



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Wokingham Borough Council's Admission Arrangements for  
Community and Voluntary Controlled Secondary Schools  
2025/2026 Entry**

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## **Admission Arrangements Community and Voluntary Controlled Secondary**

### **1. Introduction**

This document details the admission arrangements for applications and preferences for community and voluntary controlled schools for whom the Wokingham Borough Council is the admission authority. The admission authority is responsible for determining the school's admissions arrangements (including this document) and deciding who can be offered a place in accordance with it. All Admissions Authorities are required to act in accordance with the Department for Education's School Admissions Code and the relevant legislation and regulations.

Each year admission authorities must determine the criteria that will be used to prioritise applicants if a school is over-subscribed. The criteria for community and voluntary controlled secondary schools are set out in this document along with the definitions of the terms used in the criteria.

This document complies with and operates within the Wokingham Borough Councils Co-ordinated Admissions Schemes and related protocols, including the Wokingham Borough Council's Fair Access Protocol. It is recommended that this document is read alongside the **Coordinated Scheme for Secondary Admissions**.

This document details the oversubscription criteria and definitions for applications and preferences in the normal secondary admissions round. The term '**normal admissions round**' refers to all applications for admission to the main year of entry of the school, which is Year 7 for Secondary Schools.

Advice and information for parent/carers on school admissions, including key information that applies to all applications as well as some frequently asked questions are available in the **Wokingham Borough Guide for Parents** which is available at **Starting secondary school - age 11 - Wokingham Borough Council**. It is recommended that all applicants consider the information in the Guide for Parents before making an application.

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

## 2. Admissions into Secondary School

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

Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances and will only be agreed by a panel of officers from Wokingham Borough Council where there is consensus between the parents, schools concerned (both current and preferred) and any relevant professionals asked for their opinion by the panel, that to do so would be in the pupil's interests. Parents will be informed of their statutory right to appeal. This right does not apply if they are offered a place in another year group at the school.

## 3. Tie Breaker

If there are more applicants within each criterion, radial (straight line) distance from home to school will be used as a tie-breaker and will be measured using the local authority's computerised geographical information system. The Council has a standard method of measuring home to school distance in a straight line using the LLPG (Land and Property Gazetteer) eastings and northings to measure the distance between the address point of the child's home address and the agreed point at the school.

For applicants who live the same distance from the school, random selection by the drawing of lots is used as a final tie-breaker.

If a parent applies for entry into a year group for more than one child, (except for twins and children from multiple births who are an exception to Infant Class Size regulation) and there is more than one child that is measured at the same radial distance to the school, with only one place available, a random selection by the drawing of lots is used as a final tie-breaker to decide which child should have the place. The remaining applicants will be added to the wait list in accordance with the published oversubscription criterion.

**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.

## 4. 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, the PAN would be exceeded.

## 5. Designated Area

The designated area for each community and voluntary controlled school is held electronically and can be viewed through the council's website at **Schools designated areas map**. These electronic maps have been adopted as the definitive descriptions of primary and secondary school designated areas for the purposes of admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria.

Living in the designated area does not guarantee a school place, as there may be more applications from parents living in the designated area than places available.

Most schools have a designated or 'catchment' area which is an integral part of their oversubscription criteria and is used when considering school place offers. However, parents can apply for places at any school suitable for their child even if they do not live in this designated area.

Parent/carers are advised to consider their 'catchment' school when making an application. If the place a child is allocated is at a school which parent/carers are not in the catchment area for, or if they move out of the catchment area they now reside in, then they may have less chance of being successful when applying for any younger siblings.

**The following secondary schools do not have designated areas**

- Forest Secondary School

## 6. Home address

Applications are processed based on the child's single permanent home address living with parent(s) or a carer/legal guardian at the closing date for applications. An address will not be accepted where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a private fostering or formal care arrangement.

Checks will be made to determine whether an address declared on the application form is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. Some residential arrangements will be considered temporary arrangements. The Council will consider the available evidence

to determine if, on the balance of probability, the declared home address is the child's permanent home.

Where the applicant, or their partner or spouse reasonably considered to be living with them as a single-family unit own another property, have previously lived in it, and chose not to live in it (including where a home is rented out to a third party), the owned property will ordinarily be considered to be the permanent home.

Special circumstances that might lead to the declared address being considered as a permanent home despite another home being owned or otherwise available for occupation, will need to be declared at the point of application by parents. Without being exhaustive these might include:

- an owned property being a considerable distance from the preferred school, indicating that the family had permanently relocated to the new home, or
- that the owned property is uninhabitable and cannot reasonably be made habitable in the period leading up to admission to the school or
- that the owned property is in the process of being sold and the family live permanently in the declared property or
- that following divorce or separation the family home cannot be occupied by the applicant or otherwise treated as the child's permanent home.

Where the declared address is rented, and the applicant has no claim on any other property the declared address may be considered to be a temporary address if there is evidence the applicant has chosen to rent the property solely for the period necessary for a child to be admitted to a particular school.

Applicants should note that should any evidence arise after a child has been offered a place or admitted to a school that indicates that the declared home was not a permanent home, the place may be withdrawn, even when a child has started school."

Reference to council tax records will be made to determine a single address for consideration of a place under criteria C or D. It is for the applicant to satisfy the local authority **or own admission authority that** they live at the address stated.

**After allocation, if an applicant moves from the property, they have used in their application to another property which is within or nearer to the designated area of the preferred school; the address of the property they originally owned and declared on application will be the address used for determining their designated area, until sufficient evidence has been received for the new address.**

Applicants will be asked to declare that the address used is expected to be their place of residence beyond the date of the pupil starting school. Applicants are required to advise of any change of circumstance at any time prior to the child starting school. If you do not declare such arrangements, or a different address is used on the application where the child does not usually live; it will be considered that a false declaration has been made and it may be decided to decline to offer a place at a particular school, or to withdraw the offer of a place. In deciding whether a place was allocated based on a misleading or fraudulent application, an admissions panel will consider any supporting evidence giving reasons why the move was necessary prior to the child starting school.

It is important to declare if there is to be a change of address prior to the child starting school. If the applicant already owns a property which is in the process of being sold, we can accept the address of the new property only on submission of the appropriate evidence in support e.g., exchange of contracts letter on both the new property and, where possible, disposal of their current property. **The deadline for submission of evidence to support a move for secondary school applications is 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.** If the move takes place later or evidence is submitted later, the local authority will only be able to consider this information after the initial allocation of places has taken place and treat the new address for waiting list purposes.

## 7. Temporary Addresses

A temporary address cannot **ordinarily** be used to obtain a school place. Temporary addresses will only be considered where evidence is provided of a genuine reason for the move. **Without being exhaustive**, special circumstances that might lead to a temporary address being considered might include:

- A family's principal home is unoccupiable because of fire or flood
- A family does not have access to a permanent or principal home in the borough. This may be because;
  - The family are refugees;
  - They are looked after children;
  - Families have faced eviction

A temporary address will be used until a permanent address is confirmed at which point an application/allocation would be revisited.

The local authority reserves its right to carry out further investigation and require additional evidence and to reject applications or withdraw offers of places, if it believes it has the

grounds to do so. In such cases, the applicant will have recourse to putting their application through the independent appeals process.

## 8. Moving house

If a family moves house before the application deadline, the online application must be amended or a new paper application form submitted, and evidence of the new address sent to the school admissions team. **The deadline for submission of evidence to support a move for secondary school applications is 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.**

If the evidence is sufficient, a new address will be considered for an application. Schools named on an application may also be changed if they are no longer appropriate.

## 9. Address evidence

If moving to or within the Wokingham Borough, evidence **that the family are living in** the new address will be required. Please refer to the list below for the evidence required depending on the type of move.

**If moving to another Local Authority, deadline dates for submission of this evidence may vary.**

**If moving to or within the Wokingham Borough address evidence received after 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 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.**

### 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.
- We may ask for 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)
- We may ask for 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
- We may also ask for 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 the last place of residence falls within a 20-mile radius of the Wokingham Borough, additional evidence will be required to show an address has been fully disposed of. The evidence required will be proof contracts have exchanged or a copy of the end of tenancy arrangements. If neither of these are applicable to your circumstances, please contact the Admissions team for advice.

## 10. Split living arrangements/Shared Care Arrangements

When a child lives with one parent for part of the week and another for the rest of the week only one address will be accepted for a school admission application. This will normally be the one where the child wakes up for the majority of school days (Monday to Friday).

Where shared care arrangements are in place and the child's time is split between two homes it may be necessary to establish the permanent home address for the child. In certain circumstances parents/carers will be asked to write to the LA stating the number of days each week the child spends with them. The LA may ask for evidence of which parent/carer was in receipt of child benefit at the point of application. If the parent/carer is not in receipt of child benefit, the LA will ask for proof of benefit award notices, such as Tax Credit Award Notices

and will ask for evidence of the child's registered address with the GP at the point of application.

The Local Authority (LA) reserves the right to request further proof, to establish the home address, as fits the individual circumstances.

Only one application must be submitted. If more than one application is received, or we are made aware of a dispute between parents, we will place all applications on hold until:

- one joint application is made, signed by all parties; or
- written agreement is provided from both parents; or
- a court order is obtained confirming which parent's application carries precedence

The information provided to determine the home address to be used will be considered by an admissions panel of at least two officers and their decision is final.

## 11. Applicants from abroad

Overseas nationals entering the UK who wish to apply for a state-funded school, must check that they have a right of abode, or the conditions of their visa otherwise permit them to access a state-funded school before making their application.

It is the responsibility of parents to check that they and their children have a right of abode in the UK, or their children have a right, under their visa entry conditions, to study at a state-funded school.

If a child is entitled to access a state funded school, evidence of the move to the area, with an application must be provide. **Please refer to section 9 to find out what evidence is required.**

The address used will be the address where the child is living at the closing date for applications unless evidence is provided that the family is returning to a property that they own in the borough by **31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**. Third party written evidence confirming the details and timing of the relocation will be required. Adjustments will be made to any waiting lists, if the family returns later, prior to the start of school. Further advice on the documentation required can be obtained from the School Admissions Team.

## 12. Returning Crown Servants and Armed Forces Personnel

Families of Crown servants returning from overseas to live in the Wokingham Borough or applicants relocating in the armed forces may apply for a place in advance of their move provided the application is accompanied by an official letter confirming the posting to the UK and the expected relocation date.

If you are applying for your child to start secondary in September 2025 and are relocating to the Wokingham Borough from **elsewhere in England**, you must:

- complete the application form from the local authority where you live
- send a copy of the official MOD, FCO or GCHQ letter declaring your relocation date and future home address, unit postal address or quartering area address to your home authority by the relevant deadline. Your home authority will co-ordinate your application with the local authority for your future address

If you are applying for your child to start secondary in September 2025 and are relocating to the Wokingham Borough from **overseas** you can:

- apply using Wokingham's online application form (paper forms are also available on request)
- send a copy of the official MOD, FCO or GCHQ letter declaring your relocation date and future home address, unit postal address or quartering area address to the Admissions Team by the relevant deadline.

If we receive your application **within** the agreed application dates, and you provide an official letter that declares a relocation date and a Unit Postal address or Quartering area address, then, when considering the application against the oversubscription criteria, we will, where possible allocate the child a place in advance of your family arriving.

If you are applying to move your child at any other time (in-year application) you must:

- complete the in-year application form
- send a copy of the official MOD, FCO or GCHQ letter declaring your relocation date and future home address, unit postal address or quartering area address to the Admissions Team

There is no guarantee that a place will be available at a preferred school. Each application will be considered in line with the school's admissions criteria.

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

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

### **14. Oversubscription Criteria**

Some schools will be oversubscribed – that is where the number of applicants exceeds the relevant admission number or the number of places available. Where this is the case, priority is given to certain categories of children. The oversubscription criteria set out below will be used by the Council as the admission authority to prioritise all applicants who have applied for a place at a community or voluntary controlled school. All preferences will be treated on an equal basis.

**Children with statements of special educational needs or an Education Health and Care Plan that name a school in the statement or plan are required to be admitted to the school that is named. The governing body does not have the right to refuse admission.**

**Within the admission arrangements for all community and voluntary controlled schools, looked after and previously looked after children will receive the top priority for a place.**

## **The Oversubscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled secondary schools are in the following priority order:**

**Criteria A:** Looked after and previously looked after children

Places will first be given to children who are looked after by a local authority and to children who were previously looked after, including children who were previously looked after outside England, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a childcare arrangement order or special guardianship order.

### **Looked after children are;**

- Children who are in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by a local authority in accordance with Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, e.g., fostered or living in a children's home, at the time an application for a school is made; and
- Children who have previously been in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by a local authority in accordance with Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 and who have left that care through adoption, a child arrangements order (in accordance with Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 and as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014) or special guardianship order (in accordance with Section 14A of the Children Act 1989).
- Children who appear (to the local authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A child will be regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. The parent/carer will need to provide evidence to demonstrate that the child was in state care outside of England and left that care as a result of being adopted

**Places will be allocated under this criterion when places are first offered at a school and the local authority may also ask schools to admit over their published admission number at other times under this criterion. (See note 1).**

**Criteria B:** Families who have exceptional medical or social needs as the grounds for their child's admission to a particular school **(See note 2).**

**Criteria C:** Children whose permanent home address is inside the schools' designated area and who has a sibling at the school at the time of application; who is expected to be attending the school when the child will enter the school **(see notes 3 and 4)**

**Criteria D:** Children whose permanent home address is inside the schools' designated area.

**Criteria E:** Children whose permanent home address is outside the schools' designated area and who has a sibling at the school at the time of application; who is expected to be attending the school when the child will enter the school (**see notes 3 and 4**)

**Criteria F:** Other children

## Note 1

**Looked after children** are those who are in the care of a Local Authority or are being provided with accommodation by a local authority in England in the exercise of their social services functions.

**Previously looked after children** are those who immediately after being in care (as defined above) became subject to an adoption order, child arrangements order or special guardianship order. They are also those who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

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 because 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 care, or the residential authorities' duty/triage/social care department**

## Note 2

When submitting an application under criterion B (exceptional medical or social needs as grounds for a child's admittance to a particular school), this must be supported by written evidence from an independent professional aware of the case relating to the child, parent/carer or other children living at the same address (e.g., doctor, hospital consultant or psychologist for medical grounds or registered social or care worker, housing officer, the police or probation officer for social needs). This evidence must be specific to the school in question; it must show why that school is the most suitable; what facilities will benefit the child, and why no other school can offer the same support.

Your application cannot be considered ***under Oversubscription Criterion B*** if you do not declare that you are applying under this criterion, and you do not provide written independent professional evidence. All supporting documentation must be received by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 for consideration prior to the main allocation of places. An admissions panel will consider the supporting evidence provided and will advise the applicant of its decision; the panel's decision is final. Any evidence received by the school admissions team after 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 will not be considered in the main allocation of places but will if agreed by panel; affect the applicant's position on a school's waiting list after offer day.

It should be noted that all schools have the resources to work with special educational needs and common childhood complaints such as asthma or allergies.

## Note 3

Your child will have higher priority if they have an older brother or sister at the school you are applying for. The older child must still be at the school when the younger child starts.

‘Sibling’ refers to brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, stepbrother, or sister, foster brother or sister or the child of the parent/carer’s partner where the child for whom the place is sought, is living in the same family unit at the same address as the sibling. A sibling relation does not apply when the child currently on roll will leave the school before the sibling starts.

It includes children who at the time of application have a sibling for whom the offer of a place at the preferred school has been accepted, even if the sibling is not yet attending.

#### **Note 4**

Occasionally a parent with more than one child can express a preference for their designated area school(s) for the older child, but the local authority is unable to meet this preference. The local authority will then allocate a place at a lower ranked preferred school or the closest available school with places. In this case, the parent may then prefer to send younger sibling(s) to the same school as the older child attends. In such instances, the allocated school may be regarded as if it were the designated area school for subsequent siblings and would be treated as meeting criterion C (sibling resident inside the designated area). This does not apply however if there is a change of preference after an offer of a school place has been made.

Parents must notify the school admissions team at the time of application that they consider this exception applies. Where there is an application for the actual designated area school(s), designated area status would still be applied.

The authority has sought to make the above criteria as objective as possible. However, for category B and any other cases where judgement is needed as to which criteria the application meets, a panel of at least two officers will consider the application and supporting evidence. The panel’s decision and reasons will be recorded, for the purposes of informing the parent and any subsequent appeal.



## **15. Published admission numbers (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, to accommodate any additional pupils. The school needs to consider whether it would require any additional resources to meet pupil 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 to initially 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.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS	PUBLISHED ADMISSION NUMBER
Bohunt School Wokingham *	240*
The Bulmershe (Community School) Due to become an academy in 2024	240
The Emmbrook *	210*
The Forest*	210*
The Holt*	240*
Maiden Erlegh*	278*
Oakbank School*	112*
The Piggott CofE*	206*
St Crispin's *	200*
Waingels College*	240*

**\*Own admission authority schools included for completeness; this is subject to determination by the individual school governing body / academy trust.**

There is no longer a requirement to consult on an increase in admission numbers for individual schools. This table may be amended when admission arrangements are determined.

In some cases, there may be proposals associated with schemes for school expansion which require separate statutory determination. These expansions are subject to separate consultation in parallel with consultation on school admission arrangements. If the school expansions are not approved prior to the determination of the local authority's admission arrangements; the original admission number as stated in this table will be determined, but this may be varied at a later stage (as a permitted variation) to implement the school expansion proposals, if approved. Admission numbers may also be increased by the admission authority after determination where there is due to an unforeseen major change in circumstances.