

This guide is for
admission into
school outside of the
normal point of entry
(in-year transfer)

Admission to a Richmond borough school as an in-year transfer



**achieving
for children**

The School Admissions Service is provided by Achieving for Children, in partnership with the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

The information in this guide relates to a child transferring into a Richmond school outside of the normal point of entry, known as an in-year transfer. This information was correct in June 2023 and is subject to change. It should be read together with the 'Richmond's infant, junior, primary and secondary schools' brochure available on [the Richmond Council website](#) which provides information about the state-funded schools in Richmond.

When the guide refers to 'primary' school, this will mean primary, infant or junior school unless otherwise differentiated.

For the purpose of this brochure the term 'parent' is used to mean parent or carer unless otherwise differentiated.

Please provide a copy of any supporting documentation requested as we will not be responsible for the return, loss or damage to any original documents supplied.

Responsibility for information printed here relating to academies or the free school lies with the governing body of the school concerned, and not with Richmond Council or Achieving for Children.

If you have any questions regarding school admissions, please contact the team, including your child's name and date of birth in the body of the email.

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If you have difficulty reading this document because of a disability or because English is not your first language, we can help you. Please email us or ask someone to email on your behalf.

Contents

SECTION 1: Introduction	4
Age range of schools	5
SECTION 2: Steps in applying for an in-year transfer	7
Step 1: Collecting information about schools	7
Step 2: Deciding which schools to apply for	7
Step 3: The application process	14
Step 4: Submitting your application	22
Step 5: Being offered a place	23
SECTION 3: School appeals and Fair Access	25
School appeals	25
Fair Access	27
SECTION 4: Further information	28
Early years settings (nurseries), post-16 education and special educational needs provision	28
Free school meals	28
School uniform grant	29
Schools in other council areas and independent schools	29

SECTION 1: Introduction

Please refer to the 'Richmond's infant, junior, primary and secondary schools' brochure available on [the Richmond Council website](#) for information about each of the state-funded schools in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. Visit the individual schools' website for the admission arrangements relevant to the academic year of entry.

This brochure is intended for parents who want to apply for a place at a Richmond school in any year group for primary or secondary school outside of the normal admissions round. This is known as an in-year transfer. The Achieving for Children School Admissions team coordinates in-year transfers for state-funded schools in the Richmond borough.

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 that is primary to secondary or first year entry into a primary school at the beginning of Reception.

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

- moved into the area and do not currently have a school place for your child
- moved within the area and wish to transfer your child to a closer school
- have moved or plan to move into the borough from overseas
- wish to transfer your child(ren) from their current school to another preferred school

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 half term of the academic year and you are applying for a place in the next year group for September entry.

If your child is already in school and you are considering transferring them to another school, it could be difficult. Places will have already been allocated and availability will be limited. A child's education usually benefits most when they have continuity of teaching and learning in the same school. If you would like your child to transfer to another school, you should discuss it with the Head Teacher of your child's current school to resolve any issues or concerns. Where possible, do not remove your child from their existing school until another place has been secured as they may be out of school for a number of weeks.

Please read the information in this guide carefully to understand how to make an application and your responsibilities as the applicant.

You can contact us if you need any further help using the information on page 2.

If you wish to apply for a school in any other local authority, please contact the relevant council or the school directly for further information on how to make your application. The Richmond Admissions team only manages in-year transfers into schools in our administrative area. Contact details for neighbouring boroughs can be found in Section 4.

Age range of schools

Infant schools

Infant schools provide education for children aged 4 to 7 years. They cover the three school years Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. The first year of infant school is called the Reception year for children who become 5 during that year. Years 1 and 2 then follow for children who become 6 and 7 during these years. Most infant schools have nursery classes attached to them which cater for children aged 3 to 4. The infant class size regulations limit an infant class to 30 children per teacher.

Junior schools

Junior schools provide education for children aged 7 to 11 years. They cover four school years, Years 3 to 6. Children transfer to secondary school at the end of Year 6.

Primary schools

Primary schools provide education across the whole primary age range of 4 to 11 years. They cover the Reception and Years 1 to 6. Most primary schools have nursery classes attached to them for children aged 3 to 4. Children transfer to secondary school at the end of Year 6.

Secondary schools

Secondary schools provide education for children aged 11 to 16 years. They cover five school years, Years 7 to 11. Children finish compulsory education on the last Friday in June if they will be 16 by September. They are then expected to participate in education, employment or training until they are 18 years old.

Intake chart for the academic year 2023/24

PRIMARY		
Infant		
Reception	1 September 2018	31 August 2019
Year 1	1 September 2017	31 August 2018
Year 2	1 September 2016	31 August 2017
Junior		
Year 3	1 September 2015	31 August 2016
Year 4	1 September 2014	31 August 2015
Year 5	1 September 2013	31 August 2014
Year 6	1 September 2012	31 August 2013

SECONDARY		
Year 7	1 September 2011	31 August 2012
Year 8	1 September 2010	31 August 2011
Year 9	1 September 2009	31 August 2010
Year 10	1 September 2008	31 August 2009
Year 11	1 September 2007	31 August 2008

SECTION 2: Steps in applying for an in-year transfer

Step 1: Collecting information about schools

You should gather as much information as possible before you decide which schools you want to apply for.

- Read the 'Richmond's infant, junior, primary and secondary schools' brochure available on [the Richmond Council website](#) which provides information about the state-funded schools in Richmond, and includes a map showing the location of the schools.
- Read about the schools on their individual school websites.
- Arrange to visit the schools. Contact details for each Richmond borough school are available in the 'Richmond's infant, junior, primary and secondary schools' brochure.
- You can find and compare schools on [GOV.UK](#) if you would like to view the report of an Ofsted school inspection, these are available to view online on the individual school's website and on [the Ofsted website](#).
- Consider your child's particular interests, abilities and views on the schools visited.
- Consider whether daily travel to and from school is possible within a reasonable time. It is your responsibility as the parent to make sure your child gets to school on time. Check the Transport for London [Plan a Journey](#) information.
- Information about school vacancies is available from the School Admissions team. 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 ahead as we are processing applications on a daily basis. We will not provide school vacancy information between July and September due to the high volume of applications we are processing at that time.
- If a school you are interested in applying for is full in the relevant year group, you can still apply in order for your child's name to be placed on the school's waiting list. You will receive an email to confirm the outcome of your application and this will provide details about your right of appeal. Please read the information in Section 3 before submitting an appeal.

Step 2: Deciding which schools to apply for

Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education, and the local authority is required to provide a place in a school if a parent requests one. Once a school place has been offered the local authority's duty has been discharged.

The regulations allow for a parent to express a preference for a school, this is not the same as being able to choose which school your child attends. You should not make any assumptions that your child is entitled to a place at a preferred school, or at the school nearest to your home address.

The local authority and schools are committed to meeting parental preference as far as is possible within the number of places available. You are not guaranteed a place at a preferred school, and it is important to be realistic when considering which schools you name as a preference. Once a

school place has been offered (whether it is a preference offer or not), the local authority's duty to provide a school place for the academic year has been discharged.

The admission criteria

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 education, health and care plan (EHCP) which names the school must be admitted even if the relevant year group is full, and will be counted in the published admission number.

The oversubscription criteria for each Richmond school is printed on the individual school's websites. Make sure you understand the admission criteria, and address any questions directly to the school if you are applying for a voluntary aided, free school or academy.

Schools that have faith-based criteria may require a supplementary information form and/or a reference from a parish priest or other minister of religion. If you are applying for a place at one of these schools, make sure you understand their admission criteria and provide all required information to the school at the same time as you make your application. If you do not complete and return the form to the address provided on the form, the school will only consider your application using the information on the application, and this may reduce your chances of being offered a place at the school.

If you have any questions about the oversubscription for a community school, please contact the Admissions team using the details on page 2.

Explanation of terms commonly used by schools in the oversubscription criteria

Please refer to the full admissions policy of the schools you are interested in to check whether a criterion applies and for any variation to the following definitions.

Looked after children or previously looked after children

The highest priority must be given to looked after children and previously looked after children, including those children who appear to the admissions authority to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

Looked after children

A 'looked after child' is a child who is (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 in accordance with Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989, at the time an application for a school is made.

Evidence requirements

If you are applying for a child who is currently in the care of a local authority, you must provide a written statement from the child's social worker which confirms that:

- the child is currently a looked after child and is 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
- the name of the local authority the child has been placed in the care of

- the child is currently placed with a foster carer or in local authority accommodation

Previously looked after children

A 'previously looked after child' is a child who was previously in state care but ceased to be because they were adopted (Section 46 Adoption and Children Act 2002), or became subject to a child arrangements order (Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014), or a special guardianship (by Section 14A of the Children Act 1989), immediately before having been looked after.

It also includes children who appear to the admission authority to have been in state care (defined as in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society) outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

Evidence requirements

If you are applying for a child who was previously in the care of a local authority in England, you will need to provide the following evidence according to your child's circumstances below:

- an adoption order made under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, including the schedule which confirms details of the date and place of birth, and the placement of the child
- a written statement from the local authority where the child was previously in care confirming the child was in local authority care immediately before a special guardianship order was made, and 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
- a written statement from the local authority where the child was previously in care confirming the child was in local authority care immediately before a child arrangements order was made, and a child arrangements order settling the arrangements to be made as to 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)

For children adopted from overseas we require a photocopy of the relevant order of proof that the child was in state care outside of England and left that care as a result of being adopted. The order should be translated into English as necessary.

Exceptional family, social or medical need

All Richmond primary schools have experience of dealing with children with different social and medical needs. It is expected that no more than a small number of applications will be given this criterion in a year, if any at all. The threshold of acceptance is exceptionally high. Such needs must be so exceptional as to be very uncommon in the general population.

Requests for priority under this criterion are considered by the admissions authority of the school for which you are applying. Please refer to the 'Richmond's infant, junior, primary and secondary schools' brochure available on the Richmond Council website, to determine the type of school you are applying for, and follow the relevant instructions for applying set out below.

Please note that if your child has special educational needs or if your child may need additional support in school, but does not have an education, health and care plan (EHCP), it is not possible to consider their application for a higher priority under this criterion. Your child's educational

needs can be successfully supported through effective induction, support and differentiated provision at any school.

Schools do not consider reasons such as your place of work, childcare arrangements or previous family connections to the school to be strong enough to be considered under this criterion.

Applying for exceptional family, social or medical priority at an own admissions authority school (all secondary schools, and voluntary-aided, free or academy primary, infant or junior schools)

The School Admissions team does not assess social and medical need applications for these schools. It is your responsibility to read the school's admission policy to confirm the requirements to apply for priority under this criterion. You must send your request and the required supporting documentation directly to the school to be considered. This evidence must confirm the circumstances of the case and must set out why the child can only attend a particular school and why no other school could meet the child's needs.

Providing evidence does not 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 case and whether the evidence demonstrates that a placement should be made at one particular school above any other.

The school will notify you directly of their decision, and inform the School Admissions team if additional priority should be applied to your application. If you do not agree with the decision made for your request, you must contact the school directly to discuss the matter. We have no authority to require schools to give priority for admission under this criterion.

Applying for family, social and medical priority at a community primary, infant or junior school

The School Admissions team only assesses social and medical need applications for community schools within the borough. We cannot consider requests for other types of schools.

For the purposes of this criterion, the meaning of disability is pursuant to Section 6 and Schedule 1, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010.

The family, social or medical need can apply to the child or another member of the family. All applications are considered individually and the following must be included at the time of application:

- a letter explaining the reasons for applying under this criterion, why the preferred school is significantly more suitable than any other school for your child, and the difficulties likely to be caused by not attending it. A statement must be included giving permission for the local authority to make such enquiries as it thinks necessary to investigate the matter further, and
- specific supporting evidence that gives reasons and providing supporting 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 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. Evidence from members of the family, friends or a childminder will not normally be acceptable.

Please note that hospital appointment letters or prescriptions are not considered relevant documentary evidence.

Please scan the supporting documents and send them to richmond.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk, including your child's name and date of birth in the body of the email. If this is not possible they can be sent by post to the address on page 2.

All information provided is treated in the strictest confidence.

Applications lacking supporting independent, objective evidence will be rejected under this category without further assessment. Any rejected application will then be considered under the next highest appropriate category for the child.

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

- All community 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 education, health and care plan, we will not consider their application for a higher priority under this criterion. Special educational needs include the following non-exhaustive list of conditions: autism spectrum condition, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, ADHD, ADD, speech and language difficulties.
- All Richmond borough 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 will not consider common ailments as exceptional medical needs, including the following non-exhaustive list of conditions: asthma, eczema, food allergies, diabetes, or where the dispensing of medication may require further training of school staff for its administration.
- All schools are expected to appropriately support their pupils' emotional and social needs, including anxiety and stress-related conditions, and applications on this basis will not be considered under this criterion.
- 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 will not be considered under this criterion.
- Domestic arrangements, such as recently arrived in the UK, joint care arrangements, child care arrangements, transport arrangements, the location of your place of work, the need to leave or meet children at more than one school at the same time, the fact that your child attended a nursery associated with a particular school, or there are previous family connections with a particular school, will not be considered under this criterion, without accompanying exceptional medical or social reasons.
- A preference to keep your child with their current friendship group, or a preference to attend or not attend a faith school will not be considered under this criterion.
- We 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.

The strength of applications will be considered by two or more officers who will make an evidence-based decision, referring to another officer where disagreement exists. Those officers assessing the strength of an application will have knowledge of the local authority's admissions process and the School Admissions Code.

The officers will consider the application as objectively as possible, and will note collectively their reasons for any rejection of the application under this criterion.

The local authority's decision is final and there will be no right of appeal to officers against refusal to consider an application under this category. You will have the legal right of appeal to an independent appeal panel if you are not offered a place at your preferred school.

Brother or sister attending the school (sibling link)

Children are defined as siblings if:

- they are a full, half, step, adopted, or foster brother or sister
- they live at the same address as the child named on the application
- they currently attend the preferred primary or secondary school
- they will still be on roll at the time your child will be admitted

It is your responsibility to make sure the relevant sibling's details are included on the application otherwise priority will not be considered.

Children of a multiple birth do not give sibling priority to each other until at least one child of that multiple birth has started at the school.

Having more than one sibling currently on roll at a school does not give additional priority.

Please note cousins are not considered as siblings, even if they live in the same household.

We cannot guarantee that siblings will be allocated a place at the same school, particularly if the school is oversubscribed. If it is your priority for your children to attend the same school then you should name a school with places in the relevant year groups as your preference.

Children of staff

Children are defined as full, step, half, and adopted siblings living in the same household. Staff should be directly employed by the school for two years or more before the admission application and at the point of admission, and/or recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage. Some schools may further qualify how staff will meet this criterion. We will confirm your status with the school concerned.

Distance from home to school

In order to be fair to all applicants the council uses a standard method of measuring home to school distance. For Richmond borough schools, the home to school distance is the shortest route by road or maintained footpath in metres as measured using the School Admissions' computerised geographical information system and data supplied by Ordnance Survey.

The starting point of the measurement is a grid reference point within the property (the seed point) that is supplied by Ordnance Survey. The end point is measured to the nearest named school gate or nodal point, set out in the admission arrangements.

From the seed point the route always connects to the road or maintained path nearest to this point, even if your home address is on the corner of two roads or has more than one entrance or exit.

The positioning of front doors, driveways and back gates is not relevant to the route or the measurement. For example, if there is a path to the rear of your property which is closer to the seed point than the road in front of your property which you typically use, the distance measurement will start from the rear path.

There may be routes and rights of ways used by pedestrians that are not used for home to school distances, for example paths through car parks, cemeteries, golf courses, parks and other enclosed spaces, 'short-cuts' across patches of open land without paths, or footpaths across private land which are not defined as public routes. There may be footpaths that are part of a housing development, or maintained footpaths and roads within and outside of Richmond Council's administrative area that are not recognised for route determination by the GIS that we use. The walking route measured by the council's geographical information system therefore may be different to an actual walking route.

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

Please note that the method for measuring home to school distance is for school admissions purposes only. The council does not promote these as actual walking routes and nor should they be interpreted as such. Accessibility to private or public transport will not be considered.

We will not provide home to school distances to applicants ahead of a formal application being received and an offer being made. There are public websites available that can be used to calculate the distance between two points which will provide an indication of the home to school distance for the purpose of deciding which school preferences to name on your application. It is not possible to use another computerised programme or a route finder, including the 'Find my nearest' webpage on the Richmond Council website, to match the method of calculating distances for admissions purposes that is used by the council.

Only distances generated by the council's geographical information system will be used to determine the allocation of places. We will only use the grid reference point for the home address supplied by the Ordnance Survey and the routes recognised by the geographical information system, and only measure to the school gate(s) or nodal points determined by the school. This is an objective measurement tool, and we will not amend distances because your child would not typically use the route identified by the system.

Please note that Deer Park School, St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary and Twickenham Primary Academy measure home to school distance as a straight line from the seed point of the property to the school gate(s) determined by the school. Please refer to the school's admission arrangements for further details.

Linked infant school

Community infant schools are paired with community junior schools as listed below.

- Hampton Infant School and Hampton Junior School
- Carlisle Infant School and Hampton Hill Junior School
- Heathfield Nursery and Infant School and Heathfield Junior School
- Trafalgar Infant School and Trafalgar Junior School

If your child attends one of the above schools, any siblings will gain priority for admission to the same school, or the linked school as appropriate. It is your responsibility to ensure the sibling information is provided on the application form.

The sibling link for Hampton Wick Infant School and St John the Baptist CE Junior School is administered by the governors of St John the Baptist CE Junior School who are responsible for the admission of pupils. Make sure to check if you need to complete the school's supplementary information form.

Supplementary information form

A supplementary information form is only required when a school needs additional information to apply its admission criteria.

It is your responsibility to check whether any schools you are applying for in the Richmond borough and other council areas require a supplementary information form to be completed.

If you apply to a school that requires a supplementary information form, and you do not complete and return the form to the address provided on the form, the school will only consider your application on the information on the application. This may reduce your chances of being offered a place at the school.

Step 3: The application process

When to apply

Applications should be made no sooner than one term prior to hopeful entry, based on a six term school year. No applications for the current academic year will be accepted after 30 June.

Your child will be expected to start at their allocated school within the same academic year, and within five school days of admission arrangements being confirmed with the school. If you are moving into Richmond borough we will not be able to complete the in-year admissions process to the point of offering a school place unless your child can start within five school days.

Please note that if applying in the final half term of the current academic year to start school in the same 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 your application will be re-considered alongside any other children applying for a September start, in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

Your application will normally be processed within 10 to 15 school days. If you apply from June for a September start your application will be processed as set out below.

We will not start to process your application until you have provided us with all the required information and supporting documentation.

It will take longer for your child to start school if you name schools which are full. Secondary school often take longer to admit a child due to the need to consider the impact on timetables and option groups.

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

If you are applying for your child to transfer into school in September, or if you are requesting for your child to remain on a waiting list, you can apply from 1 June.

All applications received by the end of June will be considered together in July. Applications received later than 30 June will be considered on an individual basis following the processing of the June applications, in the order they were received.

The outcome for in-year applications for September 2023 start may not be available until a number of weeks after the children have returned to school after the summer break. This is because the schools have a legal responsibility to ensure that children who have left their school are on roll at another school before the child can be off-rolled and a vacancy confirmed. Be prepared that your child may not start school for several weeks if they do not currently have a school place.

We will be in contact with you as soon as we can provide an outcome for your application. Due to the high volume of applications we receive between July and September, we will not be able to provide vacancy and waiting list information. From October you can request this information by emailing richmond.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk.

Completing your application

You cannot make an application for an In-Year transfer via the eAdmissions portal used for the normal admissions round. You apply using the web page form available on [the Richmond Council website](#).

Depending on your responses you may be required to attach additional documents.

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
- documentation to confirm that the date of birth entered on the application is correct

Child's home address

We will make a decision as to whether or not to accept an address for admission purposes in accordance with the guidance set out below. This guidance applies to all applications and should be read in its entirety.

Your application must be made from a single address and only a single application can be made for a child. If parents live separately, make sure you read the information about joint care arrangements before deciding on which address should be used on the application.

If your child lives elsewhere with someone who has legal care and control of your child which is due to a formal fostering arrangement through Social Services, you must submit official letters from the professionals involved to confirm this at the time of application.

The address you provide on your application must be where you are physically living with your child at the time the application is submitted. If you intend to move you must follow the process for moving home set out below.

Joint care arrangements

If your child lives between two properties, we will use one address to determine the outcome of an application: the principal parental address.

Separated parents do not have the right to choose which address should be used on their child's application. There is an expectation that parents are consistent in the address being used to apply for school places. This is to ensure that separated parents do not gain an advantage for admission to a preferred school based on distance, by using different addresses on applications for their child(ren).

In the absence of a formalised legal care arrangement, we will usually determine the principal parental address to be the address where a parent who holds parental responsibility permanently lives along with the child. In cases of shared care (both parents hold parental responsibility and care is split or shared), we will determine the principal parental address to be that of the parent where it is evidenced that they undertake the majority of care during the school week.

In cases where it is evidenced that shared care is exactly equal, we consider all available evidence that you provide to support your application. We will also consider information such as the principal address held by the current school, school census data, and the address previously used to apply for school places for your child or any siblings under the same care arrangements.

Once the principal parental address has been determined it will be subject to the same address verification checks as all other applications.

You are reminded that only one application can be submitted for your child, even if separated parents live in different boroughs. It is not appropriate for the council to become involved in private disputes between separated parents or carers. If you cannot agree who should make the application, or which schools should be named as preferences on the form, we will require a specific issue order from the family court setting out who is responsible for applying schools. We will not proceed with any applications subject to a dispute until agreement can be reached. This may affect your child's chance of being allocated a place at a preferred school.

If you make an application without the consent of all those with parental responsibility, we will consider this as an intentionally misleading application. Your application, and any offer which has been made, will be withdrawn.

The assessment of the home address for admissions purposes

The council is committed to following strict address verification procedures to ensure that only entitled pupils are offered places. We consider any school place obtained by deception, or because of deliberately misleading information, to be unfair as another child is being denied their lawful claim to that place.

We will verify the address you use on your application using council records and systems, agencies, fraud departments, education settings and other resources available to us. This is to confirm that the address you have given in your application can reasonably be considered your child's permanent home address for admissions purposes. If we are unable to verify your address information, or you have moved to the address given on the application within the last 12 months, we will request further information.

It is your responsibility to provide all the evidence necessary to support your application according to your circumstances. If the School Admissions team does not receive sufficient evidence required to verify your home address, or the evidence is not provided within the timeframe requested, we will not accept the address provided on your application for admission purposes. This will mean that we will not apply any priority based on home to school distance to your child's application.

We will request further information if there are any doubts about the information provided, or where information has been received that suggests a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application has been made. We reserve the right to ask for proof of your address at any time during the application process, even after a school has been offered or accepted. We will make a judgement based on evidence available to us, and if necessary your child's place will be withdrawn.

If you suspect that a parent has applied using an address that the child does not live at, please send an email to richmond.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk. Any information received will be treated in strictest confidence.

The address to be used on the application

To accept the address provided on your child's application, we must be satisfied that this is the address where you and your child are habitually resident at the time of applying, and where they will continue to physically live from the time of application to the point at which they start school. It is your responsibility to inform the School Admissions team of any change to your circumstances. If you intend to move you must follow the process for moving home set out on pages 18 to 20.

You must provide the Admissions team with information about all the properties that you are connected to in order for us to make an assessment on whether a property can reasonably be disregarded for admission purposes.

If you use an incorrect address or you fail to inform the School Admissions team of other properties which you are connected to, this will be treated as an attempt to obtain a school place on the basis of intentionally misleading information, and your application will be withdrawn as permitted by the School Admissions Code.

We will not accept an address you intend to move into in the future. This includes (but is not limited to) a property which you intend to rent or buy, or a property which is being renovated before you and your child occupy it.

We expect your child's home address to be a residential property that is their only or main residence, not an address at which your child may sometimes stay or sleep due to your domestic arrangements.

We will not accept the address of a relative (unless it can be independently evidenced using documents issued by a government agency, that you and your child have been living there as a long-term and permanent arrangement), a friend or a childminder, a commercial address or a temporary address.

Temporary addresses include (but are not limited to) an AirBnB, guest house, hotel or serviced apartment, or the address for a family member or friend where you are staying because you have recently moved into the borough. If you are not able to provide a permanent address on your application, we will not apply any distance priority to your preferences until a permanent address is secured.

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 that is further away is not available for you to live in. We must be satisfied that your move is a permanent arrangement, and will require proof that the previous address has been let on a commercial basis at a market rent. We will consider the timing of this arrangement and any familial or personal connection to the tenant, when making the decision whether to disregard the property for admissions purposes.

If you rent a property we will consider any break clauses included in the tenancy agreement when making an assessment of 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.

Moving into the borough or within the borough

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

You must provide sufficient proof that the move is legally binding and that you and your child are habitually resident in the new property. We require evidence from **each** of the following groups which demonstrates your child's particular circumstances.

Group A (evidence relating to the new property)

- A solicitor's letter showing the date that your purchase was completed.
- A full copy of the Assured Shorthold Tenancy agreement that is signed by both landlord and you.
- If you have moved back into a property you already own, you should send us proof of this, such as Land Registry.

AND

Group B (evidence relating to the previous property)

- A solicitor's letter confirming that a property sale has completed.
- A check-out report from a rented property, to show the date you handed in the keys,
- A letter or email from the landlord/letting agent of a rented property, showing the date you moved out.

- If you still own your previous property but have let it to tenants, a full copy of the tenancy agreement signed by you and your tenant. You must also send us a letter from your mortgage company that confirms they know about the arrangement.

AND

Group C (evidence relating to habitual residency)

A copy of an electricity bill showing current levels of energy usage at the new property, and two further documents from the following list, showing your new address.

- A copy of your updated driving licence (a copy of an application to amend the licence is not sufficient).
- A GP letter showing you have registered your child at a local surgery which includes the date of registration.
- Confirmation of your home contents insurance or car insurance.
- Official correspondence from the HM Revenue & Customs, or the Department for Work and Pensions relating to benefit entitlement, dated within the last three months.
- Vehicle Registration Document (V5C) showing your name and address.

Mobile phone bills, credit card statements, bank statements, and inclusion on the electoral roll are not proof that you live at the address, and will not be accepted. We will also not consider evidence which is dated later than the date it was requested by the School Admissions team.

If you are arriving from overseas you must provide proof of landing, such as a copy of your child's boarding pass or immigration stamp in their passport.

We reserve the right to ask for further evidence if we have any doubts about the information provided. If your change of address cannot be supported by the evidence above, contact us for advice.

If you plan on moving, you must still use the address where your family is living at the time of applying, and provide us with details of the new address on your application form if it is known. It is your responsibility to tell us when you have actually moved and to provide the evidence detailed above before the address will be verified and changed on the system.

Applications for families arriving from abroad, including from the EU, from 1 January 2021

Please see the separate information below for children of UK service personnel and UK crown servants returning from abroad.

In most cases, children arriving from overseas have the right to attend schools in England. It is the responsibility of parents to check that their children have a right, under their visa entry conditions, to study at a school before submitting an application.

If you have recently arrived from abroad, we recommend that you check that you have a right of abode or that the conditions of your immigration status otherwise permit you to access a state-funded school.

Children aged under 18 are classed as dependent children if they are the children of foreign nationals who have settled status in the UK, or who are entering the UK on a work visa or student visa, or who are part of a family entering or residing in the UK under the immigration route for British National (Overseas) citizens and their dependants. These children are entitled to enter the country with their family, or to join their family and study at a state-funded school once in the UK.

Unaccompanied children may also enter the UK to access a school. To comply with their visa terms, unaccompanied foreign national children, and young people (including such EEA nationals entering the UK after 31 December 2020) who are entering on a child student visa or student visa must, when accessing education in England, study at the independent school, sixth form college or further education college which is sponsoring them.

Foreign nationals cannot use the six-month standard visitor visa, or 11-month short-term study (English language) visa, to enter the UK to enrol as a pupil at a school. Find out what these visas can be used for on the visa pages of [the Government site](#).

Irish citizens' right to live in the UK and access school places will not change. Irish citizens do not need to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme, but their family members, who are not Irish or UK citizens, will need to apply.

If you currently live abroad, but intend to move to Richmond borough before your child starts school, we will accept an admission application. This will normally be based on your address abroad, even if you are returning to a property you own. We will only accept a Richmond borough address for admissions purposes once you and your child are habitually resident at this address, and you have provided proof of landing, such as a copy of your child's boarding pass or immigration stamp in their passport.

If we are able to allocate a place at one of your preferred schools using your overseas address we will, but your child will be expected to start at the allocated school within five school days (or at the start of school in September if you applied in June for the next academic year), otherwise the offer may be withdrawn. Please bear this in mind when deciding when to submit your application ahead of your arrival in the UK.

Children of UK service personnel and crown servants

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 no sooner than four months ahead of your move into the area. Your application must be accompanied by official documentary evidence from your employer that confirms a relocation date and your intended address if known. We will use a unit or quartering address as the child's home address for UK service personnel where a parent requests this. If you are unable to provide an intended address please contact the School Admissions team.

UK Service personnel and their families may obtain further information, advice and guidance from [the Children's Education Advisory Service](#), 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.

Out of year group requests

Any request for admission outside of the normal age group will be considered by the admitting authority for the school. Admission authorities must make clear the process for requesting admission outside of the normal age group in their admission arrangements. We suggest you contact the schools to discuss your request before submitting your application.

Your application will be processed according to your child's chronological age group. If the school agrees that they can be taught out of year group, this will be organised by the school once a place has been offered.

Please note that the admission authority for academies, voluntary-aided and free schools is responsible for making decisions on the admission of children outside of the normal age group in their school. The local authority cannot require them to agree with your request, and it is not appropriate for us to become involved in disputes where the parent does not agree with the decision that has been made. You must follow the school's complaint procedure which is published on the school's website.

Step 4: Submitting your application

Before you submit your application please check that:

- you have read and understood the admissions criteria for each school included on your application, and considered whether your child is likely to get a place
- you are clear on the order you want your preferences to be listed in
- you understand how the home address will be assessed for admissions purposes
- you have provided the documentation required to support your application
- if applicable, you have sent the supplementary information form directly to the school
- you have read and understood the declaration on 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

Parent and carer declaration

When making your application you will sign a declaration to confirm that you have read the guide and understand your responsibilities as the applicant.

You will also confirm that you have parental responsibility for your child 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. It is not appropriate for the council to become involved in private disputes with parents or carers. You should attempt to resolve the matter of school preference between yourselves and inform us in writing, or through the family court by way of a specific issue order. 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 or result in an offer being withdrawn.

Step 5: Being offered a place

If we are able to offer your child a place at more than one of your preferred schools, we will look at your order of preference and offer you a place at the highest preferred school at which your child can be allocated a place.

If your child does not meet the admissions criteria for any of your preferred schools and you are a Richmond resident, the Admissions team will offer you a place at the nearest community school to your home address with places available where possible. This will not be done automatically if your child is currently at a school where they can remain or at an independent educational setting. We will also provide information on other schools with vacancies for you to consider.

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

We advise you to accept the school place offered to ensure your child has a school place. This will not affect your child's position on any waiting lists of your higher preference schools or your right to appeal.

Once an offer has been made (whether it is for a preferred school or for an alternative school), the duty to provide a school place has been discharged, and any further offer will be from the waiting list(s) for the preferred schools named on your application. If you refuse an offer you must provide information about the arrangements for your child's education. If we do not have this information we are required to refer your child to the Education Welfare Service for further investigation as a potential child missing education.

If you do not respond within the timeframe requested in your outcome letter then the offer is likely to be withdrawn and may be offered to another child.

Once any offer is accepted the school will contact you to provide you with more information and to arrange a start date. The School Admissions team cannot provide this information.

Waiting lists

If we are unable to allocate a place at a higher preferred school, your child will automatically be added to the waiting list for the remainder of the academic year.

Waiting lists are maintained in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria and not by the date a child's name is added to the list, so 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 oversubscription criteria, it can affect your child's position on the waiting list. They can move down the list as well as up. You can request your child's position on the waiting list by contacting the school directly or by sending an email to the School Admissions team.

Should a place become available at a school, and your child is top of the waiting list for that school, you will be contacted and offered the place. You must then decide whether you wish to accept the place or not and let us know within the specified timeframe.

Waiting lists are maintained until the end of each academic year and then they are cleared. If you wish for your child to remain on the waiting list for the following year you will need to complete the in-year transfer request form available on the [Richmond Council website](#) in June.

Please note that waiting lists will be closed down on 30 June and remain closed until the end of September while we process applications and compile the waiting lists for the new academic year. During this time no waiting list positions for schools will not be available.

School refusing to admit a child when they have places

If an admission authority refuses your child a place even though they have places, they must provide you with a letter outlining the reasons for their decision, information on your legal right of appeal, and inform you whether your application qualifies for consideration by the Fair Access Panel (see Section 3). Admission authorities cannot refuse to admit a child on behavioural grounds at any point in the normal year of entry (Reception, Year 3 at a junior school or Year 7) unless your child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools. In this case there is no need for an admission authority to comply with parental preference for a period of two years from the last exclusion.

Withdrawing offers

Once the offer of a place has been made, the admissions authority may withdraw the offer in the following limited circumstances:

- where the offer was made in error
- where the application is considered fraudulent or intentionally misleading
- where a parent has not responded to the offer within a reasonable time

SECTION 3: School appeals and Fair Access

School appeals

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.

If you are appealing for an infant class (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) please ensure you read the information on the infant class size regulations below.

The admissions authority for the school to which you are applying is required to explain to you why your child has not been offered a place at that school. They must also explain to you how you can appeal against this decision. This information will be published on their website.

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.

The 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.

Appeals for Richmond community schools are managed by the Richmond Independent Appeal Service. More information can be found on [the Richmond Council website](#).

For information about appealing for a school place at an own authority school or in another council area, please contact the school or relevant council directly. Contact details for neighbouring boroughs can be found in Section 4.

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.

Infant class size regulations

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 education, health and care plan specifying a school.
- Looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round.
- Children admitted, after initial allocation of places, 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.
- 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 education, health and care plan who are normally taught in a special educational needs 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 until the infant class size drops back to 30.

How this affects 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, appeals for school places in infant classes which total 30 students are heard under infant class size 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.
- 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.
- The decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admissions authority would have made in the circumstances of the case. 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, that 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 thought about 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 infant class size appeals

<http://lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint/fact-sheets/education/infant-class-size-appeals>.

Appeal rules followed for all other year groups (Years 3 to 11)

When considering an appeal for any other year group, appeal panels follow a two stage process in reaching decisions.

First, a factual stage at which the panel considers whether the school's published admission arrangements were correctly applied in the individual's case, and decides whether prejudice (or harm) would arise to the efficient provision of education and/or the efficient use of resources in the school if the child was admitted.

Second, a balancing stage at which the panel exercises its discretion, balancing between the degree of prejudice to the school (or harm) and the weight of the parent's case, before arriving at a decision.

Fair Access

The council and all schools in Richmond upon Thames have agreed a [fair access protocol](#) to admit vulnerable and unplaced children who may have difficulty finding a suitable school place as an in-year transfer. Fair Access is not intended to be used in place of the normal in-year process and will only be used as the final resort.

The aims of the fair access protocol are to ensure that:

- a school place is found quickly for children with no school place who meet the criteria for consideration under the protocol
- no school, including those with places available, is asked to admit a large number of children who have been excluded from other schools, have challenging behaviour or a history of behavioural problems
- the child is admitted to the most suitable school, even if there is no place available and the school has to go over their published admission number

The Fair Access Panel, which considers applications under this protocol, consists of representative Head Teachers and senior council staff. The panel makes the final decision on which school will be nominated to receive each case. This will take into account the suitability of the placement for the pupil and the school and, where possible, will ensure that the required additional resources are made available to support the pupil's successful integration into school. There is no requirement for the panel to meet parental preference when allocating a school.

The panel must sit within 20 school days of a referral being made.

Children who are admitted to schools under this protocol take priority over any children on waiting lists.

SECTION 4: Further information

Early years settings (nurseries), post-16 education and special educational needs provision

The School Admissions team only deals with applications for children of statutory school age (Reception to Year 11) and cannot provide information on early years settings, post-16 education or special educational needs provision. There is information about these areas on [the AfC Info website](#).

If you require further support, please contact the appropriate team:

Early Years: early.years@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Post-16 education: 14-25@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Special educational needs and disabilities team: senteam@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Free school meals

All infant age children (Reception, Years 1 and 2) will receive free school dinners, however it is still worth notifying your school if you meet the criteria below as they will receive additional funding.

For other year groups, in order to receive free school meals applicants must be receiving one of the following:

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're 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 four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Children who get paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or guardian, can also get free school meals.

If you have any questions about free school meals please email:

freeschoolmeals@achievingforchildren.org.uk.

Please speak to your child's allocated school about making an application.

School uniform grant

Please contact your child's allocated school for information about any support they may be able to offer.

Schools in other council areas and independent schools

If you are a Richmond borough resident and you wish to apply for schools in other council areas, you must contact the school or local authority directly. Details of the nearest five councils bordering Richmond follow.

<p>London Borough of Hounslow Children's and Adults' Services Hounslow House, 7 Bath Road Hounslow TW3 3EB T: 020 8583 2711 E: admissions@hounslow.gov.uk W: www.hounslow.gov.uk/admissions</p>	<p>Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames School Admissions, Achieving for Children Guildhall 2, Kingston KT1 1EU E: kingston.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk W: www.kingston.gov.uk/schools</p>
<p>Hammersmith and Fulham School Admissions Section 3rd Floor, 145 King Street Hammersmith W6 9XY T: 020 8753 1085 E: school.admissions@lbhf.gov.uk W: www.lbhf.gov.uk/admissions</p>	<p>Surrey County Council Admissions and Transport Team PO Box 475, Reigate RH2 2HP T: 0300 200 1004 E: schooladmissions@surreycc.gov.uk W: www.surreycc.gov.uk/admissions</p>
<p>London Borough of Wandsworth Pupil Services Section, Children's Services Town Hall Extension, Wandsworth High Street, London SW18 2PU T: 020 8871 7316 E: admissions@wandsworth.gov.uk W: www.wandsworth.gov.uk/admissions</p>	

Independent schools

Information about independent schools can be obtained from:

Independent Schools Council First Floor, 27 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9BU
T: 020 7766 7070 E: www.isc.co.uk

To apply, contact the independent or private school directly for further details and an application form. The Council cannot act as your agent in contacting a private school. It has no role at all in admissions to private schools, or in relation to any other aspect of education at a private school.

If you have any questions regarding school admissions, please contact:
School Admissions, Achieving for Children, Guildhall 2, Kingston KT1 1EU
E: richmond.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk
W: www.richmond.gov.uk

If you have difficulty reading this document because of a disability or because English is not your first language, we can help. Please email the School Admissions team or ask someone to email on your behalf.