

International Students with Children

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Introduction

We know that if you are making the decision to bring your child or children to the UK it is important to have as much information as possible about childcare and schools in Reading. We hope that this guide will give you some guidance and information on other resources you can use to inform your decisions.

Think about where you want to live

International students wanting to bring their child/children to the UK and who are of school age will need to think carefully about where they are going to live. Before making your decision on where you are going to live, consider the following:

What schools for the age of your child/children are in the area where you want to live?

What is the allocation history for those schools? If the demand for the majority of schools in the area you want to live is higher than places available you should look at other possible areas to live.

It is advisable to contact the Local Authority School Admissions Team prior to moving to the UK if possible to determine where there are school places and to verify the possible new home address' designated area, if this is important to you. The information given to you will only be current on the date you contact them and can change, but the information will give you guidance on if you are likely to be able to gain a place.

Local authorities cannot guarantee that a school place can be offered even if you move to an address in the designated area of the school you wish to send your child to.

Tip: Choose an area to live where there is less demand for school places for the year group/s your child/children will need to be placed. This is essential as in the majority of cases international students will be making 'In-year applications' for schools for their child/children.

Finding a school in the UK

Direct Gov have a very useful School Finder website **schoolsfinder.direct.gov.uk**. On this site you can search for information about all schools including Ofsted reports, attainment and assessments results and other information about individual schools. This website will also tell you which Local Authority the school is in.

The UK school year at a glance

An academic or school year runs from 1 September to 31 August. The academic year is split into three terms – autumn (followed by the Christmas holiday of approximately 2 weeks), spring (followed by the spring holiday of approximately 2 weeks) and summer (followed by a holiday period of approximately 6 weeks) and each term is split into half-terms (with a one week holiday at the end of the first half-term).

Year Group:	Foundation 2 (F2) Rising Five (Reception)	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11
Age Range:	4 – 5 (according to date of birth) start dates vary by local authority but from September 2011 children may start in September	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Phase of Education:	Key Stage 1			Key Stage 2				Key Stage 3			Key Stage 4	
Type of School:	Primary School							Secondary School				
	Infant School			Junior school								

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)

Ofsted inspect all state funded and some independent schools, as well as colleges and teacher training, childminders and day care.

The inspection makes observations and gathers evidence so as to assess how well a school is performing. It is a legal requirement for all registered childcare providers, schools and colleges to be inspected.

Ofsted inspection reports can be useful for international students in providing independent and impartial information on a School's performance however it is also important to point out a few things to keep in mind:

- Ofsted inspection visits usually take place over a few days and are an indication of how the school performed at that time of the inspection. It should be noted that this may not be a true reflection of the school now.
- Think about the date of the Ofsted inspection, the performance of the school could have changed so try and visit the school or make contact by telephone or email and ask questions.
- In most cases a school tends to be visited by Ofsted once every 3 – 5 years.
- If the performance of a school is scored lowly by Ofsted – that school will have to provide an action plan to address any issues or concerns and will be monitored by Ofsted on the progress the School is making.

Tip: Always try to visit the schools if you can or make contact via email or telephone to find out more.

Making sure the school is right for your child

Some things to ask when visiting or contacting a school:

- How much homework are the children given?
- Is there a reward system for good behaviour? These are sometimes called commendations.
- Ask for the School policy setting out the standards of behaviour it expects. The policy should outline what the school will do if your child's behaviour falls below these standards. Sanctions a school might use include:
 - a reprimand
 - a letter to you as a parent
 - removal from a class or group
 - loss of privileges

- confiscating something belonging to your child if it's inappropriate for school for example a mobile phone
- detention that can take place during school hours, at lunchtime, after school or at weekends. You should be given 24hours notice if your child receives a detention.
- More serious disciplinary problems may result in:
 - Fixed period exclusion or;
 - Permanent exclusion.
- Is there any extra support for children whose first language is not English?
- Are there any other children from your country?
- Will your child need to wear a uniform? If so how much will the uniform cost?

Things to look out for when visiting a school:

- Do the children behave well and seem motivated?
- Are the children doing their work?
- Do the children and teachers seem to have a good relationship?
- Is the work of the children displayed? Think to yourself what is the standard of that work?

How to support your child once they start at school:

- Make sure your child has all the equipment they will need; the school will usually give advice if needed.
- Give encouragement with homework, especially reading and writing in English.
- Find out the name of your child's form teacher and how you can contact them if there is a problem.
- Make sure your child attends school every day and ensure your child arrives on time.
- Make sure the school knows how to contact you if there is a problem or accident during the school day. It is really important that the school has up to date contact details for you.

School admission applications

For the majority of our international students, you will be living in either the Reading Borough or Wokingham Borough local authority areas. Links to their school admission webpage or information on admission arrangements in that Local Authority area are below:

- Reading Borough Council - www.reading.gov.uk/schoolsadmissions
- Wokingham Borough Council - www.wokingham.gov.uk/schools/schools-colleges/admissions

Neighbouring Local Authority school admission webpage links are below:

- Bracknell Forest District Council - www.bracknellforest.gov.uk/learning/learn-schools/learn-and-starting-school.htm

- Oxfordshire County Council - www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/portal/publicsite/councilservices?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=http://apps.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Internet/Council+Services/Education+and+learning/Schools/Admissions/
- Slough Borough Council - www.slough.gov.uk/services/11500.aspx
- The Royal Borough of Maidenhead and Windsor - www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/ed_admissions_home.htm
- West Berkshire District Council - www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=811

There is high demand for school places so if you are making an 'in-year' application it is likely that a preferred school may be full. It is strongly recommended that international student parents express more than one preference in order to maximise the extent to which preferences can be met. It is also recommended that at least one of your preferences should be realistic.

What supporting evidence may you need to provide with your child/children's school application?

When you are applying for a school place for your child/children as well as filling in the appropriate application form you may need to also provide:

- Copy of visa documents for both yourself and your child/children for example entry visa and passport details.
- A letter confirming what tuition fees you have paid to the University of Reading.
- Tenancy agreement for the property you are living in the UK.
- If your child has a serious medical, physical or psychological need – you will need to provide supporting documentation from the professional person involved.

Check with your Local Authority to find out if you do need to provide any supporting documentation and if any of your documents aren't in English then arrange to have them translated to English.

Taking children out of school

In the UK, once your child is registered with a primary or a secondary school, your child is expected to attend. You must not take your children out of school during the term time as you risk being prosecuted if your children fail to attend. Visit the UK government webpage 'School attendance and absence: the law' for more information at: www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/YourChildsWelfareAtSchool/DG_066966

If you need to take your child out of school, for example if you need to travel back home; you should discuss this with the school as soon as possible. If you do not have the agreement of the school, the school place may be withdrawn.

If your child is unwell or cannot attend school for another reason, you must contact the school as soon as possible (either by telephoning or attending the school).

If you are unhappy with the way your child is being educated then you should contact the head teacher in the first instance to discuss.

Delivering and collecting children

Make sure you know when your child is expected to arrive at school and plan ahead for your journey such as checking bus timetables, what the traffic is like at peak times. This is important as you must arrive with your children before the school day begins.

When collecting your child, you or the person collecting the children should arrive at the very least a few minutes before the child is due to be released from their school. If you cannot collect your child from school and you have arranged for someone else to collect them you should let the School know beforehand.

Nurseries and Preschools

'Little Learners' www.rusu.co.uk/intheunion/nursery/ is an Ofsted registered nursery offering childcare exclusively to students and staff of the University of Reading. With a capacity of 94 places for full day care, the nursery is available for children aged from three months to five years and is staffed by a team of experienced and professional childcare practitioners.

The 'University of Reading Pre School' www.universityofreadingpreschool.co.uk aims to provide learning experiences through structured play opportunities for all the children in the group and with the involvement of the parents in all aspects of the operation of the group. The Pre-school offers children a safe, satisfying and happy place to play, learn and develop with children of the same age before going on to meet the demands of school.

Both Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council can also provide details of early years' providers in their areas.

Childminders and Childcare

Childminders work from home providing childcare to children of various ages. Childminders must be registered and are inspected regularly. For information on Childminders and childcare visit the 'Government finding and choosing childcare' website at www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Childcare/DG_180946

Child Safety

Leaving children alone at home

There is no legal age limit in the UK for leaving a child at home alone, however it is an offence to leave a child alone if it puts them at risk. The NSPCC (National Society for Protection against Cruelty to Children) advises that no child should be left alone under the age of twelve, or overnight under the age of sixteen.

For more information on leaving children at home visit the Child Accident Prevention Trust website www.capt.org.uk/ or call 020 7608 3828, or refer to the guidelines on the websites below.

- Parentline - www.parentlineplus.org.uk/
- Safechild - www.safechild.net/
- Families Online - www.familiesonline.co.uk/

Babysitters

According to Government guidance babysitters over 16 years old should be mature and sensible enough but still make sure you check that they can cope.. However, if a babysitter is under 18 years of age, you as the parent will have full legal responsibility if anything happens to the babysitter or the children in their care.

Useful Sources of Information

If you require any further information or advice please visit the below websites:

- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children - www.nspcc.org.uk/
- Telephone the Childline Helpline for children on 0800 1111.
- Parentline - www.parentlineplus.org.uk/
- Parentinguk - www.parentinguk.org/
- Safechild - www.safechild.net/
- Families Online - www.familiesonline.co.uk/
- Directgov for Parents - www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/index.htm is the UK government public services information and advice website for Parents
- Relate for Parents & Families - www.relateforparents.org.uk/
- Parenting.co.uk - www.parenting.co.uk/
- Advisory Centre for Education - www.ace-ed.org.uk/