Willow Bank Infant School Admission Arrangements for Academic Year 2028/29

Willow Bank Infant School is committed to providing an inviting and welcoming environment where every child feels safe, happy and ready to learn. We are a small infant school offering places from Reception to Year 2. We strive for all our children to become lifelong learners and inspire a genuine love of learning in every pupil. Our core values of Kindness, Respect, Resilience, Community, Independence and Bravery, ensures that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential within our nurturing and inclusive school community.

Willow Bank Infant School is one of the founding member schools of the Orchard Learning Alliance Multi Academy Trust. For further details about the Trust, please see the website **here.**

Admissions for Reception

- The PAN (Published Admission Number) for entry in September 2028 is 60.
- The school uses the Wokingham Borough Council Admissions Service which publicises the school to parents in the same literature as for other Wokingham schools. The School will participate in the co-ordinated arrangements made by Wokingham Borough Council. Parents/carers wishing to send their children to Willow Bank Infant School should submit an application to their home Local Authority and follow the guidance of that Local Authority regarding deadlines for submitting the application. This information will be published in Local Authority admission guides**.**
- **Applications made after the closing date but before offer date**: The closing date for applications for Infant School places in the normal admissions round will be 15th January 2028. Changes to existing applications received after 15th January 2028 will be considered as 'late' and processed after all on-time applications have been considered.
  Applications received after the 15th January 2028 may be considered as on time, under exceptional circumstances only, and when evidence is provided to support this. For example: If any medical or social circumstances within the family change after 15th January 2028 that means you feel your child would need a place at a particular school. Applicants who want their application to be considered after the 15th January 2028 as an "on-time" application under exceptional circumstances should contact Admissions Services and provide supporting evidence to: schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk
  The ability to make vital amendments will be dependent on the stage of the process. **If no evidence is provided it will be reasonably assumed that an application could have been made by the closing date and the application will not be processed until after the offer date and main allocation of places.**
- **Applications made after the offer date but before 31st August 2028:** All late applications will be processed by the application of the admissions criteria where necessary. Where possible a place will be offered at a preferred school with places available. If this cannot be achieved a place will be allocated at the nearest or most accessible school with places to the home address if they live in the Wokingham borough. No offer will be made to those

children living outside of the borough as it is the responsibility of the home authority to provide a school place. Parents retain the right of appeal.

- Children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), or a statement of Special Educational Needs that names the School in the plan or the statement will be allocated a place above all other applicants.

- If there are more applicants than places available, applications will be prioritised in accordance with the following over-subscription criteria;

    a) Looked after children or children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became the subject of a child arrangements order or special guardianship order. *

    b) The children of staff at Willow Bank Infant School where that member of staff is the legal parent and guardian of that child, has a permanent contract to work at the school and where that member of staff has been employed at the school for 2 or more years at the time of application for the place or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post within a demonstrable skill shortage.

    c) Children who have a sibling at Willow Bank Infant School or Willow Bank Junior School at the time of application; who is expected to be attending the school when the child will enter the school. Priority is given to those whose permanent home address is closest to Willow Bank Infant School.

    d) Children who do not have a sibling at Willow Bank Infant School or Willow Bank Junior School at the time of application. Priority is given to those whose permanent home address is closest to Willow Bank Infant School.

* See Appendix A

Where the application of oversubscription criteria would result in splitting children with either the same birth dates or children born in the same academic year from the same family, then places will be offered even if this will result in the school going above its admission number.

Tiebreaker

If there are more applications from parents than places available the following tiebreaker will be applied to decide which of the applicants can be offered places, and the waiting list order. Priority will be given within any of the above oversubscription criteria to the applicant whose permanent home address is nearest to Willow Bank Infant School in terms of radial (straight line) distance. Distances will be measured consistently and will be measured as a straight line between the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) address points for the respective home address and school, using the Easting and Northing for each address point. These are then used to calculate the distance between the two address points using a 'direct distance mathematical routine' within the Capita ONE system used by Wokingham Borough Council's School Admissions Team into which the LLPG address points are imported. This calculates the distance from the values created through this process using Pythagoras' Theorem by measuring the distance in meters between the Easting and Northing for each end address point then multiplied by 0.000621317 to convert to miles. It should be noted that this calculation may not be exactly the same as that created by a Geographical Information System (GIS) product as the GIS product may build in a formula to allow for the curvature of the earth. This curvature does not begin to affect distance values until the distance is at least 10 miles.

In the event that two or more children live at the same distance from the school and there are fewer places available, random allocation will be used to decide which child will be allocated the remaining place(s). This will be by supervised drawing of lots, carried out by at least 2 officers at Wokingham Borough Council.

Residency Requirements
Home address

Applications are processed on the basis of the child's single permanent home address living with parent(s) or a carer/legal guardian at the closing date for applications. Reference to council tax records will be made to determine a single address for consideration of a place. It is for the applicant to satisfy the local authority that they live at the address stated.
Applicants will be asked to declare that the address used will be their place of residence beyond the date of the pupil starting school. The local authority reserves its right to carry out further investigation and require additional evidence and to reject applications or withdraw offers of places, if it believes it has the grounds to do so. In such cases, the applicant will have recourse to putting their application through the independent appeals process.

It is important to declare if there is to be a change of address prior to the child starting school. If the applicant already owns a property which is in the process of being sold, we are able to accept the address of the new property only on submission of the appropriate evidence in support e.g. exchange of contracts letter on both the new property and, where possible, disposal of their current property. The latest date for submission of evidence to support a move is 15th January 2028. If the move takes place later or evidence is submitted later, the local authority will only be able to consider this information after the initial allocation of places has taken place and treat the new address for waiting list purposes.

Temporary addresses cannot ordinarily be used to obtain school places. Temporary addresses will only be considered where evidence is provided of a genuine reason for the principal home being unoccupied e.g. fire, flooding or subsidence, or the family does not have access to a permanent home in the borough, e.g. they are refugees or have faced eviction. A temporary address will be used until a permanent address is confirmed at which point an application/allocation would be revisited.

If an applicant owns a property which they do not occupy and/or rent out and reside in another property that they own, within, or nearer to the designated area of the preferred school, then it is for the applicant to provide sufficient evidence that the address of the property they reside in is the family home, to allow that address to be used for determining designated area status.

Applicants are required to advise of any change of circumstance at any time prior to the child starting school. If you do not declare such arrangements, or a different address is used on the application where the child does not usually live; it will be considered that a false declaration has been made and it may be decided to decline to offer a place at a particular school, or normally withdraw the offer of a place.

Split living arrangements
Where a family claims to be resident at more than one address, justification and evidence of the family's circumstances will be required e.g. split residence order or legal separation documentation. The application must be completed by the parent, at an address which is owned, leased or rented, where the child lives for the majority of the school week. This is based on the number of school nights a child spends at the home (Sunday night 1800 hrs to Friday 0900 hrs).

Where there is an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, the School Admissions Team will assess and make a judgment about which address to use for the purpose of the allocation of a school place where necessary requesting further information e.g.

- any legal documentation confirming residence
- the pattern of the residence
- the period of time over which the current arrangement has been in place
- confirmation from any previous school or early years setting of the contact details and home address supplied to it by the parents
- where the child is registered with the GP
- any other evidence the parents may supply to verify the position

The information provided will be considered by an admissions panel of at least two officers and their decision is final. It is recommended that consensus is reached by both parents and child on the school preferences to be expressed and it should be noted that only one offer letter will be sent to the main applicant unless otherwise requested and agreed by both parents.

Applicants from abroad
An application for a school place can be made from applicants applying for a school place for their child from abroad, provided that they can provide evidence of their right of abode. The address used will be the address where the child is living at the closing date for applications, unless evidence is provided that the family is returning to a property that they own in the Borough by 15th January 2028. Third party written evidence confirming the details and timing of the relocation will be required. Adjustments will be made to any waiting lists, if the family returns later, prior to the start of school. Further advice on the documentation required can be obtained from the school Admissions Team.

Service Families
Families of UK service personnel who are not yet living in the area will be able to make an application if it is accompanied by an assignment order declaring a relocation date and intended address. In the absence of a new home postal address, the authority will use the former Hazebrouck Barracks (co-ordinates: Easting 476869 and Northing 166249) as the postal address to determine distance to a preferred school. A letter from the Commanding Officer or garrison headquarters will be required confirming the living arrangements for families who are being housed at the army quarters at Arborfield but are assigned to another base.

Returning Crown Servants
Families of crown servants returning from overseas to live in the Wokingham borough may apply for a place in advance of their move provided the application is accompanied by an official letter confirming the posting to the UK and the expected relocation date.

Where a parent is unable to provide confirmation of a relocation address, an indication of the area may be provided, narrowed down as far as possible, to which the family intend to return. Preferences will be considered but applications will be considered under criterion D until the parent is able to provide confirmation of the new address such as proof of exchange of contracts or a signed rental agreement. If a place cannot be offered at a preferred school; no alternative school will be offered until confirmation of the relocation address within the borough is received but the right of appeal will be advised.

Children with birth dates in the same academic year
Out-of-age-group admissions will only be agreed where there is consensus that it is in the best interests of the child; the circumstances of each case will be considered individually. Such a consensus would be reached between the parents, schools concerned (the current school and Willow Bank Infant School) and any relevant professionals asked for their opinion on the case by Willow Bank Infant School.

Accepting or declining the offer of a place

Parents are required to accept or decline the allocated place using the form sent with the allocation letter. The form must be returned to the home local authority in accordance with their co-ordinated scheme (Wokingham Borough Council's states two weeks from the date of the offer letter). If a form is not received, there will be one further written warning and failure to respond may result in the place being withdrawn. Parents are requested to advise the local authority at any stage, if they are not accepting the place for any reason.

Waiting Lists

After 15 April 2028 a 'waiting list' will be administered if the school has more applicants than places available. A child's position on the waiting list is determined by applying the over-subscription criteria as described above. Positions on the waiting list may go up or down due to pupil withdrawals or new or revised applications and no account is taken of the length of time spent on the waiting list. Waiting lists will be maintained by the local authority to fill places that may become available during the school year but will transfer to Willow Bank Infant School on 1 September 2027. Children who are the subject of a direction by the Secretary of State for Education to admit or who are allocated to Willow Bank Infant School in accordance with an in-year fair access protocol will take precedence over those on the waiting list.

In Year admissions to Years Reception – 2

Applications for entry to Reception after the end of the routine admissions round (ending on 31 August 2028) and applications for entry into Reception to Year 2 at any time are processed as in-year applications and applications will be managed by Willow Bank Infant School according to published admission arrangements and timescales.

Parents wishing to apply for a place at the school should complete the in-year application form available at admissions@willowbank-inf.wokingham.sch.uk.

Applications for Willow Bank Infant School will be considered no more than half-a-term in advance of the school place being required, as indicated in the following table:

When you want your child to start	Earliest you can apply
Start of the academic year to October half-term	From May half-term
After the October half-term to winter break	From the start of the academic year in September
After winter break to February half-term	From October half-term
After February half-term to spring break	From January
From spring break to May half-term	From February half-term
From May half-term to end of academic year	From Easter break

For entry to a school at the start of a term or half-term, an application will need to be received by Willow Bank Infant School, 15 school days in advance of the commencement date. It is possible in this instance, that your child will start a short time after the start of the term or half term.

If there is no child on the waiting list for the year into which the applicant is seeking admission, then the Academy Trust will determine whether a place can be offered to the applicant. If at the time of this determination the school has applications from more than one pupil for admission to the same year group, all the applications will be ordered according to the criteria used in determining initial admissions to Reception and will be considered in that order.

The Academy Trust will normally decide to refuse a place to a full year group as admitting another child will prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources; unless they are statutorily obliged to admit the applicant or the application is covered by Wokingham Borough Council's Fair Access Protocols.

Waiting Lists

If there are pupils on a waiting list for the year into which the applicant is seeking admission, then the pupil will be placed on that waiting list in a position determined by application of the criteria used in determining initial admissions to Reception. Pupils will be admitted from the waiting list in order as space becomes available. No account is taken of the length of time spent on a waiting list.

Positions on waiting lists may go up or down due to student withdrawals or new or revised applications received, therefore waiting lists will be reviewed and revised:

- each time a child is added to, or removed from, the waiting list
- when a child's changed circumstances will affect their priority
- when parents respond to periodic requests to see if they wish to remain on the waiting list

- at the end of the school year; should there be a change in the determined oversubscription criteria

Children who are the subject of a direction by the local authority to admit or who are allocated to Willow Bank Infant School in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over those on a waiting list.

Wait lists will be closed at the end of a school year, and parents will need to re-apply for a place at Willow Bank Infant School in the next academic year.

Parents will be able to apply to Willow Bank Infant School for each year if they wish to be placed on the waiting list for that year. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that Willow Bank Infant are informed in writing to admissions@willowbank-inf@wokingham.sch.uk if they want their child's name to be removed from the waiting list or if their circumstances have changed from the original application.

Request for a place outside the normal year group

Places will be offered on the basis of the child's chronological age. This applies to all children, including those moving from abroad with little or no English. Out-of-age-group admissions in other year groups will only be agreed where there is consensus that it is in the best interests of the child; the circumstances of each case will be considered individually. Such a consensus would be reached between the parents, schools concerned (the current school and Willow Bank Infant School) and any relevant professionals asked for their opinion on the case by Willow Bank Infant School. Parents will be informed of their statutory right of appeal. This right does not apply if a place is offered in another year group at Willow Bank Infant School.

Distances

Distances will be measured consistently and will be measured as a straight line between Willow Bank Infant School's address point and for the respective home address, using Google Maps.

In the event that two or more children live at the same distance from the school and there are fewer places available, random allocation will be used to decide which child will be allocated the remaining place(s). This will be by supervised drawing of lots, carried out by at least 2 independent persons.

Accepting or declining the offer of a place

Parents are required to accept or decline the allocated place, which will be sent by e-mail, within 3 school days from the date of the offer e-mail. Failure to respond may result in the place being withdrawn and the place released.

When accepting the allocated place, students will be expected to start within the half-term that the offer is made. If this is less than 10 school days, the start date may be extended up to 10 school days after the start of the next half-term. If it is parental choice not to accept a start date within this time scale, the offer may be withdrawn and the child may be removed from the waiting list.

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on the waiting list if they confirm that they wish to be. In accordance with the latest School Admissions Code, Willow Bank Infant School is required to inform the Education Authority of any application received and the outcome of the application. This includes the refusal of a school place by the parent; in which case the Education Authority may contact you to ascertain what arrangements you have made to educate your child.

Appeals

Parents have a statutory right to appeal to an independent appeals panel against the refusal of a place in all year groups at a school for which they have applied. This right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not their preferred age group.

Anyone wishing to appeal has 20 days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to prepare and lodge their written appeal; an application form is available from our website, https://www.willowbankinfant.com/web/admissions/260173. Please also see www.clerksassociates.co.uk our independent service provider for more information. The decisions of the appeals panel are binding on the school. There is no automatic right to a further appeal for admission within the same academic year unless there is a significant change of circumstances relevant to the application.

General Contact information for all admissions

Copies of the school admissions arrangements and application form are available on the school website, https://www.willowbankinfant.com/web/admissions/260173 or from the Admissions Officer, who should be contacted in the first instance with any queries about the school admission arrangements.

Email: admissions@willowbank-inf@wokingham.sch.uk

Telephone: 0118 969 5452

Address: Willow Bank Infant School
Duffield Road
Woodley
Reading
Berkshire
RG5 4RW

Copies of Wokingham Borough Council documents, parent's guides and common application forms are available on its web site www.wokingham.gov.uk/schools-and-education

They can also be obtained from the School Admissions Team, whose contact details are given below. Any queries about Wokingham's admission arrangements should be addressed to the team.

Email: admissions@wokingham.gov.uk

Telephone: 0118 974 6000

Address: School Admissions Team
Wokingham Borough Council
PO Box 156
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1WN

Policy agreed by the Orchard Learning Alliance Full Trust Board on future date to be advised.

Appendix A (WBC Co-ordinated Admissions Schemes and Policy 2028/2029)

Note 1

A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order including those who appear [to the admission authority] to have been in state care outside of England and cease to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services function (see definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

An adoption order is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders). A 'child arrangements order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

Applications received under the Criterion A must be made by the person with parental responsibility for the child (e.g. the child's social worker, acting on behalf of the local authority for a looked after child) and will need to be supported by the following official documentation, as applicable:

- confirmation by the home local authority that the child is looked after or
- confirmation by the local authority that last looked after the child confirming that the child was looked after immediately prior to the issuing of one of the orders detailed above.

It should be noted that all schools have the resources to work with special educational needs and common childhood complaints such as asthma or allergies.

Note 2

A sibling is a brother or sister (that is, another child of the same parents, whether living at the same address or not), or a half-brother or half-sister, step-brother or step-sister, or adopted or foster children living at the same address.

It includes children who at the time of application have a sibling for whom the offer of a place at the preferred school has been accepted, even if the sibling is not yet attending.