listing your preferences, admissions priority is usually given to those pupils who apply for their designated area school. **However, living in the designated area does not guarantee you a place at the school if the school is oversubscribed.**

Important - You must list the schools in the order that you prefer them, including any out of borough schools. Please make full use of your opportunity to list more than one school on your application to avoid disappointment.

You are NOT guaranteed a place at a school if you only list one option. If you do not meet the admissions criteria or the school is oversubscribed, we will offer you a place at the nearest appropriate school with vacancies. This may not be your most local school. Do not name the same school more than once; it will only be considered as one preference.

You can [find and compare schools on GOV.UK.](https://www.gov.uk/find-compare)

If you would like to view the report of an Ofsted school inspection, these are available to view online on the individual school's website and on the [Ofsted website](#).

10. Completing your application

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

You are strongly encouraged to use the online portal to submit an application. If you apply online, you will be sent an email advising you of the result of your application. After you receive this email, you will be able to log onto the parent portal to view your application result and accept or decline your offer of school place online.

If you apply using a paper application form, you will be sent the result of your application by Royal Mail. Parents who submit an on-time paper application form will have their offer letter posted **on** National Offer Day. We are unable to give results out over the telephone. Any documents or applications posted to School Admissions may be delayed in being received. Wherever possible all applications should be submitted online, and documents scanned to schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk

Child's details

Child's name and address: This should be your child's legal name and the address at which they live permanently. Where a child lives with separated parents with shared responsibility, parents must decide which address to use for the allocation process. The admissions team will determine if an address can be used based on information received and information held on record.

You must not use the address of a relative or childminder. If you have moved or are about to move house, you must send us proof of your child's permanent address.

School preferences

Name up to **FOUR** schools in order of preference. Make sure that your first preference is the school you most want for your child, as this is the one, we will try to offer you where possible. You must not name independent (private) schools on your application. Instead, you should apply directly to these schools.

Order of preference

You should think carefully about your order of preference when you decide how to list the schools for which you are applying. This is because if your child qualifies for a place at several schools, you will only be made one offer to the school with the highest preference for which your child is eligible. Any offers to a lower preferred school will be automatically withdrawn to ensure each child only receives one offer.

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, by 15 January 2024. This letter will need to explain why the school is the **only** school to meet your child's needs and why no other school could provide the appropriate support.

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. Please give details of the youngest brother or sister who is already attending the school (not the nursery) that you want (or attending the linked junior school) and who will still be at the school in September 2024. Include stepbrothers, stepsisters or fostered or adopted children living at the same address as your child.

Looked after and previously looked after children

Only fill in this section if your child is in public care (also known as a 'looked after child') or was previously looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (in accordance with the Adoption and Children Act 2002) or became subject to a child arrangements or special guardianship order (in accordance with the Children Act 1989).

Applications for looked after children must be completed by the designated social worker.

If you are making an application for a previously looked after child, who immediately after being in care became subject to an adoption order, child arrangements order or special guardianship order, you will need to attach to your application one of the following pieces of evidence:

- **Special guardianship order** – This order appoints one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian(s). Refer to [Section 14A of the Children Act 1989](#).
- **Child arrangements order** – This order settles the arrangements of the person the child is to live with. Refer to [Section 8 of the Children Act 1989](#), as amended by [Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014](#). Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.
- **Adoption order** – Refer to [Section 46 of the Adoption and Children act 2002](#) or [Section 12 of the 1976 Adoption Act](#).

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 by the deadline for evidence. Send the whole document, 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.

Serious medical, physical, psychological, or social need

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 that some own admission authority schools do not have medical/social reasons within their oversubscription criteria. These schools will not be able to consider medical/social need when ranking school place applications.**

'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 by the application deadline, 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.

Send your evidence to the [Admissions Team](#). All information submitted will be regarded as confidential.

Your child or family member's exceptional medical and/or social need cannot be considered if you do not tick the appropriate box on the application form and submit supporting application by the application deadline.

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.

Private fostering arrangements

If you are looking after someone else's child, this could be a private fostering arrangement and the Local Authority must 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, aunt, brother, sister or step-relative.

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.

Parent and carer declaration

When making your application you will sign a declaration to confirm that you have read the guide and understand your responsibilities as the applicant.

You will also confirm that you have parental responsibility for your child and that you have the agreement of all people with parental responsibility to make your application, or there is a court order allowing your application. It is not appropriate for the council to become

involved in private disputes with parents or carers. You should attempt to resolve the matter of school preference between yourselves and inform us in writing, or through the family court by way of a specific issue order. Any applications subject to a dispute will not be processed until agreement can be reached, and this may affect your child's chance of being allocated a place at a preferred school or result in an offer being withdrawn. **Please read through the checklist carefully and ensure you read the declaration before submitting your application by the closing date.**

11. The preference system when applying for secondary school places

You are offered one school place on national offer day. If your child qualifies for a place at more than one school on your list, we will offer you a place at the school that you have placed highest on your list of preferences.

If we can't offer you a place at one of the schools you applied for, we will offer you a place at your nearest Wokingham school that has places available.

Equal preference (This is how school places are allocated) – How it works

1. You can name up to FOUR schools on your application, in order of preference.
2. Your child is added to a list for each of the schools you have named. Each schools list is then ranked in accordance with the published admission criteria for that school to determine whether they are able to offer a place.
3. If only one of your preferred schools can offer a place, you will be allocated a place at that school.
4. If your child qualifies for a place at more than one school, the one ranked highest on your application will be allocated.
5. If none of your preferred schools can offer a place, you will be allocated a place at the catchment school (if places remain) or the nearest school (measured as a straight line) with a place available. You will also be advised of the arrangements for placing your child on the waiting list and your right of appeal.

12. School admission rules

If a school does not have enough places for everyone who applies, the admission rules for that school will be used to decide who will get a place. Every school has a set of rules, known as the 'admissions arrangements' or 'oversubscription' criteria. Schools that are oversubscribed will follow these rules when allocating places.

All Secondary schools in Wokingham set their own admissions criteria, but applications for these schools should still be made to Wokingham Borough School Admissions Service using the [Parent Portal](#). Please click on the school details below to be taken to their website for further information about each school and to view their oversubscription criteria.

***Bulmershe School at the time of writing this guide is still a Local Authority Maintained School but is in the process of becoming an academy. It is expected to become an academy in the autumn term of 2023 at which point this guide will be updated.**

Own admission authority schools

School details	Places available In 2024	Last place allocated
Bohunt	240	Oversubscribed - The last child allocated lived 1.969 miles from the school
*Bulmershe	240	Oversubscribed - The last child allocated lived 2.106 miles from the school
The Emmbrook	210	Oversubscribed - The last child allocated lived 5.667 miles from the school
The Forest School (Boys only)	210	Undersubscribed - All preferences met
The Holt (Girls only)	240	Oversubscribed - The last child allocated lived 1.847 miles from the school
Maiden Erlegh	279	Oversubscribed - The last child allocated lived 0.784 miles from the school
Oakbank	112	Oversubscribed - The last child allocated lived 3.982 miles from the school
The Piggott	206	Oversubscribed - The last child allocated lived 3.583 miles from the school
St Crispins	200	Oversubscribed - The last child allocated lived 2.771 miles from the school
Waingels College	240	Oversubscribed - All preferences met

13. 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.

14. Supplementary Information Forms (SIF)

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' 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.

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.

➤ [The Emmbrook School](#)

➤ [St Crispin's](#)

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.

15. Change of preference

If an older child transfers to another school after 31 December 2023 and you need to change your younger child's school preferences because of this, you should contact Admissions Services: schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk

Please be mindful that the ability to make vital amendments will be dependent on the stage of the process. Depending on when your older child transfers, it may be possible to change your school preferences.

If any medical or social circumstances within the family change after 31 December 2023 that means that you feel your child would need a place at a particular school, please contact the Admissions Team schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk.

If you live outside of Wokingham, you must complete and submit your application to the borough where you live. Unless the academy school states otherwise, some academy or out of borough schools prefer evidence to be submitted to the school or their local authority directly. Please be aware they may also have their own published deadline for this.

16. Applying after the closing date

Any applications received after 31 October 2023 will be considered as a late application. However, we may consider applications as on time, under exceptional circumstances, and when evidence is provided to support this. Our ability to accept late applications, with extenuating circumstances, as on time, is time sensitive in view of the processes involved. You can apply by downloading an application form from our website [Starting and applying for secondary school - age 11](#) and emailing the completed form to schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk

17. Proof of residence

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.

Entry proof will include, signed tenancies, posting orders, proof of exchange, and documents showing you have registered your property for the purposes of taxes, the electoral roll and with other relevant government agencies – for example your driving licence.

Exit proofs include any relevant documentation pertaining to the disposal of your previous address and include, for example, signed tenancies and proof of exchange. Additional information may be requested at any time. We also require satisfactory details of the ownership, tenancy, and disposal of any previous addresses. If we require any proof of residence, we will contact you to request it before we can continue with your application.

If you are already resident at an address, please provide some suitable proof such as a copy of the current financial year's council tax statement. When you apply online you may be asked to enter your Council Tax Reference for this purpose. If you are moving to a new address and renting, a full copy of your new tenancy agreement, signed by yourself for a minimum duration of 12 months. For a 6-month tenancy we ask for written confirmation from your landlord that they will not issue a 12-month tenancy agreement and the reason(s)

why or confirmation that it is a 6-month rolling tenancy with the expectation that you will be in the property for longer than 6 months. Short term tenancies may not be accepted.

If you are moving to a new address and purchasing a property, please provide a letter or email direct from your solicitor. This must be on exchange of contracts and include the date of completion.

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.

18. Changing your address

If you move address before 31 December 2023, you must notify us in writing by emailing schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk. You can also make changes to the schools you wish to apply to.

If moving to or within the Wokingham Borough, address evidence received after 31 December 2023 cannot be considered for the initial offer of places. It will be used to communicate the outcome of the application and for waiting list purposes after national offer day where required.

If a child has been allocated a place at a school and then subsequently moves from the address on the application, the Local Authority will revisit the allocation and may remove the place if the child is no longer eligible for the space. At that point any allocation would be subject to availability at that time.

19. Siblings

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 primary place of residence.

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.

20. Measuring home to school distance

We use the Capita ONE system to calculate the distance from your child's home (the start point) to the school (the end point). This system calculates the distance in miles to three decimal places. Please note that you cannot compare distances produced on the local authority's Capita ONE system to those calculated using any personal or online geographical information system software you may have access to such as satellite navigations system or Google maps.

21. National Offer Day

On 1 March 2024 we let our parents know which school has been offered for their child. An email is sent to parents who applied via the Citizen's Portal on the 1 March 2024. Parents who submit an on-time paper application form will have their offer letter posted **on** National Offer Day. Each Local Authority informs their residents of the outcome of their application, even if the result is an out of borough school.

22. Reasons for Refusal School Admissions

If we have not been able to offer your child a place at your preferred school, this is because there were more applications for the school than there were available places and not all requests for places could be met.

Places are allocated in line with the admissions criteria published by the relevant admission authority and your application may not ranked high enough to obtain a place.

If you listed own admissions authority schools (e.g., voluntary aided or academy schools) on your application and this school was listed higher than the school offered, then the trust or the governors of the school were unable to offer a place to your child as your application was not ranked high enough against their admissions criteria.

If you have been refused a school place at a school within another local authority (LA) you should refer to the relevant LA for information regarding refusal.

For late applicants: If we are not able to offer your child a place at your preferred school, this is because the school has reached its admissions number (the maximum number of children that can be admitted to the year group for September 2024) from the initial round of admissions.

23. Waiting Lists

- Your child's name will **automatically** be placed on the waiting list, in criteria order, of any Wokingham school that you named as a higher preference than the school you have been offered.
- If a place becomes available for your child and you accept it, your child will be removed from the waiting list of any schools you named as a lower preference.
- The waiting list will include children new to the area who weren't able to make an application on time.
- Waiting list positions are subject to change as they must be re-ranked each time a new application is received.
- You should be aware that if an application is received for a child who has higher priority under the school's admission criteria, it can affect your child's position on a waiting list. They can move down as well as up the list.
- Your child can remain on more than one waiting list.
- Waiting list positions for Wokingham schools will be available from 16 March 2024 after parental responses, address changes and late applications have been processed. You can request your child's position by sending an email to schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk
- **Wait lists will be closed at the end of a school year (31st August 2025) 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.
- For schools outside of Wokingham, you must check with them direct whether you have been automatically added to their waiting list(s).

24. Confirming acceptance of the school offer

You can accept or decline a school place offer by clicking on the following link. [Accept or decline the school place you've been offered.](#)

All acceptances or refusals of a school place must be made by 15 March 2024

25. 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 at schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk

The Admissions Team will advise you of the outcome of any further school applications you make in May 2024. It is strongly recommended that you secure and accept a place at one of the schools that still have availability.

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.

26. School Place appeals

When you applied 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](#).

27. 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 [School Travel Assistance policy \(opens as a pdf document\)](#).

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/>

28. 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 neighbouring Local Authority is a closer school to your home address, if transport is an important factor in getting your 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.

For the normal school admissions round, unless there are exceptional circumstances, it is generally assumed that each of your nearest schools, **including schools in neighbouring Boroughs**, will have space to accommodate your child. Parents/carers will be expected to have named all four nearest schools on their application, which may include schools in neighboring Boroughs.

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 would not be entitled to travel assistance should your preference be unsuccessful.

For all children, including those with SEND, a child qualifies for travel assistance when they attend the nearest suitable school which meets their needs. **If a parent selects a school which is not their nearest suitable school which meets their child's needs, parents/carers may then be responsible for making their own transport arrangements and all travel costs for the whole time that their child is at that school.**

During the normal school admissions round, if parents/carers choose to apply for a place for their child at a school that is not the nearest school as their first preference and instead apply for another preferred school, then the child will have no transport entitlement to that

preferred school (on the basis that space would have been available at the nearest school at the time of allocation and there would have been a reasonable opportunity to secure a place had parents/carers made this their first preference).

During the normal admissions round, if an application for a place at the nearest school is refused, transport may then be provided to the next nearest school with space, subject to the standard eligibility criteria being met. However, to qualify for transport to the next nearest school with space, parents/carers must have listed their four nearest schools as one of their preferences and been refused a place at those schools.

For children attending a mainstream school who do not have an EHCP, please note free travel assistance will not be provided if you apply for a place at schools which are not the nearest but don't get into those schools and are allocated a place at a school further away because there are no spaces left at the nearest suitable school.

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.

➤ **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