



MOVING UP TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

For parents applying for a Year 7 School place for
September 2026

www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/contactadmissions

June to October 2025	Research schools, visit school open events, and decide which schools to apply for
5 September 2025	Online application portal opens
09 and 11 September 2025	Practice Test and Secondary Transfer Test for grammar schools
10 October 2025	Secondary Transfer Test results released
31 October 2025	National deadline to submit a secondary school application (by 23:59 on this date)
2 March 2026	National Offer Day

When do I need to apply for my child's secondary school place?

Submit your child's secondary school application in the autumn term, by the national deadline of **31 October 2025**.

Submit one application to your child's home Local Authority (LA): this application should include all your child's preferred schools (even if the school is not in that LA's area). If your child lives in Buckinghamshire, submit their application to Buckinghamshire Council on the online application portal from 5 September 2025. If you cannot apply online, please contact us: www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/contactadmissions

You will find out which secondary school your child has been offered on National Offer Day: **2 March 2026**.

How do I decide which schools to apply for?

It is important to do your research before applying for school places, to find out:

- Information about your preferred schools, and whether they will be right for your child;
- If your child needs to sit a test before applying (such as the Secondary Transfer Test for grammar schools, or the banding test for The Highcrest Academy);
- If you should include further information or evidence when you apply (such as a Supplementary Information Form, or additional address evidence if you have recently moved house);
- How your child's application will be considered (look for the school's admission rules within their Admissions Policy) and whether your child is likely to be offered a place.

Most schools host open events, so that families can visit schools and learn about what they have to offer: check school websites for details. School websites will also have lots of other helpful information.

Our website provides a checker which enables you to work out your catchment and closest schools (measured in a straight line): www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/find-a-school-place Please also see later section on school transport.

Our website explains the application process in detail. If you do not have access to a computer, we can send you a paper copy of this information: www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/admissions

What do I need to know about grammar schools and the Secondary Transfer Test?

There are two types of mainstream secondary school in Buckinghamshire:

- Upper/all-ability schools, which admit children without reference to their academic ability
- Grammar schools, which admit children who score 121 or higher in the Secondary Transfer Test (11 plus)

The Secondary Transfer Test measures verbal reasoning, non-verbal reasoning, and mathematical skills. There are two papers, each about 60 minutes long, with a break between. The test takes place in school during the school day. A shorter practice test is taken two days before the test, to help children learn what to expect. A Familiarisation Booklet will be posted to your child's home address in July.

Children who attend a Buckinghamshire state-funded primary school are automatically entered for the Secondary Transfer Test and do not need to be registered for testing separately. If you do not want your child to sit the test, confirm this in writing to your child's headteacher. Children who attend any other school must be registered for testing on our website between 2 May and 13 June 2025.

If your child has Special Educational Needs or a disability and already receives adjustments in school to help them access the curriculum your headteacher will apply for access arrangements to enable them to access the test.

If a child scores 121 or higher in the Secondary Transfer Test, they are considered 'qualified' for grammar school and will be prioritised for places at their preferred grammar school(s) according to each grammar school's admission rules.

How do you work out which children are offered a place at a school?

If there are more applications for a school than places available, we use a school's admission rules to work out which children should receive an offer: the children who best fit a school's admission rules are most likely to be offered.

Each school's admission rules are different: check the admission rules for each of your preferred schools by looking in their Admissions Policy – this should be available on each school's website, but if you cannot find it the school will be able to send you a copy if you ask them.

School places are offered on how well children fit the admission rules. Schools do not know where they are listed in your child's application (i.e. whether they are your first preference, second preference, etc.), so they can't prioritise children who listed the school as their first choice or rule out those who placed it lower down their list.

Each child is only offered one school on National Offer Day: the order you list the schools in your child's application tells us which school you would prefer in case more than one school is available: we always offer your child the highest preference possible. This is why you must list the schools in the order you really want them – i.e. your most preferred school at number 1, followed by your next best option at number 2, and so on.

What do I need to know about school transport?

Most children are not entitled to Free School Transport: make sure you consider how your child will get to school when deciding which schools to apply for. Families may be able to pay for school transport if places are available or otherwise make use of public transport.

Free School Transport may be given if your child (a) attends their nearest school and (b) the nearest school is over the statutory walking distance of 3 miles (or the route is deemed unsafe to walk). You can use our free school transport checker - [Find my child a school place](#). The distance used for transport purposes is the shortest driving/walking route: this is different to the distance used for admissions purposes (straight line, or 'as the crow flies').

For your child to be considered for Free School Transport, you must include your nearest school, as identified in the checker above, in your application. If your child's nearest school is not included in their application, Free School Transport will not be provided to a school further away. Bear in mind that your nearest school may not be your catchment school. For grammar qualified children, an upper/all-ability school may be the nearest school – Free School Transport is not provided to grammar school unless it is the child's nearest school.

More information about School Transport is available on our website:

www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools-index/school-transport/