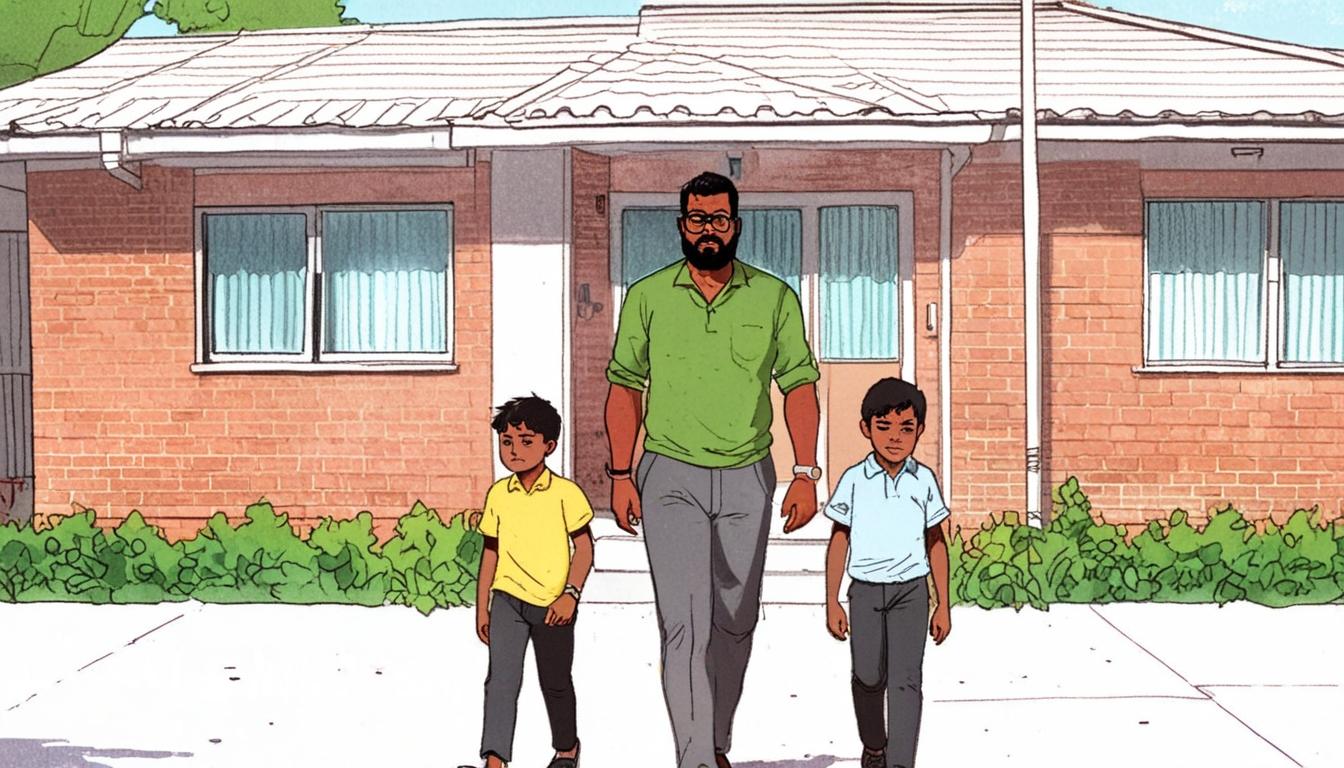
# Romesh Ranganathan criticises West Sussex council over son’s school placement



Comedian Romesh Ranganathan has publicly criticised West Sussex County Council after his youngest son was offered a place at a secondary school located “on the other side of town,” far from the schools attended by his two older brothers. The 47-year-old TV host of The Weakest Link revealed his frustration when the council failed to allocate a place at any of the schools he had listed as preferences, including the same school where his elder children are enrolled.

Mr Ranganathan said he repeatedly contacted the local authority to review his child's school placement but received no timely or satisfactory response. In his effort to seek a resolution, he even enlisted the help of his local Member of Parliament. Only then did he receive a reply from the council informing him that “they can’t do anything” about the situation. Speaking to the BBC, Mr Ranganathan explained that the distance between the assigned school and his other children’s institutions means he will likely have to put his son in a taxi to ensure he arrives on time when school begins in September.

On his Instagram account, the comedian described the situation as a “shambles” and accused the council of deprioritising children who have siblings in the same school, stating, “So the school that we put down that is the same as his brothers, they said you are not having that. Not only you’re not having that, you’re not having any of the schools you put down as a preference. In fact, we placed you at a school the other side of town. That’s it. So I’m like, well no. I don’t want that.”

Mr Ranganathan further detailed how he had sent a “beggy” email to the council but only got a response after his MP intervened. When the council finally responded, he was told they had investigated their placement procedures and found them satisfactory, a conclusion he expressed scepticism about. “It’s more than disappointing. It’s not the football. It’s my son’s school placement,” he said.

The local council confirmed to the BBC that it did not comment on individual cases but acknowledged the disappointment families experience when children are not placed in their first-choice schools.

This issue reflects a wider challenge seen across the UK, where over a third of pupils fail to obtain their top choice for secondary school. Recent National Offer Day data indicated that up to 36 percent of applicants in some parts of London and up to 26 percent in other regions were not allocated places at their preferred schools. Pepe Di’Iasio, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, stated that the increasing demand for secondary school places, especially in sought-after schools with good Ofsted ratings in affluent areas, was creating fierce competition. Meanwhile, schools with lower pupil demand face financial difficulties.

Families who do not receive offers from their preferred schools still have the option to appeal and are often placed on waiting lists, though the outcome remains uncertain. Mr Ranganathan noted that they are now on the waiting list and “will have [their] fingers crossed,” underscoring the importance of school placement decisions to families. “Isn’t your kids’ education... aren’t you allowed to be worried about it? Anyway, f\*\*\*ing annoying,” he added.

The Daily Mail is reporting that such cases highlight the growing pressures on local authorities to manage school admissions amidst rising pupil numbers and the challenges inherent in balancing demand across various schools in the area.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/mar/01/thousands-of-pupils-in-england-lose-out-on-first-choice-secondary-school-place> - This article discusses how thousands of pupils in England did not secure their first-choice secondary school places, highlighting the challenges in the school admissions process.
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/mar/01/london-secondary-school-applications-down-by-4000-after-fall-in-birthrate> - This piece reports on the decline in secondary school applications in London due to a falling birthrate, affecting school admissions and placements.
3. <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/selective-comprehensives-2024/> - The Sutton Trust's research highlights the social selectivity of top comprehensive schools in England, which can impact school placements and admissions.
4. <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/news-and-press-releases/2024/national-primary-offer-day-2024-98-get-preferred-school-place> - This press release from London Councils details the outcomes of the National Primary Offer Day 2024, showing that 98% of children received a place at one of their preferred schools.
5. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/secondary-and-primary-school-applications-and-offers/2024-25> - This government report provides statistics on secondary and primary school applications and offers for the academic year 2024/25, offering insights into school placements and admissions.
6. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn07147/> - This briefing from the House of Commons Library discusses the school admissions system in England, including the rights of parents to appeal school placements and the options available when preferred schools are not allocated.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14658369/Comedian-Romesh-Ranganathan-hits-local-council-school-shambles-son-offered-place-town.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data