



WORCESTERSHIRE
SCHOOL
ADMISSIONS
2026-27



Starting School Admission Guide

2026/2027

Find out more online:

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schooladmissions



worcestershire
county council

Guide on How to Make an Application for Starting School for Parents and Carers of Children Resident in Worcestershire

Starting school is an exciting step for you and your child, however the process can sometimes appear confusing. This leaflet aims to provide you with some basic information and advice, as well as how to apply for a Reception school place for children born between **1 September 2021** and **31 August 2022**.

Even if you already have older siblings in a school, your child attends a nursery at the school, you have approached a school, been placed on an expression of interest register or think you have either already applied or put your child's name down at a school, **you will still need to make and submit an on-line application. This is very important, if you do not make an application on time, you may not be considered for places until after all those that applied by the closing date.**

Attendance at a particular nursery does not give priority for a place at a First or Primary school.

Starting School

For Parents/Carers of young children in Worcestershire the guide below indicates when to apply for your child/ren to start school:

Date of Birth	Relevant Year Group for Intake	Applications Open	Applications Closing Date
01/09/2021 to 31/08/2022	Reception 2026/2027 Academic Year	1st September 2025	15th January 2026
01/09/2022 to 31/08/2023	Reception 2027/2028 Academic Year	1st September 2026	15th January 2027
01/09/2023 to 31/08/2024	Reception 2028/2029 Academic Year	1st September 2027	15th January 2028
01/09/2024 to 31/08/2025	Reception 2029/2030 Academic Year	1st September 2028	15th January 2029

Applications open on 1st September 2025 and close on 15th January 2026.

Visit: [Apply for a school place | Worcestershire County Council](#) to make your application.
Or telephone School Admissions on **01905 822700** if you need assistance.

The different types of school

Academies (A)

Academies are publicly funded independent schools. The governing body/academy trust have responsibility for managing the academy and have responsibility for deciding the arrangements for admitting pupils including their own admissions criteria. Academies don't have to follow the national curriculum and can set their own term times. They still have to follow the same rules on admissions, special educational needs and exclusions as other state schools.

Community (C) and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools

Worcestershire Local Authority (LA) is the admission authority i.e. it has responsibility for deciding the arrangements for admitting pupils to community (C) and voluntary controlled (VC) schools including the admissions criteria.

Foundation (FD) and Voluntary Aided (VA) schools

The governing body is the admissions authority i.e. it has responsibility for deciding the arrangements for admitting pupils including their own admissions criteria.

Free Schools (FR)

Free schools are funded by the government but aren't run by the local council. Free Schools are non-profit making, independent, state-funded schools. They're 'all-ability' schools, so can't use academic selection processes like a grammar school. The governing body have responsibility for managing the Free School and have responsibility for deciding the arrangements for admitting pupils including their own admissions criteria.

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 parents have a legal responsibility to provide their child with an education either by regular school attendance or Otherwise. Under this duty parents can decide to take personal, including financial, responsibility for their child's education and this is known as Elective Home Education (EHE). Information on Elective Home Education is available from the SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (see page 11 for details).

Worcestershire school organisation

In Worcestershire there are two systems;-

Three-Tier System

The three-tier system of first, middle and high schools operates in some areas of Worcestershire.

Two-Tier System

In the other areas of Worcestershire, there is a two-tier system of primary schools for pupils up to the age of 11 with high schools for pupils over the age of 11.

Can schools cater for children with additional needs?

Schools offer support for children with additional needs and will have a SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) with whom you can discuss any concerns. There are also a number of mainstream schools with specialist units and Special Schools around the County. Further information and advice for parents of children with additional needs is available from the SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (see back cover for contact details).

When is my child able to start school full time?

The law requires all children to start full-time education by the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday. Children who have reached their fourth birthday are entitled to attend full-time in a reception class from the September after their fourth birthday.

The Reception year group from **1st September 2026 - 31st August 2027** is for children who were born between **01/09/2021 - 31/08/2022**.

Can I keep my child out of school until s/he is 5?

By law children must start in full-time education at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday. **However, all children are entitled to access education in the September following their fourth birthday.**

Parents can request that their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age. All Schools have to provide for children to attend part-time, should the parent wish to do so. Any period of part-time attendance is at the discretion of the parents. You should discuss with the school you would like your child to attend, what their induction arrangements might be. Parents may also request that their child's entry to a reception class be deferred until later in the same reception academic year group. Parents wishing to consider this must discuss the situation with the Headteacher at the school. Parents must apply for a school place in the normal way at the usual time.

Summer Born Children

Usually children with a date of birth in the summer term wishing to start school in the September after their fifth birthday would start in Year 1 and consequently miss the entire reception year. To apply for a place in Year 1 and not reception please refer to the relevant Information for Parents Book 2026/27 for further details. Please be aware that there may not be a vacancy in Year 1 at that time.

Parents can also **request** that their child enter the reception class in the September after their fifth birthday, effectively in the year group below their chronological age group. The admissions authority of the school must make the decision based on the circumstances of each case. In the case of a Community or Voluntary Controlled School the Local Authority will request the head teacher of the school to reach the final decision. This will involve the head completing an educational assessment to determine whether or not it is appropriate for the individual child to delay their entry into school and be taught permanently behind their chronological age group.

This process must be completed in advance of the closing date of 15th January 2026, in the event that the delayed entry is **not approved**, parents will need to make application in time for the 2026 reception intake. Should the delayed entry be **approved** you will be advised how to proceed at that stage.

Even if it is agreed that your summer born child can start school in the September following their fifth birthday in the reception class, the normal admission arrangements apply and there is no guarantee of a place. You should therefore give careful consideration to requesting delayed entry. A full copy of the protocol can be viewed at: [School Admissions Policies | Worcestershire County Council](#)

What do I need to do?

1. Visit Schools

Schools hold open events for interested parents and children. These can be evening or daytime sessions. You can tour the school, talk to staff and pupils and see demonstrations. If the visit is during a normal school day, you will be able to see the school at work. These are good opportunities for you and your child to have a look at the school and get a feel for it. You should contact the school direct or visit the school website to find details of open day events.

If you are unable to make the arranged date, most schools are usually happy for you to visit at a different arranged time. You should contact the school direct to organise this.

Visit as many schools as you can to compare. Make up your own mind rather than listening to rumours. Feel free to talk with schools about things that are important to you.

Please be aware:

- **Attendance at a particular nursery/pre-school does not give a child priority in gaining a place at the school where the nursery/pre-school is located. Parents/carers must still apply for their child to go to a First/Primary school and places are allocated in line with the Admissions Policy of the school.**

2. Get more information about the schools you are interested in

- Every school produces a school prospectus (a brochure giving information about the school). Ask the school for a copy.
- Look at the school website.
- Find My Catchment Area School at: [Find a school | Worcestershire County Council](#)
- Read the information on available in the 2026/27 Information for Parents book which is available online at: [Apply for a school place | Worcestershire County Council](#)
- Get Information about Schools gives links to the School profile, Ofsted reports and School performance data: [Get Information about Schools - GOV.UK](#)

3. Look at the admission policy

This information is vitally important. If a school is oversubscribed (has more applications than places), it will use admission criteria to decide who to offer places to. Read them carefully for the schools you are interested in. To look at what happened in previous years and how many children were offered places under each criteria, you may wish to contact the school direct.

4. Decide which schools

You are strongly advised to use all of the three preferences available to you and to be realistic about the schools you apply to. Always put down one school where you are more likely to get a place, even if it is your third preference.

DO NOT HOWEVER, put schools as a preference if you would be unhappy with the offer of a place at that school.

NB Parental responsibility

The law allows any parent/carer that has parental responsibility for a child, (which in most cases will mean more than one parent/carer), to express preferences on an application, for the school/s they would like their child to attend. To avoid multiple applications, and delays in processing, parents/carers should agree on the preferences expressed and submit only one application. If there are persons with parental responsibility not residing at your child's address, it is your responsibility to notify and/or consult them before expressing a preference for a school.

Consider individual factors that are important to you:

If your child has particular learning needs, talk to the SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) at the schools you are interested in.

Consider **how your child will get to school** before you apply - can your child walk or cycle there or use public transport. Avoid applying to a school which will be difficult to get to or may involve expensive transport costs.

Information about home to school transport assistance available to residents of Worcestershire is available on-line at: [School Transport | Worcestershire County Council](#) or Tel: **01905 765765**.

5. Apply on time - the closing date is 15th January 2026.

The Reception year group from **1st September 2026 - 31 August 2027** is for children who were born between **1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022**.

Places in reception classes for admissions in the school year September 2026 to August 2027 are allocated on the basis of applications received on or before the closing date of 15th January 2026. It is very important that you apply on time. If you do not submit an application on time, you may not be considered for places until after all those that applied by the closing date.

Parents who do not wish their children to start until they have reached compulsory school age **must** discuss their intentions with the school, and must also apply for a school place online by 15th January 2026, so that their application can be considered.

If you are in the process of moving at the time of your application you **MUST** provide School Admissions with some firm **independent** evidence of when you will actually begin to live there. This evidence must be provided before the relevant closing date for applications. This is also applicable if you are moving property and wish to have your application considered from your new property.

When and How to Apply for the Reception Year Group Academic Year 2026/2027

When to Apply	
Applications Open	1st September 2025
Closing Date	15th January 2026
School Offer Notification Date	16th April 2026

If you live in Worcestershire and your child is due to start school in Reception during the school year 2026/27, then you must apply to Worcestershire County Council for his or her school place – the opening and closing dates for applications are as above.

How do I apply?

- Apply online at: [**Apply for a school place | Worcestershire County Council**](#)
- You will need an email address
- Once you have submitted your application you will receive an email to acknowledge receipt. If you do not receive this email, it could mean that you have not submitted the application correctly and should resubmit it. **It is very important that you retain this receipt as proof of submission for your records.**
- If you do not have access to the internet, you can get online at any Worcestershire library.
- Join the Library and use your Library card to get one hour internet access free each day.
- Training on “How to get online” is available free to all Worcestershire Library members.

If you require additional assistance please do not hesitate to call School Admissions on 01905 822700.

N.B. It is very important that you apply by the closing date of 15th January 2026. If you do not make an application on time, you may not be considered for places until after all those that applied by the closing date. Applications received after the deadline may be classed as late and you may be refused a place, even if you live in the catchment, have a child at the school already, have a child in the school nursery or live very close to the school. **Any late changes to on time preferences are also subject to the late application policy.**

You are advised to refer to the Information for Parents book 2026/27 for full details of the Late Application procedure.

Deadline for applications is 15th January 2026

Parents of children resident outside Worcestershire

If you are not resident in Worcestershire, then you should obtain admission details from your home LA and apply from your home LA, even if your preferences include schools within Worcestershire.

Offer date

Offers will be issued on 16th April 2026. They will be issued direct to parents, by School Admissions, even if it is on behalf of the governing body of an Academy, Foundation, Free or Voluntary Aided School, or a school in a neighbouring LA.

In the few cases, where it may not be possible to offer a place at any of the preferences nominated on the application, a place will be offered at the nearest school with available places for pupils who live in Worcestershire.

The acceptance or decline of the offer must be made by the date specified.

For pupils not resident in Worcestershire, the offer or refusal will be sent direct to parents by the home LA, even if it is for a school in Worcestershire.

Mythbusters and Tips

Mythbusters

- Listing only one preference does not increase your chance of getting into that school.
- Applying for more than one school does not weaken your chances of getting a place at your preferred school.
- Naming schools that you are very unlikely to get as your second and third preferences will not increase your chances of getting your first preference school. The other schools you applied for are not considered when deciding who to offer places to.
- Applying for your catchment school does not mean you will be automatically offered a place there. If you can be offered a school which is higher on your list, you will be. If your catchment school is oversubscribed, you may not be offered a place. To check what your catchment school is you can go on line at:
www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schoolsearch
- All on-time applications to a school are considered at the same time. Priority is not given to those who put the school first. The order in which you list the schools is only used if you could be offered a place at more than one school. In this case, you would be offered whichever of those schools was highest on your application form.
- Having gained admission for one child at a school does not guarantee a younger child will be admitted. Should the school be oversubscribed at the time of application of a younger sibling, catchment area may have a higher priority on the oversubscription criteria.
- Having gained admission to a school of your preference, does not mean your child will have highest priority for transfer to the related middle or high school. If the related middle or high school is oversubscribed at the time of transfer, your child might then have to move in a different direction from other children currently attending the same school.

Tips

- You can name up to three schools on your application. You are strongly advised to use all three preferences to increase your chance of getting a preferred school.
- You are advised to include your catchment school as one of your three preferences. However please note that you are not guaranteed a place at your catchment school. Check out which school you are in catchment for at the above link.
- Do not put schools as a preference if you would be unhappy with the offer of a place at that school. It would be a waste of a preference if you were offered a place at a school that you would not be happy with your child attending.
- If we are not able to offer a place at your preferred schools, we will name an alternative school with places. This will normally be the nearest school to where you live that still has places available.
- Visit our website and read the section entitled 'Is your child ready for school':
www.worcestershire.gov.uk/readyforschool

Be Realistic!

Don't waste all of your preferences on schools that are unlikely to be able to offer your child a place. Have at least one school as a "safety net" where you are likely to be offered a place.

- When deciding who to offer places to, schools do not know what order you have listed them on your application or which other schools you have applied for – this information is confidential prior to allocation.
- Decisions about who to offer places to are made using the admission criteria only. Any other schools you may have applied to, has no bearing on the admission arrangements.

Schools within Worcestershire

All schools in the County are co-educational, and all high schools are comprehensive. However, there are different types of school and there are also differences across the County in the age groups that the schools provide for, as explained below.

The areas served by a **three-tier** system of first, middle and high schools are as follows:

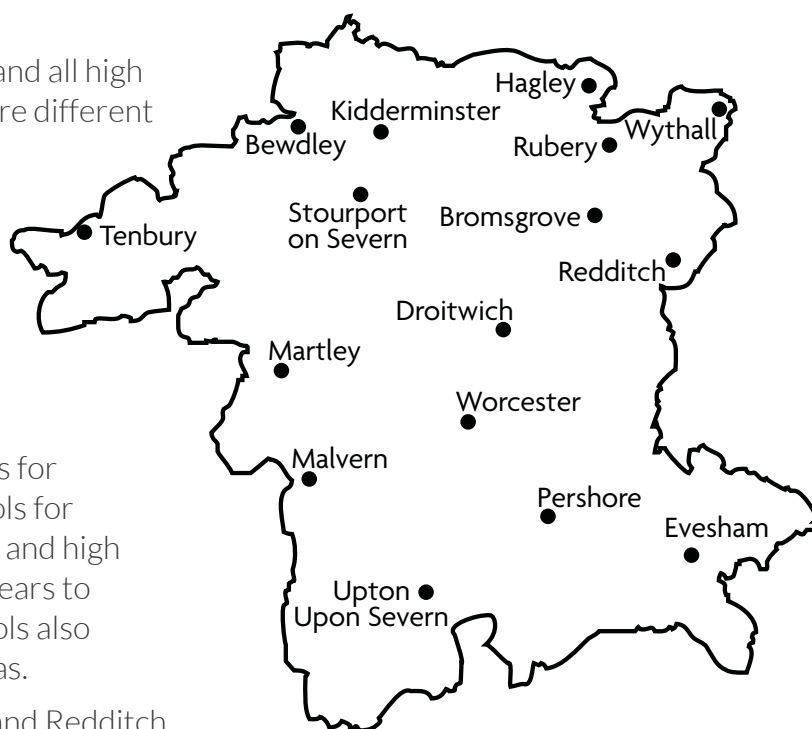
Bromsgrove	*Droitwich
*Evesham	*Redditch

The **three-tier** system consists of first schools for pupils from 5 to 8, 9 or 10 years, middle schools for pupils from 8, 9 or 10 years to 12 or 13 years, and high schools which provide for pupils of 12 or 13 years to 18 years. A **two-tier** system of Catholic schools also serves Droitwich, Evesham and Pershore areas.

*A number of schools in Droitwich, Evesham and Redditch have approved, or are in the process of changing the age range of the school and are in the process of converting to the **two-tier** system, subject to approval.

In the other areas of Worcestershire, there is a **two-tier** system of primary schools for pupils up to the age of 11, with high schools for pupils over the age of 11.

If applying for a A, FD, FR or VA school place, you should check the details in the 2026/27 Information for Parents book at [Apply for a school place | Worcestershire County Council](#) or contact the school direct to find out if you need to complete a supplementary information form for that school.



Tier Systems and Year Groups by Area

Area	Tier System	Type of School	Age Range	Year Groups
Bewdley	2	Primary	5 - 11	R - 6
		High	11 - 18	7 - 13
Bromsgrove	3	First	5 - 9	R - 4
		Middle	9 - 13	5 - 8
		High	13 - 18	9 - 13
Droitwich	2	Primary	5 - 11	R - 6
	3	First	5 - 9	R - 4
		Middle	9 - 12	5 - 7
		High	12 - 18	8 - 13
Evesham	2	Primary	5 - 11	R - 6
	3	First	5 - 10	R - 5
		Middle	10 - 13	6 - 8
		High	13 - 18	9 - 13
Hagley	2	Primary	5 - 11	R - 6
		High	11 - 18	7 - 13
Kidderminster	2	Primary	5 - 11	R - 6
		High	11 - 18	7 - 13
		All through	5 - 18	R - 13
Malvern	2	5 - 18	5 - 11	R - 6
		R - 13	11 - 18	7 - 13
Martley	2	Primary	5 - 11	R - 6
		High	11 - 16	7 - 11
Pershore	2	Primary	5 - 11	R - 6
		High	12 - 18	7 - 13
Redditch	2	Primary	5 - 11	R - 6
		High	11 - 16	7 - 11
	3	First	5 - 9	R - 4
		Middle	9 - 13	5 - 8
		High	13 - 18	9 - 13
		High	11 - 18	7 - 13
Rubery	2	Primary	5 - 11	R - 6
		High	11 - 18	7 - 13
Stourport	2	Primary	5 - 11	R - 6
		High	11 - 18	7 - 13
Tenbury	2	Primary	5 - 11	R - 6
		High	11 - 16	7 - 11
Upton	2	Primary	5 - 11	R - 6
		High	11 - 18	7 - 13
Worcester	2	Primary	5 - 11	R - 6
		High	11 - 16	7 - 11
		High	11 - 18	7 - 13
Wythall	2	Primary	5 - 11	R - 6
		High	11 - 18	7 - 13

Checklist for applying - 15th January 2026 is the closing date for First/Primary School applications.

Visited the website: [Apply for a school place | Worcestershire County Council](#) and read the 'Information for Parents' book. If you do not have access to the Internet, either visited your local Library and gained free access to the Internet or viewed a copy of the book in Schools, Libraries or at your Local Worcestershire Hub.

Visited Schools and obtained a School Prospectus.

Applied online and retained the email receipt sent when submitted. Remembered to keep a reminder of own password used when applying for future use.

Date Applied:

Password:

Security Question Answer:

OR

Completed and submitted an IA form and retained the signed receipt as proof of application.

If there is anything about the admissions process which you do not understand please contact School Admissions:

By Phone: 01905 822700

By Post: School Admissions,
County Hall,
Spetchley Road,
Worcester,
WR5 2NP

By Email: schooladmissions@worcestershire.gov.uk

Online: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schooladmissions

The SEND Information, Advice and Support Service Worcestershire offers independent and neutral information/advice on Special Education Needs and information on elective home education. Please contact:

By Phone: 01905 768153

By Email: SENDIASS@worcestershire.gov.uk

Online: www.hwsendiass.co.uk

This leaflet has been prepared by Worcestershire County Council to inform parents about school admissions and transfers in good time for the school year 2026/27. To the best of our knowledge all information was correct at the time of printing: July 2025.