

## Section 3

# How to apply for your child's first and junior school place

We have tried to make the admissions and application process as fair and easy as possible.

### We have done this by:

- Allowing parents/carers to choose up to three schools in preference order on one application form
- By fairly allocating places so that as many children as possible can get a place at a school of their choice
- By having one day, 11 April 2012, on which all offers of a school place will be posted out

This section tells you how to apply for:

- Your child's first place at school
- Your child a place at a junior or primary school when leaving year 2 or an infant school

It is your responsibility to apply for a place. You should not assume that we know your child needs a school place, even if you have put your child's name on a waiting list or you have an older child at the school.

You still need to apply for a place even if your child is currently in the infant or nursery of the school you want them to go to.

If you do not apply we will not be able to offer your child a school place.

To help you understand the process we have included some frequently asked questions.

You can find more information on the Wakefield Council website: [www.wakefield.gov.uk/admissiontoschool](http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/admissiontoschool)

### Please note:

The information within this guide was correct at time of printing.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Applying for your child's first school place

#### When should my child start full time school?

All reception age children will start school in September 2012.

The first year of school is known as reception year.

If your child is in year 2 of infant school you need to apply for your child a place at either a junior or year 3 of a primary school.

**If your child currently goes to a primary school you do not need to apply for a school place in the junior years as your child will continue with their education at the same school.**

#### If my child attends an infant school, does this mean they will automatically attend the feeder junior school?

No. This does not automatically mean your child will get a place at the junior school. We do not operate a feeder system. We cannot guarantee places at any school.

### What types of schools are there?

You can apply for any school that covers the age group for your child. However you are not guaranteed a place. All applications have to meet the schools and Council's admissions policies. These are explained in this section and section 8.

These are the following types of schools:

- **Community Schools** - These are schools maintained and controlled by Wakefield Council. The majority of schools in the district are Community Schools. Wakefield Council is responsible for all admissions to Community Schools

- **Voluntary Schools** - Some schools are owned by a voluntary body. Usually it is a church such as Church of England or Roman Catholic Church. This is not always the case. The Governing Body of a Voluntary School has the majority of its governors appointed by the church authority or foundation that provides the school. They would, for example, seek to preserve any religious associations which the school has.

### There are two types of Voluntary School:

*Voluntary Aided Schools* are responsible for all their own admissions arrangements. Decisions on admission to the school are made by the Governing Body.

*Voluntary Controlled Schools*, like Community Schools, Wakefield Council deals with their admissions.

### Foundation Schools

'Trust Schools' are supported by a charitable foundation and the school(s) within the 'Trust' become foundation school(s). These schools have a degree of independence from the Local Authority. They own their own buildings and sites, employ their own staff and act as their own admissions authority.

### Academies

Academies are similar to Foundation Schools, however they are funded directly by the Government and not the Council.

### What if I want to apply for a Voluntary Aided School place?

To apply for these schools you still use the Wakefield application form or online application.

Wakefield Council will send a copy of your application onto them. It is the school's responsibility to check this against their admissions and oversubscription criteria.

**Please note that for applications for places at a Voluntary Aided School you need to complete a supplementary information form. This allows the school's Governing Body to assess your application fully. You will need to contact the school direct and ask for this form. Please complete the form and return it to the school.**

Wakefield Council will write to let you know whether your application has been agreed to, not the school.

### Where can I find out more about junior or primary schools?

This guide includes information about all schools in Wakefield including names, addresses and telephone numbers. It also gives you:

- The maximum number of children each school can admit into reception year or year 3 (where appropriate)
- Details of how many children were admitted last year
- Any before or after school provision such as Breakfast Clubs, Childminders, After School Club, etc

Schools have their own prospectus. Contact the school for a copy.

General information about schools in Wakefield can be found on the Council's website, [www.wakefield.gov.uk/schools](http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/schools). Here you can also find links to school websites.

### When should I apply for a school place?

You must apply for your child's place by 15 January 2012.

If your child currently attends an infant school, Nursery or pre-5 setting and they live in the Wakefield district, an application pack will be made available to you there. If you have not received a pack please contact the Wakefield Admissions Team or use the online form at: [www.wakefield.gov.uk/admissiontoschool](http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/admissiontoschool)

Telephone number 01924 305616/17/306766

Don't forget the closing date for applications is 15 January 2012.

### Is a first come, first served system used to allocate places?

No, we do not look at any applications until the closing date has passed. All places are allocated using the Published Admissions and Oversubscription Policy.

## Where can I go for help and advice about which school to choose?

Deciding which schools to choose is a very important decision. The admissions process can be confusing. If you need any help or advice contact the Choice Advice Service.

This service is there to help you to understand all the different information and forms so that you can make the best choice of school for your child.

### This could include:

- Listening to your questions and concerns
- Advice on all parts of the admissions process
- Help with completing the school admissions form
- Impartial information about schools within the Wakefield district and schools in neighbouring authorities, including school facilities, size, specialisms, curriculum, how well they are performing and Ofsted reports.
- Details of the admissions policies for different schools
- Explaining the options if you do not get the school you want
- Arranging school visits
- Information on school transport, travel and uniforms
- Advice and support if you want to appeal

The service will not make the decision for you. Neither will they recommend or guarantee a place at any school. They are there to help you to make that decision.

The support they provide is free and confidential. They will only share your information if you agree.

They are happy to meet you at home, school or in your local Children's Centre. You can also contact them by telephone or email.

Contact: Choice Advice Service  
Room 201  
County Hall  
Wakefield  
WF1 2QW

Telephone: **0800 587 8042**

Email: **choiceadvice@wakefield.gov.uk**

Web: **www.wakefield.gov.uk/Education/Schools/ChoiceAdviceService**

## Do I have the right to choose which school I want my child to attend?

As a parent/carer you have a legal right to express a preference for the schools you would like your child to attend. You do not have the right to decide the actual school. This is the decision of Wakefield Council Admissions Team or the Governing Body of the Voluntary Aided School or Foundation School. Each Community, Foundation or Voluntary Aided School serves a 'catchment' area.

You are much more likely to have your preference met if you ask for a school that serves your catchment area. To find out which catchment area you live in please contact Wakefield Council's School Admissions Team on 01924 305616/17 / 306766 or check the Council's website, **www.wakefield.gov.uk/admissiontoschool**

Some schools can receive more applications than number of places (the published admission number). If this happens, for community, foundation, voluntary controlled and academies (except Ossett\*), school places will be allocated using Wakefield Council's over-subscription criteria and places will be offered in the following order:

- (a) Children in Public Care (Looked After Children);
- (b)
  - i Children who live in the school's catchment area, who have brothers or sisters at the same school, at the time of admission;
  - ii Other children who live in the school's catchment area;
  - iii Children who live in that part of the school's catchment area which is designated as an option area;
- (c) Children who have brothers or sisters in attendance at the school, a;
- (d) Other children, with priority being given to those living nearest to the school.

\*Please note that that Ossett Academy has its own admissions policy. Details can be found under Section 8.

Please note:

- Any place offered on the basis of an address, which is later found to be fraudulent, may be withdrawn.
- The brother and sister category includes step-brothers and sisters. They must live at the same address, be of statutory school age and will still be at the same school, or a school on the same site, when the child starts.

- For oversubscribed schools, children living nearest to the school, (measured in a straight line from home to school) will be offered places first. Voluntary Aided Schools will use their own published over-subscription criteria. Contact the school for a copy of their criteria.

Please note that we cannot guarantee that you will be offered a place in any of your preferred or catchment area schools.

### What if my child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs?

You still need to fill an application form in. Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs are dealt with under a different system. Once we have received your application we will pass it onto the Special Educational Needs and Review Team. They will contact you to discuss your application. For further information please see the section on Special Educational Needs. The application process and closing date remains the same.

### What if I am not happy with the school place I have been offered?

If you are unhappy with your offer and choose to refuse this, then you have a right of appeal.

**You have twenty one days to do this from the date you receive your refusal letter.**

You need to tell us the reasons for your appeal.

For your appeal to be successful you will need to prove that:

- the Council has not acted fairly in refusing your child a place at your preferred school or,
- there are exceptional circumstances why your child should attend your preferred school, even if the school is full.

**For Community, Foundation, Voluntary Controlled or Catholic Voluntary Aided Schools, appeals should be sent to:**

Clerk to the Independent Appeals Panel,  
Wakefield Council, Committee Services,  
Room 46, Town Hall,  
Wakefield, WF1 2QW.

**For Church of England Voluntary Aided Schools please appeal to:**

Wakefield Diocesan Board of Education,  
Church House, 1 South Parade,  
Wakefield, WF1 1LP

If your appeal is against another Council you need to get an appeals form from that Council. Some numbers are included in the Helpful Telephone Numbers in this guide.

If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs appeals are made to the Independent Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. See the Special Educational Needs Section for more information.

### What happens at appeal?

Your appeal will be heard by an independent appeal panel. You have the right to attend and to speak in the hearing. After the appeal you will receive a letter telling you of the panel's decision and the reasons for it. Any decision made by the appeals panel is binding and both schools and parents must keep to it.

### Can I receive more than one offer?

No. Parents receive one and only one offer of a school place.

### What if I have twins or triplets and only one gets a place?

If there is only one place available you will need to decide whether you take that place or not. You may wish to appeal for your other child(ren).

### If my child does not get a place at a school of our choice is there a waiting list?

Yes. All children will remain on the waiting list until the end of the 2012/13 academic year.

Offers of places will be made as vacancies arise. Places will still be allocated using the Council's Over Subscription Criteria. We will write out to let you know once a place is available. Your position on the list can move up or down. You have 14 days to let us know whether you want the place or not.

If you do not let us know within this timescale the place will be offered to another child. At the end of each academic year all waiting lists for that academic year are closed. To stay on the list for the next school year you need to apply for the next academic year. Application forms are available from the School Admissions Team.

Your child will not be placed on a waiting list if they have a place at your first choice of school. If your child was offered a place at your second choice of school they will only go on the waiting list for your first choice of school.

If your child was offered a place at your third choice of school they will join the waiting lists for both your first and second choice.

If your child has not been offered a place at any of your chosen schools they will be placed on the waiting list for all three schools you selected.

### What if I make a late application?

The closing date for all applications is 15 January 2012. Any applications or amended applications received after the 17 February 2012, (unless there is a change of address) will be considered as late applications. These will not be processed until all those who applied on time have been dealt with.

October/November 2011	Distribution of application forms and letters to parents.
15 January 2012	Closing date for application forms.
11 April 2012	Offer day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will send out offer and refusal letters to parents.</li> <li>If you apply online your school offer will be available at midnight on 11 April 2012</li> </ul>
9 May 2012	Closing date for parents to either accept or refuse offer.
End of May onwards	Appeals.

## What if my child's address changes or we move house?

Moving house or a change of address may affect your offer of a school place.

Please let us know straight away. You will need to provide proof of your new address or the reasons for the change to your child's address.

- If you submit an on-time application and notify us of a change of address before 17 February 2012, we will implement the new address and this will be treated as an on-time application.
- If you submit an on-time application and notify us of a change of address after 17 February 2012, we will implement the new address and this will be treated as a late application.
- If you submit an on-time application and notify us of a change of preference and change of address after 17 February 2012, this will be treated as a late application.

## Fraudulent Applications

Any school place offered on a fraudulent address will be withdrawn. You may be asked for proof of address. This may be:

- A letter from your Solicitors detailing any house purchase and the completion date. A letter of intention to purchase is not enough.
- Evidence (e.g. from an Estate Agent or Solicitor) of a tenancy agreement or lease, including the start and end date.
- Appropriate written evidence (in the form of a letter from your Solicitor or Estate Agent) confirming the sale of your property or termination of a tenancy agreement/ lease.
- If you are returning to live in a property that you already own. We will need written evidence of the date that you are returning and that you plan to stay there.
- If you have been renting your property out evidence that you have given your tenants notice to leave.

- If the move is to live with a member of your family or to live with you, we will need to see proof of child benefit, showing that the child is at that address.

Please note that if the proof you give is not to the satisfaction of the Wakefield Council School Admissions Team your amended application will not be considered.

In some cases an Education Welfare Officer may visit you to check that your child lives at the address you put on your application form.

