

# Royal Wootton Bassett Academy

## Admissions Arrangements for 2025-26



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**RWBA Responsibility:** AEI

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### **Relevant Legislation:**

The Admissions Code

### **Related Policies:**

**Home School Agreement**

**Transport Agreement**

**Special Educational Needs Policy**

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#### **1. Rationale**

This Policy aims to provide the Academy and Parents with advice and guidance on how to apply for places at Royal Wootton Bassett Academy and what to do should applications be made beyond the Academy's Published Admissions Number.

**The application round for entry into Year 7 – 2025 opens on 1 September 2024. The deadline date for applications to be submitted is midnight on 31 October 2024. The home address given for the child must be the address where the child is resident as of the deadline date.**

This Policy contains advice and guidance for those making applications within the traditional catchment area and beyond.

This Policy contains advice and guidance about the Appeals process.

Royal Wootton Bassett Academy's policy has been adopted from Wiltshire Council and applies solely to applications for places at Royal Wootton Bassett Academy. As the school is part of a Multi-Academy Trust, our admissions authority is Ascend Learning Trust.

## **Raising of participation age**

From the summer of 2015 new government legislation states that young people have to stay in education or training until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. This will usually be at secondary school until the academic year in which they are 16 (some students may transfer to Further Education or a University Technical College at 14). Students can then choose from one of the following options: full-time education, such as school or college; an apprenticeship; employment or volunteering alongside part-time education or accredited training. It is compulsory that they participate in education or training until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The only exception is early achievement of level 3 qualifications for example if they take A Level exam in Year 12.

## **General Information**

Parents will be able to make an online application. Online applications will be made directly to their own council. If an online application has been submitted, a written application is not necessary. The online facility will be available from 1 September 2024 up until the deadline of 31 October 2024.

There will be a standard written application form known as the Secondary Common Application Form (SCAF). This form must be used for the admission of pupils into the first year of secondary education in the specified year, unless an online application has been submitted.

Unless an online application has been made, the SCAF must be used as a means of expressing one or more preferences by the parent wishing to apply for a school place for their child whether within or outside the county. The child must live in Wiltshire.

The SCAF will invite the parent to express up to three preferences in rank order (schools may be inside or outside Wiltshire), and to give their reasons for each preference. Preferred schools may be state funded inside or outside Wiltshire. They will also explain that the parent will receive no more than one offer of a school place and specify the closing date and the address to which it must be returned. A place will be offered at their highest ranked school at which they are eligible to be offered a place, or if a place cannot be offered at any one of their preferred schools, and the child is living within Wiltshire, a place at an alternative school will be allocated.

The deadline date for applications is **31 October 2024**. All completed SCAF's are to be returned directly to the LA by the deadline date. Any Secondary Common Application Forms (SCAF's) which are incorrectly returned to schools must be forwarded to the LA by the deadline. Forms returned to schools and not received by the LA by 31 October 2024 will be treated as late applications. The LA will send out an acknowledgement of receipt for each SCAF and all online applications. Applicants will be advised to contact the LA if they have not received an acknowledgment with 15 school days of posting their paper application.

**Royal Wootton Bassett Academy's Admission Arrangements adopted from Wiltshire Council's Determined Admission Arrangements for the 2025/26 academic year.**

**Arrangements for the co-ordination of secondary admissions are made within the co-ordinated admissions scheme determined for 2025/26.**

**a. Designated Area**

A designated area is a discrete geographical zone served by a school. The address that determines a child's designated area is the place where s/he is ordinarily resident with his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) for the majority of the school week. Most schools have a discrete designated area but some addresses fall within areas shared by two or more schools. Children living outside the county boundary are treated as if the children live within Wiltshire but outside the designated area for the school(s) in question. Maps for each designated area are held by the local authority and RWBA.

In the case of children from the boating community (Boaters) proof of mooring will be required. Those without a permanent mooring, must provide details/proof of their sorting office, post office/poste restante address and this will be used for admissions criteria and allocation purposes.

If there is a tie-break situation, then the criteria of the relevant admissions authority will be applied.

**b. Preferences**

Parents will be invited to state up to three ranked preferences. Each preference will be considered equally. This means that Wiltshire Council will consider all applications against the published admissions criteria without reference to how the school applied for has been ranked on the application form. As far as possible applicants will be offered a place at a school to which they have expressed a preference, for example Royal Wootton Bassett Academy. Where the applicant has made more than one preference the Local Authority (LA) will make an offer at the highest ranked preference school with available places in accordance with the standard admission criteria. Where it is not possible to offer a place at a preferred school, for example Royal Wootton Bassett Academy, and the applicant lives in Wiltshire, the LA will allocate a place. Allocations will be made after all expressed preferences have been considered. An applicant will normally be offered a place at the designated school for their home address. An alternative school may be allocated in cases where the designated school is full and the alternative school is within the safe statutory 3 mile walking distance and has places available or it is a school to which free home to school transport would be provided.

In the case where there are more children living within an area, than there are places available and the parent has not named the designated school(s) as one of their preferences, the remaining places will be randomly allocated.

**c. Children with an Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)**

All children whose statement of special educational needs or education, health care plans that names a school must be admitted.

**d. Published Admission Number**

A Published Admission Number (PAN) is agreed for each school annually and defines the number of places available for the year of entry. The RWBA PAN for 2025-26 is 287.

All applications must be agreed until the PAN has been reached and this figure will not be exceeded other than in exceptional circumstances. For example, a child living within a school's designated area and for whom no reasonable alternative school place is available, may be allocated a place at the designated school even if this exceeded the PAN. Reasonable in this circumstance is defined as a school within the statutory 3-mile safe walking distance from the child's home address or a school to which free home to school transport would be provided.

#### **e. Address**

The child's address provided on the applications form should be that of the child's normal place of residence. Only one address can be considered for application purposes. The address provided will be used to determine the child's priority for a school place. The LA reserves the right to confirm the address provided by the applicant using the council tax reference number which is provided as part of the application.

For Year 7 September 2025 entry, the address used to determine priority of school places for on time applications submitted in the main round, will be the child's normal place of residence as at deadline date of 31 October 2024. A future address from an applicant who is moving can be considered if the LA receives evidence in the form of an exchange of contracts or tenancy agreement of a minimum of six months by the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

Where children spend time with parents at more than one address then the address given on the form should be the one at which they are normally and habitually resident, i.e. sleep at, for the majority of term-time school nights (Sunday night to Thursday night). If children spend time equally at different addresses, then the address which will be used for admissions purposes will be the one registered for child benefit. The Local Authority may request proof of the registered address, which must pre-date the application.

Future addresses from applicants who currently own a property that is unoccupied or rented out, for which they plan to return to, will not be used when allocating places, unless a formal notice to terminate the rental agreement has been received by the deadline date/exceptional circumstances date. Such applications will be checked to confirm the applicants have returned to the property. If the applicant has not returned to the address, it will be considered a fraudulent application and the place will be taken away, even if the child has already started school. If no proof is provided, the current address will be used to determine the child priority of a school place.

For in year transfer applications the current address at the time of applications will be used.

#### **f. Shared Parental Responsibility**

Where two (or more) adults both have parental responsibility for a child it is preferable that they should agree before submitting an application form which school(s) to name as their preference(s). In cases of dispute, or where two application forms are submitted, the LA will process the application received from the adult who has a residence order. If no such order has been made, preference will be given to the parent with whom the child is living for the majority of the school week.

If both parents are in dispute as to whom the child lives with the majority of the school week, the LA will process the application received from the adult who is in receipt of the child benefit, if this is not available then the address used on the NHS card will be used.

In the event of a further dispute regarding the address used, parents may wish to take independent legal advice on whether they should seek a specific issue order from the court to decide on where the child is schooled. For in year transfer applications, until any such order is made, the placement will continue in the best interest of securing educational provision for the child with a minimum of disruption until any such order is made.

For year of entry, where possible, a place will be offered in accordance with the preferences to the parent who can provide evidence that they are in receipt of child benefit.

### **g. Multiple Births**

The LA will endeavour to place siblings born at the same time (e.g. twins, triplets etc.) in the same school. If necessary, the Academy will be required to admit over PAN to accommodate such children.

### **h. Children of UK Service Personnel (UK Armed Forces)**

Applications for children of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting to the county will be considered in advance of the family moving into the county if necessary. Where possible, an application must be included in the normal admission round.

An official letter, such as a posting note or letter of support from the commanding officer should be sent to the LA as soon as possible. This should include the relocation date and unit postal address or quartering area address.

Until a fixed address is available, the unit postal address or quartering area address will be used and a school place allocated accordingly. For service personnel moving back to a property that they own and this is currently rented out, then this address can be considered providing a signed letter from the Commanding Officer or a formal notice to terminate the rental agreement is received stating the future address.

If there is a tie-break situation then the criteria of the relevant admissions authority will be applied.

The LA will not refuse a child of UK service personnel a place because the family does not currently live in the area. It is also not permitted to reserve places for children of UK Service Personnel. If a place is not secured at the preferred school and the applicant has provided proof of a Wiltshire address then an alternative place will be allocated. This will be at the next nearest school to the unit postal address or quartering address with available places.

Children will be considered to be siblings if any brother or sister (including step siblings living at the same address) is going to be attending a school. Their position on any waiting list will be set accordingly. The sibling link will not apply if the child that is going to be attending the school will be in Year 11, 12 or 13

### **i. Children from Overseas (not UK Armed Forces)**

All applications for a child from overseas will be considered in accordance with the relevant legislation at the time of application. Children who hold a full British Citizen passport or children whose passport has been endorsed to show they have the right of abode in the country are entitled to apply for a place at a maintained school. The passport or visa should be made available for inspection before an offer of a school place can be made. Asylum Seekers should make available evidence of their right of abode as provided by the National Asylum Support Service.

Applications on behalf of children currently living outside the UK will be considered but until the children are resident in the country, their home address will be considered as being their place of residence outside the UK. Exceptions to this would be instances where the children are of parents returning from foreign postings, such as UK service personnel and other crown servants (including diplomats) who have been posted abroad on a fixed term contract and who are returning to live within the UK. Proof of future UK residency (or a service unit's postal address) will be required if application is made to an oversubscribed school.

Future addresses from applicants who currently own a property that is unoccupied or rented out, for which they plan to return to, will not be used when allocating places, unless a formal notice to terminate the rental agreement has been received by the deadline date/exceptional circumstances date. Such applications will be checked to confirm the applicants have returned to the property. If the

applicant has not returned to the address, it will be considered a fraudulent application and the place will be taken away, even if the child has already started school. If no proof is provided, the current address will be used to determine the child priority of a school place.

## **2. Early or Delayed Transfer**

### Early transfer

Children may only transfer early to Royal Wootton Bassett Academy if it can be shown that not to do so would be detrimental to their academic progress or social wellbeing. Each such request involves consultation with their current school, Royal Wootton Bassett Academy and where appropriate, the Authority's professional adviser(s). The application will not be agreed if one or more parties consider that the transfer would be inappropriate. Agreement to such a request would be considered exceptional.

### Delayed transfer

All requests must be submitted to the Local Authority by 31 October, the year in which the child would have chronologically transferred to secondary school.

Children may remain for a further year in a primary school if it can be shown that not to do so would be detrimental to their academic progress or social wellbeing, The presence of special educational needs or underachievement are not in themselves sufficient reasons to delay transfer.

Children for whom a delayed entry to school or year group retention has already been agreed by the relevant parties will continue in the lower year group unless it can be shown that it is in their best interests to re-join their chronological year group. To enable the child to transfer back to their chronological year group then, a place must be available in the relevant year group.

The continuation of this arrangement will continue on transfer to secondary school unless the parent/carer, current school, the school to which the child would otherwise wish to transfer and, where appropriate, the LA's professional adviser consider it in the child's best interest to re-join the chronological year group. An application for delayed transfer to secondary school must still be made in the same way as expected of other children in the year group in which they are working (rather than their chronological age group).

## **3. Deadline – applications received by the deadline date of 31 October 2024 will be considered as first round applications**

The closing date for main round applications (i.e., applications for entry into Royal Wootton Bassett Academy Year 7 2025) is 31 October 2024. On the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2025 (National Offer Date), offers will be despatched to all parents who submitted an application form by 31 October 2024 offering a place at one school.

These offers will contain the following information:

- a. The name of the schools at which a place is offered
- b. The reason why the child is not being offered a place at any of the other schools nominated on the SCAF
- c. Information about their statutory right of appeal against any decision to refuse places at other preferred schools

All applications received after the deadline of 31 October 2024, including those directed incorrectly to Royal Wootton Bassett Academy and not forwarded to the LA before the deadline, will be treated as late applications and considered only after those applications received before the deadline have been determined. Applications may be considered as being received on time if they meet the exceptional circumstances criteria as detailed in the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme 2025/2026.

#### **4. Oversubscription Criteria for Voluntary Controlled and Community School**

Where Royal Wootton Bassett Academy is over-subscribed, places are allocated to children in order of the ranked criteria listed below:

**a) Looked After Children/Previously Looked After Children**

The definition of Looked After Children - 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 ceased 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 functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989). Proof will be required and must be submitted by the deadline date.

**b) Vulnerable Children**

Children from families registered with the National Asylum Support Service; children or families with a serious medical, physical or psychological condition where written evidence is provided at the time of application from a senior clinical medical officer and the general practitioner or specialist showing that it would be detrimental to the child or family not to admit to the preferred school.

For the purpose of the above criteria the word 'families' is determined as living at the same address at the time of application and also living at the same address on a permanent basis. Proof will be required and must be submitted by the deadline date.

**c) Designated Area Siblings and Shared Area Siblings**

A child is considered under this criterion if a sibling is attending the school as at the deadline date and where the child lives within the designated area or shared area at the same address as the sibling. The sibling must not be in year 11, 12 or 13 of the school at the deadline date. Step, half and foster siblings are included in this category;

**d) Other Children from the Designated Area or Shared Area**

Children resident within the designated area or shared area who do not qualify under one of the criteria above.

**e) Other Siblings out of area**

A child is considered under this criterion if a sibling is attending the school as at the deadline date and where the child lives at the same address as the sibling. The sibling must not be in year 11, 12 or 13 at the deadline date. Step, half and foster siblings are also included in this category;

**f) Children of staff at Royal Wootton Bassett Academy**

A child is considered under this criterion:

- i. Where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and/or
- ii. The member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

If applicants wish to be considered under this criterion, then a letter from the Head Teacher confirming one of the above applies to the applicant and this must be provided at the time of application.

**g) Other children out of area**

Children to whom none of the above criteria apply.

**Tie Break**

If Royal Wootton Bassett Academy is oversubscribed within any of the above categories, the straight-line distance from the child's home address to the school will be used as the determining factor. Distances will be measured according to the Ordnance Survey eastings and northings for the child's home address and the school. Those living closer to the school will be given priority.

If two or more children with the same priority for admission live an indistinguishable distance from the preferred school but cannot all be admitted then the available places will be decided by means of casting lots. The random allocation will be conducted independently by Democratic Service, Wiltshire Council.

**5. Waiting Lists**

Waiting lists will be maintained for all intake year groups. Parents must request that their child is added to the waiting list if a preference higher than the school place offered has been refused. All applicants have the right of appeal against any refusal of a place. The existence of a waiting list does not remove this right from any unsuccessful applicant.

The position on the list will be determined by applying the published over-subscription criteria and not by date order of receipt. This will mean a position will change if a later application is received from someone with higher priority according to the oversubscription criteria.

Waiting lists for all year groups will close at the end of each academic year.

Parents may submit a fresh application for the next academic year group which will be considered from 31 May onwards.

Parents may submit a fresh application for the next academic year group which will be submitted 8 weeks in advance of the required date.

If your child is offered a place from a waiting list, then you must accept or decline the place within 10 working days of the date of offer. If the place is not accepted, then a further letter will be sent informing the applicant that should they not accept or decline the place within 5 working days the place will be withdrawn. A further letter will be sent informing the applicant the place has been withdrawn.

Notes:

- Names will only be removed from the lists if a written request is received or if the offer of a place that becomes available is declined.
- Registration of interest on a school's Pre-Admission List will not be considered as an application for a school place.
- Except for Service Families, children will have considered to be living within the designated area for a school on receipt of an exchange of contracts or a signed tenancy agreement.
- Except for Service Families, children will not be considered to be a sibling unless their brother or sister is attending the school or Sixth Form and is expected to still be in attendance at the chosen start date.



## **6. Applications for Secondary Year 7 Intake – applications received after 31 October 2024**

Applications received after the deadline of 31 October 2024 will be considered as late applications.

Applications received between the 1 November 2024 and 8 March 2025 will be treated as second round applications.

Applications received after the 8 March 2025 will be treated as third round applications.

## **7. Appeal Process – Main round applications**

Parents have a right of appeal to an independent panel against any decision made by or on behalf of the Authority as to the school at which education is to be provided for their child.

Parents who are refused a place at Royal Wootton Bassett Academy have the right of appeal to an Independent Admission Appeal panel.

The deadline dates for lodging appeals for the main round (Year 6 to Year 7) entry is:

### First round appeals

For applications received from 1 September 2024 -31 October 2024 and for offers made on National Offer Date, appeals must be received the LA no later than 29 March 2025.

### Second round appeals

For applications received from 1 November 2024 - 8 March 2025 and for offers made on 26 April 2025, appeals will be heard as soon as possible.

### Third round appeals

For applications received after the 8 March 2025 and for offers made after 17 May 2025, appeals will be heard as soon as possible.

All appeals will be heard in accordance with the timescales which have been determined and are explained in the School Admissions Appeals Code.

Parents who have appealed unsuccessfully can reapply for a place at the same school in a later academic year, and have the right of appeal if unsuccessful. Where there have been material changes in circumstances in the same academic year and a repeat application is considered and again refused, the parents will have the right to a fresh appeal.

## **8. In Year Transfer Applications for year groups other than Secondary Year 7 2025 Intake**

All Applicants who wish to apply for a school place must complete an In-Year Secondary School Transfer Form which should be returned to the LA. The applicant may or may not live in Wiltshire. Should a parent living in Wiltshire wish to apply for a school in another authority, they must contact that authority directly for details on how to apply.

Applications received after the 26 July 2024 for the year of entry and any applications received for other year groups are classed as transfer applications. All applications will be considered together with any applications that have already been refused and the child's name will be placed on the waiting list accordingly.

Other than in exceptional circumstances and in agreement with the two schools involved, a transfer will, if the applicant is not moving address, only be considered as being for the start of the next traditional term.

All applications will be considered together with any applications already on a school's waiting list.

The following table gives the earliest date that applications can be sent and when they are considered. Decision letters should be posted within 20 school days of either the date in the last column or, if you application is later than this, our receipt of your form.

<b>Date admission being sought</b>	<b>Earliest application should be submitted</b>	<b>Applications will be processed from</b>
January to March	1 September	31 October
April to July	1 January	15 February
September to December	1 April	31 May

Applications received requesting more immediate admission are considered in the order that the School Admissions Team receives them. If more than one additional application for Royal Wootton Bassett Academy is received on the same date, places are allocated to children in order of the oversubscription criteria as listed in this policy.

In all cases parent(s)/guardian(s) will be invited to state up to a maximum of three secondary ranked preferences. An offer will be made at the school listed as highest preference possible which has an available place.

If your child is offered a place at Royal Wootton Bassett Academy, then you must accept or decline the place within 10 working days of the date of offer. If the place is not accepted, then a further letter will be sent informing the applicant that should they not accept or decline the place within five working days the place will be withdrawn. A further letter will be sent informing the applicant the place has been withdrawn.

Parents who are refused a place at a school for which they have applied have the right of appeal to an independent Admission Appeal panel. All appeals will be heard in accordance with the timescales which have been determined and are explained in the School Admissions Appeals Code.

Requests for places in year groups other than the one relating the child's chronological age will only be agreed, if supported by the LA's relevant professional adviser(s) and Royal Wootton Bassett Academy.

## **9. Proof of Address**

The LA and Royal Wootton Bassett Academy reserves the right to ask parents for proof of their address. If the parents' current address is different to that held on the LA's computerised system, the LA may ask parents to provide proof of the new address if one is indicated. Acceptable proof of address includes:

- i. A copy of your Council Tax Bill
- ii. A solicitor's letter stating contracts have been exchanged and specifying a completion date
- iii. A signed and dated tenancy agreement for a 12-month period, plus proof of residency (e.g. copy of a recent utility bill)

If parents fail to provide proof of a new address, the LA will use the old address for admission purposes. If parents notify the LA that they will be moving house, even if they provide the relevant proof of that address, they must move into that property by no later than the end of the first term following the notification. The LA and Royal Wootton Bassett Academy reserve the right to check that parents are living in the address indicated within that timescale. If parents are not living there, the applications will be investigated and the allocated place may be withdrawn.

## **10. Fair Access Protocol**

All Wiltshire Schools, including Royal Wootton Bassett Academy will act in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol which has been adopted to give access to educational provisions for hard to place children.

If the admissions authority refuse admission to a child with challenging behaviour (outside the normal intake round) the case must be referred to the LA for consideration under the In-Year Fair Access Protocol. This will normally only be the case where the school has a partially high proportion of children with challenging behaviour or previously excluded children.

This protocol does not apply to a Child in Care (Looked after Child, a previously looked after child) or a child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health and Care Plan, as these children must be admitted.

Further information on the In Year Fair Access Protocol including further criterions for referral, and a copy of the protocol can be viewed at [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)

## **11. Sixth Form Admissions**

Parents or students wishing to enrol for sixth form courses at Royal Wootton Bassett Academy should in the first instance contact us and ask for a copy of the sixth form prospectus. This will detail the courses offered at the school and any specific entry requirements for any of those courses. The Academy will require an application form to be completed should the parent or student wish to make a formal application to join the Sixth Form.

## **12. Applications to Royal Wootton Bassett Academy**

Should you wish to apply for a place at Royal Wootton Bassett Academy, you would need to in the first instance apply to [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk) to fill in an application form. Then we would urge you to contact our Admissions Team at the Academy to book an Academy Tour, so that any initial or pre-application questions can be asked. This opportunity allows the Academy to process your potential application in a more informed manner.

## **13. Appeal Process**

Parents have a right of appeal to an Independent Admissions Appeal Panel against any decision made by or on behalf of the Authority as to the school at which education is to be provided for their child.

All appeals will be heard in accordance with the timescales which have been determined and are explained in the School Admissions Appeals Code.

Information about the appeal procedure will be provided where a place at one or more of the preferred schools has been refused. Parents should contact the Customer Services Team (01225 713010) to obtain an appeals form which should be returned to Democratic and Members Service team at County Hall, Trowbridge. The clerk for the appeals panel will be provided by the D&M Service team.

Parents who have appealed unsuccessfully can reapply for a place at the same school in a later academic year and have a right of appeal of unsuccessful.

Where there have been material changes in circumstances in the same academic year and a repeat application is considered and again refused, the parents will have the right to a fresh appeal.

Please note that appeals are only heard in term time.