



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Your Guide To Secondary School Admissions

For Entry In September 2026

Application Deadline: 31st October 2025

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

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Key Dates at a glance

Admissions Round	Secondary - Year 6 into Year 7
Birth range	01/09/2014 - 31/08/2015
Website opens and you can apply online	12 September 2025
Closing date for applications	31 October 2025
Deadline for house moves and additional supporting evidence	31 December 2025
National Offer Day & Notifications sent (1 March 2026 is a Sunday, therefore next working day)	2 March 2026
Response deadline (Acceptances and refusals of any offer should be made by this date)	16 March 2026
Waiting list information available from	18 March 2026
Late applications, change of address, change of preference outcomes will be communicated from	18 March 2026
Appeals should be received by this date to be heard together (20 school days following notification that application was unsuccessful)	27 March 2026
Appeals received on-time should be considered by this date (within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals)	15 June 2026
Round closes (Late applications need to be made up to 31 August. From 1 September admissions need to be made via an In Year application)	31 August 2026

1. When will your child move to Secondary School

If your child was born between 1 September 2014 and 31 August 2015, you will need to apply for your child to start secondary school in September 2026.

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. When to submit a school place application

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

4. Who to apply to for a school place

You must apply to your home local authority, (the Council you pay your council tax to). You can apply either online or by using a paper application form. Wokingham Borough residents should make applications to Wokingham Borough Council online, via the [**Council's Citizen Portal**](#) known as the Common Application Form (CAF).

- You can name up to **four preferences** on your application.
- You can only make **one application**
- You cannot list independent/ private schools on your application form. These are fee paying schools and you must apply to the school directly.
- You must name any school you wish to apply for regardless of which Local Authority it is in. For example, if you live within Wokingham but want to apply for a school in Reading or Bracknell, you must name the school on your Wokingham application form. This means if you are a Wokingham resident you will need to apply to Wokingham Borough Council and must name any school that you wish to apply for, even if it is within another Local Authority.
- You cannot apply direct to other local authorities or schools.
- It is your responsibility to contact other admissions authorities to obtain information about their schools and the criteria that is relevant to admission at that school and to complete any additional forms that may be required.

5. Types of schools

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

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

Community and Maintained Schools

Wokingham Borough Council is the admission authority for these schools and makes decisions about the policy they use for school admissions.

Academy Schools (Non – Maintained Schools)

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

Voluntary Aided Schools (Non – Maintained Schools)

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

Free Schools (Non – Maintained Schools)

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

6. Which schools to apply for

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

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

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

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

IMPORTANT - If you do not name the nearest schools in your original school place application, your child is unlikely to be eligible for travel assistance. The nearest school may not be a Wokingham school or your catchment/designated area school. Please check if a school in a neighboring Local Authority is a closer school to your home address, if getting your child to and from school may be an issue for you.

7. How many schools to apply for

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

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

8. Catchment/Designated area

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. If the school is full in your child's year group, they may not be offered a place—even if you live within the catchment area.

9. Deciding which schools to include as a preference

When choosing schools to list on your application, we recommend considering those closest to your home address, including schools in neighbouring boroughs. These are often easier to travel to and may be more likely to offer your child a place.

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 Past Allocations

To help guide your choices, you can view how places were allocated at Wokingham secondary schools in previous years:

- [Secondary school allocation summary 2025 \(PDF document\)](#)
- [Secondary school allocation summary 2024 \(PDF document\)](#)
- [Secondary school allocation summary 2023 \(PDF document\)](#)
- [Secondary school allocation summary 2022 \(PDF document\)](#)

If your nearest school is outside Wokingham, check past allocation data for neighbouring boroughs:

- [Bracknell Forest Schools](#)
- [Reading Borough Schools](#)

Final Tips

List schools in genuine order of preference, including any out-of-borough options.

If you only list one school and don't meet its criteria, your child may be offered a place at the nearest school with available spaces, which may not be local.

You can compare schools in England on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). The [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website provides a tool to compare school performance, allowing you to review performance data, test and exam results, Ofsted ratings, and other relevant information.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. Completing your application

If you live in Wokingham Borough, you can apply for a school place either:

- **Online** via the Council's [**Council's Citizen Portal**](#), or
- By requesting a paper application form from: [**schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk**](mailto:schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk)

We strongly encourage you to apply online, as it is quicker and more secure. If you apply this way:

- **You'll receive an email notification on National Offer Day.**
- **You can then log into the portal to view your offer and accept or decline it online.**

If you submit a paper application and provide an email address, you'll also receive your offer by email from 9am on National Offer Day. If no email is provided, your offer will be sent by post. Please note **results cannot be given over the phone**.

To avoid delays:

- Submit your application **online wherever possible**.
- Scan and email any supporting documents to: **schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk**

Child's Name and Address

Please provide your child's legal name and the address where they live permanently. This should be the address where your child will continue to live beyond the date they start school.

If your child lives between two homes due to separated parents sharing responsibility, you must agree on one address to use for the school application. **The address used must be where the child spends the majority of their time.**

If care is shared equally (50/50), parents must jointly decide which address to use. The Admissions Team will assess whether the chosen address can be accepted, based on the information provided and records held.

You must not use the address of a relative, friend, or childminder. If you have recently moved or are planning to move, you must send proof of your child's new permanent address.

School preferences

You can name up to four schools on your application, listed in order of preference. Your first preference should be the school you want most for your child, as we will aim to offer a place there if possible.

Please note:

- Do not include independent (private) schools on your application. These must be applied for directly with the school.
- Think carefully about the order in which you list schools. If your child qualifies for more than one, you will only receive an offer for the highest-ranked school for which they are eligible. Lower-ranked offers will be automatically withdrawn.

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**.

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.

Siblings

If your child has a brother or sister already attending one of your preferred schools, you may be eligible for sibling priority. To ensure this is considered:

- Include details of the youngest sibling currently attending the school (not the nursery) or its linked junior school.
- The sibling must still be attending the school in September of the year your child starts.
- Include step-siblings, fostered, or adopted children living at the same address.

If sibling details are not provided, your child may be given lower priority for a place.

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 by the deadline. Wokingham Borough Council may verify this information with the relevant local authority.

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.

Important:

- This criterion can **only be considered for your highest preference school**.
- If you tick the medical/social box for multiple preferences, **only the highest one will be reviewed** under this criterion.

Please note that all schools are equipped to support children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Having SEN alone does not automatically qualify for priority under the medical/social criterion unless there is an exceptional need that makes one specific 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 by the application deadline 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.

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.

Supporting Evidence Checklist

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**

Parent and carer declaration

When submitting your application, you will be asked to confirm:

- You have read the admissions guide
- You have parental responsibility and the agreement of all others with parental responsibility
- If there is a dispute, it must be resolved privately or through the family court. The Council cannot intervene in private disagreements.
- Applications subject to unresolved disputes may be delayed or withdrawn, which could affect your child's chance of securing a preferred school place.

Please read the checklist and declaration carefully before submitting your application by the deadline.

13. The preference system when applying for secondary school places

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

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

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

All local authorities use an equal preference system to allocate school places. Here's how it works:

1. You can list up to four schools on your application, in the order you prefer them.
2. Your child is considered for each school independently, based on that school's published admissions criteria.
3. If your child qualifies for a place at only one school, that's the school you'll be offered.
4. If your child qualifies for more than one school, you'll be offered the one highest on your list.
5. If your child doesn't qualify for any of your preferences, we'll offer a place at:
 - Your designated area school (if places are still available), or
 - The nearest school with space, measured in a straight line from your home.

You'll also receive information about:

- Waiting lists for your preferred schools
- Your right to appeal any decision

14. School admission rules

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

All Secondary schools in Wokingham set their own admissions criteria, but applications for these schools should still be made to Wokingham Borough School Admissions Service using the [Parent Portal](#).

15. Own admission authority schools

Please click on the school details below to be taken to their website for further information about each school and to view their oversubscription criteria.

School details	Published Admission Number	Oversubscription criterion and distance of last place allocated in the last admission round	
<u>Bohunt</u>	270	<u>Oversubscribed</u>	5. Designated area not attending a linked school – 3.132 radial miles
<u>Bulmershe</u>	240	<u>Oversubscribed</u>	F. Any other child – 2.169 radial miles
<u>The Emmbrook</u>	210	<u>Oversubscribed</u>	F. Any other child – 5.425 radial miles
<u>The Forest School</u>	210	All preferences met	
<u>The Holt (Girls only)</u>	240	<u>Oversubscribed</u>	E. Designated area – 2.246 radial miles
<u>Maiden Erleigh</u>	279	<u>Oversubscribed</u>	4. Designated area – 0.928 radial miles
<u>Oakbank</u>	112	All preferences met	
<u>The Piggott</u>	206	<u>Oversubscribed</u>	G. Any other child – 3.136 radial miles
<u>St Crispins</u>	210	<u>Oversubscribed</u>	F. Any other child – 2.277 radial miles
<u>Waingels College</u>	240	All preferences met	

16. 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' needs. 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.

17. Supplementary Information Forms (SIF)

Some schools require you to complete a **Supplementary Information Form (SIF)** to provide additional details needed to assess your application fully against their admissions criteria. This is **in addition to** submitting the **Common Application Form (CAF)** to your local authority.

You **must** submit a CAF to the local authority, even if you have already completed a school's SIF.

It is **vital** that you submit any required SIFs **by the school's deadline**. Failure to do so may significantly reduce the likelihood of your child being offered a place at that school.

If you are applying under the **medical and/or social grounds** oversubscription criteria for any of the schools listed below in the Wokingham Borough, you must:

- Complete the school's **SIF**
- **Send the SIF and all supporting documents directly to the school**

You can download the SIF by clicking on the school's name below or by visiting the school's website:

- [The Emmbrook School](#)
- [St Crispin's](#)
- [Waingels](#)
- [Bulmershe](#)

Please note: **Out-of-borough schools may also require SIFs.** It is your responsibility to check each school's requirements before listing them on your application.

Where an academy, voluntary-aided, or foundation school receives a SIF from a Wokingham resident, it will **not** be treated as a valid application unless the school is also listed as a preference on the Common Application Form.

Out of borough schools may require SIFs, please ensure you check the schools' requirements before listing them on your application.

18. Change of preference

If an older child transfers to another school after 31 December and you need to change your younger child's school preferences as a result, please contact the Admissions Team at schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk

Please be aware that the ability to make changes depends on the stage of the admissions process. Depending on when your older child transfers, it may be possible to update your preferences.

If there is a change in medical or social circumstances within the family **after 31 December** that affects your child's school placement needs, please also contact the Admissions Team.

To request changes to your secondary school preferences after National Offer Day, you must complete a [**Change of Preference Form**](#). These forms will be considered after the initial response deadline has passed.

The schools listed on the Change of Preference Form will replace your original preferences, so please include any schools you still wish to be considered for.

If you live outside of Wokingham, you must submit your application to your home local authority.

Some academies or out-of-borough schools may require supporting evidence to be sent directly to the school or their local authority. Please check each school's published requirements and deadlines carefully.

19. Applying after the closing date

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

20. Proof of residence

Your home address is a key part of how your school application is assessed. The address you provide **must be your child's single, permanent home**, where they will continue to live **beyond the date they start school**.

We will check addresses against Wokingham Borough Council's council tax records. If a place is offered based on an incorrect or misleading address, the offer may be **withdrawn**.

If we need to verify your address, we will ask for **proof of both entry and exit**:

Entry proof may include:

- A signed tenancy agreement (minimum 12 months)
- A solicitor's letter confirming **exchange of contracts** for a house purchase
- Posting or marching-out orders (for armed forces families)
- Evidence of registration for council tax, electoral roll, or driving licence at the new address

Exit proof may include:

- Confirmation from a landlord or letting agent of the end of a tenancy
- Solicitor's letter confirming **exchange of contracts on** of sale of a previous property
- Other documents showing disposal of a previous address

We may also request details of ownership, tenancy, or disposal of any previous addresses. Additional information may be requested at any time.

If you are already living at the address:

Please provide a copy of your **current council tax statement** for the financial year. If applying online, you may be asked to enter your Council Tax Reference Number.

If you are moving to a new address:

- **Renting:**

Provide a full copy of your signed tenancy agreement (minimum 12 months).

For 6-month tenancies, we require written confirmation from the landlord explaining why a 12-month agreement is not issued, or confirmation that it is a rolling tenancy with the expectation of staying longer than 6 months.

Short-term tenancies may not be accepted.

- **Buying a property:**

Provide a letter or email directly from your solicitor confirming exchange of contracts.

- **Buying a new build property:**

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.

- **Armed Forces:**

Submit a copy of your posting or marching-out order. A school place can only be allocated once proof of residence is received.

The deadline for submission of evidence to support a move for secondary school applications must be received by school admissions by the deadline stated in 'key dates at a glance'.

21. Changing your address

Moving before 31 December

If you move address before 31 December, you must notify us in writing by emailing schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk and provide evidence of your new address and disposal of your old address. You can also make changes to the schools you wish to apply to.

Moving after 31 December

If moving to or within the Wokingham Borough, address evidence received after 31 December cannot be considered for the initial offer of places. Your address will not be updated until **after** national offer day. It is unlikely you will receive an update from School Admissions until **after the initial response deadline** has been reached because we will need to see what places become available at oversubscribed schools. Please refer to the key dates at the start of this guide. It will be used for waiting list purposes after national offer day where required.

Moving after National Offer Day and before 31 August

If you are moving into the Borough you will need to submit a **late application** and attach your supporting address evidence. We will not take your application over from your current LA until address evidence has been received. If there is a delay in providing your address evidence, we recommend you update your school preferences with your current local authority and request Wokingham School preferences to be added.

The admission address on your application should be your child's single permanent home and your child is expected to be **resident at this address beyond the date of your child starting school**. If you are moving within the Wokingham Brough before 31 August, you **must** email school admissions notifying them of your change of address and attach your supporting address evidence. If you wish to change your school preferences, please complete a [**Change of Preference Form**](#) available on our website.

Important - If a child has been allocated a place at a school and then subsequently moves from the address on the application before 31 August, the Local Authority will revisit the allocation and **may remove the place if the child is no longer eligible for the space**. At that point, any allocation would be subject to availability at that time.

22. Siblings

We define siblings as brothers or sisters living at the same address as their primary place of residence. This includes:

- Full siblings
- Half siblings
- Step siblings
- Foster siblings

All siblings must be living at the same address to be considered under the sibling criterion. Siblings who live at different addresses will not be considered under this criterion.

A sibling link means your application may be given higher priority than those without a sibling at the school, depending on the school's admissions criteria.

Important: For most schools, sibling priority is considered after designated area children, so having a sibling at the school does not guarantee a place.

Year 11 siblings

If your child has a sibling currently in Year 11, please be aware that they may not be on roll when your younger child starts school the following September.

In these cases, the sibling link may not apply, depending on the school's admissions policy. Please check with the school or the Admissions Team if you're unsure.

Having children at different schools can be challenging. While many families are successful in securing places for younger siblings, this is not guaranteed, even if an older sibling already attends the school.

23. Measuring home to school distance

We use the Capita ONE system to calculate the distance between your child's home and the school. This system measures the distance in miles to three decimal places, using a straight-line (as-the-crow-flies) calculation from the home address (start point) to the school (end point).

Important: The distances calculated by Capita ONE may differ from those shown on personal or online mapping tools such as Google Maps, satellite navigation systems, or other route planners. These tools often use road routes or walking paths, which are not used for admissions purposes. Only the distance calculated by the local authority's Capita ONE system will be used when assessing applications under distance-based criteria.

24. National Offer Day

On **National Offer Day**, we inform parents which school has been offered to their child.

- If you applied via the Citizen's Portal and requested email notifications, you will receive an email from 9am on National Offer Day.
- If you submitted an on-time paper application and provided an email address, you will also receive an email from 9am.
- If you did not provide an email address, your offer letter will be posted on National Offer Day.

Each local authority is responsible for informing its residents of the outcome of their application, **even if the school offered is outside their borough**.

Please note: It may not be possible to offer all children a school place on National Offer Day. This day marks the **start of the offer process**, and further offers are made as places become available—such as when families accept or decline offers or make alternative arrangements.

Waiting lists typically take **4–6 weeks** to settle after the initial response deadline.

25. Reasons for Refusal School Admissions

If we have not been able to offer your child a place at one of your preferred schools, it is because:

- The school received **more applications than available places**, and not all requests could be met.
- Places are allocated according to the **published admissions criteria** of the relevant admission authority.
- Your child's application may not have been **ranked high enough** under those criteria to be offered a place.

If you listed own admission authority schools (such as academies or voluntary aided schools) and one of these was ranked higher than the school offered, the trust or governing body of that school was responsible for ranking applications. They were unable to offer your child a place because your application did not meet a high enough priority under their criteria.

If you applied for a school in another local authority (LA) and were refused a place, you should contact that LA directly for more information about the decision.

Late Applications: If you applied after the closing date, and we were unable to offer a place at your preferred school, it is because the school had already reached its admissions number (the maximum number of children that can be admitted to the year group) during the initial round of allocations.

26. Waiting Lists

Your child's name will automatically be placed on the waiting list, in criteria order, of any Wokingham school that you named as a higher preference than the school you have been offered.

Your child will remain on the waiting list(s) for the whole of Year 7 (until 31 July 2027). If, at any time you want your child's name to be removed from a waiting list, please confirm by email to the School Admissions Team and your request will be actioned.

Key waiting list information

- The waiting list will include children new to the area who weren't able to make an application on time.
- Waiting list positions are subject to change as they must be re-ranked each time a new application is received.
- You should be aware that if an application is received for a child who has higher priority under the school's admission criteria, it can affect your child's position on a waiting list. They can move down as well as up the list.
- Your child can remain on more than one waiting list.
- Wait lists will be closed at the end of a school year (31st July) and parents will need to re-apply for a place at their preferred school.
- Children who are the subject of a direction by the local authority to admit or who are allocated to a school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over those on a waiting list.
- For schools outside of Wokingham, you must check with them direct whether you have been automatically added to their waiting list(s)

Waiting list positions

Waiting list information will only be provided by email. To request your child's waiting list position, please email schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk including your child's full name and date of birth. Waiting list information will be available from 18 March, however, wait list positions will not settle for approximately 4 to 6 weeks.

To allow the team to focus on processing late applications and fill spaces from waiting lists, we ask that parents keep enquiries about waiting list positions to a minimum until May.

Waiting list allocations

If a place becomes available for your child from a waiting list, the School Admissions Team will allocate that place and send you an offer letter. At the same time, the existing offer of a place at a lower preference school will be withdrawn.

Following the new offer, any school(s) listed lower in preference to the offered school will be marked as no longer required.

You should be aware that this could happen up until the 31 August.

Waiting lists from September

From September, waiting lists will be handed over to schools who do not buy into our In Year service. If a place becomes available for your child from a waiting list from September, you will be contacted and will have the opportunity to accept or decline the place.

27. Confirming acceptance of the school offer

Please respond to your offer by the response deadline (see key dates).

Applications received via Citizen's Portal

Please accept or decline the school offered by [logging into the Citizen Portal website.](#)

Paper applications

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

If you are not happy with the place offered, we recommend that you accept the place and remain on the waiting list for higher preferred schools. Accepting the offered place does not impact your chance of gaining a place from a wait list but will ensure your child has a school place for September.

28. Updating your school preferences

Following National Offer Day if you wish to make changes to your school preferences please complete a [**Change of Preference Form**](#). It is unlikely you will receive an update from School Admissions until **after the initial response deadline** has been reached because we will need to see what places become available at oversubscribed schools. It is strongly recommended that you secure and accept a place at one of the schools that still have availability.

It typically takes 4-6 weeks for waiting list movement to settle following the initial response deadline.

Your child's waiting list position at your preferred schools, or the outcome of an appeal that you decide to make, will not be affected by your child having an alternative school place.

29. School Place appeals

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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.

Entry to Secondary school bulk appeal statistics

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

School	Appeals received	Appeals refused	Appeals Allowed	Appeals withdrawn or settled*
Maiden Erlegh School year 2025	21	19	0	2
Maiden Erlegh School year 2024	29	18	2	9
Maiden Erlegh School year 2023	35	22	1	12
The Holt School year 2025	9	8	0	1
The Holt School year 2024	25	19	1	5
The Holt School year 2023	15	9	2	4

***Settled means the child has either been offered a waiting list position or a place at a higher preferred school. Withdrawn means the parent has chosen not to continue with their appeal.**

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](#).

30. 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**](#)