



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Wokingham Borough Council
Co-ordinated Scheme for Admission to Infant,
Junior and Primary Schools**

2027/2028 entry

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TIMETABLE FOR CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME 2027/2028

Please note that dates may change to the next working day if the School Admissions Code is revised permitting national closing dates to be adjusted if the date falls on a weekend.

Admissions Stage		Reception (Year R) & Junior (Year 2 into 3)	
Birth Years	Reception	01/09/21 -31/08/22	
	Juniors	01/09/18 -31/08/19	
Rounds open		13 November 2026	
Closing Date for Applications		15 January 2027	
Deadline for house moves and additional supporting evidence		15 January 2027	
Unranked preferences forwarded to Wokingham Borough Own Admission Authorities		07 February 2027	
Ranked preferences from all schools to be returned to Wokingham LA		15 March 2027	
Final offer exchange with other Local Authorities		31 March 2027	
National Offer Day & Notifications sent		16 April 2027	
Deadline to Accept or Refuse Offers		1 May 2027	
Deadline for Appeals (20 school days following notification that application was unsuccessful)		14 May 2027	
Appeals Heard By (40 school days)		21 July 2027	
Round Closes (Switch to In-Year Process)		31 August 2027	

THE CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME

1. Reasons for a co-ordinated scheme

Under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, local authorities are required to formulate and determine co-ordinated schemes for primary school admissions. These regulations specify what must be included in a co-ordinated scheme and the Secretary of State has also issued a School Admissions Code which includes some mandatory provisions.

This scheme complies with the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021 and all current legislation regarding school admissions. This scheme is reviewed annually.

2. Aims of a co-ordinated scheme

This scheme explains how school places are offered for children starting Reception (the first year of primary school) or Year 3 (for junior schools) in Wokingham. It applies to all mainstream state-funded infant, primary, and junior schools in the borough.

The main aims are:

- One offer per child – every child will receive just one school place offer.
- Highest possible preference – we will offer the school ranked highest that has a space available.
- Same day for everyone – all offers are sent out on the same day.

How does this work?

We use an equal preference system. This means every school listed on an application is considered equally at first, without giving priority to the first preferred school. If a child qualifies for more than one school, we then offer the one ranked highest.

Who does this apply to?

- Children starting Reception in the school year when they turn five.
- Children starting year 3 at a Junior School in the year they turn seven.
- Summer-born children who have agreed deferred entry.
- **It does not apply to nursery places, even if the nursery is part of the school.**

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

- These children follow a separate admissions process managed by the SEND team.
- If a mainstream school is named in the EHCP, that school must admit the child and will do so before other applications are considered.

Important: This scheme does not decide who qualifies for a place at a school. Each school's published admission rules are used to check eligibility.

The scheme simply explains:

- How to apply for a school place.
- How we decide which school to offer if a child qualifies for more than one school, or none of the applicants' preferred schools.

3. Timing of entry to Primary Education

Children are usually admitted into the school year that matches their age. In Wokingham, all children are offered a full-time Reception place starting in September of the school year in which they turn five.

Wokingham Borough Council encourages families to take up this offer, as starting Reception in September helps children:

- Settle in with their peers
- Access the full curriculum from the beginning
- Build strong foundations for learning and development

Compulsory School Age

Children must start school or receive suitable education by law once they reach compulsory school age. This is the term after their fifth birthday. The table below shows when children reach compulsory school age based on their birth date:

For the 2027-28 school year, the table below sets out the position:

Date of Birth	Date of compulsory school age	Latest date child may start school full-time
1 September 2022 – 31 December 2022 (Autumn born)	31 December 2027	The start of the 'Spring' term in January 2028 A school place will be available from the September but can be deferred until January – the school place will be held once parents have agreed this with the school.
1 January 2023 – 31 March 2023 (Spring born)	31 March 2028	The start of the 'Summer' term in April 2028 A school place will be available from the September before this but can be deferred until January or April — the school place will be held once parents have agreed this with the school.
1 April 2023 – 31 August 2023 (Summer born)	31 August 2028	The start of the 'Autumn' term in September 2028 A school place will be available from the September before this but can be deferred until January or April – the school place will be held once parents have agreed this with the school

Starting School: Options for Four-Year-Olds

Most children start school full-time in September after their fourth birthday. However, there are legal options available for how children begin school, depending on their age and readiness.

Parents can choose to:

- Start full-time in September (the standard approach), or
- Request part-time attendance until the start of the term after their child's fifth birthday, or
- Defer their child's start date to later in the school year — but no later than:
 - The term after their fifth birthday, or
 - The beginning of the summer term (whichever comes first)

These options must be discussed with the school to agree on a suitable plan.

Summer Born Children (Born 1 April – 31 August)

Parents of children born between 1 April and 31 August have the right to request delayed entry to Reception until the September after their child turns five.

Important points to consider:

- This is a formal request and must be discussed with the school and any early years setting involved.
- Delayed entry may have long-term implications for a child's education and development.
- If parents/carers choose not to take up a Reception place and wait until Year 1:
 - They cannot hold the original Reception place.
 - They must apply again for Year 1, and a place is not guaranteed.

Wokingham Borough Council's Position on Starting Reception

Wokingham Borough Council strongly encourages children to start Reception in the September following their fourth birthday, wherever possible.

Starting school at this point:

- **Helps children settle into routines alongside their peers**
- **Supports early learning and development in a structured environment**
- **Ensures access to the full Reception curriculum from the beginning of the school year**

While there are legal options for part-time or deferred starts, these are intended for exceptional circumstances. The Council believes that most children benefit from starting full-time in September, and schools are well-equipped to support a smooth transition. If parents/carers are considering a different start date, it's important to:

- **Discuss this with the child's school**
- **Involve any early years setting the child attends**
- **Carefully consider the potential impact on the child's learning and social development**

The Council's priority is to ensure that every child has the best possible start to their education.

Admission outside normal age group

Children are usually placed in the school year that matches their age. In most cases, this is the best option for their learning and development.

However, in exceptional circumstances, parents can request for their child to be educated outside their normal age group — for example, starting Reception a year later or being placed in a different year group.

How to Make a Request

To do this, parents must:

- Complete a Wokingham Borough Council request form - called *Request to Work Out of Chronological Year Group*
- Provide written evidence from professionals who know the child well, such as:
 - An educational psychologist
 - A specialist teacher
 - Health professionals (e.g. paediatrician, speech and language therapist)

How Decisions Are Made

Each request is looked at individually by a panel of Wokingham Borough Council officers. A decision will only be made if:

- There is agreement between the parents, the current school, the preferred school, and the professionals involved
- Everyone agrees that this would be in the child's best interests

Important: These requests are not automatically approved. Wokingham Borough Council believes that most children thrive when placed with their age group, and decisions to educate outside of this are made with great care.

Delaying Admission to Reception and Summer Born Children

Most children start school in the September after their 4th birthday. However, children are not legally required to attend school until the term after their 5th birthday. If a parent is considering delaying when their child starts school, then different options are available to them depending on when their child was born.

- Children born September-December (Autumn born)
- Children born January-March (Spring born)
- Children born April-August (Summer Born)

Delaying Admission to Reception: Children born September-December

If a child is born between 1 September and 31 December, then parents must apply for a school place during the winter that they turn 4 years old.

Children in this age group are expected to start Reception full-time in the September following their fourth birthday. This is the standard starting point for all children, and Wokingham Borough Council encourages families to take up this offer so children benefit from the full Reception experience.

Parents/carers can request to:

- **Postpone a child's start date until later in the Autumn term (up to January)**
- **Or choose part-time attendance during the Autumn term**

This is known as deferring a child's admission.

The latest a child can start full-time is **January**, and the school place will be held for them — but only if this is agreed with the school in advance.

If it is in the child's best interest to do this, parents/carers should:

1. Apply for a school place during the winter of their child's 4th birthday. The deadline for applications is 15 January after their 4th birthday.
2. Accept a school place offered.
3. Speak to the school about deferring their child's start to later in the year. Discuss both the possible benefits and disadvantages of your child starting later in the year.
4. If parents want their child to attend part-time then they should discuss with the school what might be the best schedule for their child.
5. The school will hold a child's place during the Autumn term of their reception year, depending on how long they decide to defer.
6. A child **MUST** start school at least by the beginning of the Spring Term in January.

Delaying Admission to Reception: Children born January-March

If a child is born between 1 January and 31 March, parents/carers must apply for a school place during the winter before they turn four.

Children in this group are expected to start Reception full-time in the September following their fourth birthday. Wokingham Borough Council encourages families to take up this offer so children can benefit from the full Reception experience and settle in with their peers.

Parents/carers can request to:

- **Postpone a child's start date until later in the school year (up to April)**
- **Or choose part-time attendance during the Autumn and Spring terms**

This is known as deferring a child's admission.

The latest a child can start full-time is April, and the school place will be held — but only if this is agreed with the school in advance.

If it is in the child's best interest to do this, parents/carers should:

1. Apply for a school place during the winter before their child's 4th birthday. The deadline for applications is 15 January.
2. Accept a school place offered.
3. Speak to the school about wishing to defer a child's start to later in the year. Discuss both the possible benefits and disadvantages of a child starting later in the year.
4. If parents want their child to attend part-time then they should discuss with the school what might be the best schedule for their child.
5. The school will hold a place during the Autumn and Spring term of a child's Reception year, depending on how long they decide to defer.
6. A child MUST start school at least by the beginning of the Summer Term in April.

Delaying Admission to Reception: Summer Born Children (April-August)

Children born between 1 April and 31 August are usually offered a reception place starting in the September after their fourth birthday. Wokingham Borough Council expects that most children will start school at this time, as it supports their learning and social development alongside their peers.

In some cases, parents may consider delaying their child's entry into Reception until the following September (when the child turns five). This is a significant decision and should be made only after careful consideration.

If parents/carers are thinking about this option:

- They must first apply for a reception place in their child's normal age group.
- After applying, they can then request delayed entry by asking for their child to start Reception a year later.
- This request is not automatic and must be discussed with the school and Wokingham Borough Council.
- Parents/carers may be asked to provide supporting evidence from professionals (e.g. early years staff, health professionals) to help assess whether this is in their child's best interests.

Important: Where entry to Reception is deferred, the original allocated place cannot be held. A new application must be submitted for the following academic year, and there is no guarantee that a place will be available at the originally preferred school.

Options

Parents of summer born children may consider the following:

- Summer Born Option 1: Postpone their child's start to later in the year
- Summer Born Option 2: Attending school part-time
- Summer Born Option 3: Delaying admission by a full year

Summer Born Option 1: Postpone your child's start to later in the year

Summer born children are allowed to accept an offer of a school place but then postpone their start in Reception until later in the year. This is called 'deferring' a child's admission to primary school. **The latest parents can postpone their start is April.**

If it is in the child's best interest to do this, parents/carers can:

1. Apply for a school place during the winter before their child's 4th birthday. The deadline for applications is 15 January before their 4th birthday.
2. Accept a school place offered.
3. Speak to the school about wishing to defer a child's start to later in the year. Discuss both the possible benefits and disadvantages of a child starting later in the year.
4. The school will hold a place during the Autumn and Spring terms of the child's Reception year, depending on how long they decide to defer.
5. A child **MUST** start school at least by the beginning of the Summer Term in April. They can then attend school either full-time or part-time for the rest of the year.

Summer Born Option 2: Attending school part-time

Summer born children are allowed to attend school part-time during the whole of their first year. This means that a child can start attending gradually. As long as the child starts school by April in their Reception year then they are allowed to attend part-time, either for all of the year or for part of it.

If it is in the child's best interest to do this, parents/carers can:

1. Apply for a school place during the winter before their child's 4th birthday. The deadline for applications is 15 January before their 4th birthday.
2. Accept a school place offered.
3. Speak to the school about their child attending part-time. Discuss both the possible benefits and disadvantages, and what might be the best schedule for the child.
4. From the September after the child's 4th birthday, they can either attend school part-time, or they can postpone their start date until the start of the Summer Term of their Reception year.
5. A child **MUST** start school at least by the beginning of the Summer Term in April.
6. The child can attend part time during the summer term as well, but they must attend school.

Summer Born Option 3: Delaying admission by a full year

If a child is born between 1 April and 31 August, parents/carers may consider requesting that their child starts Reception a year later than their normal age group. This means they would begin school in the September after they turn five.

Important Things to Consider

- This is a formal request and must be approved by Wokingham Borough Council and the school.
- It is a significant decision that may affect a child's education long-term. In most cases, children who start Reception a year later will remain in that lower year group throughout their schooling.
- This arrangement may not be recognised by other schools or local authorities if they move or apply elsewhere in the future.

What Happens to the original school place offered

- If parents/carers choose to delay admission by a year, the Reception place originally offered will be withdrawn.
- They will need to reapply the following year, and the application will be considered alongside all others.
- If the school is oversubscribed, the oversubscription criteria will apply, and there is no guarantee that a place will be available.

Each year, some families who delay admission find they no longer qualify for a place at their preferred school because the cut-off distance has changed, and they now live too far away. This is an important factor to consider when making a decision.

If it is in the child's best interest to do this, parents/carers can:

1. Apply for a school place in their child's normal age group, during the winter before their child's 4th birthday. The deadline for applications is 15 January before their 4th birthday.
2. Complete Wokingham borough Council's Summer Born Deferral Request Form
3. Meet with the headteacher of the school, and any others you plan to apply for, to discuss the options available. Discuss both the possible benefits and disadvantages of the child starting school a year late.

- If parents/carers plan to apply for Wokingham Borough community or voluntary controlled schools, the Wokingham borough Local Authority will consider the request
- If parents/carers plan to apply for academies, free schools or voluntary aided schools, the school will consider the request
- If parents/carers plan to apply for schools outside the Wokingham Borough, they will need to discuss their procedures with them directly.

If a request to delay admission is agreed;

- 1.** The school admissions team will send an email/letter letting parents know which schools have agreed a request to delay admission.
- 2.** After this, if parents still want to delay admission, inform the School Admissions Team at Wokingham Borough Council to withdraw the original application or withdraw any school place offered to your child.
- 3.** The School Admissions Team at Wokingham Borough Council will withdraw the application/offered school place.
- 4.** During the winter before your child's 5th birthday apply for a school place as part of the main admissions round. The deadline for applications is 15 January before their 5th birthday.
- 5.** Clearly state on the application form that you are applying for a Summer-Born Reception place to start school in September.

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

This scheme applies to all mainstream infant, primary, and junior schools in the Wokingham Borough, including:

- Community schools
- Foundation schools
- Voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- Academies

Who makes the admission decisions?

- For community and voluntary controlled schools, Wokingham Borough Council is the admission authority.
- For foundation and voluntary aided schools, the school's governing body is the admission authority.
- For academies, the academy trust is the admission authority.

When we say, “Wokingham Borough Schools”, we mean all the above schools located in the borough.

5. Admission to middle schools in other local authorities

These arrangements will be managed centrally by Wokingham Borough Council. An application form needs to be completed by parents wishing to apply for a place for a middle school in another local authority. Each local authority will accept applications in the same way as it would for its own normal admissions round. Co-ordination will be held with the maintaining local authority who will apply their co-ordinated scheme. The maintaining local authority will inform Wokingham Borough Council if a place is to be offered in one of its schools and Wokingham Borough Council will inform the parents of the outcome of the application.

6. Admission to Junior Schools

Applications for Year 3 places at junior schools will be managed centrally by Wokingham Borough Council. Parents of children currently in Year 2 and living within the Wokingham borough will be able to apply online from **13th November**.

This coordinated admissions round is only for junior school places and entry to reception in Primary schools. If parents wish to apply for a primary school place instead (e.g. transferring to a different primary school for Year 3), they must use the in-year admissions process. In-year applications should be submitted at least six school weeks before the place is needed — for a September start, this means applying after the May half-term.

Parents who live **outside the Wokingham borough** but wish to apply for a Wokingham junior school should do so using the application process provided by their **home local authority**.

7. Multiple offers

Under this scheme, a child will only receive one school offer. Applicants can still apply to independent (private) schools separately if they wish.

Special case – new academies: If a new academy is planned, applicants can list it as a preference. However, if the Department for Education does not give final approval for the school to open by the agreed date, it will be removed from the allocation process. Applications for that school will then be handled outside this scheme.

Working with other local authorities: We share information with other Councils to make sure, wherever possible, that each child only gets one offer, even if you apply for schools in different areas.

8. The Equal Preference System

All Wokingham Borough schools and academies have equal preference admission policies. Wokingham Council, as the Local Authority, will apply the admission rules and give each child a single offer on the same day.

Applicants are encouraged to list **four school preferences** when submitting an in-year application. The school listed as the **highest preference** is generally assumed to reflect the applicant's strongest choice. Listing multiple preferences increases the likelihood of securing a place at a suitable school, particularly where availability is limited.

The admission policy for each school is applied to a child's application along with all the other applications for the same school. At this stage, it does not matter whether schools have been listed as preference 1, 2 or 3 etc., as all applications are considered equally against each school's policy. It is where a child is placed within that policy that counts.

All applicants for each school are put into order according to the criteria in that school's policy. Places at the school are filled in order up to the published admission number (PAN). The answer to each preference will either be a yes (place available) or no (place not available).

If more than one school can offer a place, then we look at the order of preferences. Applicants will only get one offer; this will be the highest of those that can offer a place. If all four schools can offer a place, applicants will be offered their top preference.

Applicants who apply through the Wokingham Borough Council Citizens Portal will be able to view the outcome of their application online on the published offer date as set out in the Council's admissions timetable.

Where none of the preferred schools can offer a place, and there are places available elsewhere, a place will be allocated at:

- The **nearest** Wokingham Borough secondary school with available places, based on the child's home address.

It may not always be possible to offer all children a school place on National Offer Day. National Offer Day is the start of the offer process and offers continue to be made when places become available after parents accept and decline their offer of a school place and as parents make alternative arrangements for their child's education.

If a place at a preferred school cannot be offered by Wokingham Borough Council to cross-border applicants, an alternative place will not be considered, as the home local authority will be making an offer.

If Wokingham local authority and another local authority can both offer places, the authorities will determine the place to be allocated based on the ranked preferences.

Preferences may also be expressed for new academies where there is agreement by the sponsor to do so. The Scheme for new school inclusion in the co-ordinated schemes is included in section 35 of this document.

9. The Common Application Form

Wokingham Borough residents can make applications online, via the [Council's Citizen Portal](#). If applicants are unable to apply online, they should email schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk for details on how to complete a paper application.

The Common Application Form for normal admissions is a form for applicants to express their preferences for places both at Wokingham Borough Schools and at schools maintained by other local authorities and academies in other local authority areas.

Those potential applicants who may wish to home educate their child from Reception or enroll their child in an independent school from Reception are requested to inform the Council if this is the decision they have taken in lieu of completing the Common Application Form.

10. Split living/Shared Care arrangements

Where a child lives with one parent for part of the week and another for the rest, only **one address** can be used for the school admission application. This will usually be the address where the child wakes up for the majority of school days (Monday to Friday).

In cases involving shared care arrangements, it may be necessary to confirm which address should be treated as the child's permanent home. To support this, the local authority may request:

- A written statement showing how the child's time is divided between the two homes.
- Evidence of which parent or carer was receiving Child Benefit at the time of application.
- If Child Benefit is not claimed, alternative documents such as Tax Credit Award Notices.
- Confirmation of the child's registered GP address.

The local authority reserves the right to request additional documentation as needed, depending on individual circumstances, to establish the correct address for admissions purposes.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. Multiple Applications

Only one Common Application Form can be processed for any given child. 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 Common Application Form.

If the Council receives more than one Common Application Form, for example both an online and paper application, and they differ, the Council will query this with the applicant.

If the Council receives a Common Application Form from more than one person claiming parental responsibility for the same child, and the content of these applications differs, 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 Common Application Form is submitted.

14. Preferences

Applicants will complete the Common Application Form (CAF) when applying for a secondary school place.

The form allows applicants to:

- List up to **four schools** in order of preference
- Provide reasons for each preference
- Rank preferences (e.g. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th)
- Include relevant details such as the child's home address and any siblings attending the preferred schools

It is recommended that **all four preferences** are used and that **nearest and catchment schools** are included, even if some are located outside Wokingham Borough. This approach supports a more realistic chance of securing a place.

Where an application includes a school located in another local authority, Wokingham Borough Council will forward the application and any supporting documentation to the relevant authority or academy trust.

Travel Considerations

Most families arrange their own travel to school, including walking, cycling, driving, or using public transport. If a school is selected that is further away than others with available places closer to the child's home, this will be treated as parental preference.

In such cases, the child is unlikely to qualify for free Travel Assistance under the Council's transport policy. While parental preference is respected in the allocation of places, it does not guarantee eligibility for transport assistance. Where the allocated school is not the nearest suitable school, travel arrangements remain the responsibility of the applicant.

15. Supplementary Information Forms

Some schools require a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) to gather additional details relevant to their oversubscription criteria. This form is separate from the Common Application Form (CAF) submitted to the local authority.

A valid application must include both:

- The **CAF**, listing the school as a preference; and
- The **SIF**, submitted directly to the school by the published deadline (where required)

Failure to submit a required SIF by the deadline may significantly reduce the likelihood of a place being offered at that school.

SIFs are only required for applicants seeking consideration under specific oversubscription criteria.

For the 2027/2028 primary and junior admissions round, the following Wokingham Borough schools require a SIF:

- [St Teresas Catholic School](#)
- [Finchampstead CofE Primary School](#)
- [St Dominic Savio Catholic School](#)
- [St Peter's CofE Primary School](#)

SIFs should be downloaded from the school's website and sent directly to the school.

Applicants listing out-of-borough schools should check those schools' admissions policies to determine whether a SIF is required.

Where a Wokingham resident submits a SIF to an academy, voluntary aided, or foundation school, it will not be treated as a valid application unless the school is also listed as a preference on the CAF submitted to Wokingham Borough Council.

16. Submitting the Common Application Form - Applicants living in the Wokingham Borough

Applicants will need to create a citizens portal account and complete an online application.

The web address for the citizens portal is:

- https://schoolsonline.wokingham.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/en

If applicants are unable to apply online, they should email the school admissions team at schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk for details on how to complete a paper application.

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

Any applications received directly by a school must be forwarded to the Council's School Admissions team prior to the deadline for applications.

17. Submitting the Common Application Form - Applicants living outside the Wokingham Borough

Applicants living outside the Wokingham Borough, who want their child to attend a Wokingham school, should apply using the Common Application Form provided by their home local authority. The applicant's home local authority will then forward any preferences for Wokingham Borough schools along with any supporting documents to the Wokingham Borough Council's School Admissions team.

Any applications submitted to the School Admissions team by an applicant who lives outside the Wokingham Borough will not be processed and instead will be forwarded to the applicant's home local authority.

18. Determining eligibility for places

The decision about whether a child gets a place at a school listed on an application is made by the **admission authority** for that school.

- For community and voluntary-controlled schools, Wokingham Borough Council is the admission authority.
- For academies, foundation, and voluntary-aided schools, the school or academy trust is the admission authority.

When does the Council make a decision?

The Council will only decide which school to offer when:

- It is acting as the admission authority for a school (e.g., community or voluntary-controlled schools).
- An applicant qualifies for more than one school.
- An applicant does not qualify for any of the schools listed on the application.

How eligibility is checked:

- Each school uses its own published admission rules to rank applicants.
- If a school has delegated this process to Wokingham's School Admissions Team, we apply the school's rules on their behalf.
- If a school has not delegated, the school itself will rank applicants and tell us the outcome.

Applications for schools outside Wokingham

- Applications for schools in other local authority areas are forwarded to the relevant authority, which applies its own admission arrangements.

Published Admission Number (PAN)

- Each school must offer at least the number of places set by its Published Admission Number (PAN).

19. Allocating school places

If applicants live in the Wokingham Borough, here's how places are offered:

- One offer per child – applicants will only receive one school place offer.
- All the schools listed on the application will be considered.

What happens next?

- If a child qualifies for only one school listed, they will be offered a place there.
- If a child qualifies for more than one school, they will be offered the school ranked highest.
- If a child does not qualify for any preferred schools, we will:
 - Offer a place at their **catchment school** (if there is space and if applicable).

- If that's full, offer a place at the **nearest Wokingham school with spaces available**.

Other important points:

- If a child is offered a place at a school in another local authority, we will let that authority know.
- No places are held back or reserved at any school.

20. Applicants living outside the Wokingham Borough

If applicants live in another local authority area and apply for a Wokingham school:

- Wokingham will send details about a child's eligibility for a place to their home local authority.
- The home authority will decide which school to offer, using its own co-ordinated admissions process.
- They will let Wokingham know if a child has been allocated a place at a Wokingham school or if the place is not needed.

21. Notifying the governing bodies and head teachers at Wokingham Borough schools

After school places have been allocated Wokingham Borough Council will send a list of children offered places to:

- Governing bodies of academies, foundation, and voluntary-aided schools.
- Headteachers of community and voluntary-controlled schools.

Important:

- This list may change later if allocations are updated.
- Schools must not contact parents until the Council has informed families of their offers.

22. Notifying Applicants

Notifications about the outcome of an application will be sent to applicants' on 16th April of the admission year, the National Offer Day for Primary and Junior admissions.

Those applicants that applied using the online form will be informed electronically where possible, and these communications will likely be received before other applicants are informed by non-electronic means.

It may not always be possible to offer all children a school place on National Offer Day. National Offer Day is the start of the offer process and offers continue to be made when places become available after parents accept and decline their offer of a school place and as parents make alternative arrangements for their child's education.

If the school place allocated is at an academy, voluntary aided or foundation school, or is in another local authority area, the notification sent to applicants will be on behalf of the school's admission authority. Applicants will be asked to let the School Admissions Team know by 1 May of the admission year if they do not want their child to take up the school place allocated.

23. Nursery and Foundation One Admissions

Admission to nursery and Foundation One classes at state-funded schools, or other early years' providers at, or linked to particular schools, including co-located children's centers, does not guarantee or give any priority for admission to primary education at that school.

24. Late Applications (Before Offers Are Made)

The closing date for secondary school applications is 15th January. Applications received after this date are classed as late and processed after all on-time applications and after responses to offers have been received. Changes to existing applications received after 15th January are also treated as late.

Exceptional circumstances:

Applications received after 15 January may be treated as on-time only in **exceptional cases**, and supporting evidence must be provided. Examples include:

- A sibling moves school after 15 January, requiring a change in preferences.
- Significant medical or social changes in the family after 15 January that affect school choice.

To request this, applicants should contact Admissions Services and send evidence to: schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk

If no evidence is provided, the application will be treated as late and processed **after National Offer Day**.

25. Late Applications (After Offer Day and Before the End of the School Year - August 31st)

- All late applications will be processed using the school's admission criteria where necessary.
- Where possible, a place will be offered at a preferred school with spaces available.
- If this is not possible, a place will be allocated at:
 - The **designated area school** (if spaces are available/is applicable), or
 - The **nearest or most accessible school with spaces** for Wokingham residents.
- No offers will be made for children living outside Wokingham Borough, as their home authority is responsible for providing a school place.
- Parents retain the right of appeal.

26. Change of preference

Parents who wish to amend their application before the closing date will be allowed to do so if they amend their online application by the closing date. If a paper application has been submitted, they will need to email a revised application to school admissions by the closing date.

Parents who wish to amend their application after the closing date should complete a change of preference form. No consideration will be given to their request until after the offer date and

responses to offers have been received.

It should be noted that if an alternative school place has been allocated by the local authority as no parental preference received by the closing date could be met, any changes of preference can adversely affect access to assistance with school transport.

27. Applications after the normal admissions rounds (In-Year applications)

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

28. Accepting an offer

School place offers made on National Offer Day (16 April) must be formally accepted or declined by the applicant.

- Offers can be **accepted or declined online** via the Citizens Portal.
- If no response is received by 1st May, a final reminder will be issued. Failure to respond may result in the offer being withdrawn, allowing the place to be offered to another child.

Accepting the offer confirms the intention to take up the place for the start of Reception, or Year 3 for Junior Schools, in September. If the offer is declined, the applicant should indicate whether alternative arrangements have been made or if they wish to remain on waiting lists for higher-ranked schools.

Applicants who decline an offer and do not secure a place at another school may be referred to the School Admissions Team for further support. In cases where a child remains without a school place, the local authority may consider intervention, including referral to the Education Welfare Service, to ensure the child is placed in education.

It is important to note that:

- Accepting an offer does not affect the child's position on waiting lists for higher-ranked schools.
- Declining an offer without securing an alternative may result in delays in placing the child in education.
- The local authority reserves the right to withdraw offers where deadlines are missed and no valid reason is provided.

29. Waiting lists - How children are placed on a waiting list

Children are automatically placed on the waiting list, in criteria order, for any Wokingham school listed as a higher preference than the school offered.

Waiting lists are maintained by the local authority for its schools, where necessary, until the end of the academic year to fill places that may become available. The length of time on the list does not affect priority.

Positions on waiting lists can change due to pupil withdrawals or new/revised applications. Lists are reviewed and updated when:

- A child is added or removed.
- A child's circumstances change and affect priority.
- Parents respond to checks confirming they wish to remain on the list.

Waiting lists close at the end of the school year. Applications must be resubmitted from June onwards to remain on the list for the following year.

Children admitted under a local authority direction or through the Fair Access Protocol take precedence over those on a waiting list.

Applications to join a waiting list can be made online each year. Parents must inform the School Admissions Team in writing if they wish to remove their child from the list or if circumstances change.

After the normal admissions round closes on 31 August for Reception and Year 3 transfers, waiting lists will usually transfer to schools by October half-term unless the governing body requests the local authority to continue managing them. Waiting list information will be available according to the agreed timeline.

30. Waiting lists - Prioritisation

Children on a waiting list are ranked using the school's **oversubscription criteria**, based on the most up-to-date information available.

Whenever a new application is added or an existing applicant's circumstances change, the waiting list is reordered according to the school's criteria. This ensures that priority reflects current circumstances rather than the date the application was made.

31. Waiting lists - Allocation of places to those on the waiting list

If the number of pupils on roll falls below the school's **Published Admission Number (PAN)**, any available places will be offered to children at the top of the waiting list, based on the school's oversubscription criteria.

When a place becomes available while the waiting list is active:

- The admission authority for the school must offer the place to the highest-ranked child on the list at that time.
- Wokingham Borough Council, as the coordinating authority, oversees waiting lists in partnership with schools that manage their own admissions and with other local authorities

Other admission authorities are required to inform the Council when places become available so that allocations can be coordinated. This ensures that each child receives **only one school place**.

32. Appeals

Parents and carers have a legal right to appeal if their child is refused a place at a preferred school. This right does not apply if a place is offered but in a different year group than requested.

- This right does **not** apply if a place is offered but in a different year group than requested.
- Appeals can only be made for the year group applied for. If a different year group is later requested, a new application must be submitted. There is no appeal right for a different year group unless that new application is refused.
- Parents can appeal even if they have accepted another school place and can appeal for more than one school.
- Only one appeal can be made for the same school in a single academic year unless there is a significant and material change in circumstances.
- Appeals against a decision not to admit a child must be submitted on the official appeal form within 20 days of the online notification refusing a place.
- For on-time applications, the deadline for lodging an appeal is 15 May of the admission year.

When appeals are heard:

- Appeals submitted by the deadline are usually heard in June or July.
- Appeals submitted after 15 May will be heard in July or August where possible but may be delayed depending on when they are received.

Group hearings:

- If multiple applicants appeal for the same school, appeals may be heard together in a group appeal for the first stage.

Who arranges appeals:

- Wokingham Borough Council arranges appeals for community and voluntary-controlled schools.
- Governing bodies of schools that manage their own admissions must arrange their own appeals, although they may choose to use the local authority's service
- Applicants will be informed if admitting additional children would breach the infant class size limit

Infant Class Size Rule:

For Reception, Year 1, and Year 2, the law limits classes to **30 pupils per qualified teacher**. This means appeals for these year groups can only succeed in very limited circumstances, such as:

- The admission arrangements were not applied correctly.
- The decision was unreasonable in law.

33. Appeals for schools outside the Wokingham Borough

Where the appeal is for a school in another local authority area, local appeal arrangements may differ from the above. If this is the case, applicants are advised to contact that local authority to further discuss the appeals process in their areas

34. Changes to allocations because of successful appeals

The outcome of the appeals process may mean there are further variations to the allocation of places at some schools. All changes will be communicated between the various admission authorities operating within this scheme, including the Council, schools that are their own admission authority, and other Local Authorities

35. Scheme For New School Inclusion In Co-Ordinated Schemes

New schools can be included in the co-ordinated admissions scheme if the sponsor requests it and the local authority agrees. Parents will be able to apply for these schools as part of the normal admissions process if the Secretary of State for Education gives initial approval before the Parent's Guide is published (by 12 September in the year before entry).

How to apply for a new school:

- Applications must be made through Wokingham Borough Council by listing the new school as a preference on the application form (online or paper).
- National deadlines apply:
 - 15 January for primary admissions.
 - 31 October for secondary admissions.
- Online applicants in Wokingham will see the school listed by name (not by school number, as this is only issued after the Funding Agreement is signed).

Applicants outside Wokingham:

- Can apply for the new school using a paper form provided by the school.
- Preferences for other Wokingham schools must still be made through the home local authority.

Approval and offers:

- If the Funding Agreement is signed by:
 - 24 March 2027 (primary) or
 - 29 January 2027 (secondary),

Wokingham Borough Council will make offers on behalf of the academy trust on National Offer Day. Parents must confirm acceptance within 14 days.

If approval is delayed:

- Applications for the proposed school will be considered outside the co-ordinated scheme.
- Parents will receive an offer for an existing school based on their other preferences and will be notified separately about the new school.
- This may result in parents holding two offers temporarily until final approval is confirmed.

Next steps if two offers are held:

- Parents will be asked to confirm which school they accept.
- If the new school is chosen, the original allocation will be withdrawn and the place offered to another child from the waiting list.

Parents outside Wokingham will be informed when a final offer can be made, and the home local authority will be notified if the offer is accepted. If a place cannot be offered at the new school, parents will be informed of their right to appeal and how to do so.

36. Relevant Area

What Is the “Relevant Area” for Admissions Consultation?

Local authorities must set a “**relevant area**” to guide who they consult with when making changes to school admission arrangements. This area must cover the whole borough and is reviewed every two years.

In Wokingham, the relevant area is the same as the borough boundary. This approach is consistent with neighbouring councils and helps ensure smooth coordination across borders.

Who is consulted when changes are proposed?

If Wokingham Borough Council is responsible for admissions, it will consult with:

- Wokingham School Admissions Forum (or alternative body if adopted)
- Local schools (community, voluntary controlled, and academies)
- Diocesan authorities
- Neighbouring councils
- Relevant parents and carers
- Other people or organisations with an interest in admissions

If a school manages its own admissions (e.g. academies or voluntary aided schools), it must consult with:

- Wokingham Borough Council
- Wokingham School Admissions Forum (or alternative body if adopted)
- Other schools in the borough
- Diocesan authorities
- Neighbouring councils within 8 km (for secondary schools) or 3.2 km (for primary schools)
- Relevant parents and others with an interest in the arrangements

This process ensures that any proposed changes to how school places are offered are fair, transparent, and take into account the views of the wider community.