

Finchampstead Church of England (Aided) Primary School

ADMISSION POLICY FOR SEPTEMBER 2025 – AUGUST 2026

The School has a distinctive Christian ethos which is embodied in our Vision Statement: that our children

- feel cared for unconditionally and valued as unique creation made in the image of God
- become enthusiastic self-motivated learners with a thirst for life-long learning, built on a firm foundation
- learn from, and aspire to, excellence in a wide range of academic, sporting, musical, artistic and social activities
- have a strong set of Christian values, including tolerance, respect for the planet, self and others, honesty and sincerity, kindness and friendship, love and forgiveness, justice and personal responsibility

so that our pupils can create their place, and have a positive influence, in tomorrow's world.

As a church school, we welcome applications from Christian families, and those of other faiths or none. We ask all parents applying for a place at our school to respect this ethos and its importance to the whole school community.

The governors have made every effort to ensure that these arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code 2021 and all relevant legislation, including that on infant class sizes and equal opportunities.

Admission arrangements to the Reception Year in September 2025

At our school, pupils are normally admitted at the beginning of the school year (1 September – 31 August) in which they reach their fifth birthday. Parents whose children were born between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021 may apply for them to be admitted to the Reception Year in September 2025. **There are 17 places** (the published admission number) **available**.

Parents of a child born between 1 Sept 2020 and 31 March 2021 may defer entry until their child reaches compulsory school age (the term beginning in January or April after his or her fifth birthday). The school will hold the deferred place for the child, (provided it is taken up during the school year 2025 - 26) although, in the majority of cases, we find that children benefit from starting at the beginning of the school year, rather than part way through it.

For children born between 1 April 2021 and 31 August 2021 (summer-born children) parents can defer the date that their child is admitted to school but not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year.

Until the child reaches compulsory school age, s/he may attend part-time. If parents wish to exercise this right, they should discuss detailed arrangements with the head teacher.

Parents (see Note 1) wishing to apply for the Reception [Foundation] Year in September 2025 must complete the common application form provided by their home local authority (the home LA). The home LA is the LA in whose area the parents live at the time of the application. The form must be returned to that LA no later than 15 January 2025. Applications received after this date will normally only be considered after all those received on or before the cut-off date. Offers and refusals of places will be given to parents on 16 April 2025.

In addition, all applicants under category 5 and 7 (St James' Finchampstead church connection, see below) must submit the school's Supplementary Information Form

completed by the Rector of Finchampstead and California or other competent church authority at a time when there is no Rector. **This form is an essential part of a denominational application and must be submitted to the school by 15 January 2025, the same deadline as the Common Application Form. If the Supplementary Information Form is not received on time, the application will be considered under the next appropriate category (which may mean that no place is available).** The Supplementary Information Form can be obtained from the school or is downloadable from the school website, www.finchampsteadschool.org or Wokingham LA's website, www.wokingham.gov.uk/admissions.]

Over-subscription criteria

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming Finchampstead Church of England (Aided) Primary School will always be offered places.

If there are fewer applications than places available, all children will be offered places. If there is greater demand for admission than there are places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

- 1 Looked-after children and children who were previously looked after, including those children who appear to have been in state care outside England, but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted. (see Note 2).
- 2 Children with a normal home address (see Note 3) **in the catchment area** (see Note 4) **and** who (or whose family) have (has) exceptional medical or social needs that make it essential that the children attend Finchampstead Church of England (Aided) Primary School rather than any other. These needs must be fully supported by written evidence from the appropriate professional person involved with the family (see Note 5).
- 3 Children with a normal home address (see Note 3) **in the catchment area** (see Note 4) **and** with a sibling (see Note 6) on the roll of the school at the time of application or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at the school and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school.
- 4 Children with a normal home address (see Note 3) **in the catchment area** (see Note 4).
- 5 Children with a normal home address (see Note 3) **outside the catchment area** (see Note 4) **and** from parents (see Note 1) one of whom is a regular worshipper (see Note 7) at the Parish Church of St. James', Finchampstead and who request admission on denominational grounds **and** with a sibling (see Note 6) on the roll of the school at the time of application or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at the school and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school.
- 6 Children with a normal home address (see Note 3) **outside the catchment area** (see Note 4) **and** with a sibling on the roll of the school at the time of application or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at the school and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school.
- 7 Children with a normal home address (see Note 3) **outside the catchment area** (see Note 4) **and** from parents (see Note 1) one of whom is a regular worshipper (see Note 7) at the Parish Church of St. James', Finchampstead and who request admission on denominational grounds.
- 8 Children who (or whose family) have(has) exceptional medical or social needs that make it essential that the children attend Finchampstead Church of England (Aided) Primary School rather than any other. These needs must be fully supported by written evidence from the appropriate professional person involved with the family (see Note 5).

9. Other children.

Proximity of the child's home, as measured by the radial (straight line) distance (see Note 8) between the home and the school with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will serve to differentiate between children in criteria 1 to 9 should the need arise. In the event that two distance measurements are identical, the school will use random allocation to decide which child should be offered the place. The process of drawing lots will be conducted in the presence of a person independent of the school.

N.B. The school is retaining the church affiliation criteria for 2025/26 but intends to reconsider for 26/27 when a new Rector can be part of the Governors' discussion.

All Other Admissions

Admission to the school during the school year depends on whether or not there are places available. **All year groups at the school have 17 places.** Applications must be made directly to the Wokingham LA on a form available from Wokingham LA with whom the school has a voluntary co-ordination arrangement.

If there is a vacancy, and there is no child on the relevant waiting list with a higher priority (according to the over-subscription criteria 1 – 9 above), a place will be offered.

In-year admissions or admissions at the beginning of school years other than Reception will only be considered by the LA and Governing Body up to half a term [using the three term year] in advance of the desired date for entry. For example, for entry in January, the application will not be considered until after the October half term break.

Admission outside normal age group

Requests from parents for places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully e.g. for those who have missed education due to ill health. Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances and a decision made based on what is in the child's best interests. It is recommended that parents discuss their wishes with the head teacher in advance of applying for a place. The governors may ask relevant professionals for their opinion on the case. If a place in the requested age group is refused, but one in the normal age group is offered, then there is no right of appeal.

Waiting Lists/ Continued Interest Lists

The school and Wokingham LA maintain waiting lists for those children who are not offered a place, and the parents ask for the child's name to be added to the waiting list. The order of priority on the waiting list is the same as the list of criteria for over-subscription and does not depend on the date on which an application is received. No account is taken of length of time on a waiting list. The school and LA periodically seek confirmation that parents wish a child to be kept on the waiting list.

Multiple births

In the case of twins, triplets etc or same cohort siblings where there are insufficient places available for all the children, the school will offer places in an order drawn by random allocation (multiple births) or to the eldest (birth dates in the same school year) up to the stated maximum of 17. The process will be conducted in the presence of a person independent of the school. If this results in splitting the family, parents may wish to decline the offer and seek places for all their children elsewhere. The school has to take this stance because of pressure on classroom space at Key Stage 2 (Juniors) when two year groups of 17 are together in one classroom.

Fair Access

The school participates in Wokingham LA's Fair Access Protocol. Children qualifying under the Fair Access Protocol may be offered a place even if there are no places available in the relevant year group and also take priority for admission over any child on the waiting list.

Appeals

Any parent not offered a place for their child at their preferred school has the right of appeal to an independent appeals panel. Details of appeals arrangements are available from the school, including the date by which an appeal should be submitted. In the event of an unsuccessful appeal against non-admission to the school, the school will not consider any further application in the same school year (1 September – 31 August), unless there has been a material change in circumstances, for example a change of address which results in a move from outside the catchment area to inside it.

School Visits

Parents who wish their children to attend the school are most welcome to visit. Arrangements can be made through the School Office.

Admissions in September 2024

The school received _ applications expressing a preference for admission to the Reception Year in 2024 by the closing date in January 2024. These were ranked as follows:

Children with statements or EHC plans naming the school

Criterion 1

Criterion 2

Criterion 3

Criterion 4

Criterion 5

Criterion 6

Criterion 7

Criterion 8

Criterion 9

_ places were offered. (Criterion _, _) with the cut off coming under criterion _ at a distance of _ miles.

(Details to be completed when information available)

Further information

For further information and to arrange visits, please contact the School Office.

Address: Finchampstead Church of England (Aided) Primary School
The Village
Finchampstead
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 4JR

Telephone: 0118 9732166

Email: admin@finchampstead.wokingham.sch.uk

Notes

Note 1 "Parent" is defined in law (The Education Act 1996) as either:

- any person who has 'parental responsibility' (defined in the Children Act 1989) for the child or young person; or
- any person who has care of the child or young person.

If you are in any doubt, please contact the school for advice.

Note 2 By a "looked-after child" we mean one in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its functions. Previously looked after children are children who have been adopted, subject to child arrangement orders or special guardianship orders. Adopted children are those for whom an adoption order is made under the Adoption Act 1976 (Section 12) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Section 46). A 'child arrangements order' is one settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live (Children Act 1989, Section 8, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014, Section 14). A 'special guardianship order' is one appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian/s (Children Act 1989, Section 14A). Applications under this criterion must be accompanied by evidence to show that the child is looked after or was previously looked after (e.g. a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order). Evidence that a child from outside England was previously in state care will be required to come within this criterion. A child is regarded as being in state care outside England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Note 3 By "normal home address", we mean where the child normally lives. This must be where the parent or legal carer of the child lives with the child unless it is shown that the child is resident elsewhere with someone else who has legal care and control of the child. The address should be a residential property that is owned, leased or rented by the child's parent/s or person with legal care and control of the child.

To avoid doubt, where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined having regard to a joint declaration from the parents stating the exact pattern of residence. If the residence is not split equally, then the relevant address used will be that at which we are satisfied that the child spends the majority of the school week. Where there is an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, the home address will be assumed to be the address at which the child is registered with a GP.

We may ask for evidence of the normal home address in the form of a recent bill. This could be, for example, the most recent Council Tax bill, utility bill no more than three months old, a current TV licence, buildings and contents insurance, mortgage statement or rent book which shows the address concerned. Parents who are unable to provide this evidence should contact the school to discuss what evidence might be acceptable. If it becomes clear or if there is any doubt that the parents and child are not living at the address given on the application form, the school may seek further evidence. The school works closely with the LA to ensure that places are not obtained at the school on the basis of false addresses and, in cases of doubt, will take steps to verify the information provided. If a place at the school is offered, and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on fraudulent or misleading information (e.g. a false claim to living in the catchment area), and the school has denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the school will withdraw the offer of a place. The offer can also be withdrawn even after the child has started at the school.

If parents move house after the application has been made, but before any offer of a place has been made, the home LA must be informed.

If parents are moving, we will ask for evidence of the move, when considering any application for a place under the co-ordinated scheme. Documentary evidence in the form of a solicitor's letter to confirm exchange of contracts, or a rental agreement for at least a period of six months will be required.

We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

There are special arrangements for families of service personnel with a confirmed posting or crown servants returning from overseas. If the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares the relocation date, and if there is a place available, it will be offered even though there is not an intended address or the family is not yet living in the area.

Note 4 By “catchment area” we mean the ecclesiastical parish of Finchampstead & California as defined by the solid red boundary on the map attached. The position of this category is in line with the school’s Trust Deed.

Note 5 When applying under criterion 2 or 8 (exceptional medical or social needs), you must include supporting evidence from an independent professional person who is aware of the situation and supports your reasons for preferring Finchampstead Church of England (Aided) Primary School. This supporting evidence must clearly demonstrate why the school is the most suitable and must illustrate the difficulties that would be caused if your child had to attend another school. The person supplying the evidence should be a doctor, health visitor, social worker, etc. who is aware of your child’s or your own case. The school reserves the right to ask for further evidence or clarification where necessary and may seek the advice of appropriate educational professionals where necessary.

Note 6 By “sibling” we mean a natural brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent’s/carer’s partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling. It is helpful if parents make it clear on the application form where the sibling has a different family name. Where there is more than one sibling at the school, only the youngest should be listed on the application form.

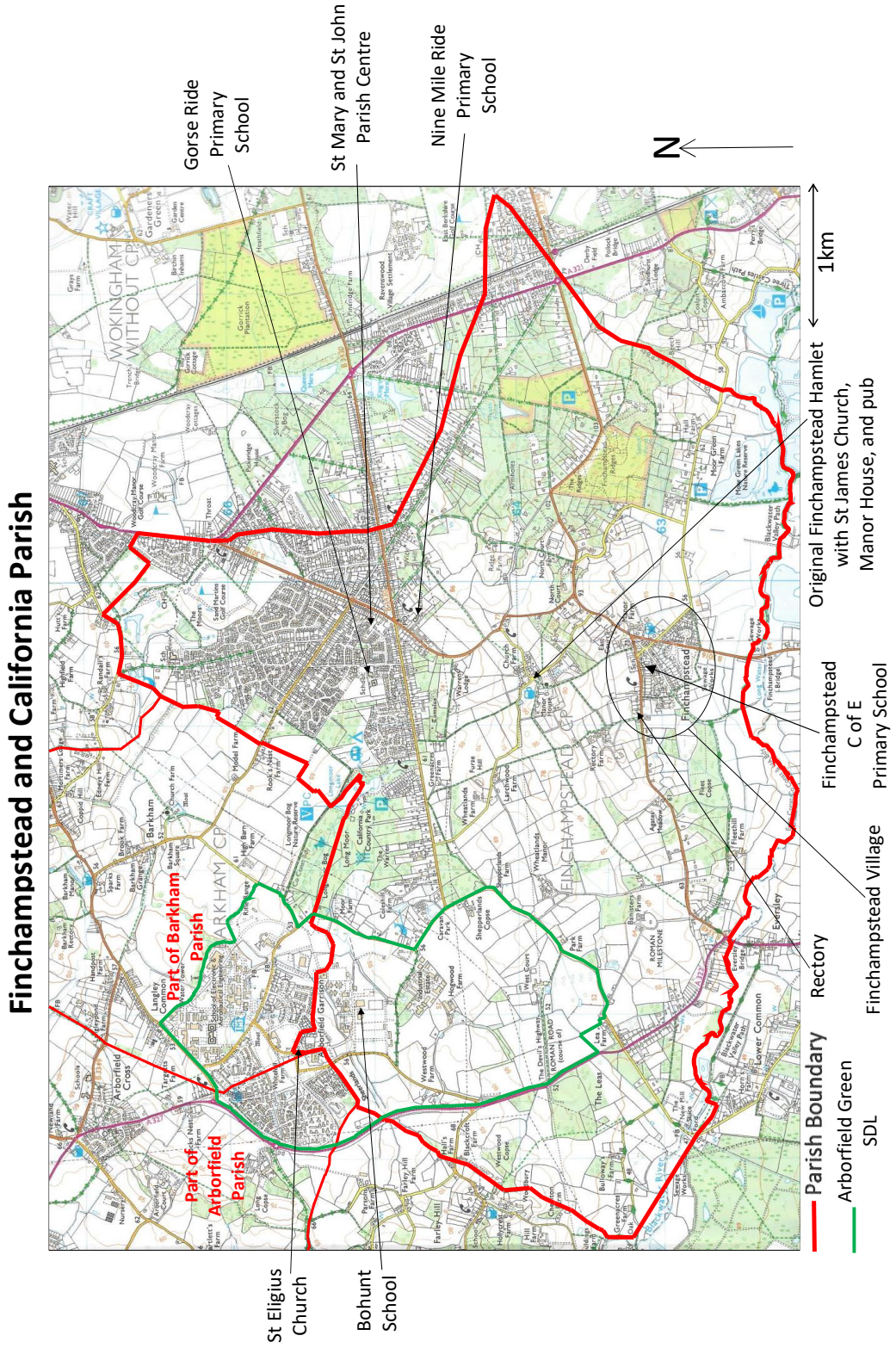
Note 7 By “regular worshipper” we mean attendance at church services by a parent/guardian at least twice a month over the twelve months preceding the application date or, in the case of long term sickness, being in receipt of regular Home Communion, as verified by the Rector on the school’s Supplementary Information Form. Families new to the area wishing to claim category 5 or 7 status will also need written references to confirm ‘regular worship’ from their previous rector/vicar/minister so that the two periods can be aggregated.

In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship”.

Note 8 The radial (straight line) distance used to determine proximity of the home to the school will be measured by Wokingham LA’s Geographical Information System.

The last full consultation was on the 2019 – 20 admission policy; a reduced consultation took place as part of a successful application to the Schools Adjudicator for a variation to the 2023 – 24 policy.

Finchampstead Church of England (Aided) Primary School Catchment Area – the Ecclesiastical Parish of Finchampstead & California, as detailed on the map



Finchampstead Church of England (Aided) Primary School
The Village, Finchampstead, Berkshire RG40 4JR

Supplementary Information Form 2025-26 to support an application based on a parent/guardian’s regular worship at St James’ Church, Finchampstead

N.B. This form is only required where a parent is seeking admission for a child on denominational grounds (Criteria 5 and 7 of the school’s admission arrangements). After completion by the Rector, this form should be returned direct to the school by the same deadline as the Local Authority common application form (15 January 2025). For a parent who has moved into the area during the period, a form will be required from both churches showing the part of the 12 month period covered by each.

Name of Child:

Statement of Parent/Guardian regarding ‘regular worship’:

(Please print name).....

I confirm that I have attended church services at St James’ Finchampstead at least twice monthly over the twelve months preceding this application date.

[Please Note: In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship.]

(Period:.....)

I confirm that I have received regular Home Communion from the church, because of incapacity. (Period:.....)

(Please delete which is not applicable.)

Please sign & date.....

Rector’s Verification

I verify that the above statement about attendance is true.

I confirm that the parent or guardian has received regular Home Communion from this church because of long term incapacity for the period stated.

(Please delete which of these two statements is not applicable.)

Signed:

Position*:

Date:

*** For example, Rector, or other Minister/official in absence of a Rector.**