

Admissions Process

August 2013	"Moving On" is available for viewing online
5 September 2013	From this date online applications can be made at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/admissions Applying online is quick, easy and secure. You can start, save, change, complete and submit your application any time up to the closing date of 31 October 2013. If you cannot apply online you can use the CAF at the back of this publication.
12 September 2013	"Moving On " books are available for viewing on request from schools, the LA and libraries.
31 October 2013	This is the closing date for on-time applications. It is easier and more secure to apply online but if you apply on paper the completed application form must be sent to: School Organisation & Planning (Admissions) County Hall New Road Oxford OX1 1ND If you are applying for a school that has asked you to submit a supplementary form or evidence (e.g. a baptism certificate) you need to submit that form to the school by this date. However, for your application to be valid you must submit a completed CAF online or on paper.
22 November 2013	Last date to provide confirmation of new address which can be taken into account for school place offers made on 3 March 2014,
6 December 2013	LA to send application data to other admission authorities in Oxfordshire by this date.
14 January 2014	Last date for return of data from own admission authorities in Oxfordshire.
3 March 2014	Offer letters dispatched (as specified in the School Admissions Code, this is the first working day after 1 March 2014) and emails sent out to those who applied online.
18 March 2014	This is the date by when parents need to accept places offered on 3 March. It is also the date by when parents are asked to state if they would like their child's name to be placed on a continued interest list. This is also the last date for accepting late applications or changes of preference.
31 March 2014	Deadline for return of appeal forms.
Late Applications	
24 March 2014	This is the date on which late applicants and those children on continued interest lists will start to be considered for any places that are available.
2 May 2014	Letters offering places will be sent to late applicants on this date.
19 May 2014	This is the deadline for receipt of any responses for offers made on 2 May,
September 2014	Start of secondary schooling,
31 July 2015	Date on which the continued interest list will be discontinued,

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The school application process

Parents of children born between 1 September 2002 and 31 August 2003 (inclusive) need to apply for a secondary school place for their children. The closing date for on time applications is 31 October 2013.

You can apply online at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/admissions. This is the main means of application. However, if you are unable to apply online you can apply using the Common Application Form (CAF). A copy of this form is enclosed at the end of this publication.

When applying for a school place you need to use one method only – either online or by using the paper CAF. Please do not apply both online and on paper as this may delay the processing of your application.

You can list up to 3 schools on the online, or paper, CAF. You are asked to list these in order of preference and in order to maximise your chances of obtaining one of your preferred schools it is very important to apply on time, i.e. by 31 October 2013.

Admissions to state funded secondary schools in England are coordinated across local authority boundaries. This means that if you live in Oxfordshire and want to apply for a place at a school that is in a different local authority you need to apply through Oxfordshire using the CAF. As with applications made for schools within Oxfordshire it is best to apply online.

Before deciding which schools to list on the CAF you are advised to visit school open events, read through the information given in "Moving On" and check school websites and prospectuses.

If you find that a school requests the submission of a supplementary form or extra evidence (e.g. baptism certificate) it is important to remember that submitting a supplementary form does not amount to an application – you have to complete the CAF as well – but it is also worth remembering that where schools use these forms it is in your interests to complete and return them.

In England schools use an "Equal Preference System". This was introduced to prevent admission authorities giving a higher priority to parents who make a particular school their first preference. Every school listed on the CAF as a preference is treated as a separate application, each one is equal, and the priority for admission is established using the admission rules for the relevant school. Once this information is available the preferences are then considered by the Local Authority acting as the "clearing house", for example, if at this stage it was theoretically possible to offer a place at all three of the schools listed, the school offered would be the one listed as the highest preference. If a place cannot be offered at any of the schools listed as a preference a place is offered at the nearest school with an available place.

If a place cannot be offered to your child at one of your preferred schools you may place your child on the continued interest (waiting) list for each of the relevant schools and/or appeal for a place through the admission appeal process.

With your letter, we will send you a response form. You should complete this form and send it back to the Admissions Team by 18 March 2014. If you applied online you will be able to respond online.

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If you do not send the response form back by 18 March 2014, or you decline the offer and do not tell us what other arrangements you are making to educate your child, the place offered to your child may be withdrawn and offered to another applicant in the second allocation round. We will begin the reallocation process on 24 March 2014.

Please note

It is important to understand the admission rules for a particular school in order to assess the likelihood of being able to obtain a place for your child.

If you are unable to gain a place for your child at one of the schools listed on your child's CAF it will be because there were other children who had a higher priority for a place under the school's admission rules.

Late applications

You are strongly advised to make sure that your application is submitted by the closing date of 31 October 2013. If an application is received after this date it will be classed as a late application unless there are extenuating reasons that mean we should process it as an on time application.

The deadline for receipt of extenuating reasons is 22 November 2013. All applications received after this date will be considered late.

Some examples are:

- An administrative error by a maintained school in Oxfordshire is responsible for the application being late.
- An administrative error by the "clearing house", the LA, is responsible for the application being late.
- A sudden illness of a close family member prevents you from submitting the CAF on time.
- The death of a close family member (child's sibling, parent, grandparent) prevents the parent/carer from submitting the CAF on time.

It is not possible to apply online after 31 October 2013. Late applications must be made on the paper CAF.

Given that any late application is likely to be less successful in obtaining a place at a preferred school, any parent submitting a CAF after the deadline for on time applications is strongly advised to write to the Admissions Team setting out the reasons why the application is late.

What happens after the first offer of places in March 2014?

If you have been offered a place at your first preference school, respond to the offer by 18 March 2014.

Everyone who has applied on time (whether online or on paper) receives a letter and a leaflet called "What Happens Next?". This leaflet explains how to:

- Respond to the place you have been offered
- Place your child's name on one or more continued interest list(s) or change preferences,
- Information about school transport (if applicable).
- Lodge an appeal.

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We cannot always offer children a place at one of the schools listed as a preference. If this happens in the case of your child, you can place your child's name on the continued interest waiting list for a maximum of three maintained schools. **However, you are strongly advised to accept the place we have offered your child or to accept a place at another school that has a vacancy. This will ensure that your child will have a school place in September 2014. Please read our policy on continued interest lists.**

The deadline for returning the continued interest form is 18 March 2014.

It is possible that you might decide that you no longer want your child to attend the school offered even though it is listed as your first preference. If this is the case you can change preferences. Please read our policy on changes of preference.

You will have the right to appeal for any school you listed on your child's application where a place was not offered. The deadline for returning the appeal form for letters sent on 3 March 2014 is 31 March 2014.

The Second Allocation (late allocation) Round from March to May 2014

After 18 March 2014 (the deadline for responses from the first allocation on 3 March), the responses are collated and any vacancies which have arisen, because of places being declined, are available to be re-offered on 2 May 2014.

The following groups of children are all considered together in the second allocation and prioritised according to the school's admissions rules:

- Late applicants, who made an application after 31 October 2013 but by 18 March 2014.
- Children on the Continued Interest list, who could not be offered a place on 3 March but want to be re-considered for a place should one become available.
- Changes of preference, where a place was offered at a school on 3 March but the applicant has changed their preference(s) or added new preference(s) by 18 March 2014 which are now higher on their application than the school originally offered.

On 2 May 2014, letters are sent for children who can be offered a place at a school or who can be offered a different place to the one offered on 3 March 2014. Letters are not sent for children whose offered school on 2 May 2014 is the same as the one offered on 3 March 2014, unless there has been a change of preference for which a letter needs to be sent.

"Continued Interest" lists policy

Oxfordshire County Council does not hold waiting lists for entry to schools. In Oxfordshire, lists for children who cannot be offered a place at a school but want to continue to be considered, should a place become available, are called "Continued Interest" (CI) lists. A Continued Interest list is made up of children who have not been and cannot be offered a place at a school. These children are listed in order of the Published Admissions Rules for that school (not in order of how long they have been on the list).

You can add your child's name to the Continued Interest list for a maximum of three schools where your child has already been considered but cannot be offered a place.

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You cannot add your child's name to a Continued Interest list for a school at which you have not yet requested a place. In this case this is called a "change of preference" (see below), and the Admissions Authority (AA) will firstly need to consider whether a place can be offered or not. If a place cannot be offered you will then be able to add your child's name to the Continued Interest list for that school subject to the maximum limit of three schools.

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the Code of Practice on School Admissions and Oxfordshire County Council's Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme clearly state that the Local Authority (LA) must offer a place at the highest preference listed where it is possible to offer a place according to the Published Admissions Rules. If you add your child's name to the Continued Interest list for a school which could not be offered, you are stating that you want this school more than (and instead of) the school offered if it is possible to make an offer at a later date.

Your child cannot be added to the Continued Interest list of a school which is lower on your list than the school they were offered. However, you can change the order of your preferences (see below), so that a new decision can be made whether a place can be offered at that school. After you have been notified of the decision, if a place could not be offered then it will be possible to add your child's name to the Continued Interest list.

For example, your child cannot be added to the "Continued Interest" list for a school which you listed as third preference if they have been offered a place at the school which you listed as second preference.

In this example, if you wanted your child to be considered for a place at the school originally requested as third preference, then this preference would need to be moved up your list to become second preference and the place offered at the school originally requested as second preference would need to be moved down your list to become third preference. The new second preference would need to then be considered as a change of preference (see below).

If a place becomes available at a school and your child is at the top of the Continued Interest list for that school, the AA will automatically offer a place at that school where possible. However, late applications and changes of preference will be considered alongside, and not after, the Continued Interest list if any places become available at a school that can be re-offered. It is therefore possible during the second allocation round for a place to be offered to a late application or change of preference rather than the child at the top of the Continued Interest list, depending on where the applicants fit in with the Published admissions criteria for the school in question.

In cases where the child at the top of the Continued Interest list is eligible to be given a place that has become available at a preferred school, the AA will automatically allocate a place at that school. The place at the school previously offered will be taken away so that it can be offered to another child. Your child cannot hold simultaneously the offer of a place at more than one school.

For example, a child's name has been added to the "Continued Interest" lists for the schools which they wanted as first and second preferences but has been offered a place at the school they listed

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as third preference. A place becomes available at their first preference school and is offered. The place at their third preference school is taken away and offered to another child. They are also automatically removed from the Continued Interest list for their second preference school because this school is now lower down on their application than the school they have been offered.

Eligibility for free home to school transport is assessed based on the Home to School Transport Policy. If a child was offered free transport to a school they were originally offered and is later offered a place at a school from the continued interest list, they will not automatically continue to qualify for free home to school transport to the new school. This will be assessed separately and offered if they qualify for transport under the Home to School Transport Policy.

It is important to remember that your child can move up or down on a continued interest list, depending on whether other children come on to or are removed from it.

The continued interest lists will be maintained from 24 March 2014 to 31 July 2015.

Changes of Preference

A change of preference is the addition of schools which were not originally requested to the list of preferences, or the re-ordering of schools on the list which were originally requested. A maximum of three new schools can be added to an application at any one time. Changes of preference will be considered by the AA at the next available opportunity.

A change of preference requested after Offer Day (3 March), will be considered alongside those who made a late application and those who were originally considered for that school, were unsuccessful in their application and asked for their child's name to be added to the continued interest list. These three groups of children form the list of "late applicants".

A change of preference which is made after 18 March 2014 is too late to be considered as a "late application". It will be determined as soon as possible after the closing date for responses to offers made in the "late process" (19 May 2014).

Once a change of preference has been considered, and notification has been made in writing, it is possible to add your child's name to the continued interest list for that school if a place cannot be offered, as long as this will not exceed the limit of a maximum of three continued interest lists.

If a place can be offered at a school which has been added as a change of preference and this school is listed higher on your application than the school offered, the place originally offered will be taken away and offered to another child. It is not possible for a child to hold simultaneously an offer of a place at more than one school.

If a place is offered at a school, the child's name will be automatically removed from the continued interest lists for any schools which are lower down on the list than the school which has been offered (see example above).

Eligibility for free home to school transport is assessed based on the Home to School Transport Policy. If a child was offered free transport to a school they were originally offered and is later

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offered a place at a different school, they will not automatically continue to qualify for free home to school transport to the new school. This will be assessed separately and offered if they qualify for transport under the Home to School Transport Policy.