

Starting School in Reception and transferring to Secondary School in Richmond Borough – frequently asked questions

Applying for Infant, Junior, Primary and Secondary Schools for September 2024

How and when can I apply for a school place?

If you are a resident of the London Borough of Richmond you will be able to apply online using [the Pan London admissions website](#) where you can create a new account or log into your existing account before completing 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).

If you currently live abroad but intend to move to the UK prior to your child starting school, we will accept an admission application but this will normally be based on your address abroad. We will accept a Richmond address for admissions purposes for the initial round of allocations if you are physically resident at this address by the closing date of 31 October (secondary) or 15 January (infant, primary, junior). If you move into the area after the closing date, but before 12 December 2023 (secondary) or 7 February 2024 (infant, primary, junior) and you can provide documentary evidence of this, your application will be processed at the same time as those applications received by 31 October or 15 January.

We will not be able to complete the admissions process to the point of offering a school place until the family and the child are living at the address used to apply the home to school distance criterion. This address must not be an address of convenience. For more information about Richmond Council's address policy, please read the "Child's home address" section in the 2024 [primary](#) and [secondary](#) admissions brochures.

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

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,

your child will have an older brother or sister at the school or your child is moving to junior school from the linked infant school.

What address should I state on the application?

You should state the address where your child is living permanently and where they will be living when school starts in September 2023. We do not accept addresses of convenience, temporary addresses or an address you intend to move to (future address). For more information about Richmond Council's address policy, please read the "Child's home address" section in the 2024 [primary](#) and [secondary](#) admissions brochures.

Where parents live separately, the parent with whom the child lives most of the time **must** use their address when submitting the child's application. If the parent with whom the child lives less of the time applies, we will **not** accept that application

Where the child lives equally with both parents at different addresses, parents must decide who makes the application before applying. Only one application can be made for the child. In such cases, proof of the equal shared care agreement and the child's residency at this address should be provided with the application in all such circumstances.

We will not mediate between parents if there is a dispute or when two applications are submitted, one by each parent. The applications will not be processed until the parents agree on which application to use or there is a specific issue order from the Family Court specifying who is responsible for submitting the application.

For more information about Richmond Council's address policy, please read the "Child's home address" section in the 2024 [primary](#) and [secondary](#) admissions brochures.

I am a Crown Servant and will be returning to the UK from overseas in the future – when can I apply for a school place?

Children of UK service personnel and crown servants who will be returning from overseas are able to apply in advance of their arrival by the closing date. This is provided your application is accompanied by official documentary evidence from your employer that confirms a relocation date and your address in the Richmond borough.

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.

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.

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 at the patterns of admissions for each school on the school's website or on the Council's website for community schools. You can also contact the School Admissions Team and/or the school(s) concerned, in order to better understand the chances of your child being offered a place. Please note, admissions patterns can change substantially from year to year, therefore previous year's patterns should be used only as a guide and cannot be fully relied upon if you are living within the distance at which the last place was offered in previous years.

How will my preferences be considered?

You will complete a single application 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 list them. Your child's application 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 listed the highest among your preferences.

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 listed the school among your preferences. Schools are not told which order you listed them on your application.

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. For example, 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.

Can I apply for schools in other local authority areas?

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

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.

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 practise 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 is likely to qualify for a place.

What if I have an exceptional medical, social or other 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).

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 Special Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Case Worker to discuss how you can apply for a school place for your child.

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 2023 for secondary school admissions (admission to Year 7) and 15 January 2024 for infant, junior and primary school admissions (admission to Reception or transfer from Year 2 to Year 3).

When will I know the outcome of my application?

You will be notified by email of the outcome of a secondary application on 1 March 2024 and of a primary or junior application on 16 April 2024.