



Starting School in Richmond Borough – frequently asked questions

[Applying for Infant, Junior, Primary and Secondary Schools](#)

[Applying for Nursery Schools](#)

[Applying for a Sixth Form Place](#)

Applying for Infant, Junior, Primary and Secondary Schools for September 2020

1) How and when can I apply for a school place?

Before you submit an application, you and your family will need to be permanently resident in your property within the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. You will be able to apply online by going to [the Pan London admissions website](#) where you can create an account and complete an application. You can do that from 1 September. The closing-dates are 31 October for secondary school admissions (admission to Year 7) and 15 January for infant, junior and primary school admissions (admission to Reception or transfer from Year 2 to Year 3).

2) What age will my child be when attending different types of school?

Infant: for pupils aged 4 to 7;

Junior: for pupils aged 7 to 11;

Primary: for pupils aged 4 to 11;

Secondary: for pupils aged 11 to 16

3) Do I have to apply for a school place?

Yes. You must apply for a school place even if your child already attends an attached nursery or your child will have an older brother or sister at the school, or if you have already put your child's name down on the 'expression of interest' list at an infant or primary school that you prefer.

4) What address should I state on the application?

You should state the address where your child is living permanently and must be the address where your family normally resides. We do not accept temporary addresses.

If you own a property but you state that you and your child are living in a rented property, we will use the address that you own.

If your child is cared for under a shared custody agreement, you must agree with your child's other parent as to which address will be used for school admissions purposes before completing the application. Only one application should be submitted.

The Council's [primary](#) and [secondary](#) school admissions brochures contain detailed guidance on how addresses will be considered.

5) If I state only one preferred school on the application form, does that mean I am more likely to be offered it?

Not unless you have carefully checked the school's oversubscription criteria (the order in which places are allocated) and you are absolutely sure that your child will be offered a place there, because, for example, your child will have an older brother or sister at the school and will therefore qualify for a place under the 'sibling' criterion (see also Question 9 below); or you and your child live very close to the school and your child will therefore qualify under the 'home to school distance' criterion.

If a place cannot be offered for your child at that school, there is no guarantee that an alternative place will be offered at the initial allocation stage. You are therefore strongly advised to state a preference for your nearest non-faith, non-selective school as well as any schools further from your home which you may prefer. You can list up to six schools on the application, in the order that you prefer them.

6) Do I have to use all six preferences?

No. But unless you are absolutely sure that a place will be offered for your child at your first preference school, you are strongly advised to consider and apply for a range of schools, rather than just one or two. You should also find out how places were allocated in previous years by looking in the admissions brochure and speaking to the Admissions Team and/or the school(s) concerned, in order to understand better the chances of your child being offered a place. Please note, though, that admissions patterns can change substantially from year to year, so previous year's patterns are only a guide and cannot be fully relied upon if you are living at, or near, the edge of a school's catchment area.

7) How will my preferences be considered?

You will complete just one application form even if you are applying for schools in more than one borough. You can list up to six schools in order of your preference. The application will then be considered under the 'equal preference' system. This means that all preferences are considered without reference to the order in which you ranked them. Your child is then considered separately for each school using the published oversubscription criteria (the order in which places are allocated) to decide whether or not a place can be

offered. If more than one school can potentially offer a place for your child, we will offer a place at whichever of those schools you ranked the highest among your preferences.

This system is designed to allow you, if you wish, to state one or more schools as your first and other high preferences schools which are further away from your home or, due to the sheer volume of applications, statistically less likely to be offered you a place for your child, whilst still stating closer schools as lower preferences which you are sure will be able to offer you a place if a place cannot be offered at one of the higher preference schools. Alternatively, your closest school may be the one which you prefer, in which case, please refer to the answer given to question 5 above.

8) Will I have a better chance of being offered a place for my child at the school I list as my first preference than someone who lists it as a second or lower preference?

No. Each school considers every application against the oversubscription criteria, without any reference to the position you ranked the school among your preferences.

9) My child already has a brother or sister in my preferred school – will my child be given priority?

Maybe. Not all schools give ‘sibling’ applicants absolute priority; you must carefully check each school’s oversubscription criteria. If you are applying for a Reception class place, a sibling in Year 6 at the time of the application does not qualify as that child will have left the school by the time your younger child will be due to start there.

10) Can I apply for schools in other local authority areas?

Yes, you can, by naming these schools among your preferences on the same application form. We will pass your child’s details to the local authorities in whose area the schools are situated and they will let us know whether or not a place could potentially be offered at any of those schools.

11) Why aren’t places in Richmond Borough’s schools reserved for children who live within the borough?

Because that is against the law. A High Court judgement against Greenwich Council in 1989 (‘the Greenwich Judgement’) ruled that it would be unfair, and therefore unlawful, to give priority admission to a school to children on the basis of the fact that they live within the local authority in which the school is situated, because a child’s closest school might be outside the boundary of the local authority in which they live, i.e. within another local authority’s area.

12) Are faith schools only for children from families who practise the particular faith?

Anyone can apply for places at faith schools, but most faith schools give priority in their

oversubscription criteria (the order in which places are allocated) to children from families who practice the relevant faith, then to children from families of other faiths and only then to children from families of no faith. Before you state any faith school as one of your preferences, you should carefully read its criteria and find out how the places were allocated for the most recent intake so that you can see whether your child be likely to qualify for a place.

13) My child is not currently living in the United Kingdom – can I still apply?

In order to validate your address so we can fully process your application, you and your child must be living at this address before an offer of a school place can be made. The only exceptions to this rule are Crown Servants – members of the armed forces and officials of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office – who will be returning from overseas, and are able to apply in advance, by the closing date.

14) What if I have a medical, social or other special reason for applying to a certain school for my child?

You must state this on your application and provide independent supporting evidence from relevant professionals. Please be aware, though, that priority is only given when the circumstances are exceptional, documented by independent supporting evidence and clearly demonstrate why your child must attend the particular school and no other. You should also check that the school which you prefer includes priority on this basis within its published oversubscription criteria (the order in which places are allocated).

15) Should I still apply if my child has special educational needs and disabilities?

If your child has special educational needs but does not have a finalised Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) you should apply for a school place through the normal admissions process.

If your child has an EHCP, you should instead [contact your SEN Case Worker](#) to discuss how you can apply for a school place for your child.

16) What will happen if I submit my application after the closing-date?

If you submit your application late, it will be considered after all applications which are received by the closing-date. That means that your child might miss out on a school at which a place would have been offered if you had applied on time. The closing-dates are 31 October 2019 for secondary school admissions (admission to Year 7) and 15 January 2020 for infant, junior and primary school admissions (admission to Reception or transfer from Year 2 to Year 3).

17) When will I know the outcome of my application?

You will be notified of the outcome of a secondary application on 1 March 2020 and of a primary or junior application on 16 April 2020. Letters will be posted by first class post on these dates.

Applying for Nursery Schools

1) How do I apply for a nursery place?

Applications should be made directly to [the nursery schools within the borough](#), rather than through the Pan London eAdmissions website.

Applying for a Sixth Form place

1) How do I apply for a sixth form place?

Information on Kingston and Richmond Borough schools with sixth forms and how to apply is available on [the Achieving for Children Local Offer website](#).