LEAF LIVING

guide to applying for schools



Leaf Living

School applications MADE EASY



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A handbook for parents and guardians

Welcome to Leaf Living's guide to applying for schools

Applying for schools can often feel complicated. You might be applying for the first time ahead of a new academic year, or you might be relocating and wondering what your next steps are for securing a school place partway through a term.

This practical handbook has been designed to help parents navigate the schools application process, whether your children are starting at Reception, Junior or Secondary level.

In this guide, you'll find information about the school application process across England, key application deadlines, catchment areas and how they are determined. You'll also find our tips and guidance for parents who are applying for a school place during a house move.

Here at Leaf Living, we make finding a home to rent simple and easy. Let's make school applications straightforward too!

The Leaf Living Team

Helpful resources:

Government guide to schools admissions: https://www.gov.uk/schools-admissions/how-to-apply

Find your local council: https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council

OFSTED: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

Deadlines

The same deadlines apply to all schools across England. If you miss the deadline to apply, this could impact your chance of getting into your preferred school.

Infant, Junior and Primary School applications (Reception and Year 3)

Applications open: September (the day will differ depending on your local council)

Deadline: 15th January

Offers announced: 16th April

TOP TIP!
You won't get priority if you apply earlier than the deadline. All applications – as long as they are received by the deadline – will be treated equally.

Secondary School applications (Year 7)

Applications open: 1st September

Deadline: 31st October

Offers announced: 1st March



Choosing a school

Your local council's website will provide the most detailed information to help you choose which schools to apply for.

The number of schools you can apply for might differ depending on your local council area. Usually, it is three or four at Primary level, or between three and six at Secondary level (this tends to be based on how densely populated your county is). Take a look at your local council's information to be sure.

In general, you'll want to think about:

- How easy is the journey to and from the schools you are considering, both from home and from your workplace. Is the school walkable? Is it a convenient or realistic choice for your commute? Is council-funded travel help available to you? Councils usually provide a helpful map on their websites so you can do your research.
- What is the school's OFSTED rating? The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills inspects all schools and assesses them on inclusion, curriculum, teaching, pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour, personal wellbeing and leadership, as well as safeguarding. These reports are publicly available.
- Whether the school's ethos, culture and offer aligns with what you are looking for. Take a look at the school's website to understand more. Most schools will host open days for prospective parents in the autumn term, in the year before your child will start school. Go along and ask questions!

TOP TIP!
If you are applying to a school with Academy status, you'll still apply via your local council.

Understanding catchment areas

A catchment area is a geographical boundary and a way by which a school will decide who to award school places to. Generally, if you live in the catchment area of your preferred school, you are likely to be prioritised over applicants who don't. However, you can apply to schools outside of your catchment area if you choose to.

School places are also determined based on other factors and this is different for every school. In your application, you will list schools in an order of preference – this will be an important consideration when allocating places. If a school is oversubscribed, they will look at other factors too, including:

- Whether a sibling is already attending
- Faith (if the school is affiliated with a religious ethos or teaching)
- Distance from home
- If you are applying to a grammar school, your child will take entrance exams.

Living in the correct catchment is probably one of the best ways to strengthen your application to a preferred school but remember, living in a catchment area doesn't guarantee a place at your preferred school, and you might be offered a place somewhere else.



The application process

You will apply for a place at a state infant, junior, primary or secondary school through your council. You can do this online or via an application form which they can provide to you. If you are applying for a private school or a college place, you will apply directly.

If your child has an education, health and care (EHC) plan, it may name a school for them. You won't apply for your school place in the usual way. A school named in the EHC plan must give your child a place. All schools must publish their special educational needs (SEN) information reports on their websites.

TOP TIP!
You must apply through your local council based on your home address, even if you are applying for schools in a different council area.

Your local council will provide detailed information of the process to follow to when submitting your application.

You will be asked to list the schools you're applying to in order of preference.

TOP TIP!
Listing only one school won't increase your chances of a place. Make sure you include others in order of preference, to avoid a situation where you are placed in a school with no say over which one.



Accepting or appealing a school place

To accept a school place following your application, you can log into the admissions portal on your council's website (you will receive instructions on how to do this in your offer notification), or you could contact the school directly for instructions.

Most people will get a place in their top choice of school, with the rest getting a place in their second or third choice (see our section on catchment areas). If you haven't received the school place you were hoping for, you can appeal the decision. Make sure you check the deadline for doing so. Your letter should provide information on how to appeal; it helps to collect evidence to support your case. Your appeal will be assessed by an independent panel.

TOP TIP!
Accept your allocated school place just in case your appeal is unsuccessful.



Relocating

You might be planning to relocate before the start of the school year and after the application deadline, or you might be moving partway through a term.

Before term starts

If you are moving to another area but the application deadline is before you move, you will need to apply through your current local council, not your future one. You can still apply to schools outside of your council area. However, the offer you receive will be based on your existing address.

If you plan to move, and can control when you do so, it is much easier to move before or during the application process, instead of after offer day when places are allocated. Different councils and schools handle this situation differently, but if you decide to move after you receive an offer, you might find you are automatically transferred to a school with places in your new location.

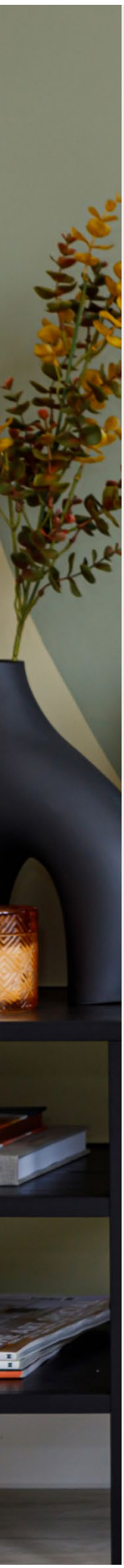
After term starts

Speak to your local council if you plan to move after the academic year has started, or if your child is already at school and will need to attend a new school. The council will guide you on how to apply.

Find out more

If you are a renter and considering a move to put you in the right catchment for a preferred school, Leaf Living can help. We have high-quality new homes to rent across England.

Find out more over on our website.
www.leafliving.com



Local schools guide

Leaf Living homes are designed for modern family living and located in family-friendly communities with easy access to local schools, transport links, green spaces and other amenities.

BERKSHIRE

All properties are energy efficient with an EPC rating of C or above, are pet friendly and include smart home technology such as keyless entry and smart thermostats. Residents benefit from a no deposit option through flatfair, and high-speed internet included. Each development is professionally managed, giving residents long term security and responsive maintenance support.

Shinfield

Homes to rent:
Shinfield Meadows

Postcode for catchment checker:
RG2 9WG

Checking your catchment area:
Primary School
https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-admissions/schools-and-catchment-or-designated-areas

This development has its own primary school!

Crowthorne

Homes to rent:
Bucklers Park

Postcode for catchment checker:
RG45 6SP

Checking your catchment area:
Primary School
https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-admissions/schools-and-catchment-or-designated-areas

Secondary School
https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-admissions/designated-area-maps

Reading

Homes to rent:
Emmer Green Drive

Postcode for catchment checker:
RG4 8SQ

Checking your catchment area:
Primary & Secondary School
https://my.reading.gov.uk/mycouncil.aspx



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