



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Local Co-ordinated In-year Admissions Scheme for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary and Secondary schools in the Wokingham Borough 2026/2027

**This includes Local co-ordinated in-year admissions
scheme for own admission authority schools where
there is agreement to do so**

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The Co-ordinated In-Year Admissions Scheme

1. Reasons for a co-ordinated scheme

This scheme complies with the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021 and all current legislation regarding school admissions. The scheme is reviewed annually and may be reviewed in the future to ensure it complies with current legislation and practice. The scheme will remain in operation as long as in-year admissions are coordinated by the Council. For the purposes of this scheme, an in-year application is an application which:

- Is submitted for a place at a school in a year group other than the normal year of entry to the school (the normal year of entry is, for example, Reception at an infant or primary school, Year 3 at a junior school or Year 7 at a secondary school); or
- Is submitted outside the normal admissions round for a place in the normal year of entry to a school; or
- Is submitted in the normal admissions round for a place in the normal year of entry to a school but was submitted too late to be determined under the co-ordinated scheme for normal admissions.

More information on applications within the normal admissions rounds can be found in the relevant Wokingham Borough Coordinated Admissions Schemes for Primary, Junior and Secondary admissions.

This document should be read in conjunction with the admissions arrangements for Infant/Primary/Junior Schools and the admission arrangements for Secondary Schools as well as the relevant parent's guides.

2. Aims of a co-ordinated scheme

This scheme is a co-ordinated scheme for in year admission to schools ("the scheme") and it is available to the admission authorities of all mainstream state-funded primary, infant, junior and secondary schools in the Wokingham Borough. Should an admission authority wish to utilise this scheme and have the local Authority co-ordinate in-year admissions to their schools, they should:

- formally request that the council coordinate in-year admissions by no later than 1st August prior to the start of the school year in which they wish for in-year admissions to be so co-ordinated;
- commit to that co-ordination and any processes contained there-in for the duration of the whole school year for which they have requested;
- place information on their websites throughout the whole school year advising interested parent/carers of the process of co-ordination by the Council; and
- not at any time during the school year admit pupils other than through the process of coordination by the Council.

The scheme applies only to 'in-year' applications for a place from Reception to Year 11. Applications for Year 12 or 13 should be made directly to those schools and colleges.

The admission of children with an Education, Health and Care plan are covered by different admission regulations.

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

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

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

For all community and voluntary controlled schools maintained by the Council, the Council is the admission authority. For all foundation and voluntary aided schools maintained by the Council, the school's governing body is the admission authority.

For all academies in the Wokingham Borough, the admission authority is the academy trust, though the trust may in their schemes of delegation, delegate this authority to those individual academies to act as the admission authority.

Wokingham Borough Council as the admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools uses this scheme for the consideration of all in-year applications for school places.

Other local admission authorities may utilise this scheme if they inform the Council that they wish to do so by 1st August at the latest each year. By the same date, for schools that intend to be part of the local authority's in-year co-ordination for the following academic year, they must also provide the local authority with all the information that the local authority is required to publish on its website, including application forms.

Where own admission authority schools do not wish to be part of the Wokingham Borough Council co-ordinated scheme, a single preference common application form will be provided by those schools, for completion by parents, to enable parents to apply direct to their preferred schools.

In line with the School Admissions Code, own admission authority schools – academies and voluntary aided and foundation schools – may choose to not to co-ordinate in-year admissions through the Council and admit pupils separately. However, they must, on receipt of an in-year application, notify the Council of both the application and its outcome as soon as reasonably practicable, but should aim to be within two school days, to allow the Council to keep up to date figures on the availability of places in the area.

The admission authority must also inform parents of their right to appeal against the refusal of a place and note that the provisions of the local Fair Access Protocol do still apply and therefore that admission authority may be referred an application to admit a child by the Council or by the Fair Access Panel.

For the purposes of this scheme, the term “Wokingham Borough Schools” refers to all community, foundation and voluntary schools maintained by the Council and to all academies located in the Wokingham Borough.

4. The Application Form

You can make an application to move from one school to another at any time of year.

Applications will only be considered 6 school weeks in advance of the place being required. For entry to school at the start of term or half term, an application will need to be received by the School Admissions Team, 15 school days in advance of the commencement date.

To apply you will need to create a citizens portal account by following the link below:

➤ [Citizens Portal](#)

Please apply through the above link and complete the online application. If you are unable to apply online, email schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk for details on how to complete a paper application.

When parents/carers apply for a school place they are advised to list **FOUR** schools. The school that they name as their highest preference would normally be the one, they really want.

5. Timing of applications

Applications will be processed no more than 6 school weeks in advance of the date the place is requested for.

Except for Crown service, service families or look-after children any applications received in advance of this will not be processed, and a new application will need to be submitted.

It is our intention that all applications should be processed, and the outcome of the application made within 15 school days from receipt of the application. This is subject to confirmation, if applying for an own admission authority school that a place can be offered, whichever is the latter.

Allocation or refusal letters will be emailed where an email address has been supplied on the application form, or alternatively sent by post.

6. Multiple applications

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

If the Council receives an Application Form from more than one person claiming parental responsibility for the same child, and the content of these applications differ, the Council will inform both applicants. The Council will then not process any preference(s) that differ until the applicants are either in agreement, or until one applicant can show the legal right to have their preference(s) considered over the preference(s) of the other applicant.

No school place will be allocated to the child until a single Application Form is submitted.

Applicants are only permitted to make one application for a place at a given school in a given school year unless there is a significant and material change in their circumstances which directly relates to their reasons for wanting their child to go to a particular school.

7. Preferences

The Application Form allows applicants:

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

Applicants are strongly advised to use all four preferences and name all of their four nearest schools and to include their 'catchment' school. An Applicant's nearest school may not be in the Wokingham Borough and could include schools in neighbouring boroughs. If applicants do not name all of their four nearest schools, this may affect their eligibility for home to school travel assistance. **If parents wish to apply for one of their nearest schools which is located out of the borough; parents should apply direct to that local authority or to the individual school concerned depending on the arrangements in place in that area.**

It should be noted that where parents apply in-year, this means that places are being sought for year groups that have already been allocated during the general transfer rounds.

It is recommended that parents express more than one preference in order to maximise the extent to which preferences can be met. Places cannot be held open for those applicants moving to a school's designated area and there is no guarantee that a place will be available at preferred schools.

It is advisable that parents contact the [School Admissions Team](#) prior to any house move to determine where there are available school places and to verify the designated area of the new home address. It should be noted that the information given is only current on the date we are contacted and is subject to change as applications are received daily or places allocated from waiting lists.

The School Admissions Team will pass on applications and any supporting information provided by the parent for any own admission authority schools **within the scheme** to their governing bodies so that they can make a decision about the application. The governing body should make decisions regarding applications within **five school days of receipt**. The governing body will then inform the School Admissions Team who will advise the offer or refusal on their behalf.

There may be a delay during school holiday periods as the school may not be contactable.

In line with the School Admissions Code, own admission authority schools – academy and voluntary aided schools – may choose to admit pupils separately, but they must, on receipt of an in-year application, notify the local authority of

both the application and its outcome, to allow the local authority to keep up to date figures on the availability of places in the area. If the admission authority chooses to admit a pupil separately, they must inform parents of a decision in writing within 15 school days of an application and also of their right to appeal against the refusal of a place.

Each preference will be considered against the admissions authority's oversubscription criteria if necessary and, where more than a single school place could be offered, the place will be offered for the highest ranked preference.

8. 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.

9. Out of borough applications

Wokingham Borough Council will not accept applications from other local authorities where their resident applies direct to them. Applications must be made direct to Wokingham Borough Council on its in-year application form. Where further information is required to support the application, liaison will take place direct with the parent. Wokingham Borough Council will respond to the parent, in writing, the outcome of their application. If the place is declined, the parent will be advised of their right of appeal. Where parents are moving out of the borough; parents should apply direct to that local authority or to the individual school concerned depending on the arrangements in place in that area.

10. Supplementary Information Forms

Some schools ask you to complete a SIF to provide extra information for the admissions criteria to be looked at fully.

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 (SIF).

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

Primary Schools

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

Secondary Schools

- [St Crispin's](#)
- [Emmbrook](#)

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.

11. 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 PAN 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.

12. 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 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 over-subscription 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 primary schools do not have designated areas

- Beechwood primary School
- Floreat Montague Park primary School
- Keep Hatch primary school
- St Teresa's Catholic primary School
- St Dominic Savio Catholic primary School
- Wheatfield Primary School
- Windmill Primary School

The following secondary schools do not have designated areas

- Forest Secondary School

13. Misleading Applications

Admission authorities have a duty to ensure that school place applications are genuine. Where a child moves into the home of a friend or relative during the application process, or an alternative address is provided with the intention of securing a higher priority for a school place, this may be considered a misleading application. Similarly, if any information provided on the application form is found to be false or misleading, the application may be invalidated.

If a school place has been offered based on false information, the offer may be withdrawn, even if the child has already started attending the school.

14. 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 time of application. 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.

15. 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.

16. Address evidence

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

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 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.

17. Address of Convenience

An address of convenience refers to an address used on an application that is not the child's normal, permanent residence, and is used to gain advantage in the admissions process. The child's home address should reflect where they reside for the majority of the school week and where the person with parental responsibility normally lives.

Each school's admission arrangements include a definition of "home address," which is used to assess applications.

There are no fixed criteria for identifying an address of convenience. Admission authorities will determine, on the balance of probability, whether the address provided is the child's genuine, permanent residence. Examples of situations that may be considered an address of convenience include:

- Use of a relative's address where the child does not permanently reside.
- Temporary residence in a rented property or with relatives while retaining ownership of another property. In such cases, the owned property may be considered the child's home address.
- Applications made from an address where the child does not spend the majority of the school week, in cases of split parental responsibility. A court order should be provided to confirm living arrangements. Where residency is equally split, the school's admission arrangements will specify how the home address will be determined.

18. 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.

19. 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.

The address used will be the address where the child is living at the time of application. Third party written evidence confirming the details and timing of any 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.

20. 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 to move your child in-year 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.

21. Offer of a school place

On receipt of the application, consideration will be given to all school preferences and where potentially a place can be offered at more than one school preference, the single offer will be for the school ranked highest.

The offer of a place in a Wokingham borough school must normally be taken up **within the declared half-term**. Failure to take up the offer of a place during this time will mean that the offer is withdrawn, and the place released. 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.

In accordance with the School Admissions Code, admission will be deferred to the start of a term or half-term for the following categories of in-year admission:

- those that do not require a house move
- those where there is no reasonable need for an immediate move
- those allocated from waiting lists

It is envisaged that children normally would be admitted to school during a school term in the following circumstances only:

- those applying because of a house move i.e., unable to take up a place earlier due to living at a distance from the school
- those applying and unable to take up a place earlier due to ill health or other reasons beyond parents' control
- applications under the Fair Access Protocol

The benefit of moving the admission of children to the start of term or half-term is to minimise the disruption to their own and other children's education.

Places will be offered on the basis of the child's chronological age. Where a child is in a different year group and not already attending a Wokingham Borough maintained school, supporting documentation will be required from the child's current school giving reasons for this for consideration by an admissions panel.

Places can only be allocated to children working outside their normal year group with the consensus of the receiving school.

It is recommended that parents refer to the relevant admissions' authority's literature to understand how places are allocated and the process for handling their application prior to applying for a school place.

There is no guarantee that a place will be available at either a designated or a preferred school.

22. Accepting a school place offer

The offer letter will inform parents that they are required to accept or decline the place offered within **5 days from the date of the letter**. Where an email address is provided the offer letter will be sent via email.

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.

23. Availability of school places

Parents carers applying in-year, means that places are being sought for year groups that have been allocated during the general transfer rounds.

Wokingham Borough schools are popular so it is likely that a preferred school may be full. It is recommended that parents/carers express more than one preference to maximise the extent to which preferences can be met.

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.

Places cannot be held open for those applicants moving to a school's designated area and there is no guarantee that a place will be available at preferred schools.

It is advisable to contact the School Admissions Team prior to any house move to determine where there are school places and to verify the new home address' designated area if this is important to you.

It should be noted that the information given is only current on the date you contact us and is subject to change as applications are received daily and places are allocated from waiting lists.

Designated areas may change through the annual consultation and determination of admission arrangements. As the local authority must, on request, provide information to a parent about the places still available in all schools within its area; all schools within the Wokingham borough are required to advise the School Admissions Team when places become available and the numbers on roll monthly.

Use our Schools designated areas map to find out which designated or 'catchment' area you live in (or to find the designated area of a particular school). Search for an address or postcode using the text box or a location on the map using the 'set location' map pin.

Contact our admission team by email on schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk for full details of nearest local schools and refer to our school admissions pages for admissions guides.

24. 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, in order 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.

The law states that there must not be more than 30 children in an infant class (that is, classes containing reception, year 1 and year 2 children). This applies even if other adults are always present, and/or some children are absent.

25. Appealing a school place

A parent, whose application is rejected, because the school is full in the required year group, has the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel. Information regarding appeals can be viewed at: www.wokingham.gov.uk/admissions, or by contacting the council's Democratic Services team by telephoning: (0118) 974 6059.

Applications will be rejected if the admissions authority considers that admitting another child into an infant class (Key Stage 1) would result in a breach of the infant class legislation.

Parents have the right of appeal against a decision to refuse a place at their preferred school on this basis.

Parents should be aware that this situation could well apply in a number of primary (or infant) schools, particularly where they have an admission number of 30, 45 or 60 and are oversubscribed.

An Appeals Panel, where the admissions authority considers that to admit the child would force it to breach the infant class size, can only allow an appeal if it is satisfied that either:

- the child would have been offered a place if the admission arrangements had been properly implemented or if the arrangements had not been contrary to mandatory provisions in the School Admissions Code and/or
- the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admissions authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

In the event of an unsuccessful appeal against non-admission to a school, the local authority will not consider any further admission, nor is there any automatic

right to a further appeal for admission, within the same academic year (September 1 to August 31) unless there is an exceptional situation resulting in a significant change of circumstances relevant to the application.

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

26. Infant Class Size Appeals

The grounds for allowing an infant class size appeal are extremely restricted and the panel can only allow these appeals on very limited grounds, for example, either the admitting authority has not processed the application correctly or the decision to refuse was completely unreasonable.

Independent appeal panels hearing an infant class size appeal have no power to consider personal reasons such as:

- childcare arrangements
- children attending different schools
- travel or work arrangements
- academic performance
- health and medical grounds (except where this need can only be met by the school you are appealing for, and this claim is supported by professional evidence)

The Panel **must** dismiss cases that are based on these reasons alone.

Please bear this in mind when considering an appeal for reception and years 1 or 2 where there are 30 pupils in the class, or continuing with your hearing, as parents often find it frustrating when they realise the limited powers of the panel.

If you are considering an appeal for these year groups, you are advised to contact either the School Admission Team or the Appeals Office for further information around the law relating to infant class sizes.

27. Waiting lists

Waiting lists will be maintained by the local authority for its schools where necessary, for children who were not offered a school place at a preferred school, until the end of the reception year to fill places that may become available during the school year. No account is taken of the length of time spent on a waiting list.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28. 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 LAs 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](#)
- 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.