A Guide to applying for

an in-year school place.

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Co-ordination

West Berkshire Council admissions team co-ordinate applications for all West Berkshire schools with one exception, Englefield CE Primary School. The in year coordinated scheme explains how this works.

If you would like to apply for a place at Englefield CE Primary School. Please contact the school directly:

[office@englefield.w-berks.sch.uk](mailto:office@englefield.w-berks.sch.uk)

[www.englefieldprimary.co.uk/admissions](http://www.englefieldprimary.co.uk/admissions)

For all other schools, please continue reading.

Considerations before applying to change your child’s school.

Moving to a new school is an important step for all children. Some of the things which you must think about if you are considering a change of school for your child are:

**Curriculum**

This is especially important for secondary aged children, and particularly for those in years 9, 10 or 11. A new school may not necessarily be able to exactly match your child’s existing curriculum commitments.

**Achievement**

On average statistics show that school moves lower examination results. Overall, in-year movers tend to have lower prior attainment, and achieve less well as a result of moving. Compared to their peers, the attainment of pupils who make in-year moves is markedly lower, particularly at Key Stage 4. Furthermore, attainment is lower still among pupils who make multiple in-year moves. Only 27 percent of pupils who move schools three times or more during their secondary school career achieve five A\* to C grade GCSEs, compared to the national average of 60 percent.

**Behaviour**

It can be helpful for a child who is presenting challenging behaviour to move to a new school. However, this is normally only where the behaviour is linked to the existing school. If strategies to help a child have already been put in place these can be disrupted by a school move. This can lead to further difficulties.

It is usually better for the child if the family work with the existing school to help to address and resolve any difficulties.

If your child does move schools to address challenging behaviour, they may stay on the roll of their old school for an interim period. If the change of schools is not successful they would go back to their old school.

**Peer group / friends**

If there are difficulties, consider if these will be resolved by a school move. There could be similar issues, even in a new school. It is often better to work with the existing school to address matters. Moving a child away from an established peer group may adversely affect achievement.

**Timing**

A change of schools during the school year can disrupt a child’s education if they are already in the middle of a specific piece of coursework.

**School location**

If you are new to the area, you can find out which schools are closest to you and view maps that include the catchment are: [www.westberks.gov.uk/school-catchment-areas](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/school-catchment-areas)

**Transport**

Schools set their own start and finish times. You need to consider the implication of these on your child and in relation to your personal day to day schedule.

**Free Home to School Transport is only available for children who attend their nearest available School where the school is 2 or 3 miles (dependent on child’s age) or more from the school.**

**Free Transport is not provided to your catchment school if it is not the closest available.**

**For secondary school children entitled to free school meals, free transport will be available to the nearest 3 schools between 2 and 6 miles from home.**

Parents are responsible for making sure their children get to and from school at the appropriate times each day. Children may receive free transport to the closest school if there is no available safe walking route or live 2 or 3 miles (dependent on child’s age) or more from the school. You can check which school is closest using the school checker at: [www.westberks.gov.uk/school-catchment-areas](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/school-catchment-areas)

To receive free transport, you must be eligible and apply once you have been offered a school place. Transport is only provided for the purpose of attending school at the beginning of the day and returning home at the end of each day.

The full transport policy and application is available at:

[www.westberks.gov.uk/school-transport](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/school-transport)

**Free Transport is not provided to your catchment school if it is not the closest available.** Where a child is not entitled to free home to school transport, but there are seats available on existing school buses, you may be able to pay for a seat. (Currently £930 per year – subject to change): [www.westberks.gov.uk/farepaying-school-transport](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/farepaying-school-transport)

**School place availability**

Schools are often full, so it won’t always be possible to offer a place at a preferred school. The school admissions team can advise on schools with places: [www.westberks.gov.uk/contact-school-admissions-team](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/contact-school-admissions-team)

How to apply

To apply, you need to complete the in-year school application that is relevant to your child’s age. You must complete all sections. If you require help with the application you can contact the school admissions team on 01635 551111 or ask your child’s current school.

[**Primary school application [134KB]**](https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/51483/Primary-School-Application-Form-In-year-admissions/doc/In_year_primary_school_application_form_2.docx?m=638284931141830000) ,  [**Secondary application - years 7-8 [136KB]**](https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/51484/Secondary-School-Application-years-7-to-8-In-year-admissions/doc/In_year_secondary_application_form_-years_7-8.docx?m=638284930649600000)  or  [**Secondary application - years 9-11 [137KB]**](https://www.westberks.gov.uk/media/51485/Secondary-School-Application-years-9-to-11-In-year-admissions/doc/In_year_secondary_application_form_-years_9-11.docx?m=638284930869970000)

School moves between West Berkshire Schools

Whenever an application is received for a child to move between West Berkshire Schools **and there is a space in the receiving school**, the LA will notify both schools. The same will apply if initially the school was full, but a place becomes available later from a waiting list.

* Schools will be advised to notify each other and the admissions team if there are any concerns if the child were to move.
* Both schools should contact the applicant to discuss the merits and pitfalls of changing schools.

How long it will take to receive a response to your application

* Upon receipt of an in-year application, we aim to notify applicants of the outcome in writing within 10 school days and not longer than 15 school days.
* If applying in advance of an academic year we aim to notify applicants of the outcome in writing within 10 school days and not longer than 15 school days of the start of the new academic year.
* Whilst applications for the new year are processed in advance from June, due to the volume of applications and the lack of available in-year school places in certain areas

and year groups it will not always be possible to respond to an application in advance of the academic year.

When your child can start if offered a school place

* Where a child is offered a school place following an in-year application, and the offer is accepted, arrangements will be made for the child to start school as soon as possible, particularly where the child is out of school.
* An unplaced child will be offered a start date as soon as possible but always within 10 school days.
* A child with a current school place that is within a reasonable distance or a child who is being electively home educated will be offered a school place as soon as possible which will normally be between 15 and 20 school days.

School admission numbers

School admission numbers are published for each school for the 1st year of entry e.g. year 7 in a secondary school. Schools are required to admit up to the published number but can refuse to offer a place when it is reached.

School admission numbers in other years (point of prejudice)

Specific admission numbers do not apply in year groups that are not the 1st year of entry for the school. Admission authorities will offer places up to the point where the admission of another child would create significant challenges in the year group. Such challenges would be the inability to continue providing adequate support and education for the children already attending the school. We refer to this limit as the point of prejudice.

Different types of schools and what that means for applications

In West Berkshire there are different types of school:

* Academy
* Community
* Foundation
* Voluntary Aided
* Voluntary Controlled

West Berkshire Council admissions team determine the school admission policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools. The team also make the decision to offer or refuse a place in those schools.

For the remaining schools, the school Governing body or Academy Trust are responsible for determining the school’s admission policy and making admissions decisions.

School admission policies

Admission policies are published to explain how places will be offered in the event that there are more applications than places available or to place children on a waiting list when the school is already full. The application form asks questions that are relevant to all the different school policies.

An important part of the policy is the admission criteria that determines the order in which places are offered.

Admission criteria for West Berkshire Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools.

**A. looked after children, and all previously looked after children.** Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

**And:**

**Children who were previously in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care because of being adopted.** By children previously in state care outside of England, we mean children who have been looked after outside of England by a public authority, a religious organisation, or another provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. The care may have been provided in orphanages or other settings. Evidence will be required to support an application and the admission authority will determine if the evidence provided is sufficient.

**B. Children who have exceptional social or medical needs,** supported by a written recommendation from the child’s paediatrician/consultant or professional from Children’s Services. The letter must explain why the school is the only suitable school to meet the child’s needs and why no other school could provide the appropriate support for the child.

**C. Catchment Area Pupils, i.e.,** Children whose permanent home address is within the school catchment area of the school.

**D. Non-Catchment Siblings** Pupils with a brother or sister (including step/foster sibling and children of the parent’s/carer’s partner living in the same family unit) who is already attending the preferred school (in the reception year to year 11) and will continue to attend compulsory at the point of entry. A child or children with a multiple birth sibling who has a confirmed EHCP that names the school in advance of starting the school will also be considered a sibling.

For infant and junior school applications, the brother or sister will also be considered a sibling if they are already on the roll of the partner infant or junior school of the preferred school and will continue to attend compulsory education at the school at the point of entry.

**E - Children of staff at the school**

a) 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, or

b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

Schools will be asked to confirm the points above.

**F. All Other applicants - Those who do not meet any of the Oversubscription criteria A-E**

Tiebreaker

Priority will be given within any of the over-subscription criteria in the following order:

1. For Criteria A-C,priority will be given first to siblings (the definition of sibling is as explained in criteria D of the oversubscription criteria).
2. Child whose permanent home address is nearest to the preferred school. Distances will be measured using a Geographical Information System taking a straight line between the home address and the school using the unique property identification points within the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG).
3. Where 2 or more applicants meet the same admission criteria and the measured distance between home and school is the same to 3 decimal places a lottery system will be used to set the rank order for each child. In order to ensure fairness the School admissions team will administer the lottery system overseen by the head of the education service. The applicant’s names will be drawn in order and that order will be applied to their ranked order in the admission list for the school.

Multiple Births

Where the last child offered a place is from a multiple birth and one or more of the siblings would fall below the limit of the admission number in the ranking, all the children will be offered a place which will exceed the school’s admission number.

The admission policies for Academy, Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools

The admission policies for Academy, Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools are published on their websites along with any supplementary forms. Supplementary forms are also available here: [www.westberks.gov.uk/inyear-school-admissions](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/inyear-school-admissions)

Voluntary-aided, Foundation and Academy Primary website links:

* [Bradfield C.E. (VA) Primary School](https://bradfieldceprimary.co.uk/)
* [Brightwalton C.E. (VA) Primary School](https://www.brightwalton.w-berks.sch.uk/)
* [Enborne C.E. (VA) Primary School](http://www.enborne.w-berks.sch.uk/)
* [Englefield C.E. (VA) Primary School](http://www.englefieldprimary.co.uk/)
* [Fir Tree School and Nursery Newbury Academy Trust](http://www.firtreeschool.co.uk/)
* [Francis Baily Primary School](https://www.francisbaily.co.uk/)
* [Lambourn CE Primary School (Academy)](http://www.lambournschool.org.uk/)
* [Mortimer St Mary's C.E. (VA) Junior School](https://www.mortimerschools.org/)
* [Speenhamland Primary School (Academy)](http://www.speenhamlandprimary.co.uk/)
* [St Finian's Catholic (VA) Primary School](http://www.stfiniansprimary.co.uk/westberks/primary/stfinians)
* [St John the Evangelist C.E. (VA) Infant and Nursery School](http://www.stjohnev.w-berks.sch.uk/)
* [St Joseph's Catholic (VA) Primary School](http://www.stjosephs.w-berks.sch.uk/)
* [St Nicolas C.E. (VA) Junior School](https://www.stjohnandstnicolasschools.org.uk/)
* [St Paul's Catholic (VA) Primary School](http://www.stpauls.w-berks.sch.uk/)
* [Stockcross C.E. (VA) School](http://stockcrossschool.org.uk/)
* [Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet C.E. (VA) Primary School](http://www.sulhamstead.westberks.dbprimary.com/)
* [Welford and Wickham Church of England Primary School](https://www.westberks.gov.uk/article/29590/Welford-and-Wickham-Church-of-England-Primary-School)
* [Whitelands Park Primary School (Academy)](http://www.whitelandsparkprimary.co.uk/)
* [Woolhampton C.E. (VA) Primary School](http://www.woolhamptonschool.org/)
* [Yattendon C.E. (VA) Primary School](http://www.yattendonschool.co.uk/)

Voluntary-aided, Foundation and Academy Secondary website links

* [Denefield School (Academy)](http://www.denefield.org.uk/)
* [John O'Gaunt Community Technology College](http://www.johnogauntschool.co.uk/)
* [Kennet School (Academy)](https://www.kennetschool.co.uk/app/os#!/home-2)
* [Little Heath (VA) School](http://www.littleheath.org.uk/page/default.asp?title=Home&pid=1)
* [Newbury Academy Trust Trinity School](http://www.trinitynewbury.org/)
* [Park House School (Academy)](http://www.parkhouseschool.org/)
* [St. Bartholomew's School (Academy)](http://www.stbarts.co.uk/)
* [The Downs School](http://www.thedownsschool.org.uk/DSW10/index.php)
* [Theale Green School (Academy)](http://www.thealegreen.w-berks.sch.uk/home)

Requesting entry to a year group that isn’t normal for the age of the child.

* Parents can apply for a school place in any year at any time.
* However, if a parent would like their child to be taught in a different year to their normal year group, they must first submit a written request.
* Parents may provide evidence from professionals to support their request.
* Parents should list all the schools they will apply for. One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. For this reason, parents should consider whether to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference school.
* A decision will be made by the Service Manager based on the information provided and discussions with appropriate head teachers.
* Such requests will be considered, and a response provided within 6 school weeks. If the request is granted, parents will be entitled to apply for the agreed year group in the schools requested.

Permanent home address

All admission authorities determine what constitutes a permanent home address but for West Berkshire Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools:

The child’s permanent home address is where he or she lives with his or her legal parents/carers at the time of application.Future addresses must not be used on the application form.

In most cases, applicant’s rent or own one property, however, family circumstances vary so we have identified below how we will consider different cases.

* If you own a house or a flat and are renting and living in another property, we will consider the rental address as your permanent address if:

1. your owned property is rented and
2. you have been living at the rented address for at least 1 year (we will require proof)

In some cases, we may consider a rental address where you have lived for a period shorter than a year as your permanent address if your owned property is considerable distance from the rented accommodation where you are living. In these cases, we will decide what evidence you should provide us, we will review it and decide.

* If you own two or more houses, the permanent home address is where you live, and we may ask for evidence to determine which address is the permanent home address.
* If your permanent home address is not owned or rented (for example living with parents) we will consider it as your permanent home address if you do not own or rent another property. We will require evidence to show that you do not own or rent another property. If you cannot show evidence that you have lived at the current address for more than 1 year, we will need to see documentation that confirms what the previous address was and that you do not own or rent the property.
* If you own or rent a property and have moved because of an emergency, for example fleeing domestic violence, we will consider the address where you are staying as your permanent home address. We will require evidence such as a police report.
* Where parental responsibilities are shared and the child/children live at both parent’s addresses during the school week on a permanent arrangement, either address will be considered the permanent home address.

To establish where the child resides, we may ask for the following information:

1. Any legal documentation confirming residence if such an agreement exists.
2. Information on the actual pattern of residence.
3. The length of time the residence arrangements have been in place.
4. Council Tax bill and other utilities bill.

* Families of service personnel with a confirmed posting to West Berkshire or crown servants returning from overseas to live in the area will be considered as catchment applicants if: The application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a unit postal address or quartering area address.

School Catchment Area

Living in a school catchment area is part of most school’s admission criteria.

If a catchment boundary line runs through a property boundary, the unique property identification points within the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) will be used to determine which school catchment area the property falls within.

The West Berkshire Council website has an automated facility for parents to check which school catchment area they are in and the unique property identification points are used to inform which catchment a property falls within.

Parents can type their postcode into the search facility on the website to select their address and property information is displayed which includes the catchment school: [www.westberks.gov.uk/school-catchment-areas](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/school-catchment-areas)

Waiting lists

In West Berkshire we automatically place children on each higher preference school waiting list. Parents can contact the Admissions Team to find out their child’s position on the list and it’s best to do this by email.

Positions on waiting lists can change up or down because the lists are ranked based on the admission criteria and distance of each child. It is possible that you could be reasonably high on a waiting list and then continue to move further down because other families move in closer or into the catchment area for the school.

The application you have made is just for consideration in the current academic year (or next if you are applying in advance of the year starting). **Children are removed from waiting lists at the end of the summer term in July.** If you would still like to change your child’s school in the next academic year you will need to make a new application.

Applicants need to be aware that a place may never become available from a school waiting list.

Appeals against an admission decision.

Any parent who isn’t offered a school place at their preferred school or schools has the right of appeal to an independent appeals panel. This can be for a place at one or more of the preferred schools. Information on how to appeal will be provided with the result of the application.

Once your appeal has been submitted a date will be arranged to hear your appeal alongside all other appeals made for a place in the school. The school admission authority will provide a response to all submitted appeals that will explain why the school cannot accommodate additional children.

Parents are invited to the appeal hearing to put their case forward to an independent appeal panel.

The appeals clerk will write to parents after all the appeals for the school have been heard to inform them of the decision.

How to appeal

The best way to appeal is online. West Berkshire council provide the service for most schools – [Appeal Against a School Admission Decision - West Berkshire Council](https://www.westberks.gov.uk/school-admissions-appeal)

Parents will be notified how to appeal in their decision letter.