

Primary to secondary transition in Wokingham Borough

A guide for parents and carers



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WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Overview

Moving from primary school to secondary school can feel like a big step. Many children feel excited, worried, or both, and it can be an anxious time for parents and carers too. If your child has additional needs, you may have extra questions about support, routines and how the move will work in practice.

This booklet is for parents and carers in Wokingham Borough. It focuses on the move from primary to secondary school and offers practical guidance to help your child feel prepared and supported. It explains how the admissions process works for all children, including those with Special Educational Needs or a Disability (SEND), and explores how you can work with your child's current primary school and their new secondary school to plan a smooth transition.

You can read this booklet in any order. You may want to dip into sections as questions arise or use it to support conversations with school staff.

With clear information and a shared approach, the transition to secondary school can feel more manageable for both you and your child.



Contents

Choosing a school	4
Wokingham Borough schools	6
How to apply without an EHCP	9
How to apply with an EHCP	11
Support at secondary school	13
Helping your child through transition	16
Questions to ask when visiting a school	18
Useful links	19
Notes	20

Choosing a school

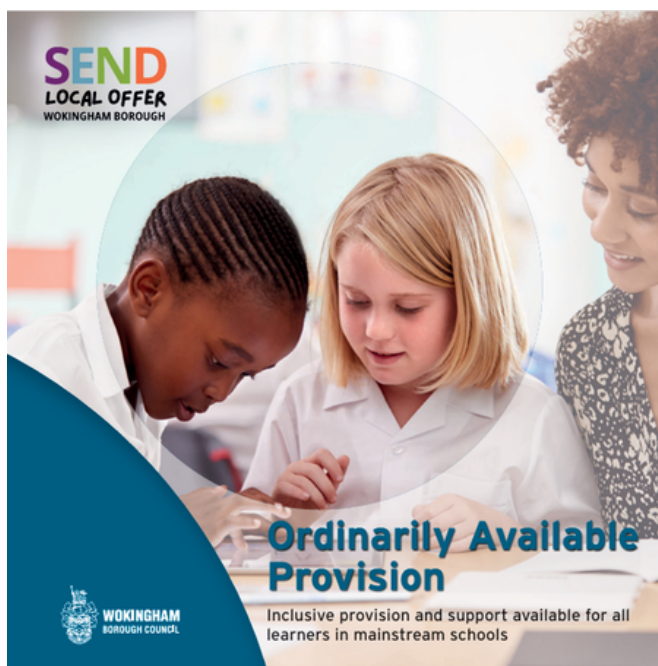
Starting your search early gives you time to visit schools, ask questions and think about what will work best for your child and your family.

You know your child best. Open evenings and open days are a good chance to notice what feels right for your child (for example, the size of the site, the noise level, the routines and how staff talk about support).

All mainstream schools in Wokingham Borough follow the Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) guidance.

This means there is a shared approach across schools in supporting children's learning, wellbeing and participation from the start of secondary school.

This sets out the inclusive approaches and reasonable adjustments that schools are expected to have in place for all pupils, including those with additional needs.



Below are some tips for helping you to decide which school to choose:

Visit more than one school if you can. Many families start with their closest school, then visit two or three others to compare what each school offers.

You are of course welcome to visit more schools than this.

Ask to speak with the school's SENCO or SEND team about your child's needs and what support could be available.

Look at the school website to find out more about how they support pupils who need extra help.

Try to visit during the school day if this option is available as well as at an open evening.

Think about travel:
how your child will get to school each day and how this might affect them.



You may find it helpful to write your questions down before you visit.
There are some suggested questions listed at the end of this guidance.

Wokingham Borough schools

The next few pages provide a list of Wokingham Borough secondary schools, grouped into mainstream and special schools.

Mainstream schools

School	Address	Link to SEND information	Link to transition information
<u>Bohunt School</u>	Sheerlands Road, Arborfield, RG2 9GB	<u>SEND</u>	<u>Transition</u>
<u>The Bulmershe School</u>	Woodlands Avenue, Woodley, RG5 3EU	<u>SEND</u>	<u>Transition</u>
<u>The Emmbrook School</u>	Emmbrook Road, Wokingham, RG41 1JP	<u>SEND</u>	<u>Transition</u>
<u>The Forest School</u>	Robin Hood Lane, Winnersh, RG41 5NE	<u>SEND</u>	<u>Transition</u>
<u>The Holt School (girls only)</u>	Holt Lane, Wokingham, RG41 1EE	<u>SEND</u>	<u>Transition</u>

School	Address	Link to SEND information	Link to transition information
<u>Maiden Erlegh School</u>	Silverdale Road, Earley, RG6 7HS	<u>SEND</u>	<u>Transition</u>
<u>Oakbank School</u>	Hyde End Lane, Ryeish Green, RG7 1ER	<u>SEND</u>	<u>Transition</u>
<u>The Piggott School</u>	Twyford Road, Wargrave, RG10 8DS	<u>SEND</u>	<u>Transition</u>
<u>St Crispin's School</u>	London Road, Wokingham, RG40 1SS	<u>SEND</u>	<u>Transition</u>
<u>Waingels</u>	Waingels Road, Woodley, RG5 4RF	<u>SEND</u>	<u>Transition</u>

Resource bases

Some mainstream schools have resource bases or SEND units. These provide support for children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and specific special educational needs.

You can find a list of resource bases on the **SEND Local Offer**.



Special schools

These schools are for children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and specific special educational needs.

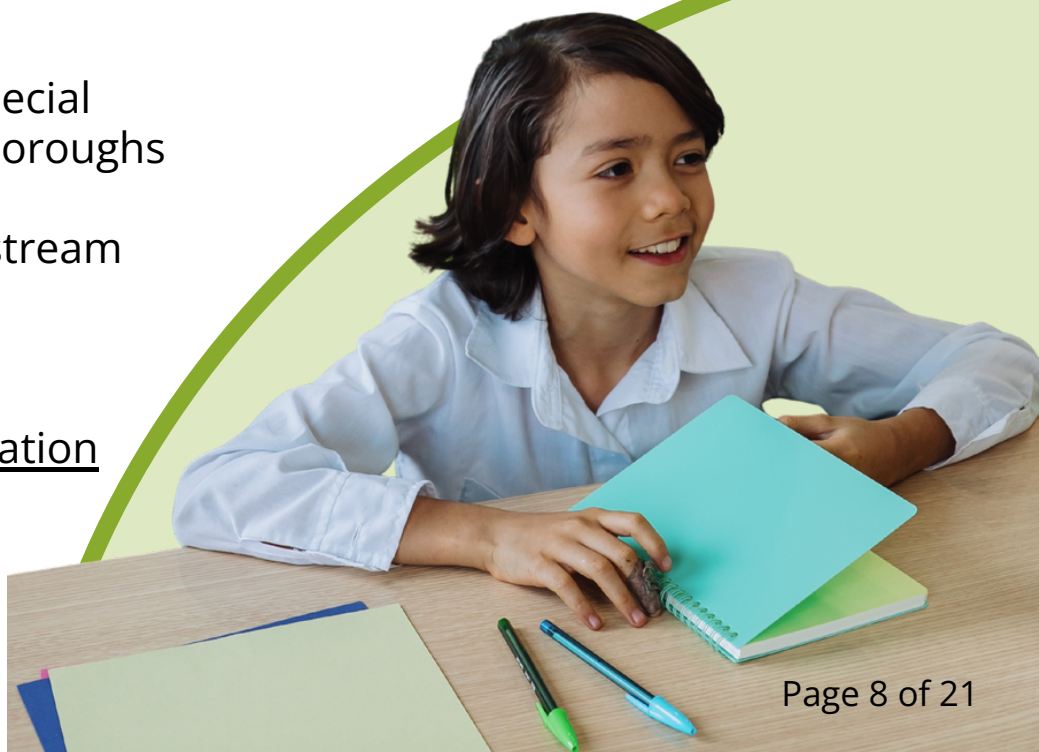
School	Address	Link to SEND information	Link to transition information
<u>Addington School</u> (severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties)	Woodlands Avenue, Woodley, RG5 3EU	<u>SEND</u>	<u>Transition</u>
<u>Chiltern Way Academy</u> (autism)	Gipsy Lane, Wokingham, RG40 2HR	<u>SEND</u>	
<u>Oak Tree School</u> (autism and associated complex needs)	Woodward Close, Winnersh, Wokingham, RG41 5LP	<u>SEND</u>	<u>Transition</u>

Out of borough and independent schools

You can find:

- mainstream and special schools in nearby boroughs
- independent mainstream and special schools

on the [Department for Education's Get Information about Schools register](#).



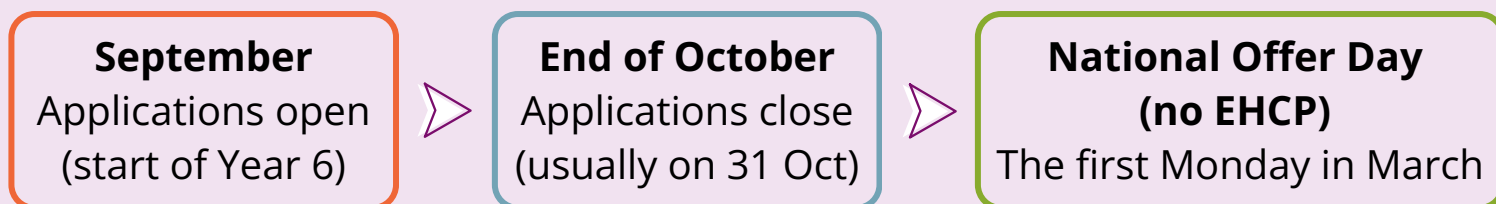
How to apply without an EHCP

The process for applying to secondary school is different, depending on whether your child has or does not have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

If your child does not have an EHCP

- Apply through Wokingham Borough Council's online admissions system (the [Citizens Portal](#)). Applications usually close on 31 October
- List up to four preferred schools, in your order of preference
- For more detail (including guidance on how places are offered), see [Starting and applying for secondary school – age 11](#)

Application timeline



If you are applying for a school in another borough but you live in Wokingham Borough, you will still need to complete the Wokingham application form. You should also check whether you need to complete any additional forms.

You can find neighbouring borough admissions information on their websites:

- [Bracknell Forest](#)
- [Windsor and Maidenhead](#)
- [Hampshire](#)
- [Oxfordshire](#)
- [West Berkshire](#)
- [Reading](#)
- [Slough](#)
- [Surrey](#)

Your school offer: what happens next

If your child does not have an EHCP, you will usually receive your secondary school offer on National Offer Day (the first Monday in March). If you applied online, you can view the offer by logging into the Citizen Portal. If you applied on paper, your offer will be sent to you.

What you need to do

- Respond to the offer by the deadline (accept or decline). You can find out more about how to accept or decline a place on the Citizen Portal.
- If you are not happy with the place offered, it is usually best to accept the offered place so your child has a school for September and stay on the waiting list for any higher-preference schools. Accepting the place does not stop you being offered a place later from a waiting list.
- You can appeal for a school that has refused your child a place. Information about appeals is on the school admissions pages (see [School admissions appeals and exclusions](#)).
- If your circumstances change (for example, you move house), check the admissions pages for how to update your application or request a change of preference.
- For full guidance, including offer information, waiting lists and appeals, see Wokingham Borough Council's [school admissions pages](#).

How to apply with an EHCP

Children with EHCPs have a separate school admissions process for moving to a new school. This process is known as a **phase transfer**. The process is led by Wokingham Borough Council's SEND Team. You can find a phase transfer timeline on the next page.

The SEND Team usually holds an online information and Q&A session for parents and carers about the phase transfer process in the summer term of Year 5. More information about this will be sent to families and schools nearer the time.

Most children with an EHCP will attend their local mainstream school, with the right support in place. A smaller number of children may need a specialist resource base in a mainstream school, or a specialist school.



EHCP phase transfer timeline

By end of Year 5:

You will have the opportunity to discuss what type of provision may be best at your child's Year 5 EHCP annual review.



September in Year 6:

The SEND Team will write to families to ask which school you would prefer your child to attend.



October to February in Year 6:

The SEND Team will consult with your preferred school and any other schools they consider appropriate to meet your child's needs.



February in Year 6:

By 15 February, the SEND Team will tell you which school or type of school they will be naming and issue an amended final EHC plan.



March to August in Year 6:

In a small number of cases, the type of school or setting is named, but it may not be possible to name a specific school by 15 February. For these families, the SEND Team will continue to speak to education settings and will give you regular updates while they find the right setting for your child.

You can find further information about the phase transfer process on the [SEND Local Offer](#).

Support at secondary school

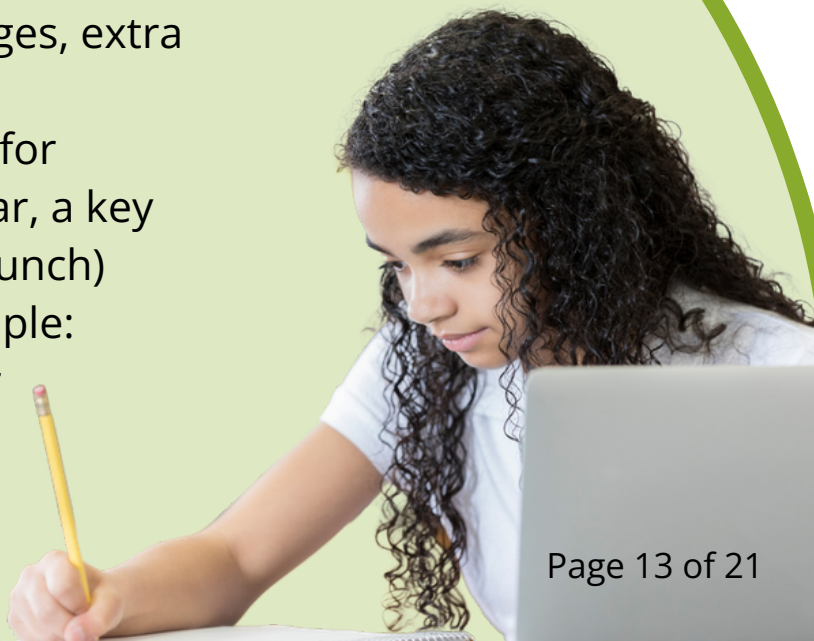
Secondary schools in Wokingham support a wide range of needs. Support is available for all children, including those with additional needs (with or without an EHCP).

Support at secondary school may look a little different to primary school because your child will have more teachers, more lessons and a more detailed timetable.

However, mainstream secondary schools still use Wokingham's Ordinarily Available Provision guidance. This sets out the inclusive support and reasonable adjustments that schools have in place to help children take part and make progress.

Support might include:

- adaptive teaching (lessons and tasks adapted so your child can access learning)
- reasonable adjustments (for example: visual supports, chunked instructions, movement breaks, seating changes, extra processing time)
- pastoral and wellbeing support (for example: form tutor, head of year, a key adult, safe spaces at break and lunch)
- help with organisation (for example: planners, checklists, routines for equipment and homework)
- small group or short, targeted interventions when needed



Delivering provision in an EHCP

If your child has an EHCP, the secondary school will continue to deliver the provision written in Section F of the plan. If any changes to provision are needed, these will be discussed with you and agreed together, usually through the EHCP annual review process.

The secondary school SENCO may attend your child's final annual review in primary school, visit them, and/or meet with the primary school SENCO to help plan a smooth transition.

If you have questions about support, ask who your main contact will be (often the SENCO or a member of the SEND team). You can also speak to your child's form tutor or head of year.

Support during the transition period

Many children feel a mix of excitement and worry about moving to secondary school. They may be concerned about getting lost, making new friends, coping with a bigger site, or adjusting to new routines and expectations. These feelings are common for both children and parents/carers - especially if your child has additional needs.

Schools often offer additional transition support for pupils who may find change harder. Support varies between schools, so the examples on the next page can help you think about what might help your child and what to ask the new school about.

Examples of transition support include:

- **Extra visits to the new school** (for example, a quieter tour, visiting at a calm time of day, or a shorter visit at first).
- **Meeting key staff early**, such as the form tutor, head of year, or SENCO, so your child knows who to go to for help.
- **Sharing information between schools**, such as pupil passports/one-page profiles, support plans and what strategies work well.
- **A named key adult** or a regular check-in (for example, a quick morning meet-and-greet or end-of-day check).
- **Buddying** or peer support, including support at break and lunch.
- **Help understanding the new routines**, such as a visual timetable, a map of the school, photographs of key places, and practice finding classrooms.
- **Support at unstructured times**, for example access to a safe space, a quiet area, or supported clubs at lunch.
- **Organisation support**, such as planners, equipment checklists, colour-coded folders, and help with homework routines.
- **Reasonable adjustments from day one** (for example movement breaks, chunking instructions, reduced sensory load where possible, and extra processing time).
- **A clear plan for difficult moments**, including agreed ways for your child to ask for help or take time out.

These are the kinds of approaches described in the Transition section of [Wokingham's Ordinarily Available Provision guidance](#).

If you think any of these would help, you can ask the new school what they can offer and agree a plan.

If your child is moving to a specialist setting, transition support will be planned around their individual needs. The specialist school will usually work closely with you, your child's primary school and (if relevant) the SEND Team to agree what visits, information sharing and phased support will help your child settle in.

Helping your child through transition

Small, consistent steps can make the move to secondary school feel more manageable. The ideas below are grouped into themes so you can pick what fits your child.

1) Talk about worries and build confidence

- Reassure your child that it is normal to feel nervous (and excited) and encourage them to talk about what they are looking forward to and what they are worried about.
- Help them make simple “what if” plans (for example: who to go to if they feel overwhelmed, what to do if they are late, or where to go if they cannot find a room).
- Focus on your child’s strengths and successes and give specific praise for new things they are trying.
- Try not to share adult worries with your child - keep your messages calm and practical and focus on the positives.

2) Practise routines, organisation and the journey

- Practise the school journey at a quiet time if you can, including where to go if there is a problem.
- Practise key routines in small steps (packing the bag, checking a timetable, getting changed for PE). A simple checklist can help.
- Use photos, a simple map, or a “key places” list (entrance, reception, SEND base, toilets, canteen, safe/quiet space) to build familiarity.
- If organisation is hard, ask the new school what they recommend (for example: colour-coded folders, a locker routine, a spare kit, or a staff check-in to reset at the start/end of the day).
- Get organised in good time (uniform, shoes, bag, stationery). Some children find it helpful to practise wearing new shoes or uniform at home first.

3) Work with school and share the right information

- Make sure key information is shared with the new school. Ask what the primary school will send (for example: one-page profile/pupil passport, support plan, strategies that work, and what can trigger worry or overload).
- If your child has medical needs, allergies, medication, or personal care needs, agree a clear plan with the new school before September.
- Ask who your main contact will be at the new school (often the SENCO, a member of the SEND team, or the head of year) and the best way to communicate.
- If your child is anxious, ask what support is available at unstructured times (break/lunch) and what the school's plan is for "difficult moments" (for example: time-out card, safe space, or a check-in).
- Encourage your child to attend transition days/induction activities and any extra visits offered. If the school runs a summer school, ask whether it would help your child.
- If your child has an EHCP, check how the support in Section F will be put in place from day one and how progress will be reviewed.

4) The first few weeks: wellbeing and settling in

- Keep home routines steady at the start of term (sleep, meals, downtime). Many children are more tired than usual.
- Plan for after-school tiredness (quiet time and a snack before questions).
- If sensory needs are a factor (noise, crowds, uniform, smells), talk to the school early about reasonable adjustments (for example: quieter spaces, ear defenders where appropriate, or a calm entry route).
- If concerns build, contact the form tutor/head of year and/or SENCO early to agree actions and a review date.

Questions to ask when visiting a secondary school

These questions are prompts to help you plan a visit. You do not need to ask them all - choose the ones that feel most relevant to your child's needs, strengths and any worries about the move.

- Who is the main contact for SEND?
- What support can be in place in lessons from day one?
- How will you learn what helps my child, and share this with all staff?
- What transition support is available, and how do we request it?
- If my child feels overwhelmed, who do they go to and what happens next?
- How do you support organisation and homework?
- What is the best way to communicate, and how will you update us?
- What pastoral and wellbeing support is available?
- What do we need to know about day-to-day routines (uniform, equipment, lunch, breaktimes)?
- If my child has an EHCP, how will you deliver Section F and review progress?



Useful links

- [Wokingham SEND Local Offer](#) – local information about SEND services, education options and support.
- [YoungMinds: helping your child manage the move to secondary school](#) – advice for parents and carers on worries, routines and emotional wellbeing.
- [IPSEA: moving to a new phase of education with an EHC plan](#) – information about phase transfer rights and processes.
- [Anna Freud: Moving Up! transition resources](#) – practical resources to support children's wellbeing during transition.
- [Together: moving up to secondary school \(additional needs\)](#) – use access code **bwfamilies**.

School visit notes

Use this space to note down what you noticed during open evenings or school visits (for example: the environment, routines, support available, and any follow-up actions).

Visit the SEND Local Offer:
www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo

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