



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Determination

Case reference: ADA4597

Objector(s): A member of the public

Admission Authority: Trust for The Royal Latin School

Date of advice: 15 June 2026

Determination

In accordance with section 88H(4) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I partially uphold the objection to the admission arrangements determined by Trustees for The Royal Latin School, for 2027/28.

By virtue of section 88K(2) the adjudicator's decision is binding on the admission authority. The School Admissions Code requires the admission authority to revise its admission arrangements within two months of this determination.

The referral

1. Under section 88H(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the Act), an objection has been referred to the adjudicator by a member of the public (the Objector), about the admission arrangements (the Arrangements) for September 2027 for The Royal Latin School (the School). The School is an academy for children aged 11 to 18 in Buckingham, and the local authority for the area in which the school is located is Buckinghamshire Council (the LA).
2. The parties to this objection are the Objector, the School, the Trust, and the Local Authority (LA).
3. The objection is to the introduction of the "Home Address Integrity Clause" to the Arrangements and the conditions within the clause which require sale of property to demonstrate eligibility for admission.

4. I would like to take the opportunity to give my thanks to all parties for the way in which they presented their views, responded respectfully to each other's submissions, and for their prompt responses to my requests for further information.

Jurisdiction

5. The terms of the academy agreement between The Royal Latin School and the Secretary of State for Education require that the admissions policy and Arrangements for the School are in accordance with admissions law as it applies to maintained schools.

6. The Arrangements were determined under section 88C of the Act by the Trust of The Royal Latin School which is the Admission Authority for the school on 2 February 2026.

7. A consultation period took place prior to the determination of the Arrangements between 17 November 2025 and 5 January 2026.

8. The Objector submitted their objection to the Arrangements on 20 February 2026. The Objector has asked to have their identity kept from the other parties and has met the requirement of Regulation 24 of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 by providing details of their name and address to me.

9. I am satisfied the objection has been properly referred to me in accordance with section 88H of the Act and it is within my jurisdiction.

10. I have not considered the Arrangements as a whole under section 88I of the Act. The Admission Authority should not take the fact that I have not raised any other matters about the Arrangements as an endorsement of their compliance with the Schools Admissions Code (the Code).

11. I have read previous adjudicator findings in case reference numbers ADA3483, ADA2879, and ADA3265, and the Chief School Adjudicator's Annual Reports. Previous determinations by other school adjudicators may be relevant and informative. However, they do not set precedents, and I have, therefore, considered the Arrangements in accordance with the requirements set out in legislation and the Code and in the light of the facts and circumstances as they are now.

12. My jurisdiction is for the Arrangements determined and to decide whether they comply with all relevant legal requirements. It is not open to me to determine how the Arrangements should be. If I uphold this objection, it is for the Admission Authority to address any non-compliance issues within the required timeframe.

13. My jurisdiction is for the 2027/28 arrangements only. I will therefore not be considering the matters raised by the Objector in respect of other admission years, though reference is

made to previous arrangements where necessary to provide context or background to the 2027/28 arrangements.

14. Although the Board of Trustees is the Admission Authority, it has been the School that has responded to my requests for further information. I will therefore refer to the School and not the Trust in this determination when dealing with those responses.

Procedure

15. In considering this matter I have had regard to all relevant legislation and the Code.

16. The information I have considered in reaching my decision includes:

- the objection dated 20 February 2026;
- a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Admission Authority at which the arrangements were determined;
- the determined Arrangements for 2027/28 which includes the Supplementary Information Form (SIF);
- responses from the LA and the School to the objection;
- maps, including Google Maps, and those showing the location of the School and catchment area;
- information available on the websites of gov.uk (including the 'Get Information About Schools' (GIAS), the LA, the School, and Ofsted;

17. I have been provided with a substantial amount of information by the Objector, LA, and the School. I have referred only to that which has a bearing on my determination.

Background

18. According to GIAS, the school is a co-educational, selective grammar school for pupils aged 11 to 18. It is an academy converter with over 1200 pupils. It has no designated religious character. It is one of 13 selective grammar schools in Buckinghamshire. Each school is an academy with a different admission authority.

19. The School was last inspected by Ofsted in 2023 and was judged to be good.

20. The published admission number (PAN) of the School for 2027/28 is 180 increasing from 174 in 2026/27.

21. To be eligible to be considered for admission to the School, applicants are required to meet the qualifying score of 121 in the Buckinghamshire Secondary Transfer Test (STT) or have been deemed qualified by a Section Review Panel (or, in exceptional circumstances, an Admissions Appeal). This is in common with other grammar schools in Buckinghamshire where there are thirteen selective grammar schools. All children in Buckinghamshire primary schools are automatically registered for testing unless the parent expressly withdraws their child. Where children attend independent primary schools or non-Buckinghamshire primary schools, parents apply to Buckinghamshire Council for testing.

22. The Arrangements set out that children with an Education, Health and Care Plan who qualify through the STT will be admitted first. Where the number of qualifying applications for admission exceed the number of places available children will be prioritised according to oversubscription criteria. These can be summarised as follows:

- a. Children in care: Looked after (CLA) and previously looked after.
- b. Pupil premium (Catchment): Children living in the catchment area of the school who qualify for Pupil Premium at the application deadline.
- c. Up to 12 places for scores 115-120 (below the qualifying standard): Up to 12 places may be offered to children whose standardised score in the STT to:
 - Looked after (CLA) or previously looked after children living anywhere, or
 - Children living in catchment (continuously from 1 September in the year preceding entry) who are eligible for Pupil Premium at the application deadline.

Within this rule, looked after (CLA) and previously looked after children are prioritised: where necessary, distance will be used to order offers.

- d. Children of Royal Latin School staff.
- e. Children living in the catchment area of the school who must have been resident at their home address continuously since 1st September in the offer year (the academic year in which offers for places are made).
- f. Siblings of children who will be on the roll of the Royal Latin School at the date of the candidate's proposed admission.
- g. Exceptional medical or social needs.

23. In 2025/26 163 of the available 174 places were allocated based on criteria linked to the School catchment area. The School is heavily oversubscribed and consistently receives more applications than there are places.

Consideration of Case

24. The Objector believes that the Schools admission policy, particularly regarding “Home Address: Definition and Evidence”, contravenes the requirements of the Code in terms of fairness, proportionality, clarity, and objective application. The Objector says that they are making a “genuine and permanent move to Buckingham” and that their children “will attend a Buckingham Primary School before 1 September 2026”. However, the parents will still own a more distant property within 15 miles of the School that has been the family home, which the School will continue to consider as the family home for admission purposes.

25. The effect is that the children are unlikely to be offered a place at the School.

26. I will now set out my consideration of the matters raised by the Objector. Where I state that I uphold an aspect of the objection, that does not necessarily imply that I fully endorse the reasoning expressed by the Objector, nor that the Objector has necessarily correctly interpreted which Code provision applies. Rather, it means that I have found that the aspect of the Arrangements drawn to my attention by the Objector does not conform with a requirement of the Code identified by me and is in breach of the Code for the reasons I have given.

27. The Objector expressed concerns about the statement in the Arrangements that refer to proof of residency and home address that says:

“If a parent of the applicant still owns a property within 15 miles of the School, which has been the main family home more recently than 1 September 2023 (i.e. four years before the proposed admission), a different property close to the school will not be accepted as the basis for a legitimate residence qualification, even if the former property is leased to a third party...”

28. Following their initial objection the objector submitted additional information that raised concerns that substantially referred to the same paragraph of the Arrangements. They concluded that:

“While the intention to prevent misuse of the admissions system is fully understood and supported, the current clause appears to go beyond what is necessary and may not represent a proportionate or appropriately targeted response.

It risks disadvantaging genuine applicants while not consistently preventing the

behaviour it seeks to address. A more proportionate approach would focus on robust verification of residence, including where appropriate periodic checks, rather than imposing inflexible conditions relating to property ownership”

The relevant issues raised here are considered below.

29. Subsequently, they provided further information related to concerns about consistency of approach to distance and residence when comparing admission arrangements from previous years. It is important to note that the Admission Arrangements are determined by the Admission Authority annually and so comparison of arrangements from year to year is not within my jurisdiction and shall, therefore, not be considered in this determination.

Fraudulent addresses

30. I will consider paragraph 14 of the Code as relevant to their objection. I will also consider paragraph 1.13 which states that (emphasis added):

“Admission authorities **must** clearly set out how distance from home to the school and/or any nodal points used in the arrangements will be measured. This **must include making clear how the “home” address will be determined** [my emphasis] and the point(s) in the school or nodal points from which all distances will be measured. This should include provision for cases where parents have shared responsibility for a child following the breakdown of their relationship and the child lives for part of the week with each parent.”

31. Paragraph 14 of the Code states that:

“admission authorities **must** ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are fair, clear and objective.”

32. Issues arise because some parents use an address which is not a genuine home address to increase their chances of obtaining a place at their preferred school. In some cases this can include temporary moves to addresses, usually rented, nearer to the school. Based on information from the School and the LA it is clear that fraudulent applications are a concern and have the potential to disadvantage genuinely local children.

33. The LA and School have provided evidence of multiple cases in recent history when a child’s home address turns out to be a different, more distant address than that which was used in the application. In 2025/26 the LA undertook eleven separate investigations into allegations related to fraudulent addresses. In several cases the concerns were proven correct by evidence including:

- The purchase of a property via “buy to let” mortgages which specifically forbids the family from living in the property

- Provision of a local address before clearly moving to a different address further away than had been previously owned.
- Families living in properties further away, moving into short-term lets closer to the School when challenged.
- Claiming to be renting a property close to the School while “family members” continue to live in previous family home.

34. Both the LA and the School have sought to deter fraudulent applications and ensure genuine residency to address a “specific and evidenced issue: families retaining ownership of a previous main home while temporarily occupying a nearer address for the purpose of admission”. The School state that the provision is “intended to ensure that:

- the address used reflects the family’s genuine principal residence;
- dual residence arrangements cannot be used to gain unfair advantage; and
- owners and renters are treated consistently.”

35. The LA confirm that all thirteen grammar schools have agreed the date for residence at an in-catchment address would be 1 September or earlier in the year preceding admissions. This has been to specifically address the issue of families adopting sixth month rental agreements within catchment areas with the specific aim of gaining a school place fraudulently. This was also designed to provide clarity to parents, whilst not prohibiting the consideration of exceptional individual circumstances.

36. The School and LA provided relevant information about how the current arrangements had been considered including:

“The 15-mile radius was selected as reasonable and proportionate distance within the local geography. It reflects a distance within which it would be entirely feasible for a family to continue living at, and commuting from, a previously owned property. As such, where a former main home remains available within this radius, it is reasonable to question whether a nearer address represents a genuine and permanent move.”

“The four-year timeframe was introduced to distinguish between recent or potentially strategic property arrangements and longer standing circumstances. A property that has been a family’s main home within the previous four years is reasonably considered to remain closely connected to that family’s residential arrangements.”

37. The Code uses the term fair, and the objection focuses on the fairness of the proof of residency requirements of the Arrangements. Fairness is focussed on the effect of the arrangements on any relevant group, in this case families who own a second home within 15 miles of the School. Fairness must be considered in context. It may be the case that the justification for the adoption of a particular set of requirements could override any unfairness.

38. To prevent fraudulent applications, the School has sought evidence that it believes necessary to ensure that an applicant's home address is genuine. In this case, the evidence required is outlined in the Arrangements, which state that:

"To qualify under the rules that refer to the school's catchment area, the applicant must have been permanently and continuously resident at the home address since 1 September of the year preceding the proposed admission. Students admitted under catchment rules are expected to remain resident in that catchment area.

If the property is rented, a legal tenancy agreement (signed by both landlord and tenant) confirming the lease has started and showing that the applicant will live at the address for at least six months after the proposed admission is required. Where such an agreement cannot be provided, additional proof of address will be required."

39. Recent structural changes to tenancy agreement requirements in England (from May 2026) from the Renters' Rights Act 2025 mean that all tenancies must now be periodic (rolling) and not fixed term. This means that the requirement for a "six months" tenancy is likely to be challenging for parents who have recently entered into a rental agreement.

40. However, in this instance, the Admission Authority has sought to provide an opportunity for families to provide evidence or, where stated evidence is not available, then an opportunity for applicants to provide alternative information to prove residency. Consideration of "additional proof of address" is likely to be fair by providing families with an opportunity to rebut the presumption that a recently rented property may not be the permanent family home. This means the Arrangements have the provision not to exclude families based on, for example, their financial situation. The opportunity to present evidence through alternative means allows this aspect of the Arrangements to be fair.

41. The Admission Arrangements also state:

"If a parent of the applicant still owns a property within 15 miles of the school which has been the main family home more recently than 1 September 2023 (i.e. four years before the proposed admission), a different property close to the school will not be accepted as the basis for a legitimate residence qualification, even if the former property is leased to a third party or has been sold to a company of which the parent(s) are a director."

42. In this instance the Arrangements make an absolute requirement related to the ownership of additional properties. This means that a family with a second property within 15 miles of the School is required to sell that property four-years prior to admission in order for a closer property to be considered as their home address, whether or not a move is genuine.

43. Because address affects the chance of gaining a place at the School, it is entirely fair and reasonable for the Admission Authority to set out circumstances in which it may be

necessary to further investigate a home address and to set out the types of evidence which may be required in order for it to make a finding of fact as to whether a claimed address is genuine or not. This addresses the clearly legitimate need to prevent the use of false addresses in applications. However, it is not fair to include absolute requirements which some applicants may be unable to meet even though they really do live at the address concerned.

44. It is conceivable that families may, for example, retain a more distant alternative property whilst having a genuine home address at a property nearer the School. There is no concern with these circumstances being treated as a reason for casting doubt on the accuracy or completeness of an application which lead to a requirement for additional evidence. However an absolute requirement which does not allow for a family to provide evidence that, despite this, the home address given is genuine, is unfair.

45. I, therefore, uphold this part of the objection.

46. It is reasonable and fair for an admission authority to set out circumstances which would cause it to presume that an address is not genuine. This could include short term tenancy or retention of another property more distant from the School. As with tenancy agreements, the applicant could be invited to provide further evidence to rebut that presumption. The Admission Authority can then consider whether the evidence provided is sufficient for it to overcome the presumption and find as fact that the address given in the application is genuine. Conversely it may consider that the evidence provided is insufficient to overcome the presumption and it will find as fact that the address given is not genuine. The Admission Authority is only required to make a finding of fact on the balance of probabilities.

47. It is clear from the experience of the School and LA that fraudulent applications are a significant concern, and they need to take steps to minimise the impact on genuine applicants, rather than those with the financial means to game the system.

48. Paragraph 2.14 of the Code states: “A school must not withdraw a place once a child has started at the school, except where that place has been fraudulently obtained”. It is therefore important that the School is in a position to identify potentially fraudulent applications and, where necessary, determine genuine residency in advance of children joining the School. Consequently, I determine that the information required in the Supplementary Information Form (SIF) is reasonable and provides the Admission Authority with relevant information. Therefore, there is no breach of paragraph 2.4 of the Code, which sets out the information that a SIF can and cannot require.

Determination

49. In accordance with section 88H(4) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, I partially uphold the objection to the admission arrangements determined by the Trust for The Royal Latin School, for 2027/28.

50. By virtue of section 88K(2) the adjudicator's decision is binding on the admission authority. The School Admissions Code requires the admission authority to revise its admission arrangements within two months of this determination.

Dated: 15 June 2026

Signed:

Schools Adjudicator: Mr Philip Lloyd