

In- Year Transfers to RBWM Schools

For Academic Year 2024/25

Changing Schools Mid-Year
Moving into RBWM



achieving
for children

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About this guide

Achieving for Children (AfC) provide the School Admissions Service, in partnership with The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM).

The information in this guide is primarily aimed at pupils transferring into a Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead School outside the normal point of entry.

A list of definitions used within this document is available to view on [Appendix A](#).

The information was correct on 23 October 2024 and is subject to change during the academic year 2024-25.

How to contact the School Admissions and Child Employment Team

Email: rbwm.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Please note: This is our primary mode of contact, and using email will get you the fastest response to your query.

Phone: 01628 683870

Please note: This is a call back service via the RBWM Customer Contact Centre

- Contacting the Admissions Team directly by phone is not possible.
- Due to the sheer volume of calls received throughout the year, we cannot necessarily provide phone support for all who request call-backs.
- Priority will always be given to requests where the information cannot be found on the website or in the appropriate guide, and where information has not already been provided via email.
- In times of especially high demand, the call-back service will be withdrawn without notice, in order to channel the available resources to help as many parents and caregivers as we can. Thank you for your understanding.

Website: rbwm.afcinfo.org.uk

Application portal: https://live.cloud.servelec-synergy.com/AFC_RBWM/Synergy/

Please note: You can register on the portal now, but cannot apply for in-year transfers on this link until 4 November.

By post: School Admissions & Child Employment Team,
Achieving for Children,
Town Hall, St Ives Road,
Maidenhead, SL6 1RF

Introduction

Please read the information in this guide carefully in order to understand the distinct types of schools within the borough and how to make an application.

This guide is for parents or carers who want to apply for an RBWM school outside the normal rounds of admissions. This is known as an in-year transfer.

An in-year transfer application should be made if you:

- Have moved into the area and do not currently have a school place for their child.
- Have moved within the area and wish to transfer their child to a closer school.
- Have recently moved to the UK from abroad.
- Wish to transfer your child or children from their current school to another preferred school.

An in-year transfer differs from a normal phase admission which is when a whole year group of pupils are due to transfer into a school at the first point of entry, for example from primary to secondary or first year entry into a primary school at the beginning of Reception.

An in-year transfer application should only be made if you require a school place in your child's existing year group, unless it is the last short term of the academic year, and you are applying for a place in the next year group for September entry. Applying for a September start in any other year than the first accepted year for that school will be an in-year transfer. For example, applying to a primary school for a September start in any year other than Reception will be an in-year transfer.

If you wish to apply for a school in any other local authority (LA), please contact the relevant council or the school directly for further information on how to make your application. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Admissions Team only manages in-year transfers into community and voluntary controlled schools in our administrative area. Contact details for neighbouring boroughs can be found in Section 8.

Please note: Even if you have been through the school admissions process before, **please ensure you have read this guide in its entirety.** There are changes made to the process every year. A new application portal (from 4 November) and revised admissions processes are in effect this year.

1. General information on schooling in RBWM and key dates

1.1. When can I apply for an in-year transfer?

Unlike with phase entry (i.e. entry to Reception, or Year 7), applications for in-year transfers can be made throughout the year. Applications should be made no sooner than one term prior to hopeful entry, based on a six-term school year.

To start school at this time..... you can apply from this date
September 1 (Term one)	June 10
October 30 (Term two)	September 1
January 2 (Term three)	October 30
February 19 (Term four)	January 1
April 15 (Term five)	February 19
June 3 (Term six)	April 15

1.2. Which schools have in-year transfers managed by the local authority?

There are 14 state-funded secondary schools and 46 state-funded primary schools in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The in-year transfer application process is different depending on the type of school to which you apply.

All secondary, middle, and upper schools in RBWM manage their own in-year transfers at present. When a school manages their own in-year transfers, this means you **cannot** apply through the local authority – you must apply to each individual school directly. The schools will manage their own waiting lists, and will look after their own application and enrolment procedures. When a school has their in-year transfers managed by the local authority, we will manage their waiting lists and application processes, and the schools manage the enrolment procedures, tours, and visits to the school.

Community and voluntary controlled schools:

Community and voluntary controlled schools are maintained by the local authority. The local authority is also responsible for setting the admissions policy. The local authority manages the in-year transfer applications for these schools, and **you can apply to a maximum of six of these schools at a time, through the local authority.**

Alexander First
Braywood First
Alwyn Infant
Boyne Hill CE Infant
Cookham Rise
Courthouse Junior
Eton Wick CE First
Furze Platt Infant

Furze Platt Junior
Hilltop First
Homer First
Holy Trinity CE Primary
(Cookham)
Kings Court First
Larchfield Primary
Oldfield Primary

Riverside Primary
South Ascot Village Primary
The Queen Anne Royal Free
CE First
Waltham St Lawrence
Primary
Wessex Primary
Wraysbury Primary

Voluntary aided schools:

Voluntary aided church schools are supported by the Church Diocesan Boards and the local authority. The governors are responsible for setting the admissions policy. **You must apply directly to these schools for an in-year transfer place.**

Cheapside CE Primary	Holy Trinity CE Primary	St Michael's CE Primary
Churchmead CE Secondary	Sunningdale	The Royal School (Crown Aided)
Clewer Green CE First	St Edward's Catholic First	Trinity St Stephen CE First
Cookham Dean CE Primary	St Edward's Royal Free Ecumenical Middle	

Academies

An academy is an all-ability school that is run by an academy trust and its governors independently of the local authority and is funded entirely by the central government. The governors are responsible for setting the admissions policy. **You must apply directly to these schools for an in-year transfer place.**

All Saints CE Junior	Eton Porny CE First	St Francis Catholic Primary
Altwood CE Secondary	Furze Platt Senior School	St Luke's CE Primary
Bisham CE Primary	Holyport CE Primary	St Mary's Catholic Primary
Burchetts Green CE Infant	Knowl Hill Primary	St Peter's CE Middle
Charters School	Lowbrook Academy	Trevelyan Middle School
Cox Green School	Newlands Girls' School	The Windsor Boys' School
Datchet St Marys CE Primary	Oakfield First	White Waltham Primary
Dedworth Green First	St Edmund Campion	Windsor Girls' School
Dedworth Middle	Catholic Primary	Woodlands Park Primary
Desborough College		

Free schools

A free school is an all-ability school which is run by the governing body independently of the local authority and is funded directly by the central government. They are set up to meet the needs of the local community. The governors are responsible for setting the admissions policy. **You must apply directly to these schools for an in-year transfer place.**

Braywick Court Free School (primary)
Holyport College (secondary day and boarding school)

1.3. The structure of primary education in RBWM

Children usually enter primary, first or infant school in the September following their fourth birthday. Children transfer into junior school in the September following their seventh birthday school, at the beginning of Year 3. The type of school your child will attend will depend on the area of the borough in which you live.

You will see a range of school types when looking at primary school education for your child. Each type of school covers a different age range:

- **Primary schools** - Catering for pupils from Reception to Year 6, or ages 4-11. These schools are found all over RBWM. After Year 6, pupils tend to move from primary schools to secondary schools.
- **Infant schools** - Catering for pupils from Reception to Year 2, or ages 4-7. These schools are found in Maidenhead. After Year 2, pupils tend to move from infant schools to junior schools.
- **Junior schools** - Catering for pupils from Year 3 to Year 6, or ages 7-11. These schools are found in Maidenhead. After Year 6, pupils tend to move from junior schools to secondary schools.
- **First schools** - Catering for pupils from Reception to Year 4, or ages 4-9. These schools are found in Windsor. After Year 4, pupils tend to move from first schools to middle schools.

1.4. The structure of secondary education in RBWM

You will see a range of school types when looking at secondary school education for your child. Each type of school covers a different age range:

- **Secondary schools** - Catering for pupils from Year 7 to Year 13, or ages 11+. These schools are found all over RBWM. After Year 11, some pupils may move to a college, UTC, Studio school, or another 6th Form provision.
- **Middle schools** - Catering for pupils from Year 5 to Year 8, or ages 9-13. These schools are found in Windsor. After Year 8, pupils tend to move from middle schools to upper schools.
- **Upper schools** - Catering for pupils from Year 9 to Year 13, or ages 13+. These schools are found in Windsor. After Year 11, some pupils may move to a college, UTC, Studio school, or another 6th Form provision.
- **UTCs and Studio schools** - Catering for pupils from Year 10 to Year 13. These schools are found outside RBWM, but within commutable distance. These schools are training centres for specific areas such as Engineering, Business, Arts Management, or Tourism, Aviation, Construction, E-Sports, or Digital Media, to name but a few. They offer the same qualifications as secondary schools, with the added bonus of industry expertise and work-experience links.

If you live in Windsor, where a three-tier system is in place, you may prefer to send your child to a school where a two-tier system is in place, and vice versa. **You are eligible to apply to any area, but parents must understand that the closer you live to a school, the higher your chances of entry.** As well, if you do not apply to the nearest school with a vacancy, you may not be eligible for school transport assistance. Please see the transport [pages](#) for further information.

1.5. Finding my nearest school/s

The easiest way to find your nearest school is to go to the GOV.UK site for school information: www.find-school-performance-data.service.gov.uk. All you must do is select the 'Location' option,

and enter your address. You will receive a list of schools, starting with the closest. This will give you a list of all types of schools, as well as their address, their latest Ofsted rating (if eligible for inspection), and the approximate straight-line distance from your home to the school.

Use the tick boxes on the left of the page to select just primary schools, schools of a particular denomination or faith, or to exclude independent or fee-paying schools from your list. For families living near the border of a local authority, such as in Datchet, Wraysbury, Ascot, Waltham, or Eton, this is a particularly useful site, as it lists schools in all local authorities, not just RBWM. You may find that the nearest school to your home may be a school managed by another local authority.

1.6. Are you eligible to apply for a school place?

Children with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) are not eligible to apply through the School Admissions Team. Further information can be found [on the AfC website](#). Please contact the SEND Team on cypds@achievingforchildren.org.uk and this specialist team will assist you.

If your child is undergoing statutory assessment, please contact the SEND Team on 07784 361 267 or 07783 806 246 before making an application.

If your child has additional needs but does not currently have an EHCP you should apply in the normal way.

2. Before you apply

2.1. How the preference system works

- During the application process, you will be asked to make a list of up to six schools that you would be happy for your child to attend. This is your 'preference' list. It is important that you put your list in order from your favourite or most preferred school, down to your least preferred school.
- Your preference list is your chance to have a say in which school your child may be allocated. Wherever possible, we take parental preference into account when allocating places, but this **does not** mean parents and carers get to choose the school their child attends.
- Your list lets us know which schools you want your child to attend, but it does not mean you are guaranteed entry to those schools.
- It is extremely important to use all the preferences available for you to use. If you choose to only list a single preference, or even three out of your six preferences in the case of Reception entry, this does not mean you will be allocated these schools.
- If enough pupils meet a higher criterion than your child, or live closer to the school, they will have priority over your child, and you will not be given a place.

Please note in cases where not all the available preferences have been listed by the parent or carer, your application will automatically have the nearest schools available for this phase of entry added to your application.

This will be done in ascending order of distance, from the closest school downwards, until all your preferences are full. The addition of schools to your application is done to ensure you gain a place at a geographically close location wherever possible, where places are available. This process reduces the possibility of families being left without a school place for their child, due to their lack of expressed preferences. You should be able to see any added preferences in the application portal.

Equal preference allocation process

Once you have constructed your preference list, it is used to check available places at your preferred schools. Each school is considered under an ‘equal preference’ scheme. This means that all applications are considered equally no matter which preference the school is ranked in your list. If you rank a school as your first preference you will not get priority over another applicant who has ranked it lower.

Action	Top tips
Applications should be made by completing the Common Application Form (CAF) online.	You may list up to six schools in order of preference, depending on the type of school your child will be attending.
We put your child’s name onto the applicant list for each school named on the application form.	All applications are dealt with equally. We do not look at your order of preference at this point, yet.
All the names on each school list are ranked according to the oversubscription criteria.	Your child’s name will be on the list for each school named, and the schools do not know at which preference you have placed their school.
We look at the vacancies available for each school and assign children from the waiting lists to fill the vacancies.	Each school now has a list of potential applicants to fill their available vacancies.
We see how many lists your child’s name appears on.	In some cases, your child’s name might appear on more than one list.
Where a child’s name appears on more than one list, it means that they are eligible for a place at more than one school. We will allocate a place at the highest eligible school on your list. This is the point when order of preference is considered.	<p>Where your child appears on a list for one of your preference schools, we will then offer a place at whichever school is your highest preference.</p> <p>Where your child’s name does not appear on any list, it means that they will not be allocated a place at any of the schools you requested. Where possible, the local authority will then allocate a place at the nearest school to you with a vacancy where your child meets the oversubscription criteria, if your child is not already at a school to which they can feasibly commute.</p>

Order of preference

You should think carefully about your order of preference when you decide how to list the schools for which you are applying. This is because if your child qualifies for a place at several schools, you will only be made one offer, to the school with the highest preference for which your child is eligible. Any offers to a lower preferred school will be automatically withdrawn to ensure each child only receives one offer.

The following table illustrates the importance of the order of preference:

Pref	School	Qualify for a place?	Outcome
1	Riverside Primary School	No	No current offer (waiting list)
2	Courthouse Junior School	Yes	Offer
3	Cookham Rise Primary School	Yes	Withdrawn – higher preference met
4	Braywood CE First School	No	Withdrawn – higher preference met
5	Oldfield Primary School	Yes	Withdrawn – higher preference met
6	Wessex Primary School	Yes	Withdrawn – higher preference met

In this case, should the parent or carer then decide they would actually prefer their child to attend Wessex Primary, they would have to put in a change of preference form, and hope there were still places at Wessex available by the time the change of preference form is processed. In-year transfer vacancies are snapped up very quickly, especially in year groups where there are few places available. This is why it is extremely important that parents and carers think carefully about their preferred schools, and list all six choices in their order of preference. **You give your child the best possible chance of entry by getting your preferences in the right order at the time of application.**

If having a school close to your residence is a major concern for you, use the GOV.UK [list](#) explained in Section 1.2 to get your closest schools, and put them in order with the closest school as preference 1. Make sure you only list schools that we can offer a place to, as otherwise you will waste a preference. As a reminder, these schools are:

Alexander First
Braywood First
Alwyn Infant
Boyne Hill CE Infant
Cookham Rise
Courthouse Junior
Eton Wick CE First
Furze Platt Infant

Furze Platt Junior
Hilltop First
Homer First
Holy Trinity CE Primary
(Cookham)
Kings Court First
Larchfield Primary
Oldfield Primary

Riverside Primary
South Ascot Village Primary
The Queen Anne Royal Free
CE First
Waltham St Lawrence
Primary
Wessex Primary
Wraysbury Primary

2.2. Collecting information about schools

You should gather as much information as possible before you decide which schools you choose to include as a preference on your application.

- Read about the schools on their individual school websites and contact them to obtain a prospectus.
- Arrange to visit the school during a normal school day to see how it operates.
- Find out what other activities the school offers, for example breakfast club, after-school clubs, and sporting activities.
- Look at the school's admission procedures on their websites.
- Information about the individual school, as well as links to their school inspection reports and school performance tables, are available on the individual school's website.
- Consider your child's particular interests and abilities, and their views on the schools visited.
- Check that daily travel to and from the school is possible within a reasonable time. **Under the law, it is your responsibility as a parent or carer to get your child to school.** The home to school transport support policy is available on the [school transport advice](#) website.

2.3. Where to find vacancy information

Information about school vacancies is available from the Admissions Team [on the AfC website](#), and is updated monthly. Please note that we can only provide information at the time of request – it is impossible for us to predict vacancy information weeks or months in advance as we are processing applications daily. Your child is not guaranteed a place at a school based on the vacancy information provided.

If a school you are interested in applying for is showing as full in the relevant year group, you can still apply for your child's name to be placed on the school's waiting list. You will receive a letter to confirm the outcome of your application, and this must provide details about your right of appeal, regardless of the type of school to which you apply.

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

As stated above, the legislation governing school admissions allows for parents and carers to express a preference for a school; this is not the same as being able to 'choose' which school your child attends. **It is important that you do not assume that your child is entitled to a place at a preferred school, at a school with their sibling/s, at a school within your designated area or at the school nearest to your home address, as this is not the case.**

You are not guaranteed a place at a preferred school, and it is important to be realistic when considering the schools you name as preferences. If you list six preferences for schools that are a considerable distance from your home, you are risking not receiving an offer for any of your preferred schools if they are all too far away. Distances to which offers are made to pupils vary

every year, and even if your next-door-neighbour received an offer last year, it does not mean you are guaranteed an offer this year. As you will see throughout this guide, the distance from your home to the school is always used to determine which children receive offers ahead of their peers.

2.5. Designated appropriate area (also known as designated area, or catchment area)

Most of the primary schools within RBWM have designated areas, but not all schools have one. Braywick Court Free, St Francis Catholic Primary, and St Edmund Campion Primary Schools do not have a designated area.

All the secondary schools within RBWM have designated areas. All Maidenhead secondary schools share the same designated area, except Holyport College which has its own designated area for Year 7-day place applications. Residents living in the designated area for Holyport College are also in the designated area for the other Maidenhead secondary schools.

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 the [Neighbourhood View](#) facility on the council website. Electronic copies of the designated areas are available on the [school designated areas](#) website. Please be aware that schools without a designated area will not be listed in the Neighbourhood View facility, but they **are** listed in the GOV.UK list of schools nearest your home, outlined in sections 1.2 and 2.1.

Although you are not limited to designated area schools when listing your preferences, admissions priority is usually given to those pupils who apply for their designated area school. **However, living in the designated area does not guarantee you a place at the school if the school is oversubscribed.**

2.6. The oversubscription criteria

If there are fewer applicants than places available for a school, every applicant will be offered a place if a higher preference has not been met. If there are more applications received than there are places available, the school will use its published oversubscription criteria to work out which children have the highest priority and can be offered a place. Any children with an EHCP which names the school must be admitted before any other children and will be counted in the published admission number (PAN) where possible.

The oversubscription criteria for the schools eligible for in-year transfers through RBWM are summarised in Section 3.3. Make sure you understand the oversubscription criteria and address any questions directly to the school.

2.7. Commonly used in the oversubscription criteria

Please refer to the full admissions policy of each individual school to see whether the following criterion form part of the oversubscription criteria, and for any variation to the following definitions. Please note that the commonly used criteria regarding looked-after children, or children with exceptional social or medical needs are outlined in Section 4.

Sibling priority

Most schools in RBWM give some priority to siblings in their oversubscription criteria. Most parents find it easier to have their children attend the same school, but it is important to understand that having children at the same school is often not possible. **Please note that there is no guarantee that we will be able to offer a sibling a place at your preferred school even if you meet the sibling criterion.**

In RBWM children are defined as siblings if:

- they are full, half, step, foster brother, or sister; and
- they live at the **same address**; and
- they are already in attendance at the school; and
- they will still be in attendance when the applicant is due to start at the school.

Attendance of a younger sibling, a sibling in Year 11 at the time of application, or possible attendance in the sixth form (Years 12 and 13) does not necessarily confer sibling status.

It is your responsibility to give the sibling's details on your application under sibling details.

Qualification for sibling status is made on the basis that the pupil already at the school will remain on roll at the school at the time of application and at the time your child is due to start school. If this sibling then leaves the school, it will affect the younger sibling's application.

If you fail to indicate that a pupil has a sibling at the school when you are applying, your younger child will not be considered under sibling criterion. Your child will instead be considered under the next possible criterion, and this increases the likelihood that your younger child will not receive an offer to the school their sibling attends.

Remember to check if attendance at a linked or feeder school qualifies your child for sibling criterion for that school, and state this in your application. Some own admitting authorities and linked infant and junior schools may allow a child to be considered a 'sibling in attendance' if they are at a qualifying school. It is your responsibility to declare this in your application, so read the oversubscription criteria for your chosen schools carefully, and make sure you have made any sibling links known on the application.

Proximity to school

In most published oversubscription criteria, priority within each criterion is decided by distance, with those living closest to the school being given the highest priority. To be fair to all applicants, the council has a standard method of measuring home to school distance. This is measured in a straight line from the GIS address point of the pupil's house as determined by Ordnance Survey to the designated school node of the school, using proprietary GIS software.

Please refer to the individual school's published admissions policy for information on how places are allocated if two or more children live at the same distance from the school.

Please note that we cannot provide home to school distances to applicants ahead of a formal application being received and an offer being made. If you would like the approximate distance between your home and the school in question, you can find this information at www.find-school-performance-data.service.gov.uk/.

3. Applying for a place at a community or voluntary controlled school

3.1. The schools you cannot apply for through the RBWM in-year process

You must apply directly to any of the voluntary aided (VA), academy (A) or free (F) schools listed below. We are unable to process applications for these schools at any time or provide information about their waiting lists. If we receive applications for these schools, they will be discarded. Academies, voluntary aided and free schools set their own admission arrangements. Make sure you read the school's admission policy before making your application and provide all the supporting documentation/evidence required.

All Saints CE Junior (A)	Holyport College (F)
Altwood CE Secondary (A)	Knowl Hill Academy (A)
Bisham Primary (A)	Lowbrook Academy (A)
Braywick Court (F)	Newlands Girls' School (A)
Burchetts Green Infants (A)	Oakfield First School (A)
Charters School (A)	St Edward's Catholic First (VA)
Cheapside CE Primary (VA)	St Edmund Campion Catholic (A)
Churchmead CE Secondary (VA)	St Edward's RFE Middle (VA)
Clewer Green CE (A)	St Francis' Catholic Primary (A)
Cookham Dean CE Primary (VA)	St Mary's Catholic Primary (A)
Cox Green School (A)	St Michael's CE Primary (VA)
Datchet St Mary's CE Primary (A)	St Peter's CE Middle (A)
Dedworth Green First (A)	The Royal (Crown Aided) School (VA)
Dedworth Middle (A)	The Windsor Boys' School (A)
Desborough College (A)	Trevelyan Middle (A)
Eton Porny CE First School (A)	Trinity St Stephen's CE First (VA)
Furze Platt Senior (A)	White Waltham CE Academy (A)
Holy Trinity CE (Sunningdale) (VA)	Windsor Girls' School (A)
Holyport CE Primary (A)	Woodlands Park Primary (A)

3.2. Schools you can apply for through a single application to the local authority

If you are applying for any of the community (C) or voluntary controlled (VC) schools listed below, **you must apply through the local authority's Admissions Team.**

Alexander First (C)	Furze Platt Junior (C)	Riverside Primary (C)
Alwyn Infant (C)	Hilltop First (C)	South Ascot Primary (C)
Boyne Hill CE Infant (VC)	Holy Trinity CE Primary (Cookham) (VC)	The Queen Anne CE First (VC)
Braywood CE First (VC)	Homer First (C)	Waltham St Lawrence Primary (C)
Cookham Rise Primary (C)	Kings Court First (C)	Wessex Primary (C)
Courthouse Junior (C)	Larchfield Primary (C)	Wraysbury Primary (C)
Eton Wick CE First (VC)	Oldfield Primary (C)	
Furze Platt Infant (C)		

For all other schools listed in Section 3.1, including all secondary schools, you will need to contact the individual schools directly to apply for a place. While the local authority can give you an idea of potential vacancies, we cannot apply to these schools on your behalf.

Please refer to RBWM's online [Schools Directory](#) for these schools' website links and contact details.

3.3. Completing your application

We will need the following information from you when making your application:

- Name of preferred schools
- Your child's name and date of birth
- Your contact details, including a phone number, and your email address

You will need to attach additional documents to your application, depending on your individual situation, for example:

- Proof of address as set out below.
- Supporting evidence if you wish to be considered under the exceptional social or medical need criterion.
- If you are moving into the UK from overseas you must provide evidence that your child has arrived in the country and is now habitually resident in the UK. As stamping Visas on entry is being withdrawn from many airports, we **strongly recommend** keeping your child's boarding pass to demonstrate they have entered the country. **It is your responsibility to provide evidence that you are resident in the UK.**

Up until 3 November, you will apply through the application form link on the [website](#). From 4 November, you will be required to register on the application [portal](#) in order to complete your

application online. In all cases, if you do not have internet access at home, it is free to apply online at your local library. Your child's current school or nursery may also be willing to help you make an online application.

Please note that you must have an email address to register on the admissions portal before you make an application, **and** when applying through the electronic form on the [website](#). You must have regular access to this email address, as it will be the primary form of communication with you regarding your child's application. You will not be able to discuss the details of your child's application over the phone with the Contact Centre.

Only one application can be submitted for each child. If you try to submit more than one application for the same child, any additional applications made after the first one will be discarded automatically, without notice. This is why any changes you wish to make must be made to the original application, instead of starting again and creating a new one.

When making your application you will sign a declaration that you have parental responsibility and that you have the agreement of all people with parental responsibility to make your application, or there is a court order allowing your application.

In cases of joint custody, evidence of court orders or other documentation may be required. It is not appropriate for RBWM to become involved in private disputes with parents or carers. You should resolve the matter of school preference between yourselves and inform us in writing which application should be processed, or through the Family Court by way of a specific issue order or its equivalent. **Any applications subject to a dispute will not be processed until agreement can be reached, and this may affect your child's chance of being allocated a place at a preferred school.**

Please note up until midnight on 3 November, you can apply through the electronic form on our [website](#). From 4 November, apply online by following the [link](#).

The online portal is quick, easy, and reliable, and can be accessed using a PC, laptop, or mobile/tablet devices. The application program will guide you through each step and there are clear prompts to ensure you complete all the required sections. Your details are safe and secure, and you can view your application at any time. **Please ensure you click the 'submit' button at the end of your application otherwise we will not receive your application.**

Please note that you cannot use the online system or the website link to update your application once it has been submitted and downloaded. If you wish to make changes, you must notify the Admissions Team directly in writing, at rbwm.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk.

Why do we verify a child's home address?

We verify application addresses to ensure that only entitled pupils are offered places. We are required to do this by law, and it is not a reflection on whether we believe a child's living arrangements to be genuine. The verification process is outlined in more detail in Section 4.

Any school place obtained by deception, deliberate misinformation, or withholding of facts will be considered fraudulent, and you may face prosecution under several fraud legislations. We are also

required to withdraw the school place and re-evaluate the application at the lowest appropriate criteria and distance. Any school place obtained by deception is deemed unfair, as another child is being deliberately denied their lawful claim to that place.

3.4. When to apply

As mentioned in section 1.1, applications should be made no sooner than one term prior to hopeful entry, based on a six-term school year.

To start school at this time..... you can apply from this date
September 1 (Term one)	June 10
October 30 (Term two)	September 1
January 2 (Term three)	October 30
February 19 (Term four)	January 1
April 15 (Term five)	February 19
June 3 (Term six)	April 15

Your child will be expected to start at their allocated school within the same academic year, no later than the start of the next short term. If they do not start at the school as expected, the school place will be withdrawn and offered to the next child on the waiting list.

If applying in the final short term of the current academic year to start school in the current academic year, your child will be expected to start school by the end June at the latest. If they do not start school by this time, any offer may be withdrawn and re-considered alongside any other children applying for a September start, in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. No applications for the current academic year will be accepted after the end of June unless your child is without a school place.

Applying to start in September or to remain on the waiting list for the next academic year

If you are applying to start in September, or if you are reapplying for your child to remain on a waiting list, you can apply from 10 June. All applications received by the end of June will be processed together from the first working day in July. We will aim to write to you by the end of July to confirm the outcome of your application. This may be after the schools close for the summer break.

Applications received later than 30 June will be processed on an individual basis after the main processing exercise, in the order of the date they were received. There may be a delay if the schools have closed for the summer holiday break and cannot confirm whether a place can be allocated.

3.5. Submitting your application

Before you submit your application, please check that you:

- have read and understood the oversubscription criteria for each school included on your application, and considered the likelihood that your child will qualify for a place

- are clear on the order you want your preferences to be listed in, and have listed your favourite school as your first preference
- understand how the home address will be assessed for admissions purposes
- have used all your available preferences

Please make sure you have read and understood the declaration on the online system or the bottom of the form before submitting your application. This means you are agreeing to the terms and conditions in full and understand your responsibilities as an applicant.

3.6. The allocation process and processing times

Your application will normally be processed within **10 school days** from the date received but may take longer if it is submitted during peak periods, for example in the final short term for a September start or over the summer break. Different processing times apply to the processing of applications for September start (as outlined above). You will be notified of the outcome of your application usually within 10 school days, and you should receive written confirmation of the outcome within a maximum of **15 school days**, as long as all documentation is provided in a timely manner.

Each school has a maximum class size, and the admission authority will not be able to offer your child a place at a school which has reached its maximum, as this will prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources by the school. Please note that due to the Infant Class Size Regulations (ICS), the maximum class size in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 is 30. We cannot admit more than 30 pupils in these classes, unless they meet one of the eight exceptions to the ICS rules, outlined in 2.16 of the [Admissions Code 2021](#).

Where there are more applicants than places available, school places are allocated using the published oversubscription criteria, and this is the criteria used to determine a child's place on a waiting list.

Please note that we cannot consider any vacancy arising as a result of a child leaving a school until the current school has confirmed the child is on roll at their new school and can be deregistered from the current school. This includes potential vacancies arising over the summer break. This is due to the Pupil Registration Regulations, so parents cannot assume that because they have heard a child has left a school, that the vacancy is available in that year group.

3.7. Oversubscription criteria for voluntary controlled and community schools

A child who is the subject of an EHCP must be admitted to the school named in their plan even if the relevant year group is full. Where a school receives more applications than there are places available, places will be allocated in line with the published oversubscription criteria, in descending order:

1. Looked-after children¹ or a child who was previously looked-after. This category includes a looked-after child or a child who was previously looked-after but immediately after being in care became adopted² or subject to a child arrangement order³ or special guardianship order⁴, including children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted [Note 0]
2. Children with exceptional medical or social reasons for requiring the school (as explained in Section 4 of this document)
3. **Junior schools only** – Children attending a linked infant school [Note 3]
4. Children who live in the ‘designated appropriate area’ of the school [Note 1] and who have a sibling who attends the school [Note 2]
5. Children who live in the ‘designated appropriate area’ of the school [Note 1]
6. Children who have a sibling who attends the school [Note 2]
7. Children of a member of staff [Note 4]
8. Children whose parents have any other reason for their preference

Tiebreaker

If a school does not have places for all the children in a particular category, the borough prioritises those applicants who live closest to the school. Proximity to the school will be measured in a straight line from the address point of the pupil’s house as determined by Ordnance Survey to the address point of the school using the local authority’s GIS system. In the event that two or more children live at the same distance from the school (for example families living in flats) and there are fewer places available then random allocation will be used to decide which child will be allocated the remaining place(s). The names will be drawn and the whole process scrutinised by persons independent of the authority.

Note 0 – Looked-after children and previously looked-after children. Looked-after children are children who are (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school. Previously looked-after children includes children who immediately after being in public care were adopted or subject to a child arrangement order under the terms of the Children Act 1989 or children subject to a special guardianship order which is defined under Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian (or special guardians). Internationally previously looked-after children are children who have been in state care outside

¹ Looked-after children are children who are (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

² All children adopted from local authority care.

³ Under the terms of the Children Act 1989.

⁴ See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a ‘special guardianship order’ as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian (or special guardians).

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) and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Examples may include:

- an Article 16 Report – this applies to Hague convention adoptions and will have been issued by the central authority; or
- information provided by an adoption agency, either in the UK or overseas; or
- information provided by an organisation that provided care for the child; or
- a report or letter from another agency or organisation that has been involved with the child.

Note 1: Designated appropriate areas

Maps of the current designated areas may be viewed on the RBWM [website](#). Alternatively, RBWM applicants can use the [Neighbourhood View](#) facility on the website for information on schools based on their address.

Note 2: Sibling criterion

A sibling would need to be attending the school at the time of admission of the child for whom a place is sought. The term ‘sibling’ includes a half or stepchild permanently living in the same family unit or a foster child permanently living in the same family unit whose place has been arranged by the social services department of a local authority. Sibling eligibility will flow from a foster child to other children of the family or from a child of the family to a foster child. In the case of Infant and Junior schools, attendance of a sibling at either the Infant or Junior school qualifies as a sibling for the linked school. Linked schools are described in Note 3.

Note 3: Infant and Junior linked-school priority

- Furze Platt Junior is formally linked with Furze Platt Infant (Furze Platt Primary Federation)
- Courthouse Junior is formally linked with Alwyn Infant

Note 4: Children of a member of staff

Priority will be given where the member of staff:

- has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made; and/or
- is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

The school must confirm staff eligibility directly with the Admissions Team, in order for you to claim staff priority for your child. This can be confirmed through the school access portal (SAM) or via email. Please contact your school’s admissions team for further information.

3.8. Being offered a place

If your child meets the oversubscription criteria for more than one school, we will look at your order of preference and offer you a place at the highest preferred school at which your child is eligible for a place.

If your child does not meet the oversubscription criteria for any of your preferred schools and you are a RBWM resident, the Admissions Team will offer you a place at the nearest suitable RBWM school to your home address with places remaining where possible. This will not be done automatically if your child is currently at a school where they can feasibly remain.

Your offer letter will provide details of the school appeals process and referral to the Fair Access panel (where appropriate).

If your child is of statutory school age and you refuse an offer because it is not one of your preferred schools, then you will need to consider either applying for a maintained school which has vacancies, home educating your child, or enrolment in private education. If there are no mainstream schools with vacancies within an appropriate distance from your home your application will be referred under the Fair Access Protocol.

Children missing education are automatically referred to the Education Welfare Officers by the Admissions Team.

The school will contact you to provide you with more information and to arrange a start date.

Admission will normally be deferred until the start of the next term to minimise disruption to both the child's education and that of other children. This is based on a six-term academic year.

Admission into a school mid-term will normally only be considered for:

- applicants that are moving to a new house and unable to continue at their previous school
- applicants unable to take the place up on-time due to extenuating circumstances such as ill health
- applicants considered under the Fair Access Protocol, or admitted due to a successful appeal

Applications in the last short term of the current academic year requesting to start school within the same academic year, will be required to start by the end of June in that year at the latest.

If you have also applied to academies, voluntary aided or free schools, it is possible that you may end up with multiple offers. It is your responsibility to respond to these offers to say whether you wish to accept or decline promptly. Not responding to an offer may restrict a school from offering a place to another pupil who requires the place.

If you do not respond within the timeframe requested in your offer letter, then the offer is likely to be withdrawn within **twenty school days** from the date your child was supposed to start at the school and most likely will be offered to another child. **This timeframe is shortened to five days**

when there are less than three vacancies in that year group, where the waiting list contains more than one child.

3.9. Withdrawing offers

Once the offer of a place has been made, the local authority may withdraw the offer only in specific circumstances. These circumstances include:

- where the offer was made in error, resulting in another child being disadvantaged, and it has not been able to resolve the error without withdrawing the offer. The offer will be withdrawn as soon as possible after the error has been discovered; or
- where the application is considered fraudulent or intentionally misleading; or
- where a parent or carer has not responded to the offer within a reasonable time; or
- if the family moves home between the offer being made and the child starting at the school (particularly for the start date in September), and they move to a residence where they would not have received the original offer (i.e. further away from the school or in a different designated area); or
- where it is possible to offer a higher named preference from the waiting list.

3.10. Right of appeal

The School Admissions Code 2021 requires the admissions authority of any school to allow you to make an application even if the school is full. The admitting authority **must** send you a letter either offering you a place or the reason(s) why they are unable to allocate a place.

This letter should include information on the policy for adding your child to the waiting list, your right of appeal to an independent panel. Schools must not refuse to accept an application based on the fact that it is full or refuse to issue an outcome letter detailing your right of appeal. The school can, however, refuse your application if adding your child to the class would breach the infant class size regulations (ICS), or if adding your child would prejudice the effective education of, or the efficient use of resources for, the current pupils.

If you have applied to several schools, it is possible that you may end up with multiple offers. It is your duty to respond to these offers to say whether you wish to accept or decline promptly. Not responding to an offer may restrict a school from offering a place to another pupil who requires the place.

If you do not respond within the timeframe requested in your offer letter, then the offer is likely to be withdrawn.

The school will contact you to provide you with more information and to arrange a start date.

3.11. No school place offer

If you are having difficulties securing a school place for your child, please contact your home authority (the council to which you pay council tax) for support. RBWM residents can contact the Admissions Team at rbwm.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk.

If your child is of statutory school age and you refuse an offer because it is not one of your preferred schools, then you will need to consider either applying for a maintained school which has vacancies, home educating your child, or enrolment in private education. If there are no mainstream schools with vacancies within an appropriate distance from your home your application will be referred under the Fair Access Protocol.

Children missing education **must** be referred to the Education Welfare Officers by the Admissions Team.

3.12. Waiting lists

If your child has not gained a place at a particular school, you have the right to be placed on the waiting list. An admission authority cannot refuse to place your child on a waiting list because they are full.

Your place on a waiting list will be determined by applying the over-subscription criteria for the relevant school as published in the admission arrangements. Please check the individual school's website for further information. Further information on waiting lists is outlined in Section 6.

4. Special circumstances and common areas of query

4.1. Looked-after children or previously looked-after children

These terms refer to children who are in the care of a local authority⁵ or being provided with accommodation by a local authority, children who were previously looked-after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted⁶ or became subject to a child arrangement order or special guardianship order, and children who appear (to the admitting authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

Evidence required for a child who is currently in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority

You must enclose a letter from the child's social worker which confirms that the child is currently subject to a Section 20 Children Act 1989 agreement (signed by parent(s) and the local authority) or a current interim care order or a current final care order.

Evidence required for a previously looked-after child

You must provide documentary evidence to show that the child was in care immediately before the adoption, child arrangements order, or special guardianship order, along with a copy of the relevant order from the following list:

- an adoption order made under the Adoption Act 1976 or Adoption and Children's Act 2002; or

⁵ In accordance with Section 22 of the Children Act 1989

⁶ Under the Adoption Act 1976 or Adoption and Children Act 2002

- a child arrangements order settling the arrangements around the person with whom the child is to live with under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 (as amended by Section 12 of the Children and Families Act); or
- a special guardianship order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian(s) under Section 14A of the Children Act 1989.

Evidence required for children who have been in state care outside of England

Documentary evidence of adoption such as:

- an adoption order from a UK court; or
- an adoption certificate issued by the Registrar General for England and Wales, National Records Scotland, or the General Register Office for Northern Ireland; or
- an Article 23 Certificate – this applies to Hague convention adoptions, and will have been issued by a central authority; or
- official documentation from the relevant court or state authorities in the country of adoption, confirming that the child was adopted; in this case further information may be required including:
 - a certified document obtained from the embassy of the country of origin
 - a letter from the adoption agency
 - a letter from another agency or organisation that has been involved with the child.

Evidence required for children who have been in state care outside of England

- documentary evidence that a child was previously looked-after. The child must appear (to the admission authority) to have been 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) and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Examples may include:
 - an Article 16 Report – this applies to Hague convention adoptions and will have been issued by the Central Authority
 - information provided by an adoption agency, either in the UK or overseas
 - information provided by an organisation that provided care for the child
 - a report or letter from another agency or organisation that has been involved with the child

4.2. Exceptional social or medical need (SEMC)

In response to the needs of parents and carers with exceptional or highly unusual circumstances, the Admissions Code introduced the opportunity for parents to apply for a school, based on their child's exceptional social, emotional, or medical need. These applications are also known as applying for social, emotional, or medical consideration (SEMC). It is expected that no more than a small number of applications will be given this criterion in a year, if any at all.

All schools, whether in RBWM or not, are required by law to provide for the additional needs of their pupils, wherever possible. As such, all RBWM schools have experience providing for children with different social and medical needs. To be considered under SEMC criteria, a child must be experiencing such exceptional difficulties that they are very uncommon in the general population. The threshold for SEMC acceptance is exceptionally high, and the need can apply to the child or another member of the family.

Some schools will consider an application under this category only where the parent or carer can demonstrate a **wholly exceptional** medical or social requirement why the preferred school is the **only** suitable school for their child, and the difficulties likely to be caused by not attending that school. Specific details of the requirements for the individual schools where this criterion applies are available on their websites and summarised in Section 3 of this guide. We will only consider a social and medical application for the **first preference** school named on the application where it forms part of the oversubscription criteria.

It is the responsibility of the parents to provide a clear argument, with supporting evidence, as to why their child should be given this consideration. **Please be aware that providing evidence does not automatically guarantee that a child will be given priority at a particular school.** In each case, a decision will be made based on the merits of the evidence presented and whether that evidence demonstrates that a placement should be made at a particular school above any other.

Awarding this criterion does not guarantee that a school place will automatically be allocated at the school. If the school is full in the relevant year group, your child will be added to the waiting list with the appropriate social and medical criterion, giving them priority on the waiting list over other children who fulfil lower criteria.

The local authority only assesses social and medical needs applications for community and voluntary controlled schools, which are all the schools for which you can use the RBWM in-year process.

Specific details of the requirements for all academies, voluntary aided and free schools where this criterion applies is available on the individual school's website. If you would like to apply for an own admitting authority school other than the schools specifically listed in the previous paragraph, please contact the school directly for information about how to apply under this criterion. The threshold for acceptance with own admitting authorities is just as high as it is with the local authority, and they will follow a process similar to that of the local authority, in the interests of fairness and consistency.

When assessing an application, we will consider the statement you provided, as well as any other accompanying evidence. The strength of your application will be considered by two or more officers who will make an evidence-based decision individually and then together, referring to another officer where disagreement exists. If a consensus cannot be found, then more expert advice may be sought. Those officers assessing the application will have knowledge of the local authority's admissions process and the School Admissions Code 2021. As multiple cases are

discussed at once, no notes or rough deliberations will be made available for public consumption, as it is not appropriate to discuss other cases or divulge other children's information to a third party. Instead, the officers will note collectively their reasons for any acceptance or rejection of the application under this criterion for your particular case. The reasoning will then be outlined in the letter parents receive, so that you are aware of exactly what was taken into account when making the decision.

Parents and carers will be notified of the outcome in writing once the decision has been made. In all cases, if an application is rejected under SEMC, the application for admission will be categorised under the next highest criterion. A rejection under SEMC does **not** mean that the application for admission will be affected in any other way. It will be treated in the same way as an application that did not ask for SEMC consideration.

Wherever possible, it is very important to apply, and provide all evidence when you apply for the school. The Admissions Team can only consider the application **once** during the process and if further documentation arises after the initial assessment has taken place, it may not be possible to reassess the decision. Requests or additional evidence received after the closing date for applications can only be considered where the reasons for the late submission are exceptional, and it can be reasonably assumed that the application could not be made on time.

The LA's decision is final and **there is no right of appeal to officers against refusal to consider an application under this category**. If your child has not been offered a place at your preferred school, you will have your usual legal right of appeal to an independent appeal panel. During this kind of appeal, you are able to explain why you would like your child to attend a particular school and can include the evidence you provided to support your social/medical application as part of your appeal submission.

All applications **must** include a completed social/medical application form (please email rbwm.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk to request a form) or a letter or email explaining the reasons for applying under this criterion. This form or letter **must** provide **all** of the following statements or evidence:

- Why the preferred school is the **only** suitable school for your child, and the difficulties likely to be caused by not attending it.
- Where the requested school is not the nearest school to the child's home address, you must provide clear reasons with supporting evidence why the nearest school is not appropriate. A statement must be included giving permission for the local authority to make such enquiries as it thinks necessary to investigate the matter further.
- Supporting evidence specifically in relation to your current school application that gives reasons and provides information why only the preferred school can meet a child's individual needs, and the effect on your child if they do not attend this school. This evidence must be on headed writing paper from a suitably qualified professional person associated with the child or the family, such as a consultant, a general practitioner, psychiatrist, or a senior social worker.

Please scan documents and send them to rbwm.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk. You can also attach the documents to your application in the online portal when it is available in November. All information provided is treated in the strictest confidence. Please do not send or drop off original documents, as these cannot be returned to you. A copy of your SEMC application form, as well as copies of your supporting evidence, can be attached to your application on the portal.

Important points to consider when applying for SEMC

As stated above, it is the **parent's responsibility** to ensure they provide the supporting documentation, and a clear argument that addresses the required statements. Please note that hospital appointment letters or prescriptions are **not** considered relevant documentary evidence. Evidence from members of the family, friends or a childminder is also not normally acceptable. Applications lacking external objective evidence will be rejected under this category without further assessment.

It is not appropriate for the headteacher of the school you are applying for to provide supporting evidence as this will be considered a conflict of interest in the decision-making process. Where we feel it is appropriate, we may liaise with the school during our assessment process, to request their views, however, as the admitting authority for community and voluntary controlled schools, the final decision will be made by the local authority.

Please also be aware of the following when considering whether to apply under the social or medical needs criterion:

- **Special educational needs:** All RBWM schools can provide support for a child's educational needs. If your child may need additional support in school, but they do not have an EHCP, we cannot consider their application for a higher priority under this criterion. Special educational needs include the following non-exhaustive list of conditions:

Autistic spectrum disorder
Dyslexia
Dyscalculia

Dyspraxia
ADHD and ADD
Speech and language difficulties.

If you are a resident of RBWM and consider that your child's special educational needs can only be met by attendance at a specific school, please contact the Children and Young People Disability Service (cypds@achievingforchildren.org.uk) to discuss the assessment process for an EHCP.

- **Medical needs:** All RBWM schools are expected to manage medical needs. An application with medical evidence may be agreed where a child has an exceptional illness or disability (for example, limited mobility) which means that a child can only reasonably attend one school. We cannot consider common conditions as exceptional medical needs, such as the following non-exhaustive list of conditions:

Asthma	Any condition where	training of school
Eczema	the dispensing of	staff for its
Allergies	medication may	administration
Diabetes	require further	

- **Emotional needs:** All schools are expected to appropriately support their pupils' social and emotional needs, including anxiety and stress-related conditions, and their subsequent presentations (including selective mutism and school refusal). Applications on this basis cannot be considered under this criterion.
- **Bullying:** All schools are required to have a behaviour policy that includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils, and applications on this basis cannot be considered under this criterion.
- **Domestic arrangements or family connections:** Joint care arrangements, childcare arrangements, transport arrangements, before or after school care or provision, your place of work, or the need to leave or meet children at more than one school at the same time, cannot be considered under this criterion **without accompanying exceptional medical or social reasons.**
- **Personal preferences:** A preference to keep your child with their current friendship group, the fact that your child attended a nursery associated with the particular school, the fact that your child attended a club or similar provision associated with the particular school, a preference to attend or not attend a particular faith school, a preference for a single gender school, or a preference for a particular subject to be included on the curriculum or in cocurricular provisions, cannot be considered under this criterion.

The Admissions Team will consider whether there is other support available to support the child or family member accessing another school, for example the duty for all schools to make reasonable adjustments for a child or family member under The Equality Act 2010. It is unlawful for any school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating them less favourably because of a protected characteristic. Similarly, it is unlawful to privilege a pupil or prospective pupil by treating them more favourably because of a protected characteristic, unless this is specifically enshrined in law.

4.3. Admission of children outside their chronological age group

This section refers both to 'delaying' entry to Reception and to children wishing to be 'held back' or accelerated one year. It is RBWM's policy that children should move with their chronological age peers, including children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. The relevant legislation can be found in section 2.18 of the [School Admissions Code 2021](#).

Exceptionally, a child may be educated with a peer group one year younger or one year older than their chronological age. This needs careful thought. Once placed in a younger age group it is exceedingly difficult for a child to return to their chronological age group successfully. Equally,

once accelerated it is exceedingly difficult for a child to return to their age group without feeling demotivated.

Additional guidance about how the process works and your responsibilities can be found on the [school admissions policies](#) website. This applies to all children outside of their chronological year group, regardless of the reason, including ‘summer-born’ children. Applications made without providing a written agreement from the school to which you are applying will be discarded.

Implications for pupils admitted outside their expected year group

- Where placement in a younger year group is maintained, phase transfers, SATs, GCSEs, and school leaving are reached a year or more late. Young people cease to be classed as being ‘of statutory school age’ the last Friday of June in the school year in which they turn 16 years of age. Therefore, if they are being educated in a younger year group the school must make provision for them until the date they are due to leave school, meaning they are educated for longer, at the school’s expense.
- Where placement in an older year group is maintained, the consequence is that the child will reach the next phase transfer, SATs or GCSEs, and school leaving point a year or more early. Young people do not cease to be of statutory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year they turn 16 years of age and as such would have to negotiate transfer early to a school sixth form or further education college, which would not be guaranteed, and may raise safeguarding concerns.
- As there is an obligation to be in education or training until the age of 18, a pupil who spends an additional year in school may reduce the time they spend in post-16 education or training which may limit their capacity to achieve qualifications.
- Parents, carers, and schools also need to take into account the social and emotional needs of the child when accessing careers information, pastoral care, relationship education and other PSHE topics. Children should be exposed to these topics at the appropriate level of development, and there are significant consequences if this is done before a child is ready, and also if it is left too late to be of use to the child as they develop.

The implications for being educated out of year group extend to every single time your child transfers to another school. At no point is it guaranteed that your child will be allowed to remain with their new cohort, and your child may be required to resume their expected cohort at any time a transfer occurs.

Making a request to be considered for entry out of chronological year group (OOYG)

All requests for education out of year group (OOYG) must be made to the admission authority for the school. The local authority is the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools in the borough. We will make the decision on whether it is in the child’s best interest to be admitted OOYG, considering your child’s individual needs and abilities. To make an assessment we ask you to do the following:

- Contact the school(s) you are interested in and discuss your request with them. You will need to explain how delaying entry is in your child's best interest.
- Obtain a written agreement from the school that they are willing to consider your child's application outside of their chronological year group. Where relevant, submit to the school and to the local authority any additional information from professionals involved with your child, should you choose. **Please note there is no requirement for you to provide additional information or evidence to support your application should you choose not to provide it.** It is the responsibility of the parent to demonstrate that delaying entry is in the child's best interests.
- Provide a copy of the agreement and any relevant professional evidence to the Admissions team at rbwm.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk, if the school agrees to your request to allow you to apply for your child to join Reception.
- Apply for your in-year transfer, and list the school/s you have agreements from as your preferences. You will not be able to apply for a school without a written agreement in place and provided to the Admissions team.

Our decision on whether it is in the child's best interest to be educated OYOG will be made based on the information available to us at the time the decision is made. We will consider:

- your views
- the individual circumstances of the child
- the views of the head teacher at the school(s) concerned
- any additional information from professionals involved with the child that the parent has chosen to provide
- where relevant, whether the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if not for being born prematurely
- relevant research into the outcomes of summer-born and premature children

The local authority's decision will be emailed to you as soon as it has been made.

4.4. Procedure for verifying the home address

Because the admissions process is based on the distances measured from your home to your school/s of choice, verification of your home address is an extremely important measure in preventing fraud. As mentioned in Section 2.4, it is not a reflection on whether we believe a child's living arrangements to be genuine. We are obligated to perform checks under several legislations, and therefore do not have the authority to deviate from the high standard of evidence required by these legislations. Only **one** address can be used as your admissions address. We verify application addresses to ensure that only entitled pupils are offered places. **It is your responsibility as the applicant to provide evidence to support your application.**

Address verification is not the same as identity verification. You will be used to using documents to verify your identity, but these are not the same as those needed to verify an address to the level required by the legislation. Admissions staff are authorised to verify your address and are

required to do so using a range of corporate and proprietary systems. It is common for us to request further information from you about your home address if:

- there are any doubts or confusion about your address details
- there is a joint custody arrangement in place
- you have moved to the address given on the application within the last 12 months
- you plan to move at any stage between applying for a school, and your child starting at the school
- you are forced to move from your home for any reason
- you are linked to more than one property in commutable distance from your preferred schools
- if the address given is listed as a single-person discount on the council tax listings, and this is not reflected in the tenancy or mortgage agreement

As part of the admissions process, we will check council records to confirm that the address you have given on your application is your child's permanent home address. **We recommend applying in the name of whichever parent or carer is named on your council tax account.** If you have moved to your new address recently, it will quicken your application processing time if you add your verification documents to your initial application in the portal. The portal also allows you to add the same documents to multiple children, for your convenience.

We may also seek evidence from schools or any other source we consider appropriate, and home visits may also be conducted to confirm residency. If we find that your legitimate address is in another local authority, your application will be deleted, and you will need to reapply with the correct local authority. Council tax spot checks will be undertaken at any point in the process and **places will be withdrawn if address details do not match the information given on the application.**

4.4.1. What is considered my child's admission address?

We will decide whether to accept an address for admission purposes in accordance with the guidance set out below. **This guidance should be read in its entirety.**

The address you give us on your application must be your child's **permanent address** or where they spend **most of the school week** in the case of joint custody arrangements. This decision is made at the date of application, and where they will be living when they join the school is also considered. If you intend to move before the September of entry, please see the subsection 4.4.3 'Moving home.'

The assessment of the permanent address for admissions purposes is set out below.

Permanent address for admissions purposes

- Your home address must be where you live with your child. The exception to this is if you can prove that your child lives elsewhere with someone who has legal care and control of your child. This must be due to a formal fostering arrangement through Social Services, and

official letters from the professionals involved are submitted to confirm this at the time of application.

- A child's home address should be a **residential property** that is the child's only or main residence, not an address at which your child may sometimes stay or sleep due to your domestic arrangements. **We cannot accept the address of a relative (unless it can be evidenced that the applicant and the child live there as a long-term and permanent arrangement), friend or childminder, a temporary address, or an address of a house you intend to move to, or a commercial address.**
- If you own or rent a property, which is used, or has previously been used, as your home address which is within commutable distance of an oversubscribed school, and you state that you are living at, and apply from, a different address which is closer to the school, we will normally treat the second address as temporary, even if the property which is further away is not available for you to inhabit. **It is your responsibility to provide the Admissions Team with information on the properties that you are connected to for us to make an assessment on whether a property can reasonably be disregarded for admission purposes.** The aim is to demonstrate that the original property cannot be used by your family, to a level beyond a reasonable doubt. The individual circumstances will be considered by two or more officers who will make an evidence-based decision individually and then together, referring to another officer where disagreement exists. If you are unsure of how your particular circumstances would be treated in this event, please email us for advice on your next steps, at rbwm.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk.
- If you rent a property, we **must** consider any break clauses included in the tenancy agreement when assessing the permanency of your address. If your tenancy agreement expires prior to the start of term, we will require further verification of continued occupancy following the date of expiration, even if this is after the school place has been offered. Failure to provide evidence of continued occupancy will result in the withdrawal of the school place.
- If you use an incorrect address or you do not inform the Admissions Team of other properties which you are connected to, **this will be treated as an attempt to obtain a school place based on false information**, and any offers made will be withdrawn in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021.
- If the Admissions Team does not receive the evidence required to verify your home address within the deadline given, the application will be considered under the lowest category on the oversubscription criteria, with no distance priority applied.
- If you are applying from abroad and you own a property that you will be returning to, which has previously been used as the family home and for which you can prove will be available for you to live in when you return, we will apply the address for admissions purposes. If you intend on renting a property or you cannot provide evidence that a property that you own will be available to you and your family upon your return, we cannot apply the address for admissions purposes until you have arrived, and you can prove that you and your family are habitually resident in the property. If we do not receive

sufficient proof of address before your arrival, your application will still be processed, however, we will not apply distance or criterion priority until we have received evidence. We cannot accept a temporary address or an address of friends or relatives. **It is your responsibility to let us know when you have arrived and provide evidence that you are habitually resident in the property.**

Living with relatives or in relative-owned housing

In some cases, families may live in multi-generational households on a permanent basis. A family may also live in accommodation that is owned by another family member. **It is still the responsibility of the applicant to provide sufficient evidence that the child resides at the address listed on their admission application.** While you may not be able to demonstrate that ownership or an assured tenancy agreement is in place, you will still have other documentation that can be used to demonstrate that this residence is not a temporary one. Utility bills may not be in your name, and again there are documents that can be used as an alternative. The list of alternative documents can be found in section 4.4.3. You will also be required to provide evidence of your familial relationship with the owner of the accommodation, if this is unclear.

4.4.2. Special categories of residence

- **Crown Servants and Armed Forces** - If you are a Crown Servant or armed forces family, please see the relevant section below on how your addresses are verified, as your situation is unique.
- **Barge or boat dwellers** - For admission purposes, the address used for Occupational Bargees or boat dwellers, will be the sorting office or main post office address, closest to the place of mooring as of the deadline date. Proof in the form of a licence will be required and must be submitted at the time of application.
- **Travelling families** - Children of, or who identify as, Gypsies, Roma, Travellers are considered in a different manner. Proof of address for voluntary controlled, community schools and any academy or free schools which buy back into our admissions services will not be required for traveller families where the address is confirmed by the Traveller Education Service. For admissions purposes, children meeting this criterion are defined by RBWM as children who have lived in a mobile home, traveller housing or caravan for the last 2 years and whose families are planning to continue to do so for at least a further 12 months from the point of application. Groups considered under this element of the protocol are Irish travellers, Scottish or Welsh travellers, Roma people (including British Romany Gypsies), New Age travellers, or Travelling show people.
- **Living in accommodation tied to your occupation** – If you live in accommodation that is provided for you as a condition of your contract, you will need to provide your contract, or a letter from your employer confirming that you are in a residence tied to your occupation. This may apply if you reside in a boarding school, hotel or resort, a polo or horse racing facility, or are a live-in private staff, such as a chef, caretaker, governess, tutor, or housekeeper. The letter should be from someone senior enough to verify your position, such as a Bursar, HR professional, or owner of the facility.

4.4.3. Moving home during the admissions process

Because the school admissions system and legislation are based on your permanent home address, **moving house at any stage in the application process will complicate matters**. It can add a level of frustration to an already stressful process, so wherever possible, it is not advised that you move house during the application process. Of course, it is not always avoidable, but as the address verification processes are strict, please be aware that you will need to follow the procedures outlined to you, in order to still gain a school place for your child.

If you are applying for schools that are heavily oversubscribed, it is important to keep in mind that moving home will affect whether you receive an offer for the school, or whether any offers are withdrawn. It is also important to keep in mind that if you are moving specifically into a school's area to attend that school, you will not receive an offer there unless a vacancy is apparent, and you are at the top of the waiting list. **Parents moving into an area need to be aware that the schools with available vacancies at the time of your move are the only schools to which your children can gain admittance**. Places cannot be allocated to you in oversubscribed schools – you will only be able to join the waiting list.

The rules about being connected to more than one property detailed in subsection 4.4.1 above will apply to all changes of address during the application process.

Evidence required when verifying an admissions address

Any change of address will only be considered once you provide sufficient proof that the move is legally binding and that you and your child are habitually resident in the new property. The non-exhaustive list of evidence includes:

- a solicitor's letter stating that the sale is complete, or a formal tenancy agreement which shows that the property leased is suitable for the family's needs. Confirmation of an intention to buy or rent is not sufficient proof and will not be accepted; **AND**
- proof that the previous property has been sold or the lease terminated, or sufficient evidence to allow the Admissions Team to reasonably disregard the previous property for admissions purposes; **AND**
- a copy of three (3) further documents. These could be utility bills/contracts (less than 3 months old) to prove that the family is habitually resident in the new property. These utility bills may be for water, gas, electricity, waste disposal/sewage, or internet/data connection contracts for the property itself (not a mobile device). As part of these three (3) further documents, we may also accept insurance documentation, DVLA, HMRC or Home Office documentation, GP Registration letters, driver's or professional licenses or DBS certificates, if they are dated within the last 3 months (or are in date), and the paperwork has your address listed. Mobile phone bills, prescriptions, credit card statements and bank statements are not acceptable, nor is inclusion on the electoral roll proof that you live at the address.

If you are returning to live in a property that you already own, we will require evidence of this. This includes, but is not limited to, evidence of ownership and proof that the property will be available for the family to live in by the end of August (when the child is starting school in September).

If you move during the application process, you must inform the Admissions Team in writing of your new address and the date of the move as soon as possible and **no later than two weeks after your move**, so that your application is considered using the correct address for admissions purposes. Once address verification procedures have been satisfied, your new address will be used to determine your child's position on any waiting lists so that you receive the correct outcome.

If you move after a school place offer has been made based on the address on your application, we **must** reassess your application using the new address. The assessment will consider whether your child would have been eligible for the place at your allocated school had the current address been used at the time of application, and whether another child with a higher priority for your allocated school will be disadvantaged if we do not withdraw the offer. **The school place will be withdrawn if an offer would not have been received using your new address.**

If you intend to move to another local authority, it is your responsibility to contact the relevant Admissions Team for information on the supporting documents required to prove habitual residency in that borough. The RBWM Admissions Team do not verify addresses which lie outside of this borough in these cases.

If you fail to notify the Admissions Team of a change of address during the application process or before your child starts school, this will be treated as an attempt to obtain a school place based on false information. Your application and any offer we have made will be withdrawn in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021. This will happen regardless of whether you have bought uniform or branded school supplies, and regardless of your child attending transition or transfer days at their new school. The LA will not be liable for any costs you incur when a place is withdrawn due to your residential move.

Evidence required when living with relatives or in relative-owned housing

In some cases, families may live in multi-generational households on a permanent basis. A family may also live in accommodation that is owned by another family member. **It is still the responsibility of the applicant to provide sufficient evidence that the child resides at the address listed on their admission application.** If the address is not verified, the lowest priority oversubscription criteria and highest distance measurement will be applied.

The non-exhaustive list of evidence includes:

- an explanation of your familial relationship with the owner of the address, which may involve providing copies of birth certificates, marriage certificates, affidavits, or other such documentation; **AND**
- a copy of three (3) further documents. These could be utility bills/contracts (less than 3 months old), such as water, gas, electricity, waste disposal/sewage, or internet/data

connection contracts for the property itself (not a mobile device). We may also accept insurance documentation, DVLA, HMRC or Home Office documentation, GP Registration letters, driver's or professional licenses or DBS certificates, if they are dated within the last 3 months (or are in date), and the paperwork has your address listed.

Again, mobile phone bills, prescriptions, credit card statements and bank statements are not acceptable, nor is inclusion on the electoral roll adequate proof that you live at the address.

4.5. Joint custody arrangements

Due to the complex interplay between the legislations governing school funding, admissions and governance, applications can only be made from a single applicant, and using a single residential address, in what is referred to as a 'single-point-of-entry system.' In situations where parents reside separately, this requires a level of agreement between the two parents. Parents with joint custody arrangements need to indicate this when asked on their application, and provide contact details for **both** parents, so that communication can be undertaken fairly. **Failure to indicate a joint custody arrangement, when one exists, will be considered a fraudulent act, and further action will be taken.**

If there is a situation that would make equal contact with both parents impossible or unsafe, please discuss this with us as early as possible, as there are certain scenarios where it is permitted to limit contact to a single parent. In most cases, however, all parties with parental responsibility will be contacted equally. **Please note, that we are prevented from sharing the school preferences and their order, for applications made in another person's name, even if you share parental responsibility for the child.**

As a result of the single-point-of-entry system applied throughout England, the onus is on parents to collectively make the decisions for their children, then present that agreement to admissions for action. We are prevented from interfering with this process. Due to our requirement to maintain neutrality we cannot advocate for, nor liaise between, parents where an agreement cannot be reached, unless a child requires safeguarding intervention in order to protect them from harm.

When parents share custody, we will therefore require any applications for schools for any affected children, whether at Phase Transfer or In-Year Transfer, to be agreed between the parents, in writing, before being processed. This means that without a written agreement from both parents, admissions staff are unable to move forward with any application, and no school offers can be made. The written agreement does not need to be in the form of a formal child arrangement order unless the parents require this formality in order to reach an agreement. An email from both parents' registered email addresses, outlining your agreement, will suffice. Please note that this scenario will also be in effect when accepting or rejecting school offers, so we would strongly advise allowing time for agreements to be reached, so that statutory offer deadlines can be met.

If a single parent retains full custody of their children, and provides evidence of this, an agreement is not required with the other party.

Where the parents or carers live separately, the application must be based on the address where the child lives most of the time. When parents share custody of children, they will split their time between households. This split of time may be defined by a formal order, or in a less formal, mutual agreement between the parents. Where the child lives equally with both parents at different addresses, the child's home address will be taken to be the address of the parent that is deemed to be the child's main residence, that is where the child spends most of the school week. In the absence of a formalised legal care arrangement, we will consider all available evidence that you provide to support your application.

Where there is an equal split, or there is any doubt about residence, we will make a judgement about which address to use for admission purposes. In making this judgement, we will consider the following:

- Any legal documentation confirming residence.
- The pattern of residence, including nights or hours in the school week spent at each address.
- The period over which the current arrangement has been in place, and any upcoming planned reviews.
- Confirmation from the previous or current school of the contact details and home address provided to them by parents.
- Which parent is in receipt of Child Benefit, or Tax Credit or Universal Credit, where claimed. This is because unless parents have decided between themselves who receives child benefit, HMRC will give it to the parent who the child lives with **most of the time** and in accordance with the Child Tax Credit Regulations 2002 and The Universal Credit Regulations 2013. You must have parental responsibility for the child you wish to claim for, **and** you must also be the **primary caregiver or the parent with main responsibility** of the child.
- The address of the surgery where the child is registered with a GP.
- Any other evidence the parents may supply to confirm their situation.

We aim to be as fair as possible to all parties, but we are unable to progress applications where there are parental disputes.

Should your custody arrangements change at any point in the future, you must keep school admissions informed, as it will affect the admissions processes for all your children while they are of compulsory school age.

Co-parenting couples and choosing schools in the middle of their addresses

Many parents that choose to co-parent their children attempt to select a school that is roughly in the middle of their home addresses. While this is a very logical choice in terms of family logistics, it does significantly reduce your child's chances of gaining entry to the school. This is especially true

when parents live considerable distances apart, or over county or borough lines. This is because the distance between the applicants address and the school is **always** a factor in whether a child gains entry. The expectation is that pupils attend a school in close proximity to the applicant's home, rather than one that allows for a more equal commute for parents residing at two different addresses. **Parents can feel free to nominate a school between their addresses as their first preference school but should be aware their child is extremely unlikely to gain entry to that school if it is oversubscribed.** In RBWM, this is particularly the case when nominating secondary schools such as Oldfield, Braywick Court, Larchfield, The Royal First, Queen Anne First, Oakfield First, Lowbrook, Furze Platt Infants and Junior schools, the Waltham and White Waltham schools, and the Cookham schools as their 'equal commute school,' as these schools are primarily filled by local residents living in close proximity to the school.

4.6. Applying to RBWM schools from abroad or from elsewhere in the UK

Applications for overseas pupils are considered in accordance with guidance received from the Department for Education ([DfE](#)) and in consultation with the [Home Office](#).

Parents who are not UK or Irish nationals should check they, and their children, have a right to reside in the UK before applying for a school place in England. It is not the responsibility of the admission authority or co-ordinating local authority to check on your behalf.

You can apply for a school place ahead of your arrival; however, your application will be considered from your current overseas address without distance or criterion priority. This will be the case unless you are returning to a home that you own, and which has been previously used as the family home and you can provide evidence that the property will be available for you to habitually reside there on your return.

If you are not returning to a property that you own, and which has previously been used as your family home, we can only update your address, criteria, and distance when you are habitually resident in the UK at a permanent address. **We cannot accept a temporary address, nor the addresses of friends or relatives.**

Any offer made will be provisional until your new address has been verified. In cases where an address is disputed, the application progress will be halted while investigations continue. We will ask for evidence before the school year or term begins to confirm that your child now lives in the area. Failure to provide the evidence will result in any offer being withdrawn.

Similarly, if your child does not attend school on the first day of their expected starting point without a justifiable reason, we will remove the offer and allocate the place to a child on the waiting list. We will contact you first, before this action is taken to give you the opportunity to explain why there has been a delay in taking up the place and to find out when your child might begin attending. If no response or resolution is found within 20 school days, your school place will be removed without further notice and the child referred to the appropriate investigation team.

4.7. Children with an EHCP or additional educational needs

Children with EHCPs apply through a slightly different avenue, due to the individual needs of the child. Further information can be found [on the AfC website](#). Please contact the SEND Team on cypds@achievingforchildren.org.uk and this specialist team will assist you.

If your child is undergoing statutory assessment, please contact the SEND Team on 07784 361 267 or 07783 806 246 before making an application, as we may not be able to process your application.

If your child has additional needs but does not currently have an EHCP you should apply in the normal way.

4.8. Children of Crown Personnel, including His Majesty's Armed Services

RBWM recognises the needs of Armed Service families and others serving the Crown, many of whom must manage frequent moves from within the UK and overseas. The Admissions legislation specifically mentions your unique circumstances, and states the following:

For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting, or crown servants returning from overseas, admission authorities must:

a) allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area (as long as one is available), provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date. Admission authorities must not refuse to process an application and must not refuse a place solely because the family do not yet have an intended address, or do not yet live in the area.

b) use the address at which the child will live when applying their oversubscription criteria, as long as the parents provide some evidence of their intended address. Admission authorities must use a Unit or quartering address as the child's home address when considering the application against their oversubscription criteria, where a parent requests this

c) not reserve blocks of places for these children

d) ensure that arrangements in their area support the Government's commitment to removing disadvantage for service children. Arrangements must be appropriate for the area and be described in the local authority's composite prospectus.

If you are an HM Forces family with a confirmed posting to this area, or a UK Crown Servant returning from abroad to this area, you can apply for a school place ahead of your arrival.

Your application must be accompanied by official documentary evidence from your employer that confirms a relocation date and that your intended address is within RBWM. The date you take up post must be before you expect your child to start at the school. We will not request proof of council tax payment or tenancy where the address is service family or Crown Servant accommodation. However, we do require proof of occupancy for you and your child to verify habitual residency at the address which has been declared on the application, as this is in line with anti-fraud measures applicable to all applicants.

Armed Service personnel and their families may obtain further information, advice, and guidance from the Children's Education Advisory Service. CEAS is part of the Ministry of Defence's Children's Services Directorate and established to help Service families, schools, local authorities, and other organisations with any issue relating to the education of Service children.

Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS)

Building 190 Trenchard Lines, Upavon, Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 6BE

Email: RC-DCS-HQ-CEAS@mod.gov.uk (best form of contact)

Website: [CEAS](https://www.ceas.mod.uk)

RBWM take their obligations under the Armed Forces Covenant very seriously, and we do whatever we can to assist our service families. However, please be aware the Admissions Team are unable to act in a manner that contravenes other existing legislation.

We are required to apply the oversubscription criteria to all applicants, regardless of their service background, so we cannot privilege applications from government personnel, or reserve spaces for them in schools near family accommodation hubs. As well, if a school is full by the time an application from a military family is received, we do not have the authority to insist the school go over their agreed cohort number to make a space for a service child.

4.9. Twins, triplets, and other children of multiple births

In cases where there is only one place available at a school and the next eligible child is one of a twin or other multiple birth group applying for the same mainstream school, we will admit both twins (and all the siblings in the case of multiple births) even if this exceeds the admission number for that school.

If one of your multiples has an EHCP which guarantees admission to a particular school, you must let the School Admissions Team know this, as the Children and Young People Disability Service (CYPDS) will deal with the application of the child with the EHCP while the admissions service will deal with the application(s) for the other multiple(s).

It can happen that twins or triplets in this situation will be allocated to different schools. If you wish to avoid this, you might consider making an application for just one school for all your multiples using social and medical grounds to argue that this is the only suitable school, due to your child with an EHCP naming the school as the most appropriate provision.

5. Infant class size regulations (ICS)

By law, infant classes (Reception, Year 1, and Year 2) must contain no more than a maximum of 30 pupils per qualified teacher. There are only a small number of permitted exceptions whereby an infant class can exceed this number. These exceptions are as follows:

- Children admitted outside the normal admissions round with an EHCP specifying a school.

- Looked-after children and previously looked-after children admitted outside the normal admissions round.
- Children admitted, after initial allocation of places (during the normal round of admissions i.e., phase transfer), because of a procedural error made by the admission authority or local authority in the original application process.
- Children admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds an appeal (please see limited grounds of appeal below).
- Children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance.
- Children of UK service personnel admitted outside of the normal admissions round.
- Children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil.
- Children with an EHCP who are normally taught in a special educational need's unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school, who attend some infant classes within the mainstream school

Pupils admitted for the above reasons are classed as 'excepted' pupils only until the number on roll drops back to 30.

6. Waiting lists and how they work

6.1. RBWM schools' waiting lists

Waiting list information for all primary entries to Reception and Year 3 Junior schools will be available in the application portal, once your application is processed. Before November 4, this information must be requested by emailing us at rbwm.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk.

A waiting list will only exist when there are more applicants for a particular school, than there are places available. To begin with, the waiting lists will contain the names of all children that applied to that school, and did not gain a place, as long as that school is a higher preference than the school they were offered.

Your child will automatically be added to the waiting list for any higher preference schools that you ranked above the school you were allocated. Any requests to be added to the waiting list of a school which was a lower preference than the school offered are not valid and will not be processed. If you change your mind about the school you want, you need to write to the Admissions Team requesting a change of preference to be considered for lower preferred schools.

It is important to understand that waiting lists for school admissions do not operate like a queue, where the last person to apply joins the end of the queue. **How long you are on the waiting list for a particular school cannot be considered.** This is because waiting lists are ordered by the oversubscription criteria of the school. Each time a child applies, they are slotted into the list based on their criterion, and their residential distance from the school. Therefore, if a child is

categorised as a higher criterion than your child, or lives closer to the school, they will be placed ahead of you on the waiting list, regardless of how long you have been waiting.

If you decide that you want to send your child to the school we have allocated, it is your responsibility to let us know immediately that you do not wish to remain on the waiting list for a higher preference school. If you fail to do this and we can allocate a place at a higher preference school, you will lose the original school offer. If we can offer a place from the waiting list, we will automatically take away the current place we have already offered at the lower ranked preference, and that place will be offered to another child.

Other points of note:

- Applications will be added to the waiting lists in criteria order. Any changes of address and change of preference will be processed, and may affect your waiting list position.
- Waiting list positions are subject to change. You should be aware that if an application is received for a child who has a higher priority under the school's oversubscription criteria, it will affect your child's position on the waiting list. **Positions can move down as well as up on the list.**
- The Admissions Team only have access to waiting list positions for community and voluntary controlled schools. All other schools should be contacted directly. Full information on waiting lists can be found [here](#).

6.2. Waiting lists for own admission authority schools and schools in other local authorities

Own admitting authority schools (OAAs) who do not buy into our service and schools in other areas may operate their waiting lists in a different way to the local authority, but they must still comply with the admissions legislation. It is your responsibility to confirm the arrangements they will follow if you are applying for a school in another area. We do not hold any information on waiting lists for these schools either, so cannot answer enquiries regarding these lists.

7. Appealing a decision on a school place

You have a legal right to appeal against a decision not to offer your child a place at one or more of your preferred schools, even though your child may have a place at another school. Your appeal will be heard by an appeal panel that is independent of the admissions authority whose decision you are appealing against. To ensure their independence and impartiality, there are strict rules covering the appointment of panel members. You have the right to attend the hearing to explain your case to the independent appeal panel, but no children are allowed in the hearing.

If you are appealing for an infant class (Reception, Year 1, and Year 2), your appeal will be subject to infant class size regulations. Please ensure you read the information on the infant class size regulations on the [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman website](#). See subsection 4.10 for further details.

The admissions authority can only allocate places in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria, and it is unable to allocate places above the PAN when a school is full. An

independent appeal panel will consider the grounds you give for appealing against the decision not to offer your child a school place and the reasons given by the school's admission authority for refusing a place.

The appeal panel's decision is binding on the school's admission authority, the parent, and the local authority. Further information on how to appeal for a RBWM school can be found on the [borough website](#).

The borough's school appeals service is independent of the Admissions Team. You can lodge an appeal online on the [borough website](#) to appeal for the following schools.

Alexander First	Kings Court
Alwyn Infant	Larchfield Primary
Boyne Hill CE Infant	Lowbrook
Braywick Court	Oakfield First
Braywood CE First	Oldfield Primary
Clewer Green CE	Riverside Primary
Cookham Rise Primary	St Edmund Campion Catholic Primary
Courthouse Junior	St Edward's Catholic First
Dedworth Green First	St Francis Catholic Primary
Eton Porny CE First	Waltham St Lawrence Primary
Eton Wick CE First	The Queen Anne CE First
Furze Platt Infant	Waltham St Lawrence Primary
Furze Platt Junior	Wessex Primary
Hilltop First	Woodlands Park Primary
Holy Trinity CE Primary (Cookham)	Wraysbury Primary
Homer First	

If you would like to appeal for a school not listed above, please contact the school directly for information about how to appeal. For information about appealing for a school place in another council area, please contact the school or relevant council directly. Contact details for neighbouring boroughs can be found in Section 8.

Please contact Democratic.Services@rbwm.gov.uk for more information on application deadlines.

Pending the outcome of your appeal, your child will be offered a school place at a lower named preference school where possible, or at the nearest appropriate school with a place available. If an appeal is unsuccessful there is no automatic right to a further appeal within the same academic year unless there are significant and material changes in the circumstances of the parent or carer, child, or school since the time of the original appeal. Below are the currently scheduled dates for in-year appeals during the next academic year 2024/25 that will be held at the Town Hall in Maidenhead. The deadline to submit an appeal to be heard on that date is also stated below. These are strict deadlines and must be adhered to due to the high number of appeals we receive. School holidays are also factored into these dates.

- Thursday 12 September 2024 (deadline 23 July 2024)
- Tuesday 1 October 2024 (deadline 16 September 2024)
- Tuesday 15 October 2024 (deadline 30 September 2024)
- Tuesday 7 November 2023 (deadline 25 October 2024)
- Thursday 14 November 2024 (deadline 1 November 2024)
- Thursday 28 November 2024 (deadline 13 November 2024)
- Thursday 12 December 2024 (deadline 1 December 2024)
- Thursday 22 January 2025 (deadline 19 December 2024)
- Thursday 27 February 2025 (deadline 12 February 2025)
- Tuesday 18 March 2025 (deadline 1 March 2025)
- Tuesday 29 April 2025 (deadline 4 April 2025)
- Tuesday 10 June 2025 (deadline 22 May 2025)

All dates are subject to the quantity of appeals received, so these days may be cancelled or rescheduled. The most up to date list is on the [borough website](#).

7.1. How infant class size regulations affect the admissions appeal process

If an infant class exceeds 30 pupils, for any reason other than those permitted exceptions listed above, then the school is required to take 'relevant measures.' 'Relevant measures' would mean a school would be required to employ an additional teacher and may also be required, in extreme circumstances, to provide an additional classroom. Either would involve significant expenditure.

Due to this size restriction, appeals for school places in infant classes which total 30 students are heard under the ICS regulations. **These regulations remove the discretion from the Appeal Panel to consider individual extenuating circumstances when deciding whether to offer children a place, unless they find that your appeal is covered by one of the relevant grounds below:**

- It finds that the admission of additional children would not breach the infant class size limit.
- That the child would have been offered a place if the admission arrangements (as published under Section 92 School Standards and Framework Act (SSFA) 1998) had been correctly and impartially applied; and/or
- The child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had not been contrary to mandatory provisions in the School Admissions Code and the SSFA 1998; and/or
- That the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable Admissions Authority would have made in the circumstances of the case. In order for a panel to determine that an admission authority's decision was unreasonable, it will need to be satisfied that the decision to refuse to admit the child was perverse in the light of the admission arrangements, i.e. it was beyond the range of responses open to a reasonable decision maker, or was a decision which was so outrageous in its defiance of logic or of accepted moral standards that no sensible person who had applied his mind to the question could have arrived at it.

If your appeal does not meet one of these grounds, then your appeal will not be successful. You should keep this in mind when considering whether to appeal for a school which is covered by infant class size law. The Local Government Ombudsman office has produced a fact sheet for parents and carers on ICS appeals: [Infant class size appeals - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

7.2. Fair Access Protocol

RBWM operates a Fair Access Protocol. This Protocol exists to ensure that applications for hard-to-place children, received outside the normal admissions round, are considered promptly and that places are allocated at suitable schools.

Hard-to-place children are described in the Fair Access Protocol as including, but not restricted to, the following:

- a)** Children either subject to a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan or having had a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan within 12 months at the point of being referred to the Fair Access Protocol.
- b)** Children living in a refuge or in other relevant accommodation at the point of being referred to the FAP.
- c)** Children from the criminal justice system.
- d)** Children in alternative provision who need to be reintegrated into mainstream education or who have been permanently excluded but are deemed suitable for mainstream education.
- e)** Children with special educational needs (but without an EHCP), disabilities or medical conditions.
- f)** Children who are carers.
- g)** Children who are homeless.
- h)** Children in formal kinship care arrangements.
- i)** Children of, or who are, Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees, and asylum seekers. For admissions purposes, these are defined by RBWM as children who have lived in a mobile home, traveller housing or caravan for the last 2 years and whose families are planning to continue to do so for at least a further 12 months from the point of application. Groups considered under this element of the protocol are: Irish travellers, Scottish or Welsh travellers, Roma people (including British Romany Gypsies), New Age travellers Travelling show people. To ensure these are admitted to school with the minimum of delay and to maximise what may be a short-term period of education.
- j)** Children who have been refused a school place on the grounds of their challenging behaviour and referred to the FAP in accordance with paragraph 3.10 of the Code.
- k)** Children for whom a place has not been sought due to exceptional circumstances.
- l)** Children who have been out of education for four or more weeks where it can be demonstrated that there are no places available at any school within a reasonable

distance of their home. This does not include circumstances where a suitable place has been offered to a child and this has not been accepted.

- m) Previously looked-after children for whom the local authority has been unable to promptly secure a school place

This list is not exhaustive. Applications which are suitable for consideration under the Fair Access Protocol are sent to the Fair Access Panel. The Fair Access Panel meets monthly to discuss cases and to ensure, where appropriate, a suitable school place is allocated.

The process is designed to ensure that pupils are allocated to schools which are able to provide appropriate support for them. The aim is to make sure children are allocated to the most appropriate school, as quickly as possible, to give them the optimum opportunity to achieve.

The process is also designed to ensure that no school, including those with vacancies, is asked to take more than its fair share of children who have been excluded or who exhibit challenging behaviour. Allocating a child with challenging behaviour to a school which already has a disproportionate number of children with challenging behaviour can be detrimental not only to the child entering the school, who may not receive the necessary support, but also the children already being educated in the school. The Fair Access Panel must balance this and ensure a fair allocation of these children to all schools.

Any applicant referred to the Fair Access Panel will be notified of this in writing and informed of the date when the Panel is due to meet to discuss your application.

Fair Access Protocols are managed in line with the [statutory guidance](#) from August 2021.

8. Useful contact details

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Appeals helpline	01628 796319
Home to School Transport helpline	01628 796666
Special Educational Needs helpline	01628 796779
Contact the Admissions Team by email on	rbwm.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Neighbouring local authorities

Buckinghamshire County Council	01296 395000
Bracknell Forest Borough Council	01344 354023
Slough Borough Council	01753 875700
Surrey County Council	0300 2001004
Reading Borough Council	0118 9373777
Wokingham District Council	0118 974 6000

Other useful telephone numbers

Department for Education (DfE)	0800 1008000
Independent Schools Council information service	020 77667070
Local Government Ombudsman	0845 6021983
Diocese of Oxford – Board of Education	01865 208237
Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth	01329 835363

Free school meals

To receive free school meals, applicants must be receiving one of the following:

- Income support
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The 'Guarantee' element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit (exceptions apply)

Please speak to your child's allocated school about making an application. Admissions cannot assist with these enquiries.

Home to school transport support

Some children and young people may qualify for help with transport to and from school if they live more than a certain distance from their nearest school, or if they have special educational needs which means they cannot walk safely to school.

The council provides this support in line with national guidelines and legislation, which means that some children and young people may be eligible for free home to school transport. The full home to school transport policy and information on how to apply is available on the [website](#).

Appendix A: Definitions

Definitions of terms and acronyms used in this guide:

- **'Primary' school** - this will mean primary, first, infant, or junior school unless otherwise differentiated.
- **'Secondary' school** - this will mean secondary, middle, or upper school unless otherwise differentiated.

- **RBWM** - The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council
- **AfC** - Achieving for Children
- **Academic Year** - A period commencing with 1 August and ending with the next 31 July, as defined by Section 88M of the SSFA 1998.
- **Admission arrangements** - The overall procedure, practices and oversubscription criteria used in deciding the allocation of school places including any device or means used to determine whether a school place is to be offered.
- **Admission Authority** - The body responsible for setting and applying a school's admission arrangements. For community or voluntary controlled schools, this body is the local authority unless it has agreed to delegate responsibility to the governing body. For foundation or voluntary aided schools, this body is the governing body of the school. For Academies, this body is the Academy Trust.
- **Admission Number** (or published admission number (PAN)) - The number of school places that the admission authority must offer in each relevant age group of a school for which it is the admission authority. Admission numbers are part of a school's admission arrangements. PANs apply to the following year groups:
 - **Reception** – Infant, First and Primary schools only
 - **Year 3** – Junior schools only
 - **Year 5** – Middle schools only
 - **Year 7** – Secondary schools only
 - **Year 9** – Upper schools only

All other year groups have a maximum expected capacity, above with it would be prejudicial to the effective education and efficient use of resources if more children were admitted to that cohort.

- **Banding** - A system of oversubscription criteria in which all children applying for a place at a banding school are placed into ability bands based on their performance in a test or other assessment. Places are then allocated so that the school's intake either reflects the ability profile of those children applying to the school, those children applying to a group of schools banding jointly, the local authority ability profile or the national ability profile.
- **Buy back validation service** – A service which own admission authority schools buy back into whereby the local authority grades applications and maintains their waiting lists in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria and admission arrangements on behalf of the school.
- **Catchment area** – See designated area.
- **Common Application Form (CAF)** - The form parents complete, listing their preferred choices of schools, and then submit to local authorities when applying for a school place for their child as part of the local coordination scheme, during the normal admissions round. Parents must be allowed to express a preference for a minimum of three schools on the relevant common application form as determined by their local authority. Local authorities may allow parents to express a higher number of preferences if they wish. These forms are the same for all schools.

- **Composite prospectus** – This guide is the composite prospectus. This is the prospectus that a local authority is required to publish by 12 September in the offer year. This prospectus must include detailed admission arrangements of all maintained schools and academies in the area (including admission numbers and catchment areas).
- **Coordination (also known as the Coordinated Scheme)** - The process by which local authorities co-ordinate the distribution of offers of places for schools in their area. All local authorities are required to coordinate the normal admissions round and late applications for primary and secondary schools in their area. There is no requirement for local authorities to coordinate in-year admissions, but they can offer to do so if they wish. Own admission authority schools can take in-year applications directly from parents, provided they notify their local authority of each application and its outcome.
- **Determination Year** - The school year immediately preceding the offer year. This is the school year in which admission authorities determine their admission arrangements.
- **Determined admission arrangements** - Admission arrangements that have been formally agreed by the admission authority, for example, agreed at a meeting of the admission authority and the decision recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- **Diversion offer** - This is an offer given to a parent for a school that is not listed on their preferences. It is a legal requirement that should a place not be available at a preferred school, that the local authority 'divert' the application to the nearest school with an available place appropriate for this child. Where this is not possible, the local authority is required to inform you of where schools are with available places, so that you can apply directly to the schools themselves.
- **Designated area (DA)** – Also known as the designated appropriate area, or the catchment area. A geographical area, from which children may be afforded priority for admission to a particular school. A designated area is part of a school's admission arrangements and must therefore be consulted upon, determined, and published in the same way as other admission arrangements.
- **Designated school node (DSN)** - This is the single point of entry where all pupils can safely gain access to the school. It is usually on, or near the front gate of the school. As many schools have multiple gates for pupil entry, it is more fair to all applicants to measure to a single point, rather than to any point on the school's boundary.
- **Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP)** - A plan made by the local authority under Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014 specifying the special education, health and social care provision required for that child. These are plans for children with significant disabilities or complex educational needs. They come with their own funding, and their own laws and regulations. Children with EHCPs have different requirements for admissions, and their needs are protected in UK law. EHCPs replaced the terminology 'statement of special needs.'
- **Fair Access Protocol (FAP)** - The process whereby vulnerable children and children unable to gain school places are placed in schools outside the normal admissions processes.
- **Governing bodies** - School governing bodies are bodies corporate responsible for conducting schools with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement. Governing

bodies have three key roles: setting strategic direction, ensuring accountability, and monitoring and evaluation.

- **Grammar schools (designated)** - These were the 163 schools that were designated under Section 104(5) of the SSFA 1998 as grammar schools. A 'grammar school' is defined by Section 104(2) of that Act as a school which selects all (or substantially all) of its pupils on the basis of general (i.e. academic) ability. At the time of publication, most grammar schools have converted to Academy status.
- **Home local authority** - A child's home local authority is the local authority in whose area the child resides.
- **Infant class size exceptions** - The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012 permit children to be admitted as exceptions to the infant class size limit. These are set out in paragraph 2.15 of the Admissions Code.
- **Infant class size limit** - Section 1 of the SSFA 1998 limits the size of an infant class (i.e. a class in which the majority of children will reach the age of five, six or seven during the school year) to 30 pupils per school teacher.
- **In-year application** - An application is an in-year application if it is for the admission of a child to a relevant age group and it is submitted on or after the first day of the first school term of the admission year; or it is for the admission of a child to an age group other than a relevant age group.
- **Late application** - Late applications are applications for entry in a relevant age group which are submitted before the first day of the first term in the admission year but have not been made in time to enable the local authority to offer a place on National Offer Day.
- **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman** - An independent, impartial, and free service that investigates complaints about maladministration of certain public bodies.
- **Looked-after children (LAC)** - Children who are in the care of local authorities as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989. In relation to school admissions legislation a 'looked-after child' is a child in public care at the time of application to a school. See also Previously looked-after children.
- **Maintaining local authority** - The area in which a school is located is referred to as the maintaining local authority. RBWM is the maintaining authority for all schools named in this publication.
- **National Offer Day (NOD)** - The day each year on which local authorities are required to send the offer of a school place to all parents in their area. Secondary National Offer Day is 1 March (or the next working day). Primary National Offer Day is 16 April (or the next working day).
- **Nodal point** – See also Designated school node. A fixed geographical point, other than the location of the school, from which children may be afforded priority for admission to a particular school, based on the distance from the child's home to the nodal point. A nodal point is part of a school's admission arrangements and must therefore be consulted upon, determined, and published in the same way as other admission arrangements. The selection of such a point must be clearly explained and made on reasonable grounds.

- **Normal admissions round** - The period during which parents are invited to express a minimum of three preferences for a place at any state-funded school, in rank order on the common application form provided by their home local authority. This period usually follows publication of the local authority composite prospectus on 12 September, with the deadlines for parental applications of 31 October (for secondary places) and 15 January (for primary places), and subsequent offers made to parents on National Offer Day as defined above.
- **Own admitting authority (OAA)** - These are schools that are independent of the local authority. The term covers academies, free schools, and some faith schools.
- **Offer Year** - The school year immediately preceding the school year in which pupils are to be admitted to schools under the admission arrangements in question. This is the school year in which the offers of school places are communicated.
- **Oversubscription** - Where a school has a higher number of applicants than the school's published admission number.
- **Oversubscription criteria** - This refers to the published criteria that an admission authority applies when a school has more applications than places available in order to decide which children will be allocated a place.
- **PAN** - Published or pupil admission number. This is the total number of places available at the school, in the relevant year group.
- **Previously looked-after children (PLAC)** - Previously looked-after children are children who were looked-after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order).
- **Reception class** - Defined by Section 142 of the SSFA 1998 as a class in which education is provided which is suitable for children aged five and any children who are under or over five years old whom it is expedient to educate with pupils of that age.
- **Relevant age group** - The age group to which children are normally admitted. This is also referred to as their expected or chronological age group or cohort. Each relevant age group must have admission arrangements, including an admission number. Some schools (for example schools with sixth forms which admit children into the sixth form) may have more than one relevant age group.
- **School year** - The period beginning with the first school term to begin after July and ending with the beginning of the first such term to begin after the following July, as defined by Section 579 of the Education Act 1996.
- **Schools Adjudicator** - A statutory officeholder who is appointed by the Secretary of State for Education but is independent. The Schools Adjudicator decides on objections to determined admission arrangements of all state-funded schools and variations of determined admission arrangements for maintained schools. The Schools Adjudicator also deals with referrals of directions by local authorities to maintained schools to admit a child and provides advice on requests to the Secretary of State by local authorities to direct academies to admit children.
- **Social and medical consideration (SEMC)** – Also known as social, emotional, and medical consideration. This is an application for a specific school, based on its unique ability to provide

for the specific needs of a child. Only a small number of, if any, applications are successful in any application year.

- **Supplementary Information Form (SIF)** - This is a form requested by some schools that contains extra information to help the school decide which oversubscription criteria is most appropriate. These forms may ask questions about religious attendance, pupil premium information, staff children information, or other information required by the individual school.
- **Twice-Excluded Pupils** - A child who has been permanently excluded from two or more schools.
- **Waiting lists** - A list of children held and maintained by the admission authority when the school has allocated all of its places, on which children are ranked in priority order against the school's published oversubscription criteria.

Please see the [admissions website](#) for a range of FAQs. If you cannot find your answer in this guide or on the website, please email us on rbwm.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk