# Applying for a secondary school place

**For September 2026**

Closing date for applications
31 October 2025



**Contact details**
Admissions Team, Council Offices, Market Street,
Newbury RG14 5LD
Office hours - 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday,
8.30am to 4.30pm Friday
Call: 01635 551111 Email: admissions@westberks.gov.uk

West Berkshire COUNCIL

This leaflet gives a quick summary of the process. For more information on school admissions, including information on each school in West Berkshire, go to **www.westberks.gov.uk/secondary-school-admissions**

There is a detailed Admissions Guide for Parents on the website which you should read. The guide includes answers to frequently asked questions, such as what to do if you are moving house. A reference copy will also be available to read at the Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury, RG14 5LD.

## Making an application for a school place

If your child is already in Year 6, you should apply for a place at Secondary school.

Before you decide on the most appropriate school for your child, get as much information as possible. You should arrange to visit schools, including your catchment area school. Schools have pre-arranged days in the Autumn term for this purpose.

Each school has a prospectus and most schools have a website. These are often good places to start getting to know the school:

the school's aims and objectives

- standards and other achievements
- out of school activities and clubs
- information on policies such as behaviour and discipline

## Will my child be offered a school place?

Your child will be offered a place but not necessarily at a school you apply for, especially if you don't include your catchment school as a preference.

### This is a high birth rate year.

There are high numbers of children living in all catchment areas so fewer spaces in schools for non-catchment applicants who apply. You should consider making your catchment school one of your preferred schools or risk being allocated a school some distance from home. No transport assistance will be available if you don't include your closest school as a 1st preference. If your West Berkshire Catchment School is your preferred school there are generally enough spaces.

Historically, close to 90% of children are offered their 1st choice school and 97% receive an offer in one of their preferred schools.

When children are not offered any of their preferred schools, this is normally because applicants have applied for schools where there is no reasonable expectation of being offered. We provide historic allocation data that includes the distance of the furthest child offered each year: **www.westberks.gov.uk/school-admission-data**

You can check your catchment and nearest school here: **www.westberks.gov.uk/school-catchment-areas**

## What you need to do

**A child's parent/carer must make the application.** If you live in West Berkshire you must fill in the West Berkshire Application Form.

You can apply online at **www.westberks.gov.uk/secondary-school-admissions** up to **31 October 2025.** If you live outside of West Berkshire (e.g. Reading), you must fill in the form from your local Council by their deadline.

You can name up to four schools that you would like your child to go to and rank them in order of preference. The school that you name first should be the one you would most like your child to go to.

You can apply for any type of school, either in West Berkshire or elsewhere, except fee-paying schools. Do not apply for fee-paying schools in this way.

If you plan to list a Voluntary-Aided, Foundation, Free school or an Academy in your application, you should read the over-subscription rules for that school carefully. It is important to do this because schools of this type may use different rules to allocate their school places. They may want you to provide supplementary evidence.

A summary of the over-subscription rules for each school in West Berkshire can be found in the Secondary school guide on our website at **www.westberks.gov.uk/secondary-school-admissions**

**Remember – Apply on Time**

If you do not apply by the deadline you may disadvantage your child and this could affect your chances of getting a preferred school place for your child.

## How places are offered

- Each of your preferences will be considered with regard to the school's over-subscription rules.
- Each admission authority, including other councils and boroughs will use their own over-subscription rules to rank the applications. They will tell us if a place can be offered.
- By applying the rules for each school to each application, a list is produced for each school that provides the order in which places will be offered. For example, if 200 applications are received for a school, applicants will be ranked from 1 – 200.
- All schools have an admission number. For example, if the admission number was 150 pupils and there were 200 applicants, the first 150 applicants from the ranked list can be offered a place.
- If more than one school place can be offered, we will look at the order of your preferences and offer your child a place at the school that you have listed highest.
- We will give each child only one offer of a place.

We will let you know the school place we are offering by email if you apply using the online application (emailed forms are not considered as an online application) and request to be notified by email on **03 March 2026.**

### Special Educational Needs

Many children with special educational needs go to a local school and have some extra support to help them. If your child has (or you expect them to have) an EHC Plan you should contact the Special Educational Needs Team on **01635 519713** Needs Team by email:
**senassessmentteam@westberks.gov.uk**

## Home to School Transport

Parents are responsible for making sure that their children get to and from school at the appropriate times each day. Your child may receive free transport to the closest school if there is no available walking route or you are 3 miles or more from the school. You can check which school is closest using the school checker at: **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. The full transport policy and application is available at:

**www.westberks.gov.uk/school-transport**

**In most cases, free transport is only provided to the nearest available school, which isn't always the Catchment school or a West Berkshire school.**

**Your nearest school should be your 1st preference if free transport is important to you.**

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.

**Apply from 20 April to 19 June for a fare paying seat (currently £990 per year – subject to change): www.westberks.gov.uk/farepaying-school-transport**

**Children who receive free school meals or the highest level of working tax credit may be entitled to free transport to their closest 3 schools over 2 miles from their home.**

**Free School Meals** To apply online go to **www.westberks.gov.uk/free-school-meals-apply**