



MOVING UP TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

SEPTEMBER 2026 (April 2025)



Included in this presentation

- Applying for a secondary school place (Slides 3-15)
(When to apply, how to apply, things to consider when applying, how the process works, National Offer Day, waiting lists and Appeals)
- The Secondary Transfer Test (Slides 16-43)
(Timeline, test dates, what the test measures, familiarisation and practice, the testing process, how it is marked, Selection Review and Non-qualified appeals)
- More information
- How to Contact the Admissions Team

Applying for a secondary school place

Timelines, preferences and offers

Key message!

Apply on time:
by Midnight on 31
October – the deadline



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 2025

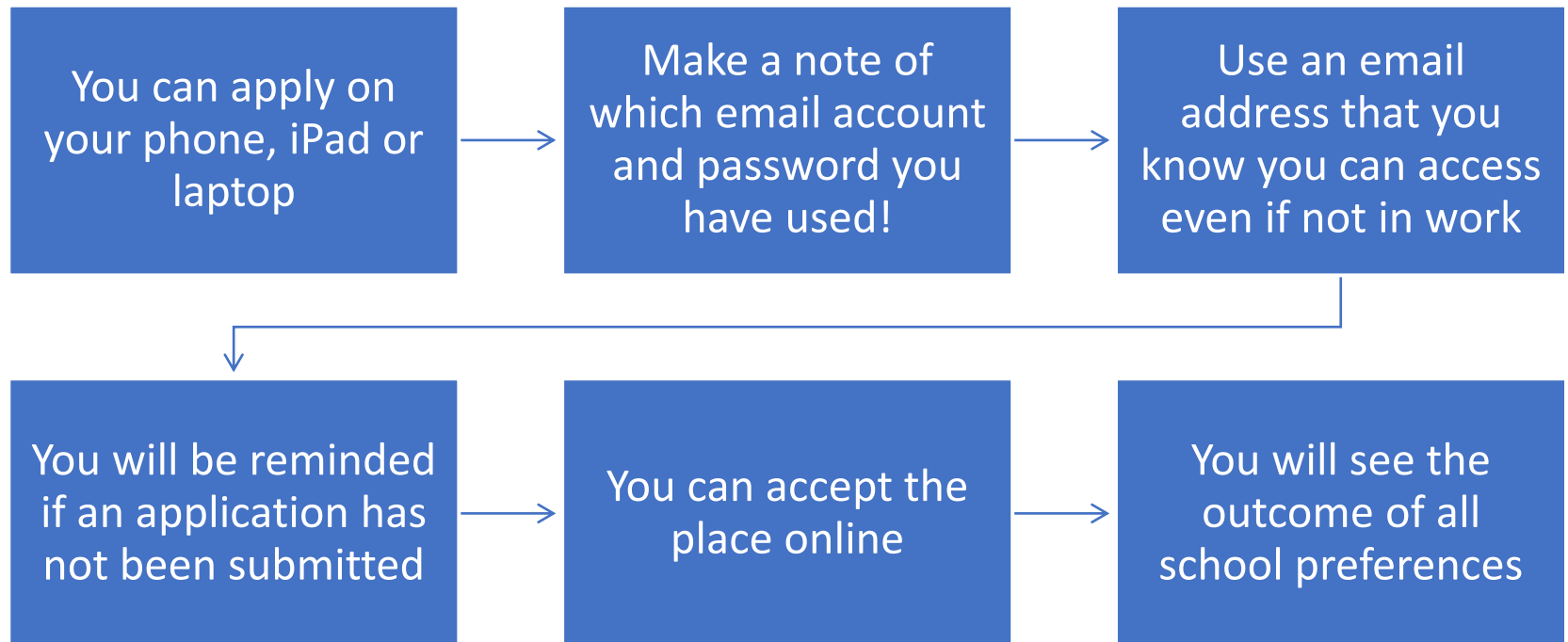


If you live elsewhere apply via your own LA's website



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:



You can give reasons for your preference



You can 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 and think about how your child will get to school



We suggest you include a local (catchment) school that you have a good chance of being offered

Think about...

Does your child need to sit or pass a test to be considered for a place at the school?

Do you know where your child fits on the school's admission rules?

Do you need to complete a supplementary information form (SIF) for the school? (e.g. Due to faith or because your child is eligible for Pupil Premium)

Do you live in catchment? (Check this on the Buckinghamshire Council website)

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 (bucksccl.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.
- School transport options | Buckinghamshire Council

The offer process – Step 1

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

The offer process – Step 2

- Grammar school preferences will only be offered to qualified pupils (by scoring 121 or following successful Selection Review)
- 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
- The vacant place created is offered to another child
- This process is repeated until no further offers can be made
- Children who cannot be offered any of their preferences are then offered a place at the nearest school with vacant places remaining

Offer Day – 2 March 2026

Parent Portal applications

- Offer emails sent 2 March
- You can log on to the portal and accept the school place online

Other applications

- Offer letters emailed 2 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 2025

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/near
est 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 2026

2026 entry

The 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 2025 (posted home)
- 9 September 2025
- 11 September 2025
- 10 October 2025
- 31 October 2025 (midnight)
- 2 March 2026
- September 2026

Testing schedule

- Testing will take place in September
- Children will usually 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/>

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://11plus.gl-assessment.co.uk/free-materials/>

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://11plus.gl-assessment.co.uk/free-materials/>

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 practice examples and test instructions
- Paper A – Verbal Skills – taken first
- Paper B – Mathematical and Non-Verbal Skills – taken second
- Practice test is not marked

Test conditions

All test centres provide appropriate test conditions the aim of which is:

- To create a fair and equitable environment where children can complete the Transfer Test without external distractions
- To provide a quiet and organised test room
- To minimise excessive noise distraction over the normal background sounds of a working school
- Invigilators will ensure the papers are kept secure before and after the test and that the test is completed in an organised and timely manner
- Children sitting the test are provided with clear instructions and materials to do the test and are reminded about the importance of behaving in an appropriate manner in the test room
- Children are given a short break between the two test papers

Illness/absence during the test period

- If a child is ill on either practice or Transfer Test day, they can sit the test papers on a later date
- 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

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

Headteacher's recommendations

- LA and Partner school headteachers are asked to provide grammar school recommendation scores for children
- They are asked to link their recommendations back to the Key stage monitoring all schools undertake
- Recommendations are provided before results are available
- Each child has two scores – a recommendation and an attitude to work score (e.g. 2:1)
- The recommendations are only needed/used if a child is put forward for a Selection Review

Headteacher's recommendations

	Headteacher's Recommendation
1	Exceptionally able so very highly recommended.
2	Very able so recommended without any reservation.
3	Recommended with reservation.
4	Not recommended for grammar school.
	Attitude to Learning
1	Enjoys challenge and is a highly motivated independent learner
2	Consistently hardworking and reliable
3	Output varies
4	Lacks self-organisation, requires support (this is not a recommendation)

Access arrangements

- Access arrangements are adjustments designed to support children with particular needs so that they can access the Secondary Transfer Test.
- Access arrangements must not advantage the child and should be based on what normally happens in class at school.
- Headteachers will apply for access arrangements for children whose parents want them to sit the test but whose consistent and normal working practices in class are adjusted to support their needs.
- Applications for access arrangements are reviewed by a panel of experts in SEND and primary teaching and an educational psychologist.

What access arrangements are available?

Access arrangements fall into three categories:

1. Changes to the way the test is administered, e.g. extra time, separate invigilation, rest breaks during the test
2. Changes to a physical feature, e.g. enlarged question booklet
3. Using extra aids or services, e.g. prompter, coloured overlays

Adjustments requested should reflect what is normal practice in class.

What access arrangements may be agreed?

- The panel will expect that the adjustments being requested are already the normal working practice in class for your child, e.g. rest breaks, additional time, enlarged test papers.
- Some agreed adjustments may be different to what has been requested. E.g. a child may be given 25% extra time for tests in school which require written answers. The STT has multiple-choice questions so 10% extra time may be considered more appropriate by the Panel.
- Some agreed adjustments may mean that your child needs to be tested separately from the rest of the class, and (depending on school staff resources) they may need to be tested at a different time or on a later date.

Marking and standardisation

- The completed answer sheets are machine marked (scanned)
- One mark is given for each correct answer
- Marks are not deducted for incorrect answers
- Each pupil will have three raw scores
 - **verbal skills**
 - **mathematical skills**
 - **non-verbal skills**
- Each score is age standardised and weighted to produce the Secondary Transfer Test Score (STTS)

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

Results publication - 10 October (1)

- We need to ensure we have a current email address for your child's results email to be sent to
- If your child attends a Buckinghamshire state school and takes the test, we will write to you in the summer term, send you a code and the location on our website for you to complete a short form to provide your email address
- When you fill in the online form and provide your email address the code ensures we match your email to your child's results record
- **Results will be emailed to parents on 10 October!**

Results publication - 10 October (2)

- If you do not provide an email address by the deadline then your child's results email will be sent to your child's primary school instead
 - The primary school will forward that email to the email address they hold for you by the end of Monday 13 October (the next working day)
- OR
- You can collect a printed copy of the email from the school from the school office on Monday 13 October

Results publication - 10 October (3)

- If your child attends a Partner school or has sat the test at a grammar school test centre, then we will send the result **to the email address you used to register to sit the test on 10 October**

All candidates:

- Contents are confidential to parent and child
- 37% of children scored 121 or more in the 2025 entry test

Pupil Premium Admissions

- All grammar schools give priority or reserve places for children eligible for the Pupil Premium grant who have not qualified in the Secondary Transfer Test.
- The number of places is 6 or more per school.
- Eligible test scores vary, but all consider scores of 115-120 and some consider lower scores .
- If your child is eligible for Pupil Premium, you will need to provide evidence of eligibility when you apply for a place.
- You need to check the details required in the admission policy for any grammar school you are interested in.
- Parents need to write **to the grammar school(s)** providing evidence of their child's pupil premium status and STT score by **31 October 2025** 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 March allocation
- Decision applies to all grammar schools
- At the end of the process and following Selection Reviews, 36.4% of the review cases qualified for grammar school in 2025 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>

How to contact the Admissions Team

Our website:

www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/

Fill in the 'Contact Us' form:

www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/admissions