

Applying for a
secondary
school place

**February
2025**



How to apply for a school place online



If you live in Buckinghamshire, visit www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/admissions between 10 September and 31 October 2024

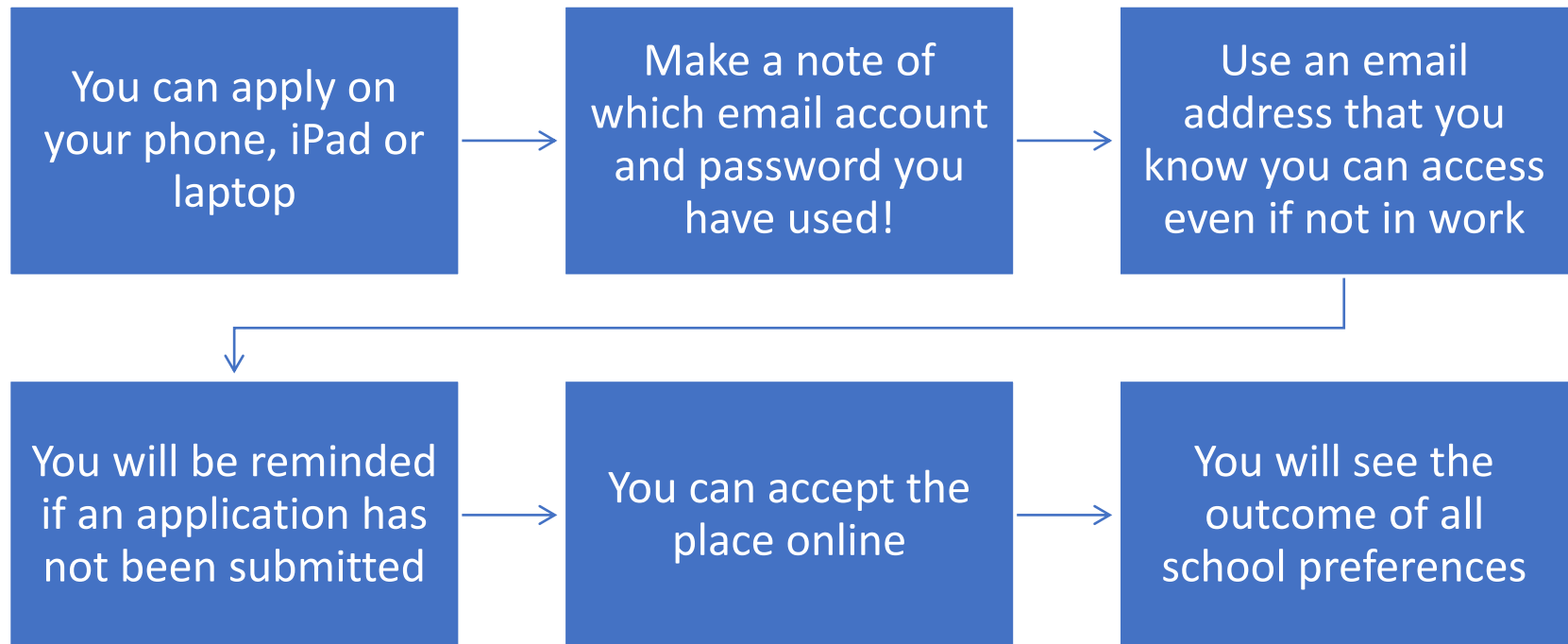


If you live elsewhere apply via your own LA's website



All you need is an email address

Applying online is easy



Making an application

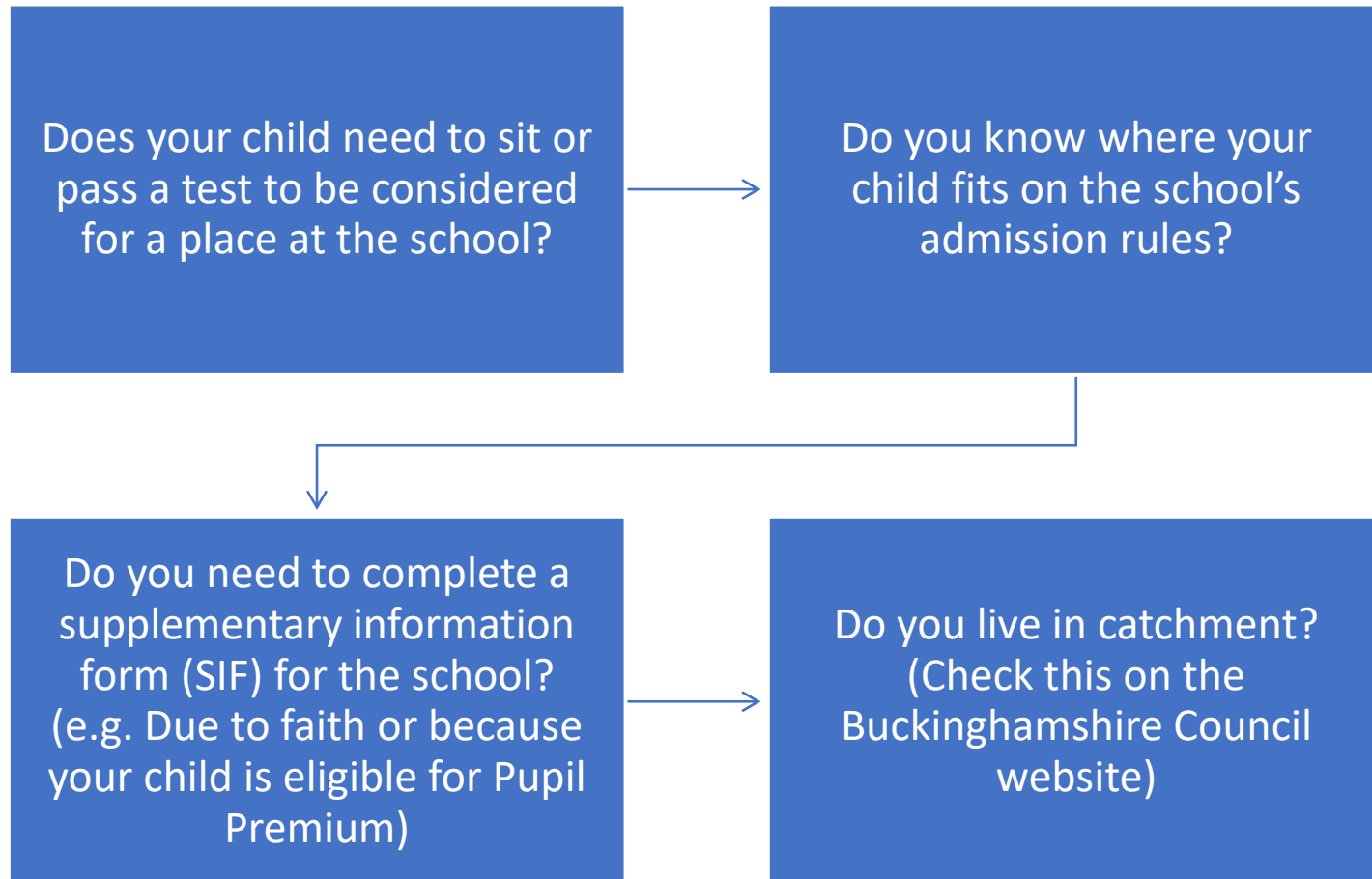
When you apply online you can:

- List up to 6 schools
- Include grammar, upper, all-ability and out of county schools
- Put the schools in the order you prefer them

Consider:

- The order of your preferences carefully
- Including local (catchment) school(s) that you have a good chance of being offered

Think about...



How will your child get to school?

Transport is given to the nearest secondary school if:

- Over three miles away, or
- Under three miles but the route is an 'unsafe walking route'
- Check on [Find my child a school place \(buckscc.gov.uk\)](http://buckscc.gov.uk) to find your nearest school for transport purposes
- All secondary schools are treated equally (grammar/upper/comprehensive/free)
- If you qualify for grammar school and attend your nearest grammar school, you will only be assisted with transport if there is *no nearer* upper school.
- Paid-for bus tickets can be purchased

The offer process – Steps 1-5

1. Local authorities share offer information with each other
2. Each school preference is treated separately
3. Schools are not told where they are placed on the preference list by the parent
4. All admission authorities apply their admission rules to the children with a preference for their school and sort the children into 'ranked order'
5. The schools tell the ranked order to their council

The offer process – Steps 6-10

6. Grammar school preferences are offered to qualified pupils (y scoring 121 or following successful Selection Review)
7. Where a child can be offered more than one school place - the higher ranked preference school is offered, and the lower preference school is declined
8. The vacant place created is offered to another child
9. This process is repeated until no further offers can be made
10. Children who cannot be offered any of their preferences are then offered a place at the nearest school with vacant places remaining

Offer Day – March 2025

Parent Portal applications

- Offer emails sent beginning of March
- You can log on to the portal and accept the school place online

Other applications

- Offer letters emailed beginning of March- follow link to accept the place

All applications

- Automatically added to waiting list for higher preferences that could not be offered but for which the child is qualified
- Can register an appeal
- You have 14 days to accept the offer

After Offer Day



You can appeal for any school you have been refused



This includes where your preference is a grammar school, and your child has not qualified



We will automatically add your child to the waiting list for any school on your application above the school we have offered as long as it is a school they are qualified to attend

About appeals

- Appeals are heard by a panel of three people
- Panel members are independent and unpaid volunteers who have no connection with the school or the LA
- Your appeal will be held via Teams, and we will explain what you need to do to be present
- You can attend your child's appeal, or it can be held in your absence if you prefer.

Application summary

- Apply by Midnight on 31 October
- Apply online at www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk or on your home LA's website
- List schools in true preference order including grammar and upper schools if your child is sitting the test
- We strongly suggest you include all your local schools (e.g. catchment/local/nearest schools)
- Be realistic, understand the rules, use all your preferences
- Fill in SIFs where requested by your preference schools
- Consider transport arrangements
- Visit the schools or view virtual tours
- Don't rely on the opinions of others

The Secondary Transfer Test

2025 entry

Secondary Transfer Test

- The Secondary Transfer Test is a test to determine whether or not a child is suited to a Buckinghamshire grammar school
- The test is produced by GL Assessment
- Buckinghamshire Council undertakes the administration on behalf of the 13 grammar schools
- You can find information about the test here:
<https://www.thebucksgrammarschools.org/>

Testing timeline

What

- Familiarisation booklet
- Practice Test
- Transfer Test
- Results Released
- Application deadline
- School place offers
- Start secondary school

When

- Early July (posted home)
- Early September
- Early September
- 11 October 2024
- 31 October (midnight)
- Early March
- September

Testing schedule

- Testing will take place in September
- Children will sit the practice test two days before the Transfer Test
- If any changes are proposed to these arrangements, they will be published on the TBGS website:

<https://www.thebucksgrammarschools.org/>

Do all children have to sit the Secondary Transfer Test?

- No, only if parents want their child to sit the test
- A grammar school will not suit every child so think carefully about whether sitting the test is going to be a positive experience for your child
- Your child's headteacher will ask you if you want your child to sit the test so they can make sensible arrangements for the testing sessions

What does the Secondary Transfer Test measure?

Verbal skills

- includes English and verbal reasoning

Mathematical skills

- includes various areas of mathematics

Non-verbal skills

- includes non-verbal and spatial reasoning

Familiarisation booklet

- Will be sent to your home address in early July
- Explains what the questions, test papers and answer sheets will look like and how the answer sheets should be completed
- Includes example questions with answers
- **It will not be looked at in school**
- Optional additional free familiarisation material can be downloaded from the GL Assessment website:
<https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/free-familiarisation>

Coaching

- Buckinghamshire primary and Partner schools must not undertake any Transfer Test coaching or preparation in school other than that specified by TBGS or allow a third party to undertake such preparation on the school site.
- Primary schools that undertake testing on behalf of the grammar schools are asked not to tutor or coach the children in their school prior to the test over and above enabling the children to follow the national curriculum relevant for their age.
- The Secondary Transfer Test is designed to enable all children to demonstrate their academic potential without the need for coaching or excessive preparation.
- There is free familiarisation on the GL website at <https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/free-familiarisation>

On the test days

- Two papers with a 15 min break between
- Each paper approximately an hour including instructions (practice shorter)
- The audio instructions give worked examples and test instructions
- Paper A – Verbal Skills – taken first
- Paper B – Mathematical and Non-Verbal Skills – taken second
- Practice test is not marked

Illness/absence during the test period

- If a child is ill on either practice or Transfer Test day, they can sit the test later
- Children should not sit the test when unwell (even if they want to!)
- Children will normally be expected to sit the practice test first
- If a child misses the practice test due to a test in another area, then an alternative date is not offered
- You will be advised of new date(s) for the test(s) before your child sits the test

If you think something has affected your child's performance in the Transfer Test

- Let your headteacher know on the test day and also collect evidence, for example a doctor's letter
- Once you have the test results, talk to your child's headteacher

Special arrangements

- Testing arrangements may be adjusted for children with SEND
- Discuss with your child's headteacher NOW
- Applications for adjustments are made via the headteacher. They must be completed as soon as possible
- Decisions about special arrangements are made by a panel of experts in SEND and primary teaching and an educational psychologist

Weighting

Each score is weighted as follows:

- Verbal – 50% of the STTS (Secondary Transfer Test Score)
- Mathematical – 25% of the STTS
- Non-verbal – 25% of the STTS
- The qualifying score is a minimum score of 121
- Scores range between 60 and 170 approximately

Pupil Premium Admissions

- For 2025, all grammar schools will reserve some school places for children in receipt of the pupil premium grant
- At each school some of these places are allocated to children who have not automatically qualified for a grammar school place
- Each school has decided upon the minimum STTS they will use for this rule
- Details can be found in individual grammar school admissions policies on their websites
- Parents need to write **to the grammar school(s)** providing evidence of their child's pupil premium status and STT score by **31 October 2024** if they want their child to be considered under these criteria

What can I do if my child does not qualify for a grammar school place?

- If your child has not qualified and you think a grammar school would be appropriate you can either:

Ask for a Selection Review

OR

Just appeal for your preferred school(s)

- The Selection Review Panel can decide if a child is qualified, and that qualification counts for any preference grammar school so all your preferences will be considered when the allocation is made
- If a child is qualified at appeal, the qualification is for the particular school only

Reasons for underperformance

- The grammar schools recognise that there may be circumstances that have impacted on a child's performance in the test
- At Selection Review each child's situation is considered individually
- The panel will look for evidence of both consistent educational ability and factors that may have affected a child's performance in the Transfer Test

Selection Review Panel

- Panel sits December-January
- 3 headteachers - two grammar, one primary
- Decision is included in 1 March allocation
- Decision applies to all grammar schools
- At the end of the process and following Selection Reviews, 31.9% of the review cases qualified for grammar school in 2024 entry

Non-qualified appeal for a grammar school place (after Selection Review)

- When a case that has been to review is considered by the Independent Appeal Panel, parents will need to show that in their child's case the Selection Review Panel decision was not 'fair consistent and objective'
- Only if they are successful, can they then put their full academic case to the Independent Appeal Panel
- If a child is qualified at appeal, the qualification is for the particular school only
- The appeal will happen in the summer term

Non-qualified appeal for a grammar school place (without a Selection Review)

- It is possible to go straight to appeal without having asked for a Selection Review
- Appeals are heard after 1 March
- Most schools will already be full by then
- You would have to prove academic potential AND give reasons why you believe a place should be offered above Published Admission Number (PAN)

More information

- School websites
- TBGS website

<https://www.thebucksgrammarschools.org/>

- Buckinghamshire Council website

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools-index/school-admissions/grammar-schools-and-transfer-testing-11/>

- **School open event dates** - See School Directory in 'Find My Child a School Place'

<https://schools.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/school-admissions/schools>