



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Your Guide to Moving School part way through the school year



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1. What you need to know before applying

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Applications should only be submitted after reviewing the relevant admission guide or additional information can be found in our parents' guide for primary schools and our guide for secondary schools which can be found on our website: [School admissions \(wokingham.gov.uk\)](https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/school-admissions)

2. Key Facts

- You may make an In Year application at any time of year as there are no closing dates for this type of application.
- We will not process in-year applications for school preferences outside of Wokingham. You will have to apply to the appropriate Local Authority to gain admission to a school out of the Wokingham Borough.
- The schools you would like to apply to will determine if you need to apply via Wokingham Borough Council School Admissions or directly to the school themselves. Some schools process their own applications. Check whether the school is "managing their own in years". If it is, you should contact the school directly to enquire about a place for your child.
- If your child does not secure a school place, you should inform the School Admissions Team at schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk as we track children for safeguarding and Children Missing Education purposes.
- Please note we do not process applications for post-16 students (sixth-form, college or training); you should contact the school or college directly for further information.

- If a school doesn't have enough places for everyone who applies, the admission rules for that school will be used to decide who will get a place (over subscription policy). Go to the [admission arrangements page](#) found in the schools admissions policy document on the school website to find out more.
- Applications should only be submitted if you can provide the required supporting evidence with the application. If evidence is not supplied at the time of application your application outcome may be delayed whilst we request documentation from you.
- In-year applications can take 15 school days, from receipt of any evidence required, to process but there may be a delay processing the application due to the volume of applications that are currently being processed. The school admissions team will notify you of the outcome to your application as soon as possible via email. If the application is to be referred to the In Year [Fair Access process](#), then an outcome of that process may take longer than 15 school days.
- The offer of a place in a Wokingham Borough school must normally be taken up within the first half term that the school place is allocated. Failure to take up the offer of a place during this time will mean that the offer is withdrawn, and the place released for another child. Exceptions can only be made where the parent provides documentary evidence that the delay is unavoidable, through no fault of their own, or in the case of Crown Service, service families or looked-after children.

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

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

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

The Local Offer website gives further information regarding the local provision for children and young people with a

disability or special educational needs. More information can be found on; [Education and special educational needs - Wokingham Borough Council](#)

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

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

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

For all school places required from the beginning of September (autumn term), you will need to make an in-year application. You can apply from 5th June onwards. The schools will close for the summer break from July until September so you may not receive outcomes to your applications before they re-open in September. It is also unlikely that your child will start in a school on the first day of the new term in September. Schools will need to see how many children have left over the summer and will then need some time to update their waiting lists to see who is eligible for their offer.

5. Moving schools within Wokingham or the local area

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

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

cause further problems. We would highly recommend that you explore all available options with the current school before deciding to move your child permanently.

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

6. New to the area or Moving House

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is the responsibility of the parents of foreign national children to check that their children have a right under their UK entry conditions to study at a school before applying for a place. You should refer to the government guidelines before

applying <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-admissions-applications-from-overseas-children>. British Nationals arriving/returning from overseas should also follow the same guidance.

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

8. Returning Crown Servants

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

9. Types of schools

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

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

Community and Maintained Schools

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

Academy Schools (Non – Maintained Schools)

Academies receive funding directly from the government and are usually run by an academy trust. They have more control over how they do things than community schools, who are guided by the local authority. Academies are inspected by Ofsted.

They have to follow the same rules on admissions, special educational needs and exclusions as other state schools and students sit the same exams. **Academies set their own admissions policies and term times.**

Voluntary Aided Schools (Non – Maintained Schools)

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

Free Schools (Non – Maintained Schools)

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

10. Which schools to apply for

All parents wishing to apply for a place at a Wokingham community school must apply directly to Wokingham Borough Council via [In-year admissions - moving to a different school \(wokingham.gov.uk\)](https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/in-year-admissions-moving-to-a-different-school). Parents wishing to apply for a place at a Wokingham non-community school must either apply to Wokingham Borough Council or directly to the school ([see section 15 onwards for further information](#)). This also applies to parents who do not live in Wokingham. Parents living outside the borough will not be able to apply through their own local authority for an in-year place at a Wokingham school. If you wish to apply to a school outside the borough of Wokingham, you will need to contact the local authority responsible for the borough

where the school is located for information about the application process.

You should apply for an in-year Wokingham school place if your child:

- lives in Wokingham and does not currently have a school place
- has recently moved or is the process of moving from abroad or elsewhere and needs a school place
- already has a school place but you want to transfer them to a school in Wokingham.

If you live near the Borough boundary, you should consider applying for schools in neighboring authority areas such as Reading, Bracknell, Hampshire and West Berkshire as they may have schools closer to your home address. We only process applications for schools we manage in-year applications for within the Wokingham Borough. For schools outside of Wokingham please contact the relevant Local Authority in which the school you are interested in resides.

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

See the home to school travel assistance section for more information

11. How many schools to apply for

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

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

12. Catchment/Designated area

This is sometimes called “Designated Area”. In essence, it is a geographical area from which children live. They are given priority for admission to a particular school. School catchment areas are used by most schools in their admission policy as one of their oversubscription criteria.

Your home address may not be in the designated area of the school nearest to your house. It is important that you check which catchment areas include your home address before submitting your application, using our [Schools designated areas map](#).

Please be aware that this is for guidance only. For confirmation of your catchment school, contact the School Admissions team for Wokingham Borough Schools, or the schools directly for all Non-Maintained Schools, for example Academy Schools.

Most schools have catchment area children as a high criterion. Children living within a school’s catchment area are generally ranked as a high priority for a place. There is, however, no guarantee of an offer of a place at your catchment school as it may be full or oversubscribed in your child’s year group.

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

When deciding which schools to apply for, we strongly encourage you to consider schools that are nearest to your home address, **including schools that may be in other boroughs**. As well as being easier to get to, such schools are more likely to be able to admit your child.

It is also important that you consider the **admissions criteria** for each school, so you understand how places are allocated and who gets priority when a school is oversubscribed. Different schools have different admissions policies, and these may affect the chances of your child being offered a place.

The regulations allow for a parent to express a preference for a school; this is not the same as being able to 'choose' which school your child attends. You should not make any assumptions that your child is entitled to a place at a preferred school, at a school within your designated area or at the school nearest to your home address. You are not guaranteed a place at a preferred school, and it is important to be realistic when considering which schools, you name as preferences.

Siblings: If you believe your child is eligible for sibling priority at one of your preferred schools, you must include the sibling's details on your application. If you don't, your child may be given lower priority for a place at the school. Include stepbrothers, stepsisters or fostered or adopted children living at the same address as your child because they will be considered as brothers and sisters too.

Reasons for your preference: The application form has space for you to give a reason for naming a school as a preference, but you do not have to complete this. Your reasons for choosing a particular school are not considered during the allocation process unless they are relevant to the school's oversubscription criteria.

It is important that you tell us anything that could affect our decision, for example if you have ticked the box to indicate you wish your application to be considered on medical and/or social grounds. In this box you can tell us if there are specific serious social or medical reasons why your child must go to a particular school.

14. 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 infant/primary schools) on legal class size limits and has been agreed by the school's governing body.

As a parent you may see that more children join a school which takes it over its PAN. This is often, however, due to circumstances outside the control of the school, and is often due to there being successful appeals or if the Local Authority needs to activate the Fair Access Protocol.

A school cannot just decide to admit over its PAN. Schools must consider the physical capacity of the school within current class sizes/structure and overall net capacity, in order to accommodate any additional pupils. The school needs to consider whether it would require any additional resources to meet pupils' need. The admission of the additional pupil/s may also require additional funding and could have an adverse financial impact on the school, which all needs to be considered. It is for these reasons, amongst others, that schools only admit over PAN in exceptional circumstances and where it will not negatively impact the school.

Some schools may consider initially, to allocate above their admission number, based on historical trends relating to the number of declines usually received following National Offer Day. In this circumstance the school will generally not allocate any additional places until numbers have fallen below the agreed admission number.

The Local Authority seeks to maintain a viable school system across the Borough. Whilst the Council remains supportive of meeting individual parental preference where this is reasonable, it also has a much wider remit of ensuring that no school can expand at the expense of another (reducing parental choice), that in-year admissions do not impair future access to a school for particular children or communities, and that the ability to effectively manage localised fluctuations in demand is maintained.

15. How to apply for a school place mid-year: Primary, infant and Junior Schools

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

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

16. How to apply for a school place mid-year: Secondary Schools

If you want to apply to one of the Secondary schools below, then you will need to make an in-year application to Wokingham Borough Council Online

➤ [Maiden Erlegh](#)

➤ [The Holt](#)

17. Applying to schools direct – Primary, Infant and Junior Schools

Some schools will want applications direct, and these schools are as follows;

The following schools administer their own in year admissions. Please refer to the school's website to apply for a place at the school or to view the school's admission arrangements:

Alder Grove Primary	Nine Mile Ride Primary	St Teresa's Catholic Academy
Charvil Piggott Primary	Oaklands Infant	Wescott Infant
Earley St Peter's Primary	Oaklands Junior	Westende Junior
Hatch Ride Primary	Shinfield Infant/Nursery	Emmbrook Infant School
Hawkedon Primary School	South Lake Primary School	Emmbrook Junior School

18. Applying to schools direct – Secondary Schools

The following schools administer their own in year admissions. Refer to the school's website to apply for a place at the school or to view the school's admission arrangements:

[The Emmbrook School](#)

[Oakbank Secondary School](#)

[Waingels College](#)

[Bohunt School](#)

[St Crispins School](#)

[The Bulmershe School](#)

[Forest School](#)

[The Piggott School](#)

19. Applying for Looked after and previously looked after children

If you are making an application for a previously looked after child who was in state care outside of England and ceased to be so as a result of being adopted, you will need to include with your application, evidence of the following:

- that your child has been adopted and;
- that your child was previously in state care outside of England (in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society) immediately before being adopted.

Evidence must be sent to the Admissions Team as priority cannot be given without it. The applicant should note, that by applying under Criterion A they understand that Wokingham Borough Council School Admissions Team may obtain additional confirmation of the child's 'Looked After'/'Previously Looked After' status, either via the Local Authority where the child was taken into, or the residential authorities' duty/triage/social care department.

20. Applying on Serious medical, physical, psychological, or social needs

You can request priority for a place at your preferred 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 a particular school essential. **Please note not all schools consider medical or social needs in their oversubscription criteria so you will need to refer to each school's admissions policy for more information.**

The application will be considered by the relevant admission authority.

'Medical need' does not include mild medical conditions, such as asthma or allergies. 'Social need' does not include a parent's wish that a child attends the school because of a child's aptitude or because their friends attend the school or because of routine child-minding arrangements.

You MUST tick the appropriate box on the application form to show that you wish your application to be considered on medical and/or social grounds.

Submit supporting evidence from a professional, such as a doctor and/or consultant for medical need or a social worker, health visitor, housing officer, the police or probation officer for social need. The supporting evidence must confirm the child or family's medical and/or social need and set out why that need makes it essential that your child attends the named school rather than any other.

Providing evidence does not guarantee priority at the preferred school. Decisions will be made based on the merits of each case and whether the evidence demonstrates that a placement should be made at a particular school above any other.

21. Parent or carer details

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

22. Private fostering arrangements

If you are looking after someone else's child, this could be a private fostering arrangement and the Local Authority needs to be notified.

Private fostering is an arrangement made by the child or young person's parent or guardian and not the Local Authority.

Private fostering is when a child or young person under the age of 16 (18 if the young person has a disability) is looked after for 28 days or more by someone who is not a close relative, guardian, grandparent, uncle, auntie, brother, sister and step-relatives.

The Council has a duty to assess and monitor arrangements to make sure the child is safe, and their needs are being met. There is a legal obligation that you and /or the parent notify the Local Authority of this arrangement

23. Misleading Applications

We are required to make sure that applications are genuine. If your child moves into the home of a friend or relative during the process, or you provide an alternative address as a deliberate device to improve your child's priority for a school place, or other details are provided on the application form which prove to be untrue – this may be considered a misleading application. If we have allocated a place and discover that the information is false, we may withdraw the school place offer for the child, even if the child has already started at the school.

24. Siblings

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

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

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

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

Having children of similar ages at two different schools can be difficult. Some parents/carers find that they are successful in obtaining a place for their eldest child but are unsuccessful for their younger children in future years.

If you obtain a place for one of your children at a school, this does not mean that places can be guaranteed for their siblings either currently or at a later date.

25. Twins and Multiple Births

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

26. Evidence required to support an application

If the reason for applying for your child's school place requires you to submit supporting evidence, you should only apply when you can provide the necessary documents. If you are eligible to apply but cannot provide the evidence, please do not submit an application. You should email the School Admissions team explaining why the evidence cannot be provided. Please email schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk

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

The evidence should name the parent/carer applying for admission

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

Buying a new home

- A solicitor's letter confirming exchange of contracts
- If purchasing a new build, in addition to the above, provide evidence that the family will be living there before the child's expected start date, for example, a letter from the developer confirming a build completion date. Documents evidencing the ownership or purchase of a plot of land will not be accepted.

In some cases, you may be asked to supply additional evidence such as:

- A copy of the applicant's updated driving license, proof of registration at the local Drs/Dental surgery; Letters addressed to the applicant at this address; utility bills; banks statements (financial details redacted), etc. Please note supplying only utility bills is not sufficient, as maintaining a house is not proof of occupation.

Renting a property

- Signed tenancy agreement, usually for a period of 12 months or more (the period of the tenancy must extend beyond

the date of the child's admission)

In some cases, you may be asked to supply additional evidence such as:

- A copy of the applicants updated driving license, proof of registration at the local Drs/Dental surgery; Letters addressed to the applicant at this address; utility bills; banks statements (financial details redacted), etc. Please note supplying only utility bills is not sufficient, as maintaining a house is not proof of occupation.

Returning to owned property

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

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

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

In-Year applications will not be considered any earlier than 6 weeks before an anticipated move to the United Kingdom. In addition to address evidence detailed above, the following should be provided when submitting an application.

- Copy of child's Passport. You only need to provide the picture page. This is required to check the child's details so an education record can be created on our system.

27. What happens after you have applied

We will contact you to confirm the result of your application. If you have been refused a school place, we will explain the options available.

How long does the school application process take?

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

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

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

If you are applying for your child to attend school in years 6, 8, 9 or 10, your application may need to be processed via Fair Access due to a lack of school places in these year groups. You will be notified if your case is going to fair access.

28. Waiting lists

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

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

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

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.

Waiting lists are closed at the end of each academic year, around 31st July. You will need to re-apply in the last half-term of the academic year, following May half-term, in order to remain on the waitlist for any preferred schools.

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

29. Confirming acceptance of the school offer

You will receive the outcome to your application via email or post. You will not receive an outcome to your In Year application via the parent portal. The offer letter will inform parents that they are required to accept or decline the place offered within 14 days from the date of the letter. Failure to accept the place offered will result in one further written reminder and failure to respond within the required timescale will result in the offer being withdrawn.

Any offer of a school place will be made to start during the current half-term or during the next half-term. Failure to start within this timescale will result in the offer of a school place being withdrawn.

The letter of offer will specifically request parents to advise the School Admissions Team if the place is not being accepted for any reason. If the child is living in the Wokingham borough and the parent is not accepting the offered place, they should advise what alternative arrangement has been made for the child.

30. Making further applications

If you are unhappy with the school at which a place has been offered for your child, you need to email the admissions team regarding amending your preference list. However, there is no guarantee that an alternative school will be offered.

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.

31. Fair Access

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

32. School Place Appeals

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

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

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

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

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

Appeals are a legal process, and some families can find this a stressful experience. Therefore, 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. If you wish to apply for a school that was not on your original application, you can do this by contacting the admissions team schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk

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

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

Alder Grove Primary School

All Saints Church of England Aided Primary School

Beechwood (Frays Academy Trust)

Bohunt Wokingham School

Coombes Primary School (Keys Academy Trust)

Crazies Hill Primary (Keys Academy Trust)

Earley St Peter's Church of England Aided Primary School

Emmbrook Secondary School

Finchampstead Church of England Aided Primary School

Grazeley Parochial Church of England Aided Primary School

Hatch Ride Primary (Corvus Learning Trust)

Keep Hatch Primary School

Maiden Erleigh (Wokingham)

Nine Mile Ride Primary School

Oakbank Secondary School

Oaklands Infant School

Oaklands Junior School

Polehampton C of E Infant & Junior Schools

Shinfield Infant and Nursery School

Shinfield St Mary's Church of England Aided Junior School

Sonning Church of England Aided Primary School

St Crispin's School

St Nicholas Primary School (Keys Academy Trust)

St Sebastian's Church of England Aided Primary School

The Emmbrook Secondary School (The Circle Trust)

Waingels College

Westcott Infant School

Westende Junior School

33. Travel Assistance

When choosing a school place, it is important to think about how your child will travel to and from school each day. Most families in Wokingham organise their own home to school journey. They may walk, cycle, use public transport, lift-share with other families or take their child to school in their family car.

The Council is committed to promoting children and young people's independence, social, and life skills essential for their preparation for adulthood. These goals underpin our Home to School Travel Assistance Policy because, where possible, children and young people, including those with special educational needs and/or disability, will be encouraged and supported to travel independently.

Our Service

The Home to School Transport Service is part of the [Community Transport Unit](#) within the council, that is responsible for running a smooth and effective transport service to the highest possible standards. We are your first point of contact for anything related to your child's transport.

For more detailed information regarding school transport and eligibility please refer to Wokingham Council's full School Travel Assistance policy. [Travel assistance to school and college \(wokingham.gov.uk\)](https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/travel-assistance-to-school-and-college). You are strongly encouraged to read the travel assistance policy before making a school place application.

If there is a school with places available that could meet the needs of your child and is closer to your home than the school or schools listed in your application and/or which offer your child a place, the placement will be classed as Parental Preference, and you are unlikely to qualify for travel assistance.

Please note, parental working commitments will not be considered as part of the decision to award transport support.

Did you know that children who walk, cycle or scoot to school are exposed to less pollution than they would be in a car?

We work with schools to encourage safe, active and sustainable journeys to school for children (and parents). We want to help our

young people gain the lifelong skills and knowledge they need to travel safely, responsibly and (where appropriate) independently. For more information, please refer to About My Journey (myjourneywokingham.com)

Travelling actively to school provides the perfect opportunity for children to learn about their local area, expand their social networks and feel independent.

Modes of travel can include:

- Walking;
- Scooting;
- Cycling;
- Park and striding (parking at least a 5-minute walk from your final destination);
- Public transport

Research also shows that walking, cycling or scooting to school can improve children's':

- Alertness;
- Concentration (for up to four hours afterwards!);
- Academic performance;
- Well-being and mood;
- Self-esteem.

It also makes children more likely to choose sustainable travel options in the future.

The Health Promoting Schools programme strives to create a healthy environment for schools, including pupils, staff, and the wider community through connecting with schools with local services that support health and wellbeing needs.

34. Eligibility for Travel Assistance

Eligibility criteria for mainstream schools

Your child must meet all of the following criteria to be eligible for travel assistance:

1. Be of compulsory school age (the term following your child's fifth birthday until the end of the school year in which they turn 16 years of age.)
2. Attend the nearest available and suitable school (where parents name their nearest suitable school as one of their 4 preferences and a place is not available, assistance may be offered to the next closest school, where the other qualifying eligibility criteria are met.)
3. Live the appropriate distance from home to school:
 - More than 2 miles (if the child is below the age of 8)
 - More than 3 miles (if the child or young person is aged 8 to 16)

The walking distance will be measured from where the home meets the public street, for example from the front gate to the nearest gate or point of access to the school premises, and by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk safely. As such, the route measured may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads.

Nearest Suitable School

A school will only be considered as unsuitable if there is a physical reason that a child cannot attend. Reasons for a school being unsuitable may include, but not be limited to:

- a secondary-aged child attending a primary school and vice versa.

There is no entitlement to transport to the nearest school of a particular type, for example, by gender, faith, structure (i.e. academy,

grammar, upper, free school) or to the catchment area school if it is not also the nearest available school.

We would not consider a school as not suitable for your child because it does not offer the course that you would like your child to attend, or if you are unhappy with its current Ofsted rating.

Please note the nearest suitable school with places available may not necessarily be a Wokingham school or the catchment school for your home address. The nearest suitable school for **transport purposes** means physically, the nearest qualifying school the pupil is eligible to attend, which means a school in a neighboring Local Authority may be nearer to your home address than any Wokingham school. You can find your nearest schools and colleges by referring to the Government website Search for schools, colleges and multi-academy trusts - [Find school and college performance data in England - GOV.UK \(find-school-performance-data.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/find-school-performance-data).

The Council has no statutory duty to provide travel assistance if a child is attending a school on parental preference grounds. This means the schools applied for are not the nearest schools, or one of the 3 nearest eligible schools in the case of extended criteria (low income). In cases of parental preference, parents/carers are responsible for making their own travel arrangements.

For pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) the nearest suitable school is taken to mean the school deemed most appropriate by the local authority to meet the pupil's needs.

When a child cannot be offered a place at the nearest school to the home address, the Council will, subject to the criteria set within this policy and the qualifying distance being met, provide transport to the next nearest Wokingham school with space to admit.

For transport to be provided in this instance the parent must provide evidence that they have applied for and been refused a place at the school which is the nearest school for their home address and any other schools closer than the school offering admission. This includes schools in neighboring boroughs. If your nearest suitable school is not in the Wokingham Borough, then transport may be provided. This is subject to meeting the eligibility criteria in this policy.

Assessments for home to school transport

Assessments for home to school transport will only be processed following receipt of a completed application form. Home to school transport eligibility and assessments will not be provided over the phone.

How to apply

If your child meets the eligibility criteria, above, complete the appropriate application form which can be found on our webpages: [Travel assistance to school and college \(wokingham.gov.uk\)](http://wokingham.gov.uk)

Types of travel assistance that may be offered

Wokingham Borough Council is an enabling council. We prioritise empowering parents and families to find their own solutions, helping people to be independent and to access support when they really need it.

The type of travel assistance offered will be for the council to decide, taking into account the needs of the young person and the nature of the journey to be undertaken. The assistance offered might include:

- A Personal Travel Budget to enable you to make your own arrangements independently (offered automatically if this is the most cost-effective travel assistance option)
- Free passes for children on public transport;
- Provision of a seat on a dedicated school bus or minibus
- A seat in a taxi, usually shared with one or more other pupils, where a pupil's needs require more personalised arrangements. This will be in exceptional circumstances only.

Note: Personal Budgets

A personal budget is a sum of money given to parents or carers to enable them to arrange their child's travel in a way that suits their circumstances best. The budget allows families complete freedom to choose the best possible travel option for their child, with

flexibility to change over time. Please read our guide to Personal Travel Budgets for more information. [Personal Travel Budgets \(wokingham.gov.uk\)](https://www.wokingham.gov.uk)

Travel assistance we do not provide

We only provide travel assistance for a child's journey between their home address and school.

If the child's parents live at separate addresses, travel assistance will normally be provided to where the child normally lives.

We do not provide travel assistance for:

- Travel to an alternative provision arranged by the school, this could be because of a fixed period exclusion or other reasons
- Attending work experience placements or interviews
- Visits to clinics, GP surgeries, hospital appointments during the school day
- After school clubs
- Travel to a parent or carer's preferred school that is not the nearest suitable school
- Travel to and from home outside of normal school finishing hours.

Reviewing travel assistance

We review travel assistance regularly to make sure we are meeting the needs of the children travelling as much as possible.

We may decide that an alternative option could be more suitable for your child or young person. When this happens, we will check with you and the school before making any changes to travel arrangements.