

Transfer to secondary school September 2021

**For children born between
1 September 2009 and 31 August 2010**

School Admissions
London Borough of Merton
Merton Civic Centre
Morden
Surrey SM4 5DX
admissions@merton.gov.uk

merton.gov.uk/admissions



Transfer to Secondary School

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Applying for Secondary School starting in September 2021

When to apply

The application process for children born between 1 September 2009 and 31 August 2010 will begin on 1 September 2020. If your child was born between these dates, please read the following information carefully and ensure you have submitted your online application by **31 October 2020**.

We would urge all parents to read the starting primary school information online or in this booklet thoroughly. Full details of Merton's admission arrangements are on our website www.merton.gov.uk/admissions, however the information provided on these pages contains everything you need in order to make an application.

Testing arrangements for selective schools

In response to a range of Covid-19 related issues which make early autumn admissions testing undesirable and impractical, many schools who test for a child's ability or aptitude have decided to postpone admission tests until later in the autumn term.

This will affect applicants applying for selective schools in neighbouring boroughs who will not find out their child's test score until after the closing date for applications.

Despite these changes, parents should still register their child for tests by published deadlines and submit their common application form by the national closing date, **31 October 2020**.

If you are a Merton resident and you wish to make changes to your preferences following receipt of test results, please email admissions@merton.gov.uk before **10 December 2020**. Please clearly state your new preference order – naming all schools you wish to apply for and in what order (up to six preferences). Changes to preferences after this date will only be considered after places are offered on 1 March 2021.

If you have questions about test arrangements, please check relevant school websites, or contact the school directly.

Open events

Due to the current situation regarding Covid 19, Merton schools have decided to replace their traditional open evenings with virtual events. Please check each school's website for up to date information.

The following table gives the information currently available together with the website address for each school.

Merton School	School web address and 2020 open event information
Harris Academy Merton	www.harrismerton.org.uk for more information
Harris Academy Morden	www.harrismorden.org.uk for more information
Harris Academy Wimbledon	www.harriswimbledon.org.uk for more information
Raynes Park High School	www.rphs.org.uk Information will be available on the school website from 24th September 2020.
Ricards Lodge High School	www.ricardslodge.merton.sch.uk A virtual event is planned for Friday 2nd October 2020 from 4.00pm via the school website. The event will be available for viewing until close of applications.
Rutlish School	www.rutlish.merton.sch.uk Information will be available on the school website from 21 September.
St Mark's Church of England Academy	www.stmarksacademy.com for more information
Ursuline High School	www.ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk Virtual open event on 17 September 5-9pm, to include a head teacher's talk, an opportunity to download the school prospectus, a virtual tour, a live Q&A session and a range of department videos where staff and students will share more about the life at Ursuline. To register for the virtual tour, please visit www.ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk/admissions/sign-up-for-virtual-tour-2020/
Wimbledon College	www.wimbledoncollege.org.uk for more information

Open evening dates for schools outside Merton are available from individual school websites.

Important dates

The key dates for the Transfer to Secondary process can be found in the following table.

Please ensure that you meet the date for submitting your online application. Submitting a late application could seriously jeopardise your chances of being offered a place at one of your preferred schools.

Date	Activity
September to October 2020	Online applications can be made.
23 October 2020	Recommended date for parents to submit their application if they are applying using a paper form.
31 October 2020	Closing date for supplementary forms for Ursuline High School.
31 October 2020	Closing date for supplementary forms for Wimbledon College.
31 October 2020	Closing date for applications. Applications received after this date will be regarded as late.
11 December 2020	Closing date for applications that have been classified as 'late for good reason'. The reason and evidence must also be included with the application. For more information on late applications visit the website.
1 March 2021	Offer day. Letters are posted to applicants who applied using a paper form. Parents who applied online will be able to view the outcome of their application from the evening of 1 March.
May to June 2021	Admissions appeals.
July 2021	Students transferring to Merton secondary schools spend a day at their new school.

Making your choices

Before deciding which schools to apply for, we advise visiting www.merton.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools/find-a-school and looking at school websites in order to gain further information

Please do not base your decisions solely on the GCSE results, Ofsted reports, or what other people say about a school. We recommend that all families make up their own minds and that your child is involved in the application process.

Visit the schools with your child and remember that different children thrive in different environments, not just those that the parents feel are appropriate.

Take into account the accessibility of the school from your home address.

You can www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables to find further information on schools close to you. If you live close to a borough boundary, you should consider applying for your local schools even if they are not in Merton. If you are thinking about applying for any schools outside Merton, please get a copy of their application information. If you are applying for schools outside Merton you must still name them on your application.

It is also important that you consider the admissions criteria for each school so you understand how places are allocated and who gets priority when a school is oversubscribed. Different schools have different admissions policies, and these may affect the chances of your child being offered a place.

If you are considering applying for a selective school in one of our neighbouring boroughs, speak to your child's primary school Headteacher to find out the likelihood of your child passing the entrance test. Please note that selective schools conduct their testing before the closing date for applications so you should know whether your child meets the entry standard before you apply.

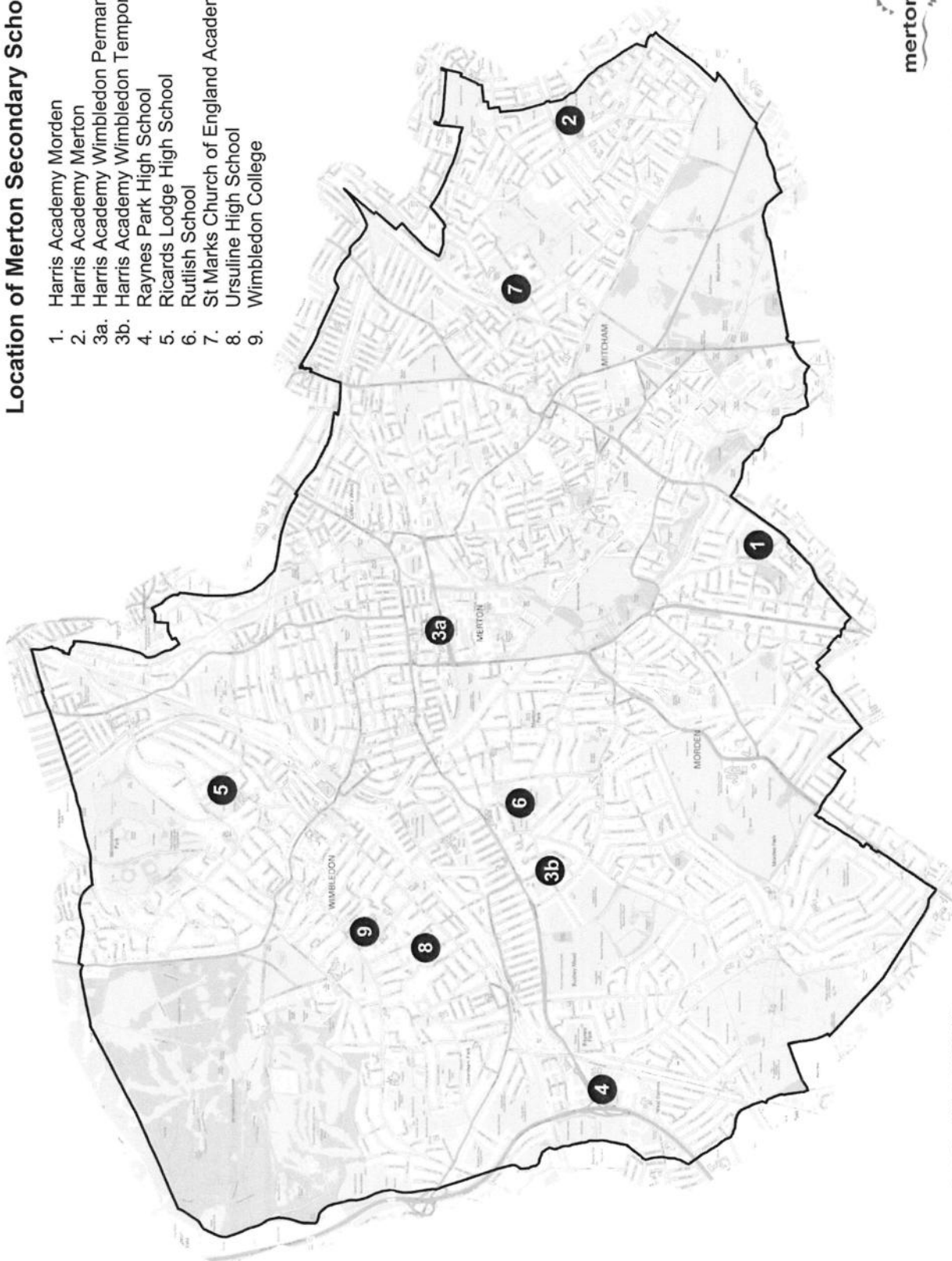
Merton schools do not have selection tests as our schools have a fully comprehensive system. However, Harris Academy Merton operates a banding system to ensure a comprehensive intake and all applicants for this Academy will be required to sit a test. Your child will only be required to sit the one test even if you apply for Harris Academies who operate a banding system.

We recommend that you make use of all six preference options available to you. You should be aware of the admissions arrangements for the school. We recommend that you check the furthest distances offered in recent years to see whether you are within average offer distance. We also suggest that you treat the application form as a wish list; name schools in the order you want them – you definitely won't be offered a school if you do not name it – but please ensure that there are schools on your list that you have checked and are likely to be offered and you are happy with. You do not gain any advantage by naming fewer schools, or only naming oversubscribed schools, and local schools you might have secured a place in may not have spaces if you name them as late preferences.

Location of Merton Secondary Schools

Location of Merton Secondary Schools

1. Harris Academy Morden
2. Harris Academy Merton
- 3a. Harris Academy Wimbledon Permanent Site
- 3b. Harris Academy Wimbledon Temporary Site
4. Raynes Park High School
5. Ricards Lodge High School
6. Rutlish School
7. St Marks Church of England Academy
8. Ursuline High School
9. Wimbledon College



Secondary Schools

Secondary Schools in Merton

Harris Academy Merton

Wide Way Mitcham CR4 1BP	020 8623 1000 www.harrismerton.org.uk info@harrismerton.org.uk
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Type of school	Academy
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Year 7 places for 2021	240
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Gender	Mixed
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Religious affiliation	None
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Sixth form provision	Yes
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DfE number	315 6905
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Harris Academy Morden

Lilleshall Road Morden SM4 6DU	020 8687 1157 www.harrismorden.org.uk/ info@harrismorden.org.uk
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Type of school	Academy
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Year 7 places for 2021	180
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Gender	Mixed
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Religious affiliation	None
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Sixth form provision	Yes
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DfE number	315 4000
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Harris Academy Wimbledon

From Sept 2021:

High Path
London,
SW20 9NS

020 3962 4300

www.harriswimbledon.org.uk
info@harriswimbledon.org.uk

Type of school	Academy
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Year 7 places for 2021	180
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Gender	Mixed
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Religious affiliation	None
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Sixth form provision	Not yet
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DfE number	315 4001
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Raynes Park High School

Bushey Road
London
SW20 0JL

020 8946 4112

www.rphs.org.uk
school@raynespark.merton.sch.uk

Type of school	Community
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Year 7 places for 2021	240
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Gender	Mixed
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Religious affiliation	None
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Sixth form provision	Yes
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DfE number	315 4052
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Ricards Lodge High School

Lake Road
London
SW19 7HB

020 8946 2208

www.ricardslodge.merton.sch.uk
office.manager@ricardslodge.merton.sch.uk

Type of school	Community
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Year 7 places for 2021	240
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Gender	Girls
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Religious affiliation	None
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Sixth form provision	Yes
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DfE number	315 4050
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Rutlish School

Watery Lane
London
SW20 9AD

020 8542 1212
www.rutlish.merton.sch.uk
administration@rutlish.merton.sch.uk

Type of school Voluntary controlled

Year 7 places for 2021 240

Gender Boys

Religious affiliation None

Sixth form provision Yes

DfE number 315 4500

St Mark's Church of England Academy

Acacia Road
Mitcham
CR4 1SF

020 8648 6627
www.stmarksacademy.com
school@stmarksacademy.org.uk

Type of school Academy

Year 7 places for 2021 180

Gender Mixed

Religious affiliation Church of England

Sixth form provision Yes

DfE number 315 6906

Ursuline High School Wimbledon

Crescent Road
London
SW20 8HA

020 8255 2688
www.ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk
enquiries@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk

Type of school Voluntary aided

Year 7 places for 2021 210

Gender Girls

Religious affiliation Catholic

Sixth form provision Yes

DfE number 315 5400

Wimbledon College

Edge Hill
London
SW19 4NS

020 8946 2533
www.wimbledoncollege.org.uk
mail@wimbledoncollege.org.uk

Type of school Voluntary aided

Year 7 places for 2021 199

Gender Boys

Religious affiliation Catholic

Sixth form provision Yes

DfE number 315 4701

How places were allocated for September 2020

To see how places were allocated in 2020 and other previous years, please see our webpage:

www.merton.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools/admissions/how-school-places-were-allocated-in-recent-years

Schools outside Merton

If you are applying for schools which are not in Merton, you still need to name them as one of your six preferences. If you do not name them as a preference, they will be unable to consider your application.

Listed below are links to the websites for our neighbouring local authorities and details of the schools available in their boroughs:

London Borough Croydon

People Department
4th Floor (Zone G)
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk, Croydon, CR0 1EA

telephone 020 8726 6400

website www.croydon.gov.uk/education/schools-new/school-admissions

email school.admissions@croydon.gov.uk

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

School Admissions
Guildhall 2
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey, KT1 1EU

telephone 020 8547 4610

website www.kingston.gov.uk/info/200342/apply_for_a_school_place

email kingston.admissions@achievingforchildren.org.uk

London Borough Lambeth

School Admissions Team,
10th Floor International House
Canterbury Crescent
London, SW9 7QE

telephone 020 7926 9503

website www.lambeth.gov.uk/school-admissions

email schooladmissions@lambeth.gov.uk

London Borough Sutton

Sutton School Admissions,
Civic Offices,
St Nicholas Way
Sutton, SM1 1EA

telephone 020 8770 5000

website www.sutton.gov.uk/admissions

email suttonadmissions@cognus.org.uk

London Borough Wandsworth

Pupil Services, Wandsworth Council
Town Hall Extension
Wandsworth High Street
London, SW18 2PU

telephone 020 8871 7316

website <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/schools-and-admissions/>

email admissions@wandsworth.gov.uk

Out-borough residents

If you are not a resident in Merton but you are thinking of applying for a Secondary School place in a Merton school, you will need to apply via your home borough.

Secondary school admissions criteria

Admissions criteria are the rules by which applications are ranked for each school. It is important you understand the admissions criteria for the schools you will name on your application. The criteria will vary depending on the type of school you are applying for, and these criteria will dictate how likely to it that you will be offered a place.

Community school admissions criteria

Please note that the criteria below apply only to Merton's Community and Voluntary Controlled schools (Raynes Park, Ricards Lodge and Rutlish). Academies and voluntary aided (Church affiliated) schools and schools in other boroughs apply their own criteria to applications and these are available either from the schools or by contacting the Admissions Team for the borough concerned.

1. Looked after children or previously looked after children (see notes on looked after children below)
2. Where there are professionally supported medical reasons or exceptional social reasons why a child should attend a particular school (see notes on medical and social reasons below)
3. Where a sibling is already in the main school at the time of admission (see notes on siblings below)
4. Children of permanent teaching staff (see notes on permanent teaching staff below)
5. Straight line distance between the child's home address and the main school (see notes on distance below)

Looked After Children

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 definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989). A previously looked after child is a child who was adopted, or subject to a residence order, or special guardianship order, immediately following having been looked after.

Medical or Social reasons

Applicants wishing to be considered under this criterion must supply professional evidence supporting their case at the time of application.

Medical reasons

-) if there are medical reasons that make it essential for your child to attend a particular school, you must provide supporting information from a doctor or

health care professional together with any other relevant information by the closing date.

-) this must make a compelling case as to why your child's needs can only be met at the preferred school, evidence of a medical condition in itself will not automatically result in a place at your preferred school being offered.
-) the evidence should explain exactly what your child's needs are and what specialist support or facilities your child requires.
-) the evidence should explain why other schools could not provide the appropriate support for your child

Social reasons

-) if there are social reasons that make it essential for your child to attend a particular school, you must provide independent evidence from a professional who is supporting your family.
-) the supporting evidence needs to set out the particular reasons why the school in question is the most suitable and the difficulties that would be caused if your child had to attend another school.
-) the evidence should explain exactly what the family's needs are and what specialist support or facilities are required.
-) the evidence should explain why other schools could not provide the appropriate support.

Providing evidence does not guarantee priority under this criterion; the School Admissions Team will consider if the evidence provided demonstrates that the child must attend a particular school and cannot reasonably attend an alternative school. Please note that your child's current (or most recently attended) school may be contacted for further information and may be sent a copy of your request. The information you provide may also be shared with an independent appeals panel should this be necessary. Applicants will not be individually advised if their application has been prioritised under this criterion.

Merton cannot seek information on your behalf and we cannot contact any health care professionals direct for further information – please ensure that you supply all available evidence to us.

Please note we cannot accept letters from yourself or from other members of your family, nor from your health visitor.

School staff are not allowed to provide letters supporting placement at their own school so please do not ask your school to write a letter supporting your application.

Based on previous decisions, it is unlikely that an application will be prioritised for the following:

-) Asthma, eczema, allergies, diabetes, dyslexia, travel sickness
-) Dispensing of medication that may require some training as this can be undertaken by any school.
-) Use of a hearing aid.
-) Because an Education Health and Care Plan has not been completed.
-) Need for the child to stay in friendship groups.

-) Childcare arrangements where the carer lives close to a particular school.
-) Work/travel arrangements.
-) Family members other than siblings.
-) A desire for a single sex school
-) School specialisms
-) Siblings in sixth form

If you feel that one of these examples should be considered you can apply but you would be expected to demonstrate how this has a significant impact on your child, why a particular school can meet your child's need more than any other and why you should be placed above other children when making allocations.

If you believe that your child has a medical need for a place in a particular school, please contact Merton Admissions for a medical form or provide your supporting evidence.

Siblings

Sibling refers to brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner, and in every case, who is living as part of the same family unit at the same address, Monday to Friday.

Ricards Lodge and Rutlish School have a cross-sibling policy; qualifying siblings attending either school will be considered under priority 3.

Siblings in Years 11, 12 & 13 at the time of an application to start secondary school (Year 7) in September 2021 will not qualify under the sibling criterion.

Distance measurement

All distances will be measured by the computerised Geographical Information System maintained by Merton Admissions team. It should be noted that the computerised system measures from a start point plotted within the property at which the applicant lives to the main school reception entrance and calculates this measurement.

The child's home address excludes any business, relative's or childminder's address and must be the applicant's normal place of residence. If there is a genuine equal share custody arrangement between the two parents, the address that will be used will normally be the address of the parent who is claiming Child Benefit for the child, however all available evidence will be considered.

The address to be used for the initial allocation of places to Secondary School (Year 7) will be the child's address at the closing date for application. Changes of address up to 11 December 2020 may be considered if there are exceptional reasons behind the change, such as if a family has just moved to the area, or has returned from abroad. Any offer is conditional upon the child living at the appropriate address on the relevant date. Parents have a responsibility to notify the Local Authority of any change of address.

Please note:

-) Applicants in short term rented accommodation may be asked to provide evidence of their current and former housing arrangements.
-) Where an applicant has ownership of a property, that address should be used for the purposes of school admission. The applicant must provide evidence and reasons for the use of any other address.
-) Where an applicant rents a property and has ownership of an alternative property, the rented property will only be used for admission purposes if the child has been resident away from the owned property for a period of 3 years or more at the closing date for applications.
-) Any applicant who moves from a rented or temporary address in advance of their child taking up their school place may have their place withdrawn if it is found the family have returned to an address already in their ownership.
-) The authority will investigate whether the place should be withdrawn if the pupil is not resident at the application address at the time of the September entry point.
-) The authority will always investigate a case where the application address has previously been used to gain a school place fraudulently.
-) Where it is found an address has been used for the purposes of admission where the child is not ordinarily resident, the application and any place offered will be withdrawn.
-) An offer found to have been gained fraudulently will be withdrawn. This may also be the case where the child has started the school.
-) In some cases, places may not be withdrawn once a child has been attending the school for a term or more. In these circumstances future sibling applications will not be given sibling priority for places and will be considered under the next appropriate criterion.

Where more than one applicant has the same straight line distance measurement and distance is the determining factor, rank order will be determined by random allocation.

Applicants wishing to query a distance from home to school should contact the School Admissions Team at admissions@merton.gov.uk. Please note that requests for distances from multiple addresses may delay your response.

In cases where a distance calculation is disputed applicants should write to the School Admissions Manager, London Borough of Merton, 10th Floor, Civic Centre, Morden SM4 5DX. All disputes will be investigated. Where it is agreed that the basis of the calculation was incorrect the measurement will be recalculated. The calculation will be re-run for both the applicant in question and any other applicant shown to be affected by the issue.

Applications relating to twins, triplets or other multiple births

Where a parent applies for entry into the same year group for more than one child and the final offered place falls between these children, the school will consider if they have capacity to offer to the additional children.

If it is not possible to offer a place to all of them, rank order will be determined by random allocation.

The names of the children who were unsuccessful will be added to the waiting list in accordance with the published admissions criteria, in the same way as for other children. The parent can then determine whether to accept or reject those places on an individual basis.

Admission criteria for Merton Academies and Voluntary Aided schools

Information on the admissions arrangements for Harris Academy Merton, Harris Academy Morden, Harris Academy Wimbledon, St Mark's Academy, Ursuline and Wimbledon College can be found on the websites for these schools.

Supplementary forms

Some schools may ask for a supplementary form to be completed. The online application will advise you if this is the case.

In Merton you will need to complete a supplementary form if you are applying for Ursuline High School or Wimbledon College, or a foundation place at St Mark's Church of England Academy.

If a school requires a supplementary form to consider whether you meet the faith requirement under its policy and you do not complete one, you will be ranked in their lowest category within its oversubscribed criteria.

If you are applying for schools outside of Merton you will need to find out if supplementary forms or online test registrations are necessary.

Supplementary forms should be returned directly to the school.

How places were offered last year

To maximise your chances of being offered a place, it is important you use all your available six preferences. Please be realistic in your assessment by using the details of how places were offered in recent years and considering schools outside of Merton if you live close to the borough boundaries.

Further information about offers in previous years can be found on our website:

www.merton.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools/admissions/how-school-places-were-allocated-in-recent-years

School places

Any change to admission numbers are included in the directory of schools.

www.merton.gov.uk/learning/schools/schoolsdirectory/primaryschools

Guide to applying for a secondary school place

The information in this booklet is for parents and carers with children due to transfer to secondary school from September 2021. If your child already attends secondary school and you need to know how to submit an application, please see www.merton.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools/admissions/in-year-school-admissions-junior-applications-and-transfers

Before completing your secondary school application there are a few things to consider:

Merton Council co-ordinates applications for secondary schools across academies, community, voluntary aided, out-borough and free schools. If you are applying for any of the voluntary aided (Church affiliated) schools, academies, or wish to apply for any schools outside Merton, you must include them in your application or they will be unable to consider your child for admission.

You may also need to complete supplementary forms for some schools that require additional information. The information contained in the Admissions Criteria section will tell you which Merton schools need these. If you apply online, the system will automatically inform you if a supplementary form is required.

Decide which schools you would like for your child in your preferred order. Each applicant in London is limited to a maximum of six preferences on their main Transfer to Secondary School application. It is recommended that you name at least one school for which your application is likely to be successful, for example, your local community school.

How places are allocated

Merton Local Authority will always try to offer a place at the school you have named as the highest preference.

Our admission process operates an equal preference scheme, which means that each admissions authority will consider applications without referring to the order of preference on your application. This means that, if your child is unsuccessful at your first preference school, they will not get overlooked by schools lower down your order of preference.

If the school is oversubscribed and has more applicants than places available, all applications will be ranked in the order described in the admissions criteria. This will show if a child's name is high enough on the ranking list to be offered a place.

If a place at more than one school can be offered your child's place will be made for the highest preference school.

Late applications or changes made to applications after the closing date

If your application is made after the closing date of 31 October 2020 or you change your existing preferences after this date, your application will be treated as late. A late application will not be considered until after all those that were received on time and may jeopardise the possibility of your child being offered a place at one of your preferred schools.

If the application is late, or preferences are changed for 'good reason', such as a change of address, these will be considered as 'on time' providing the evidence the change has taken place is received by 11 December 2020. Any applications or changes from this date will not be considered until after 1 March 2021.

To help us decide whether cases are late for 'good reason', parents must submit written evidence giving details of their case. A copy of their new Council Tax bill together with a solicitor's letter regarding contract completion or a copy of their new tenancy agreement, must accompany changes of address. If you are unsure whether your circumstances would be regarded as 'good reason', please contact the School Admissions Team for advice at admissions@merton.gov.uk.

Please note that forms that go missing in the postal system can only be reconsidered if there is proof of postage. Lost forms, where there is no proof of postage, are the responsibility of the applicant. For this reason we advise applying online wherever possible.

Children with special educational, health or care needs

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan and you live in Merton, you will need to call the SEN Team on 020 8545 4811 as your application process is different from that described here.

Please do not submit an application if your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan or a statement of SEN.

If you have applied for an Education, Health and Care Plan but have not been advised of the outcome you should submit a Transfer to Secondary application in the normal way and by the closing date of 31 October 2020.

Apply for a Secondary school place

Apply online

Last year 97.5% of applicants applied online.

We recommend that you apply online at www.eadmissions.org.uk

Please read the guidance below before applying.

Information you will be asked for when applying online or on a paper form

You may be asked some additional questions depending on the school preferences you name.

Parent or carer's details

You will need to provide your name and address. The person applying on behalf of the child should be the person with parental responsibility for them.

Your contact details are vital; please ensure you include an up-to-date telephone number and email address. If you have already used eAdmissions to make an application for this child or a sibling, please ensure that you have checked that your details are correct.

Your child

We need your child's full name, date of birth and gender.

The address on the application must be your child's permanent place of residence. The child's home address excludes any business, relative's or childminder's address and must be the applicant's normal place of residence. If there is a genuine equal share custody arrangement between the two parents, the address that will be used will normally be the address of the parent who is claiming Child Benefit for the child, however all available evidence will be considered. Please also note that:

-) Applicants in short term rented accommodation may be asked to provide evidence of their current and former housing arrangements.
-) Where an applicant has ownership of a property, that should be used for the purposes of school admission, and the applicant must provide evidence and reasons for the use of any other address.
-) Where an applicant rents a property and has ownership of an alternative property, the rented property will only be used for admission purposes if the child has been resident away from the owned property for a period of 3 years or more at the closing date for applications.

-) You need to state whether or not your child is, or has previously been, in the case of a Local Authority - Looked After Children / Children in public care. If the child meets the criteria to be classified as a child in public care you must enclose either a letter from the relevant Local Authority confirming the legal status of the child, a copy of the care order, or a copy of the special guardianship order. Please note that children adopted from overseas are not classified as children in public care.
-) Indicate if your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). If 'yes' you should contact your SEN caseworker to follow a different application process.
-) Please select your child's current school or education provision from the menu.

Your secondary school preferences

You may name up to six schools on the form. The schools do not have to be in Merton, they can be in any borough.

Limiting the number of schools you name will not improve your chance of securing a place at your first preference school, but please do not name schools unless you are happy for your child to attend.

Please think carefully about your preference order. If you receive an offer at a preference school it may not be possible to offer a place at a lower preference school later on if you change your mind.

Please name any sibling(s). You should check the admissions criteria for the school concerned as sibling rules may not be the same for each school, and not all schools give sibling priority. For most schools in Merton that give priority for siblings, sibling is defined as brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, or step brother or sister, and, in every case, who is living as part of the same family unit at the same address.

You may state a reason for your preference if you wish.

If you are attaching supporting documents to be considered under medical or social criteria, you should tick the box to confirm this. Medical or social reasons will not be considered unless supported by professionally written evidence which should either be attached to the online application or emailed to admissions@merton.gov.uk

Your online form will inform you if any of the schools you name require a supplementary form and where these are available from.

Declaration and form submission

Please read the declaration carefully then submit the application.

If you move home or your circumstances change after completing your application, you must inform us via admissions@merton.gov.uk

Advantages of applying online

Applying on line is quick and easy and comes with the following benefits:

-) your forms will not get lost in the post
-) quick, simple and no paper involved
-) safe and secure password operated system
-) the data validation system prevents you from giving incorrect school names or numbers
-) you will receive an instant email confirmation of your submitted application
-) you can change or amend your application right up to the closing date
-) no risk of data input errors once the online form has been completed
-) you will receive earlier notification of the result of your application
-) save on paper and postage costs
-) you can accept an offer online

Once you have registered to apply online, please keep a note of your user name and password. You will then be able to return to your application to make amendments until the statutory closing date of 31 October 2020, and to view the outcome on the evening of 1 March 2021.

If you apply using the online system it is important that you do not submit a paper form. Applying online and on paper will, at the very least, delay your application form being processed. If more than one application is completed for a child, the one with the later date on it will normally be accepted and the earlier one withdrawn.

All applications received by the closing date are treated equally. There is no priority for people who get their forms in early, so please take your time and only submit your application when you have carefully considered your options.

Applying on a paper form

If you are completing a paper form rather than applying online, your form should be returned by 31 October 2020. If your child attends a Merton primary school, please return your form to the school 19 October 2020. The school will keep a register of applications received in case any go missing before being processed. If your child does not attend a Merton school nursery, your form should be either hand delivered or posted to School Admissions Team, London Borough of Merton, Civic Centre, London Road, Morden, SM4 5DX. Forms must be received by 31 October 2020.

No responsibility can be taken for forms lost in the post. Wherever possible we recommend completing your application using the online system to avoid any potential postal problems. Online applicants will automatically receive email confirmation that their application has been submitted.

Please note that if you send a paper form in an A4 envelope, postage will be in excess of a single first class stamp. If insufficient postage is paid, the form may not reach our office and your application will be jeopardised.

Frequently asked questions

What is the role of local councils and schools?

All school admissions applications for state funded schools (Community schools, Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies are all state funded) should be made to the local council that you are resident. The council has a coordinating role to ensure you are offered one state funded school place on national offer day. This is to your highest preference possible, whether the school is within your resident borough or not. For Community Schools the council also sets the admissions policy to priorities admissions applications. For Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies this is undertaken by the schools. All School Admissions authorities must abide by a nationally set Admissions Code of Practice.

What is an order of preference?

This is the order in which you name the schools you are applying for. You should name the school that you want your child to attend the most as your first preference. If more than one of the schools you have named is able to offer a place, you will be allocated the school you want the most. Please think about the order in which you name your schools very carefully. If you change your mind at a later date it may not be possible to offer a place at a lower preference school. Schools are not told your order of preference.

Are first preference applications considered before all others?

No. All applications for places are considered at the same time; this is called an equal preference scheme. Once all applications for schools have been ranked, if a place can be offered at more than one preference, an offer will be made for the school named as the highest preference out of those that can be offered.

How are places allocated?

If the school is oversubscribed, that is there are more applicants than places available, all applications will be ranked in the order described in the admissions criteria. Once all applications have been ranked we can see if a child's name is high enough on a ranking list to be offered a place. If a child can be offered a place at more than one school we will offer a place at whichever of these schools is the higher preference.

Am I entitled to apply only for single sex schools?

You may express a preference for single sex schools, however by law, the authority is under no obligation to consider only single sex schools for any applicant. All places are considered according to the published criteria which cannot, by law, give priority to parents who only name single sex schools.

My partner and I are separated but have joint access or responsibility. Which address should we use?

If you have joint access the parent who looks after the child for most of the school week should make the application and give their address. This address is always checked for oversubscribed schools and documentary proof may be requested.

If there is proof of genuine equal share custody arrangement between the two parents, the address that will be used will normally be the address of the parent who is claiming Child Benefit or the address that the child has been associated with longest. All available evidence will be considered and decisions made for each individual case but if you are unsure please contact the School Admissions Team at admissions@merton.gov.uk for advice.

My family or childminder looks after my child during the week. Can I put their address?

No. We cannot accept the address of childminders or a family who may help you with the care of your child. It must be the child's home address.

We are living at a temporary address. What should we do?

If you are living at a temporary address, changing your address before your child attends the school you choose, or will be returning to this country from an HM Forces posting overseas or temporary employment overseas, please contact the School Admissions Team for advice.

We are hoping to move in the next few weeks. What do we do?

If you change your permanent address after 11 December 2020, but before your child is admitted to the school, you should inform the School Admissions Team in writing. It is not sufficient to tell the school only. Please note that change of address details will only be accepted upon receipt of a new Council Tax bill or a new tenancy agreement. Other documents may also be requested to support a change of address. If you move after the form is submitted, but before 11 December 2020, please contact School Admissions at admissions@merton.gov.uk as soon as possible.

Please note, the offer of a place may be withdrawn if it is discovered that a parent has given an incorrect address or an 'address of convenience', such as a deliberate temporary address, business address, the home of a relative, a childminder's address or the address of a parent whom the child does not live with for most of the school week.

What happens if I do not get the place I want?

You are entitled to reject any place offered. However, if you reject an offer it will then become your responsibility to secure an alternative. If you are offered a place at a school that is not your first preference, you will automatically go on the waiting list for your higher preference schools. Any preferences that are lower than your offered preference are withdrawn. You will also have the right of appeal against any school that does not offer a place, providing it was named as one of your preferences.

If you are offered one of your lower preferences, we recommend that you accept the place while waiting to see if a higher offer can be made. This ensures that your child will have a school to go to in September and does not prejudice your right of appeal or your place on higher preference waiting lists.

I am a Merton resident. What happens if I don't get any of my preferred schools?

All parents have a right of appeal against a decision not to offer a place for a child. For community schools, appeals should be lodged with the local authority. For voluntary aided, academies and free schools, they should be lodged directly with the governing body of the particular school. For schools in other boroughs, you will need to contact that local authority for further information on their appeal procedures. Information about how to appeal will be sent to all applicants who do not get offered their first preference school on 1 March 2021. Appeals are likely to be heard during May and June. Please note that you can only appeal for schools for which you have applied.

If I do not get a school offer that I am happy with, can I educate my child at home?

You may choose to take this option but we do not recommend that you do so. If you decide that this is the best option for you, you must notify the local authority in writing. You must provide a curriculum suitable for a pupil of secondary age and the local authority has a duty to ensure that the education you provide is appropriate. The local authority will ask for full details of your arrangement and advisers will make monitoring visits while you are educating your child at home. We do not provide materials, tutors or funding and cannot support you educating your child at home.

I am thinking of sending my child to a private school for secondary education. What should I do?

If you definitely do not wish to send your child to a state funded secondary school (Community schools, Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies are all state funded) there is no need to make an application to School Admissions. However, if you do not apply on-time and change your mind you will be treated alongside other late applications where places are allocated after the initial offer day in March.

I have been offered a place at a private school. What should I do?

If you are accepting a place at a private school and you have already accepted a place at a state funded school, please inform us of this as soon as possible. It is very important that you do this as, if you don't let us know, you may be preventing another child from receiving an offer of a place. Also, if your child is expected to start at a school in September and does not arrive, an Education Welfare Officer will visit you to find out what arrangements you have made for his or her education.

If my child starts secondary school, can I apply for a move to another school?

We do not recommend a child changes school unless there is a house move involved which makes travel to school particularly difficult. If you wish to consider a change of school, please contact the School Admissions Team for advice and to discuss the

options available.

I live in Merton. Is my child entitled to free school travel?

Children can travel free on the buses and trams provided that they have a child photo Oyster Card. An information leaflet and application form can be obtained from the Post Office or on-line via the Transport for London (TfL) website. Some families who have a low income may qualify for assistance if it is essential that their child travels by train or underground, the school is a long distance from home, and no placement can be provided locally. More information can be found on the Free School Travel page on our website.

I don't live in Merton. Is my child entitled to free school travel?

You will need to contact the local authority in the borough where you live for further information, as each borough is responsible for the travel arrangements of its own residents.

Can I choose which school I send my child to?

No. You cannot *choose* the school but you do have the right to express a preference.

Each school has a maximum number of places available and they cannot offer above these numbers. Where there are more applications for places than places available these are allocated in accordance with the admissions criteria.

I live in Merton. Can I apply for secondary schools in other boroughs?

Yes. You should name all schools on your application in order of preference whether they are in Merton or in other boroughs. You should check with out-of-borough schools to see if a supplementary form is required.

I do not live in Merton. Can I apply for a Merton secondary school?

Yes. You must apply through your home authority. If you live in London, your online application will automatically submit to your home authority. All places are considered according to published criteria which cannot, by law, exclude children living outside of the borough.

If I already have a child at my preferred school will I automatically get a place for my younger child?

No. You will still need to make an application and name the sibling. For Merton community or voluntary controlled schools, a sibling in Years 11, 12 & 13 will not qualify, as they will be in Sixth form or have left the school by the time of the younger child's admission. Most schools will give some priority to siblings, however you are advised to check the admission arrangements for each school you are applying for to understand where siblings fall within their criteria.

Do I have to name six schools?

No. You may name up to six schools. We would recommend using as many of your preferences as you can to maximise your chances of being offered a school place on 1 March 2021, as it is not always possible to allocate places later if you add schools or change your mind.

We live in Merton. Do I have a right to a place in a Merton school?

A local authority has a responsibility to provide school places for children in its area. However, the Education Act 1996 (Section 18) does not specify that schools have to be located in that borough. If you are unsuccessful in your preference schools, we will ensure a reasonable school offer is made, taking into account travel time and distance, however this may not be one of the closest schools to your home and we recommend that you consider this when naming your preferences.

Are my preferences confidential?

Yes. Your preference order and the names of the schools you list will not be released. All admissions authorities (the local authority or the school itself) will consider your application without reference to this information. If you are unsuccessful in your application and lodge an appeal, your application and preference order may be shared with the admissions authority and appeals panel.