



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Your Guide to Moving School part way through the school year
In-Year Applications for the academic year 2025 to 2026



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1. What you need to know before applying

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

- Your child is arriving from overseas
- You have moved to Wokingham from another part of the country
- You are moving to a new address within the Borough
- Your child already attends a school in the Borough, but you wish to transfer your child to another local school

You need to be aware that all schools in Wokingham are heavily oversubscribed. Many year groups in our schools will already be full with local children and it is not always possible to offer children a place at their preferred school during an academic year.

If you are considering moving to Wokingham, there is no guarantee of an immediate school place, and you may be offered a school that is not your preference and not close to your home.

You should also bear in mind that it is not always possible to offer siblings the same school during an academic year. If you have two children or more, they may sometimes be offered different schools if there are no available spaces in one of the year groups in the school that you want.

Due to the high demand for school places in Wokingham, you should only make an application if you will be able to take up the offer of a place immediately.

If a school that you have requested is not able to offer a place and your child/children are out of school, we will try to offer you a place at the nearest Wokingham school to your home with a vacancy at the time. This may not be the school nearest to your home. Your child will automatically be added to the waiting list for all preferred schools that have been unable to offer a place, and you will be given the right of appeal and advised about waiting list procedures.

We do not encourage moving from one local school to another school mid-year because research shows it can have a negative effect on a child's progress. Consider whether it is necessary to move schools and speak to your child's current school before completing an application. If your child has already started their GCSE exam courses, it is unlikely that another school will be able to match your child's options or exam boards, which may affect their final grades.

Applications should only be submitted after reviewing the relevant admission guide or additional information can be found in our parents' guide for primary schools and our guide for secondary schools.

2. Key Facts

- **You may make an In Year application at any time of year as there are no closing dates for this type of application.**
- We will not process in-year applications for school preferences outside of Wokingham. You will have to apply to the appropriate Local Authority to gain admission to a school out of the Wokingham Borough.
- The schools you would like to apply to will depend on whether you will need to apply via Wokingham Borough Council School Admissions or directly to the school themselves. Some schools process their own applications. Check whether the school is “managing their own in years” in sections 17 and 18 of this guide. If it is, you should contact the school directly to enquire about a place for your child.
- If your child does not secure a school place, you should inform the School Admissions Team at schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk as we track children for safeguarding and Children Missing Education purposes.
- Please note we do not process applications for post-16 students (sixth-form, college or training); you should contact the school or college directly for further information.
- If a school doesn't have enough places for everyone who applies, the admission rules for that school will be used to decide who will get a place (over subscription policy). Go to the [admission arrangements page](#) to find out more.
- Applications should only be submitted if you can provide the required supporting evidence.
- In-year applications can take 15 school days to process but there may be a delay processing the application due to the volume of applications that are currently being processed. The school admissions team will notify you of the outcome to your

application as soon as possible via email. If the application is to be referred to the In Year [Fair Access process](#), then the outcome of that process may take longer than 15 school days.

- The offer of a place in a Wokingham Borough school must normally be taken up within the first half term that the school place is allocated. Failure to take up the offer of a place during this time will mean that the offer is withdrawn, and the place released for another child. Exceptions can only be made where the parent provides documentary evidence that the delay is unavoidable, through no fault of their own, or in the case of Crown Service, service families or looked-after children.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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. **If you apply after this time, it's unlikely your child will start on the first day the school reopens following any holiday.**

For a school place starting at the beginning of September an application will need to be received by the School Admissions Team, 15 school days in advance of the commencement date. If you apply less than 15 school days in advance of the commencement date it is likely that the schools will close for the summer break so you may not receive an outcome to your application before they re-open in September. It is also unlikely that your child will start in a school on the first day of the new term in September. Schools will need to see how many children have left over the summer and will then need some time to update their waiting lists to see who is eligible for their offer.

5. Moving schools within Wokingham or the local area

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

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

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

6. New to the area or Moving House

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8. Returning Crown Servants

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

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

9. Types of schools

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

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

Community and Maintained Schools

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

Academy Schools (Non – Maintained Schools)

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

Voluntary Aided Schools (Non – Maintained Schools)

Voluntary Aided (VA) Schools are funded by the local authority but have more freedom to change the way they do things - sometimes they are supported by representatives from religious groups. The admissions authority for these schools is usually the school's governing body. **The governing body of the school is responsible for deciding on admissions to the school.**

Free Schools (Non – Maintained Schools)

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

10. Which schools to apply for

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

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

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

11. How many schools to apply for

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

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

12. Catchment/Designated area

Some schools use a catchment area (also known as a designated area) as part of their admissions criteria. This is a specific geographical area around a school. If your home address falls within this area, your child may be given higher priority for a place if the school is oversubscribed.

It is important to note that your nearest school may not necessarily be your catchment school. We strongly recommend checking which catchment areas include your home address before submitting your application. You can do this using our [Schools designated areas map](#).

Please remember:

- The map is for guidance only.
- Contact the School Admissions Team for queries relating to Wokingham Borough schools.
- For Academy or other non-maintained schools, please contact the schools directly.

While most schools give high priority to children living in their catchment area when oversubscribed, a place is not guaranteed. **There is no guarantee of an offer of a place at your catchment school as it may be full or oversubscribed in your child's year group.**

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

When choosing schools to list on your application, we recommend prioritising those closest to your home address. You may also wish to consider schools in neighbouring boroughs, as these can sometimes be easier to travel to and may offer more availability. However, please note that you cannot apply to out-of-borough schools via the Wokingham application. To apply to these schools, you must contact the relevant local authority or the school directly.

Each school has its own admissions policy, which outlines how places are allocated and who gets priority when the school is oversubscribed. Reviewing these criteria will help you make informed and realistic choices.

Key Points to Remember:

- You can express a preference, but this does not mean you can choose which school your child will attend.
- There is no automatic entitlement to a place at a preferred school, catchment school, or the school nearest to your home.
- Use all four preferences to maximise your chances of securing a suitable place.
- Do not list the same school more than once—it will only count as one preference.
- Your home may not fall within the designated area of your nearest school. Use our [Schools designated areas map](#) to check which schools include your address. While designated area children often receive priority, this does not guarantee a place if the school is oversubscribed.

- We strongly advise including local schools that have historically offered places to children living near your address. Keep in mind that distance thresholds vary each year, depending on demand.

Research school availability

It's advisable to consult the [school availability document](#) prior to making an application to determine where there are school places in the borough. This information is subject to change as we process applications, and we typically see schools being removed from the document as the academic year progresses and they become fully allocated. Typically, schools that are already full have a waiting list and the tendency is for this to continue so it is unlikely new schools will appear on the availability document.

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.

You should bear in mind that it is not always possible to offer siblings the same school during an academic year. It is not uncommon for siblings to attend different schools until a place becomes available, and we recommend parents consider how they would manage this. Some schools offer breakfast and/or after school clubs, this information can be found on school websites.

Reasons for your preference

There is space on the application form to explain why you are applying to a particular school, but this is **optional**. Your reasons will **only** be considered if they relate to the school's **oversubscription criteria**.

Parents should note that admission authorities **cannot** give priority to children according to the occupational, marital, financial, or educational status of parents applying. Nor can they prioritise families based on logistical challenges they may face getting their children to school.

If you are applying under **medical or social grounds**, you **must** tick the relevant box and provide supporting information. This helps us understand if there are specific reasons why your child should attend a particular school.

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. Applying to Wokingham Borough for In-Year Admissions

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

Primary Schools		Infant and Junior Schools
Aldryngton Primary School	St Sebastian's CofE Primary	Gorse Ride Infants School
All Saints Primary School	The Colleton Primary School	Gorse Ride Junior School
Bearwood Primary School	The Coombes Primary School	Polehampton Infant School
Beechwood Primary School	The Hawthorns Primary School	Polehampton Junior School
Crazies Hill Primary School	Windmill Primary School	Robert Piggott CofE Infant
Farley Hill Primary School	Winnersh Primary School	Robert Piggott CofE Junior
Finchampstead Primary School	Wheatfield Primary School	Shinfield St Mary's Junior
Floreat Montague Park	Whiteknights Primary School	St Paul's CofE Junior School
Grazeley Parochial Primary	Woodley CofE Primary School	Walter Infant School
Keep Hatch Primary School		
Lambs Lane Primary School		
Loddon Primary School		
Radstock Primary School		
Rivermead Primary School		
Sonning Primary School		
St Dominic Savio Catholic		
St Nicholas CofE Primary		
		Secondary Schools
		Maiden Erlegh
		The Holt

1. Applying Directly to Schools for In-Year Admissions

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

Primary Schools	Infant and Junior Schools	Secondary Schools
<u>Alder Grove Primary</u> <u>Charvil Piggott Primary</u> <u>Earley St Peter's Primary</u> <u>Hatch Ride Primary</u> <u>Hawkedon Primary School</u> <u>Highwood Primary School</u> <u>Hillside Primary School</u> <u>Nine Mile Ride Primary</u> <u>South Lake Primary School</u> <u>St Cecilia's Primary School</u> <u>St Teresa's Catholic Academy</u> <u>The Hawthorns</u>	<u>Emmbrook Infant School</u> <u>Emmbrook Junior School</u> <u>Oaklands Infant</u> <u>Oaklands Junior</u> <u>Shinfield Infant School</u> <u>Wescott Infant</u> <u>Westende Junior</u> <u>Willow Bank Infant School</u> <u>Willow Bank Junior School</u>	<u>Bohunt School</u> <u>Bulmershe School</u> <u>Emmbrook School</u> <u>Forest School</u> <u>Oakbank Secondary School</u> <u>St Crispins School</u> <u>The Piggott School</u> <u>Waingels College</u>

15. Applying for Looked after and previously looked after children

If your child is currently in public care (a 'looked after child') or was previously looked after and then adopted or placed under a child arrangements or special guardianship order, they may be eligible for highest priority under admissions criteria.

- Applications for looked after children must be completed by the designated social worker.
- For previously looked after children, you must provide one of the following:
 - Adoption Order
 - Child Arrangements Order
 - Special Guardianship Order

If your child was in State Care outside England and was adopted, you must provide:

- Proof of adoption
- Evidence that your child was in State Care immediately before adoption

Send the full documents to the Admissions Team. Wokingham Borough Council may verify this information with the relevant local authority.

16. **Exceptional** medical, physical, psychological, or social need

Not all schools include medical or social need in their oversubscription criteria. These schools will not consider medical or social need when ranking applications.

However, if the school you are applying to does include medical/social need in its oversubscription criteria, you may request priority for a place at your highest preference 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 that school essential.

What does not qualify:

- Mild medical conditions (e.g. asthma, allergies)
- A parent's preference based on*:
 - Friendships or social groups
 - Child's aptitude or interests (e.g. music, sport, language)
 - Proximity to a parent's workplace
 - Convenience for drop-off/pick-up routines
 - Childcare arrangements (e.g. proximity to a childminder or grandparent)
 - Sibling attendance at a different school

*This list is not exhaustive

What you must do

- Tick the medical/social box on the application form

Submit supporting evidence to the Admissions Team.

- Evidence must be from a relevant professional:
 - Medical: doctor, consultant
 - Social: social worker, health visitor, housing officer, police, probation officer

The evidence must clearly explain:

- Why the named school is essential
- What facilities or support the school offers
- What difficulties would arise if the child did not attend
- Why no other school can meet the same need

Note: Providing evidence does **not guarantee priority**. Each case is assessed individually, and priority will only be given if the evidence clearly supports placement at the named school above any other.

17. Parent or carer details

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

18. Private fostering arrangements

If you are caring for someone else's child, this may be a private fostering arrangement, and you must notify the Local Authority.

Private fostering applies when

A child under 16 (or under 18 with a disability) is cared for by someone who is not a close relative (e.g. not a grandparent, sibling, aunt/uncle, or step-relative)

The arrangement lasts for 28 days or more

The Council has a legal duty to assess and monitor these arrangements to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing.

Please provide relevant documents if:

- Your child is adopted, fostered, or in care
- You are applying under exceptional medical or social needs
- You are moving house

19. 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.

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.

20. Siblings

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

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

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

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

Having children of similar ages at two different schools can be difficult. Some parents/carers find that they are successful in obtaining a place for their eldest child but are unsuccessful for their younger children in future years. If you obtain a place for one of your children at a school, this does not mean that places can be guaranteed for their siblings either currently or at a later date.

21. Twins and Multiple Births

Where the parent has made the same preferences of school and, through the normal operation of the admission arrangements, the last available place has been allocated to one twin or child from a multiple birth, the other twin or children from the multiple birth will be offered a place at the school. In such circumstances, both the published admissions number and the infant class size limit would be exceeded. The other sibling(s) would remain as exceptions to the Infant Class Size Legislation for the time they are in an infant class or until the number in the year group falls back to the PAN

22. Evidence required to support an application

If the reason for applying for your child's school place requires you to submit supporting evidence, you should **only** apply when you can provide the necessary documents.

If you are eligible to apply but cannot provide the evidence, please do not submit an application. You should email the School Admissions team explaining why the evidence cannot be provided. Please email schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk

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

The evidence should name the parent/carer applying for admission.

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

Buying a new home

- A solicitor's letter confirming exchange of contracts

- **If purchasing a new build, in addition to the above**, provide evidence that the family will be living there before the child's expected start date, for example, a letter from the developer confirming a build completion date. Documents evidencing the ownership or purchase of a plot of land will not be accepted.
- A copy of the applicants updated driving license, proof of registration at the local Drs/Dental surgery; Letters addressed to the applicant at this address; utility bills; banks statements (financial details redacted), etc. Please note supplying only utility bills is not sufficient, as maintaining a house is not proof of occupation.

Renting a property

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

Returning to owned property

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

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

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

In-Year applications will not be considered any earlier than 6 school weeks before an anticipated move to the United Kingdom. We will need to set up an education record for your child. To do this we must use your child's **full legal name**. Please provide the following supporting documentation with your application:

- A copy of the photo page of your child's passport or
- A copy of your child's short birth certificate

How long does the school application process take?

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

- Up to 15 working school days for us to respond to the application and check where capacity is available **once all** the required information has been provided, such as passports or visas
- The school will confirm the start date with you
- In complex cases another 10 working school days may be required if the case needs to be taken to the Fair Access Panel to source a place for your child. The panel makes sure children who are having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, are allocated a school place as quickly as possible, minimising the time your child is out of school. If a child is placed via the panel route, then the child should be offered a start date within seven school working days

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

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

23. Waiting lists

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

If we have been unable to offer your child a place at a preferred school, they will have been added to the waiting list. It is important that parents understand that waiting lists are not ranked in time receipt order but by the schools 'oversubscription criteria' and waiting list positions can move down as well as up.

Why do children move down on waiting lists?

Positions on waiting lists may go up or down due to pupil withdrawals or new or revised applications. If your child moves down a waiting list, it's likely to be because another child has been added to the waiting list and has been considered under a higher oversubscription criterion or lives closer, causing your child to move down the waiting list. This is more likely to happen if your child is on the wait list for a school and you live outside a school's 'designated area'.

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.

When do spaces typically become available?

Schools have a legal duty to ensure the child who has left is on roll at another school or is known to their new local authority's education welfare team before they can be taken off roll and the space offered to another child.

Because of this we see very few places becoming available before a school holiday. School places typically become available a week or two after a school holiday and parents need to be aware that it is unlikely that your child will start in a new school on the first day of the new term.

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.

Reapplying to go back onto the waiting list each year

You must apply for each academic year via a new in year application to remain on the list, you can do this from the second week in June. During this time, we will continue to use the current academic year wait list until it is closed on 31st July. Providing approximately 7-weeks for you to add your child's name to the new academic year wait list before we start to use it.

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

24. Accepting or declining the school place

You will receive the outcome to your application via email or post. **You will not receive an outcome to your In Year application via the parent portal.** The offer will inform parents that they are required to accept or decline the place offered within 14 days from the date of the letter or email. Please [submit a response form](#) via our website.

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.

25. Updating your school preferences

Following the outcome of your application if you want to make any changes to your school preferences please complete a change of preference form available on our [website](#). Please note the schools listed on this form will replace your original preferences so please include any previous schools you still want as preferences.

Change of preference forms will be considered in order of receipt. Please allow up to 10 school days for a response.

26. Fair Access

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

27. School Place Appeals

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

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

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

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

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

Some families can find this a stressful experience, and it can take time for appeals to be heard, which can lengthen the period of uncertainty for you and your child. It's important to be realistic about why you are appealing and the chance of your appeal being successful. The process is free to parents but costs schools approximately £300 per child per appeal. In the current economic climate, we ask parents to consider this cost when considering making an appeal. The majority of school admissions appeals are refused as demonstrated in the Secondary Appeals statistics over page.

In Year appeal statistics for the academic year 2023/2024

The statistics below are for schools that use Wokingham School Admissions appeals service.

In Year appeal category	Refused	Allowed
Infant class size (Reception, year 1 and 2)	17	1
Primary and Junior standard appeals	49	5
Secondary standard appeals	56	11

Accepting an offer of a school place at another school does not impact your appeal. Government guidance recommends you consider accepting any offers so that you have secured a school place for your child in case your appeal is unsuccessful.

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 that was not on your original application by completing a [Change of Preference Form](#)

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

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

Primary Schools	Infant and Junior Schools	Secondary Schools
<u>Alder Grove Primary</u> <u>Charvil Piggott Primary</u> <u>Earley St Peter's Primary</u> <u>Hatch Ride Primary</u> <u>Hawkedon Primary School</u> <u>Highwood Primary School</u> <u>Hillside Primary School</u> <u>Nine Mile Ride Primary</u> <u>South Lake Primary School</u> <u>St Cecilia's Primary School</u> <u>St Teresa's Catholic Academy</u> <u>The Hawthorns</u>	<u>Emmbrook Infant School</u> <u>Emmbrook Junior School</u> <u>Oaklands Infant</u> <u>Oaklands Junior</u> <u>Shinfield Infant School</u> <u>Wescott Infant</u> <u>Westende Junior</u> <u>Willow Bank Infant School</u> <u>Willow Bank Junior School</u>	<u>Bohunt School</u> <u>Bulmershe School</u> <u>Emmbrook School</u> <u>Forest School</u> <u>Oakbank Secondary School</u> <u>St Crispins School</u> <u>The Piggott School</u> <u>Waingels College</u>

28. Travel Assistance

Getting to school safely and reliably is an essential part of every child's day. While most families make their own arrangements—whether walking, cycling, using public transport, or driving—some children face genuine barriers to independent travel. In these cases, Wokingham Borough Council may provide travel assistance, but only in **very specific and limited circumstances**. Support is not automatic and is subject to strict eligibility criteria based on age, distance to their nearest school, and individual needs.

Who Might Qualify?

Your child may be eligible for travel assistance if all of the following apply:

- They are of **compulsory school age** (from the term after their 5th birthday until the end of Year 11), and
- They attend the **nearest suitable school** with places available, and
- One or more of the following conditions is met:
 - The distance between home and school is **over 2 miles** (for children under 8), or **over 3 miles** (for children aged 8 to 16), or
 - The walking route to school is assessed as **unsafe**, even if within the statutory walking distance, or
 - They are unable to walk or travel independently due to a special educational need or disability (SEND), regardless of the distance to school.

The nearest suitable school may be in Wokingham or a neighbouring borough such as Reading, Bracknell Forest or Hampshire for example. Eligibility is based on physical distance, not on preference or catchment areas.

Suitability refers to whether the school is appropriate for the child's age and ability, and whether it can meet their **educational needs**. This means the school must be able to deliver the national curriculum and provide access to learning appropriate for the child's stage of development. It does **not** relate to Ofsted ratings, popularity, or parental views about school quality.

How Travel Assistance Is Assessed

Eligibility is assessed using the **shortest safe walking route** from your home to the school. This may include footpaths, bridleways, and other public rights of way—not just roads.

To qualify, your child must be attending the **nearest suitable school** with places available. This may not be your catchment or designated area school, and it may not be a Wokingham school. In some cases, a school in a neighbouring borough could be closer to your home. If a place was available at a nearer school and it was not listed on your application, travel assistance is unlikely to be provided.

For children with **special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)**, the Council will also consider whether the child can reasonably be expected to walk or travel independently, with or without support. Supporting evidence will be required in these cases.

What Support Might Be Offered?

If your child qualifies, the Council will decide the most appropriate form of assistance. This may include:

- A **Personal Travel Budget** to help you arrange transport independently.
- A **bus pass** for use on public transport.
- A seat on a school bus or shared taxi, **in exceptional cases**.

The type of support offered will depend on your child's needs and the nature of the journey.

What's Not Covered

Travel assistance is not provided for:

- After-school clubs or childcare arrangements.
- Travel to a school chosen for preference or convenience.
- Journeys outside normal school hours.
- Appointments or alternative provision arranged by the school.

Sustainable Travel Options

Wokingham Borough Council encourages families to consider active and sustainable ways of getting to school. The **My Journey Wokingham** website offers advice, maps, and resources to help children walk, cycle, or scoot safely. It also provides information on park and stride schemes, public transport, and road safety education. These options can support children's independence, health, and wellbeing while reducing traffic and pollution around schools.

Useful Links

- [Travel assistance to school and college](#)
- [My Journey](#)