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**Date: 18th February 2015**

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of **Education for Life Scrutiny Committee** will be held in the **Sirhowy Room, Penallta House, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach** on **Tuesday, 24th February, 2015** at **5.30 pm** to consider the following agenda items, which were omitted when the agenda was sent to print and are now available.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Chris Burns'.

**Chris Burns**  
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## A G E N D A

- 2a Education for Life Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 13th January 2015 (minute nos. 1 - 13).
- 6 Consultation - Proposed Admission Arrangements 2016/2017.

### **Circulation:**

All Members And Appropriate Officers

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## EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH  
ON TUESDAY, 13TH JANUARY 2015 AT 5.30 P.M.

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PRESENT:

Councillor W. David - Chair  
Councillor J. Pritchard - Vice-Chair

Councillors:

P.J. Bevan, H.R. Davies, C. Durham, C. Gordon, D. Havard, M.P. James, G. Johnston, and  
D.W.R. Preece

Cabinet Member for Education and Leisure: Mrs R. Passmore

Together with:

S. Aspinall (Acting Deputy Chief Executive), K. Cole (Manager, Learning, Education and Inclusion), G. Evans (Senior Manager- Planning & Strategy - Library Services), J. Garland (Service Manager - Social Inclusion), Bleddyn Hopkins (Assistant Director for Education), Tony Maher (Assistant Director Planning & Strategy), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

Co-opted Members: Mr A. Farina-Childs (Parent Governor), Mrs A. Goss (Parent Governor)  
Mrs P. Ireland (NUT) and Mr M. Weston (Cardiff ROC)

Also Present: Dylan Thomas (Education Rep, Youth Forum) and Lauren Prosser (Vice Chair, Youth Forum).

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillors Mrs A. Blackman, D.M. Gray, Mrs G.D. Oliver, J.E. Roberts, R. Saralis, Mrs M.E. Sargent and Mrs J. Havard (NUT).

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

### 3. MINUTES – 4TH NOVEMBER 2014

RESOLVED that, subject to it being noted that there had been no reference to the Local Development Plan, as detailed in the penultimate paragraph of Minute No. 9, the minutes of the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 4th November 2014 (minute no. 1 – 13) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**4. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THIS COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CALL - IN PROCEDURE**

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

**5. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING**

Councillor Mrs R. Passmore, Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, provided the Committee with success stories for Adult Community Learning. The current figures for the Bridges into work and Working Skills for ESF projects, which are due to finish in March, were very pleasing with all but 1 of the targets being met or exceeded with 3 months still remaining. It is anticipated that the final target of further learning for Working Skills for Adults participants will be met as soon as all the data is processed.

The Committee noted that The Prince of Wales formally opened Newbridge Memorial Hall and Institute on 12th December 2014. The recently opened Library and Cash Office has seen an increase of 23% in visits since its first calendar year of operation and issued 50,000 books and other items to local residents.

Councillor R. Passmore congratulated Heledd Gwynant, a Year 11 Student at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni on a successful audition to join the Percussion Section of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain.

The Scrutiny Committee were pleased to note the Cabinet Members update and extended their best wishes to the student at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni.

**6. CABINET REPORTS**

None of the Cabinet Reports listed on the agenda had been called forward for discussion at the meeting.

**REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to the following reports.

**7. PRESENTATION BY THE YOUTH FORUM**

Dylan Thomas (Education Rep, Youth Forum) and Lauren Prosser (Vice Chair, Youth Forum) presented the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee with the Youth Forum Priorities through a Digital Story by the Junior Forum, and a Presentation by the Youth Forum. The presentations outlined the issues affecting Young People, such as Littering, Bullying Awareness, Dog Fouling, Mental Health Awareness and offering more meaningful work experiences. In addition, the Youth Forum Priorities also included a proposal to progress an awareness campaign for young people around Domestic Abuse, create Educational Resources, a Poster Campaign and a White Band Campaign, alongside the White Ribbon Campaign.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning and Members of the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee thanked the Youth Forum representatives for their excellent presentation and the valid and important priorities identified. It was noted that the Cabinet expressed a keen interest in the White Band Campaign and would look to support it where possible.

Members discussed Mental Health Awareness and concerns were raised that there were no services in place for young people between the ages of 16 to 18. Officers highlighted that services such as counseling are available within schools, and work closely with CAHMS, NHS specialists in child and adolescent mental health.

Members highlighted issues with littering within their area and sought further information from the young people on their plans to tackle the issue. The Core Group of the Junior Forum intended to work together to develop a poster campaign, which would be distributed within schools to raise awareness. In addition, Members suggested school visits and approaching local companies to sponsor the campaign and additional litterbins.

The Caerphilly Youth Champion, Councillor Prew thanked the Scrutiny Committee for the opportunity to present the Youth and Junior Forum issues and Cabinet for supporting the Domestic Abuse and White Bands Campaign. Members discussed Domestic Abuse and queried the level of education and understanding and the support in schools for victims of Domestic Abuse. It was determined that the level of explanation of Domestic Abuse varied between different schools and PSE lessons. The Acting Deputy Chief Executive added that Although there is no specific support in schools, there is a strong team of staff within schools, who could make referrals to respective organisations to provide support.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Youth Forum and Junior Forum for their presentation.

## **8. IMPROVING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

J. Garland, Service Manager, Social Inclusion, presented Members with a report and presentation, which highlighted the progress made in improving attendance in schools within the borough.

The Committee noted that during the academic year 2013/14 there was an increase in both primary and secondary school attendance in comparison with 2012/13. There remains evidence of a strong correlation between poor attendance and those children and young people eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), which has also been indicated in the National Statistics First Release Absenteeism from Secondary Schools in Wales 2013/14. Members noted that improving attendance remains a priority for the Local Authority (LA) and is a target in the Learning Education and Inclusion Service Improvement Plan.

Members thanked the Officer for the report and highlighted that secondary school attendance appeared to be falling behind the Welsh Average every year, and queried the target for 2015/16. Officers highlighted that the target for 2015/16 would be set in the coming weeks. Members noted that all authorities have seen an improvement in attendance as a result of collaboration and information sharing and were asked to consider factors that have an impact on attendance within Caerphilly, such as pupil holidays and the targeted intervention work that has been undertaken within schools.

A Member queried whether Trinity Fields was included in the Authority's attendance data. It was explained that only mainstream schools were included in the Welsh Government data, however, this also included Resource Bases. Members noted that separating the Resource Based and Mainstream data would be difficult and the impact on the attendance data would be minimal.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Officer for the report and was pleased to note the progress being made in improving attendance in schools within the borough.

## **9. REDUCING EXCLUSIONS**

J. Garland, Service Manager, Social Inclusion, presented Members with a report and presentation, which provided an overview of the progress made in relation to exclusions from schools within the Borough.

The Local Authority (LA) works with schools and other partners to ensure a robust approach towards the reduction of exclusions. During 2011/12, the need to reduce exclusions became an urgent priority and has continued to be a focus in all key plans.

The Committee noted that there were no permanent exclusions issued in primary schools for three consecutive years. There has, however, been a significant increase in the number of permanent exclusions issued in secondary schools. There were no fixed term exclusions issued in over 50% of primary schools. There was a decrease in the overall number of fixed term exclusions as well as the number of days lost due to all exclusions in both primary and secondary schools. However, the number of days lost due to fixed term exclusions of 6 days or more in primary schools has increased significantly. The aforementioned increases in exclusions have caused concern and are a priority for the LA.

During 2013/14, there were disproportionately more exclusions issued to boys compared with girls. This was more pronounced in primary schools. There were more exclusions issued to children who were eligible for free school meals (FSM) compared with those who were not eligible for FSMs in primary schools. This is a different picture in secondary schools with disproportionately more exclusions issued to children who are not eligible for FSM. There were less exclusions issued to children in vulnerable groups including children who are Looked After and those with Statements of Special Educational Needs compared with those who were not in these groups.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Officer for the report and discussed the statistics and trends. It was highlighted that there is a notable difference in the exclusions issued to boys compared with girls. Officers provided that there are number of variances between the gender groups and how they deal with and present emotions etc. Factors such as age and background can have an impact on behaviour; however, the implementation of the Behaviour Strategy would facilitate further reductions in exclusions.

A Member highlighted that there were no permanent exclusions issued in the last 3 years in primary schools; however there was an increase in fixed term exclusions (over 6 days) issued in primary schools and as a result, sought further information on any policy changes. The Officer provided that permanent exclusions in Primary Schools are highly irregular, however there are situations that could warrant a lengthy fixed term exclusion, which could result in the child being placed in alternative provision. In addition, Members noted that the schools were responsible for managing behaviour and have implemented a number of sanctions prior to the issuing of exclusion.

Members discussed the data and sought further information on the 14 exclusions made and their placements. It was highlighted that some children had moved outside of the Local Authority area. The Committee noted that all placements have been going well and evidence has suggested that a fresh start in an alternative school is often the action necessary to improve the behaviour and attainment of a pupil.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

**10. CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH LIBRARY SERVICE MTFP 2015/17 – REVISED 'TIERING OF DELIVERY' OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

G. Evans, Senior Manager, Planning & Strategy - Library Services, presented the Committee with revised saving options for the Council's Public Library Service, following a request in June 2014, that further development and consideration of option 3 ('Present network of Public Libraries maintained but opening arrangements and contracted hours of staff employment are tapered to a more economical sustainable level linked to the Borough's present banding model of delivery') be brought back to Committee.

The Committee noted that Option 3 had been revised into two substantive proposals for consideration.

Option 3(a), which would contribute an estimated part year saving of £67k in 2015/16 and £134k saving in 2016/17, provided that all locations share a reduction in opening times from 570.5 to 496.5, and there would be no loss in the number of service points available to the public. Saturday provision would be retained at 4 largest town centre facilities, however this option would require a £70k investment in 7 self-service computer kiosks at smaller sites and a degree of single staffed provision to generate the savings required. Members noted that over 60 posts would be affected by some level of employment change, as roles would require variation to better match the new opening times. In addition, Members noted that Option 3(a) was the least disruptive tapering option that retained best match to present arrangements.

Option 3(b), which would contribute an estimated part year saving of £59.5k in 2015/16 and £119k in 2016/17, provided that all locations share a reduction in opening times from 570.5 to 496.5, however, there would be no loss in the number of service points available to the public and Saturday access would be retained at the present 9 locations currently provided. This option would require a £70k investment in 7 self-service computer kiosks at smaller sites and a degree of single staffed provision to generate the savings required. Members noted that over 60 posts would be affected by some level of employment change, such as some staff at smaller sites to work every weekend. In addition, Members noted that Option 3(b) was the more disruptive and poses a higher probability of unplanned library closures due to inability to provide suitable cover on Saturdays.

The Scrutiny Committee considered the performance information on each service point for weekday and weekend activity. Members noted that the generic 'mean' weekday performance, between April and November 2014 demonstrated that provision was marginally above an equivalent Saturday, however, use by families and children etc may be higher on a given Saturday, but could not be easily identified from the total activity levels reported.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Officer for the information and discussion and debate ensued.

A Member requested further information on the 4 main libraries that are planned to open and whether there would be any scope for other sites to open on a Saturday. The Officer highlighted that this could be considered following the implementation of one of the options. Members noted that staffing issues and customer services are a concern and priority and the options have been carefully considered with these in mind.

The Committee discussed the Saturday Opening and staff cover in Option 3(a). It was noted that a rota system would be implemented in order to distribute staff cover fairly and this principle would negate lone working at a site.

Members discussed opportunities to offer space within libraries to organisations, in order to increase income, as arranged in Abercarn. The Officer highlighted that this could be considered and explored provided the option was sustainable.

Members discussed Option 3(b) and raised concerns around impact on library users where their local sites would no longer open on a Saturday. Officers highlighted that the table within the presentation demonstrated the footfall within libraries during the week and weekend and presented that footfall within libraries are busier during the week. In addition, Members were assured that the 6pm closing time would be maintained at least 1 day per week in all libraries with the aim to accommodate the public as much as is possible within the restricted budget.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the Scrutiny Committee supported Option 3a and their views be forwarded to Cabinet for approval. By a show of hands this was agreed by the majority present.

## **11. DRAFT SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2015-16**

T. Maher, Assistant Director Planning & Strategy provided the Committee with an overview of the report and appendices, which was considered by Cabinet on 29th October 2014.

The report provided details of the Provisional 2015/16 Local Government Settlement along with an updated Medium Term Financial Plan for the period 2015/16 to 2017/18. The report also presented details of proposed savings for 2015/16 totalling £12.208m and a proposal to increase Council Tax for 2015/16 by 3.9%.

The Scrutiny Committee were asked to consider an additional saving requirement of £50,000, which was considered and approved by Cabinet. The saving was identified within the SEN Out of County/ LAC/ Inter Authority budget, which has demonstrated a significant underspend for a number of years.

Members raised concerns about the reduction of the budget the risk of increased demand in the future. Officers reassured the Committee that the risk of overspend on the budget is low, however, additional funds could be called upon from within departmental budgets, Corporate Budgets or Council reserves if required.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the saving proposal in the report be endorsed and forwarded to Cabinet for approval. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

## **12. REQUESTS FOR AN ITEM TO BE PLACED ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AGENDA**

The following requests for reports were received.

- (1) Councillor Denver Preece requested a report on the reduction in Free School Meals (FSM) take-up. It was agreed that the Acting Deputy Chief Executive would circulate a report to the Committee. Scrutiny Committee agreed that a further update would be brought to committee in six months to take into account the recent FSM promotion and reflect any impact
- (2) Councillor Colin Gordon requested an update on 21 Century schools development at Oakdale Plateau.
- (3) Councillor Derek Havard requested a report on Governor Training. It was noted that the report has been tabled for the next Education Scrutiny Committee.

## **13. INFORMATION ITEMS**

The Committee noted the following items for information, full details of which were included within the Officers reports. They were not brought forward for review.

1. New Governance Arrangements for South East Wales Education Achievement Service.
2. Discretionary Incidents in Schools Report 2014.
3. School Challenge Cymru Update.

The meeting closed at 8.05 p.m.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2015, they were signed by the Chair.



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CHAIR

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## EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 24TH FEBRUARY 2015

**SUBJECT: CONSULTATION – PROPOSED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS  
2016/2017**

**REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To consult Members on the proposed changes to the schools admission arrangements for the academic year 2016/2017.
- 1.2 To give Scrutiny Members the opportunity to comment on proposals as part of the consultation process before recommendations are considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 1 April 2015.

### **2. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 2.1 Ensuring that the Authority's admission arrangements are reviewed to meet the needs of schools and the Authority and comply with relevant legislation.

### **3. THE REPORT**

- 3.1 Members will recall that they are consulted annually regarding the proposed admission arrangements. The only significant changes proposed for 2016/17 relates to Secondary School Rationalisation Phase 1 – Islwyn West (Page 10 of the attached admission arrangements).
- 3.2 The consultation process has been taking place over the last couple of months and ends on 1st March in accordance with the school admissions Code. Consultees have included all Headteachers, all Chairs of Governors and all neighbouring LA's, as well as CCBC's Admission Forum and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.3 In accordance with paragraph 2.10 of the Code, the admission arrangements must be determined by 15 April and will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 1 April 2015.

### **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The admission arrangements for 2016/17 have been assessed and no negative impact has been identified. The arrangements note compliance with current Equalities, Human Rights and Welsh Language legislation.

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None.

## **6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 None.

## **7. CONSULTATIONS**

7.1 The Admission Forum meets termly to review all admission arrangements and procedures.

7.2 Other consultees are as outlined below and as stated in the report.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 Members are asked to consider the report and provide any comments as part of the consultation process.

## **9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 To ensure agreed changes are implemented for the 2016/17 academic year.

## **10. STATUTORY POWER**

10.1 The School Admissions Code (2013) and Schools Admissions Appeal Code (2013).

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Consultees: Sandra Aspinall, Acting Deputy Chief Executive  
Tony Maher, Assistant Director, Planning & Strategy  
Keri Cole, Manager, Learning Education & Inclusion  
Bleddyn Hopkins, Assistant Director, 21st Century Schools  
Councillor R Passmore, Cabinet Member, Education and Lifelong Learning  
Sue Richards, Principal Officer, Finance  
Lynne Donovan, Personnel Manager  
David Thomas, Senior Policy Officer  
Susan Ead, Legal Services  
School Admission Forum  
Headteachers and Chairs of Governors, CCBC schools  
Neighbouring LA's

Appendices:

Appendix: Proposed Admission Arrangements For 2016/17

Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning

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# Admission Arrangements For 2016/17

Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning

*Changing Lives, Building Futures • Newid Bywydau, Creu Dyfodol*

## **Primary & Secondary Education Admission & Transfer Arrangements**

In line with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, subsequent legislative updates and Welsh Governments (WG's) Schools Admissions Code, these admission arrangements will aim to ensure that:

- Parent's preference for the schools of their choice is considered in the context of a legislative framework, which has regard to the provision of efficient education and the efficient use of resources;
- Admissions criteria are clear, fair and objective, for the benefit of all children including children with special educational needs or with disabilities;
- Local admission arrangements contribute to improving standards;
- The Local Authority (LA) consults with neighbouring Admission authorities and co-ordinates arrangements, including the rapid reintegration wherever reasonable of children who have been excluded from other schools;
- Parents have easy access to helpful admissions information;
- The LA's admission arrangements seek to achieve full compliance with all relevant legislation and guidance, including legislation on infant class sizes and equal opportunities (Equalities Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Welsh Language Act 1993) and take full account of the guidance in the Code issued by the Welsh Government;
- The Equality Act 2010 and Caerphilly County Borough Council's (CCBC) Strategic Equality Plan emphasises the legal general duty the Council and its partners have to:-
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
  - Promote equal opportunities.
  - Promote good relations and mutual respect.
- This Council will work actively against discrimination and seek to create equal access to its services for all, irrespective of ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, language, nationality, responsibility for any dependents or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

## Choosing a School

The entry of children to schools is controlled and administered by an 'Admissions Authority'. In the case of Community Schools, this is the Caerphilly County Borough Council (the LA). In the case of the one Voluntary Aided School (St. Helen's Roman Catholic Primary School) and one Foundation School (Cwmcarn High School) the Admissions Authority is the Governing Body of the school. Within the County Borough, each school has an area that it traditionally serves called the "catchment area". In line with legislation, LA's must allow all parents the opportunity to express a preference for the school they wish their child to attend.

**Pupils who reside within a defined catchment area of a school do not have an automatic right to attend that school. A written application must be made and the placements will be allocated in accordance with the LA's admissions procedure.**

Parents may exercise their right to express a preference at the following times:

- on admission to an infant school or the infant department of a primary school. Nursery admissions are dealt with in Section 1.2.
- on transfer from infant to junior school or infant school to junior department of a primary school.
- on transfer from junior or primary to secondary school.
- when parents wish to transfer their child from one school to another.

Parents may also express a preference for their child to attend a Voluntary Aided School or a Foundation School.

The LA (in the case of Community Schools) and School Governing Body (in the case of Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools) must comply with any preference, which is expressed, provided there is room within the school. However the decision to admit pupils, must take account of:-

- the overall provision of efficient education and efficient use of resources.
- whether it is a co-educational or single sex school.
- Section 87 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (and subsequent legislative updates and WGs schools Admissions Code), which also allows an admission authority to refuse to comply with parental preference for a period of two years following a second or subsequent exclusion.
- where to admit would be incompatible with the duty to meet Infant class size limit of 30 because the admission would require measures to be taken to comply with those limits which would cause prejudice to efficient education or efficient use of resources.

The local catchment areas for schools providing primary education are normally grouped together to form a linked catchment area for each maintained secondary school.

**Admission or attendance of pupils at the feeder junior / primary school does not provide automatic entry to the chosen secondary school. All parents are required to complete admission forms at the appropriate time.**

All schools within the LA aim to provide their pupils with an educational opportunity, which is best suited to each individual child. Some pupils will, however, have learning needs requiring special educational provision. In some instances parents will already be receiving specialist support and guidance regarding the choice of school for their child.

All parents, however, are encouraged to discuss possible areas of concern with their local Headteacher who may then seek specialist advice.

### **Welsh Medium Schools**

All of the above arrangements apply equally to Welsh Medium schools within the Authority. Admission to Welsh medium primary schools is not dependant upon the parents or pupils being fluent Welsh speakers.

There are currently 11 Welsh medium primary schools within the LA whose catchment areas cover the entire LA's boundary and are not restricted to the catchment areas of the local English medium school. Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni will provide Welsh medium secondary education to all CCBC resident pupils, subject to parental preference.

### **Admission Limit**

All maintained schools will admit pupils up to their admissions number.

A child will normally be offered admission to the school of the parents' preference unless applications exceed the admission number, when this occurs all applications for that school will be assessed against the oversubscription criteria.

The normal ages for admission to CCBC schools are:-

- Age 3/4 in Nursery
- Age 4/5 in Infant and Primary Schools
- Age 7/8 in Junior Schools;
- Age 11/12 in Secondary Schools.

The LA's policy is to provide all 3/4 year old children in the Caerphilly County Borough an entitlement to a funded part-time nursery place at their local infant or primary school.



## **Oversubscription Criteria - these apply to all admissions to oversubscribed schools**

1. Looked After Children (children in public care) and those who were previously Looked After Children.
2. Those children who live in the school's catchment area on or before the published closing date.
3. Children recommended for placement for medical, psychological or special educational reasons. These must be confirmed by the LA's professional advisers.
4. Children with siblings (brothers and sisters) living in the same household attending the school in September 2016. The sibling must be of statutory school age. A sibling is a child who is the brother/sister, half brother/sister (children who share on common parent), step brother/sister where two children are related by marriage. This definition also includes adopted or fostered children living at the same address.
5. After taking account of the above categories, priority will be based on the closeness to the school measured by the LA's G.I.S (Geographical Information System) database. Distance is measured from the nearest entrance or gate of the home to the nearest gate or entrance of the school. If the LA has the situation where any home addresses calculate the same distance then a trundle wheel will be used to establish the nearest address. When considering whether a child lives in a school's catchment area, the address considered is that of the parent or legal guardian, irrespective of a family's domestic arrangements. i.e. the address of another relative or childminder etc. must not be given. In certain cases it may be necessary to provide evidence relating to the child(ren) in question, to show the home address of the child(ren).

Children of UK service personnel will be treated as in catchment if their application form is accompanied by an official Ministry of Defence (MOD) letter declaring a definite return date and confirmation of the new address.

Pupils from outside the school's catchment area will be admitted in accordance with parental preference if the Admission Number of the school, class or unit has not been reached and, if selection is necessary, the criteria shown above will be used.

Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives with both parents for part of the week then the home address will be determined as the address where a child lives for the majority of the week (e.g. 3 out of the 5 school days). Parents will be required to provide documentary evidence to support the address they wish to be considered for allocation purposes.

## **Multiple Birth Children (e.g. twins or triplets)**

If when applying the oversubscription criteria the last child to be admitted is one of a multiple birth e.g twin or triplet then the LA will also admit the other sibling(s).

## **Waiting Lists**

Following the allocation of places during the normal admission round any pupil that is refused admission to an oversubscribed school will remain on a waiting list for placement until the 30<sup>th</sup> September of that school year.

After the 30<sup>th</sup> September parents will need to make a new application for admission to their preferred school.

## **Organisation of Schools**

### **1. Primary Education**

Every child is required by law to receive full time education from the beginning of the school term after his/her fifth birthday. In CCBC, however, all children are able to start school full time at the beginning of the school year (September) in which they become five i.e. between the 1st September and the 31<sup>st</sup> August. Parents are able to defer the start of a child until the term following their fifth birthday.

All children are able to attend school on a part time basis in the September following their third birthday. Children between the ages of 3/4-11 are recognised as pupils receiving primary education. In Caerphilly County Borough, primary education is provided either in separate infant or junior schools, or in primary schools with one complete 3/4 -11 age range.

## **Reduction of Infant Class Sizes**

Choosing a school for the first time for a young child is especially important, both for parents and for children themselves. In accordance, with Infant Class Size Legislation, infant classes at a maintained school should contain no more than 30 pupils where a teaching session is managed by a single qualified teacher (or where the session is managed by more than one qualified teacher, no more than 30 pupils for every teacher).

### **1.1 Admission to an Early Years Placement at a Nursery School**

Children born between the 1<sup>st</sup> September and the 31<sup>st</sup> March or Good Friday depending on which date falls the latest maybe entitled to an Early Years placement (term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday) at their local Primary/Infant school dependant on availability.

Where a school has reached their Admission Number in their current nursery and where the in catchment pupils exceed 70%, only pupils who reside within the schools catchment area will be admitted into an Early Years placement.

**Please note that admission into an Early Years place in either the Spring or Summer term does not entitle your child to continue education in the nursery year at the school. An application for admission into the nursery year at the school will need to be made at the relevant time.**

## **1.2 Admission to Nursery Year**

The number of places available in a nursery year is set by the LA and the decision whether to admit your child will be taken in accordance with the LA's guidelines, which follow.

**Pupils who are admitted to a nursery year, will not have an “automatic” right to continued education within that school. A formal application must be made for entry into the reception year at the appropriate time. Applications for admissions should be made before 28<sup>th</sup> February 2016. For any assistance, please contact Mrs. Andrea West, School Admissions and Exclusions Manager or other members of the team on the following telephone 01443 864870, 864897 and 864896.**

## **1.3 Admission to an Infant School or Infant Department within a Primary School**

Pupils who attain the age of five during the school year may be admitted to an infant school/department, at the commencement of the school year in September.

Pupils admitted to a separate infant school will not have an 'automatic' right to continued education at the feeder Junior School which serves the same catchment area. Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate such pupils, a formal application must be made for transfer to the Junior school at the appropriate time.

Applications for admissions should be made as early as possible and before 18th December 2015. For any assistance, please contact Mrs Andrea West – School Admissions and Exclusions Manager Telephone: 01443 864870 or other members of the team on the following numbers 01443 864896, 864897 and 864806.

## **1.4 Transfer to Junior Schools**

Children enter or transfer to a Junior School on the first day of the Autumn term following their seventh birthday. In Primary Schools the infant and junior sections are simply departments of the same school and children progress through the school from the infants to juniors without having to transfer elsewhere.

Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate such pupils, a formal application must be made for transfer to the Junior school at the appropriate time.

Applications for admissions should be made as early as possible and before 18th December 2015. For any assistance, please contact Mrs Andrea West – School Admissions and Exclusions Manager Telephone: 01443 864870 or other members of the team on the following numbers 01443 864896, 864897 and 864806.

## **1.5 Changing Schools: Primary Education**

Changing schools during primary education is a significant step for your child to take. In the case of moving the family home, such a decision may well be a necessity and you will need to contact your local school or the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning for assistance. If, however, you would like your child to transfer from one school to another, please contact your present Headteacher first. Should you still wish to proceed with these transfer arrangements; you must apply in writing to Mrs. Andrea West, School Admissions

and Exclusions Manager, Tŷ Penallta, Tredomen Park, Ystrad Mynach, CF82 7PG Tel: 01443 864870.

If there is a suitable vacancy, your child will be admitted to the school. Parents should note, however, that classes may include more than one age group and the Headteacher will have the task of locating your child in the most appropriate class.

The statutory infant class size limit for classes of predominantly 5, 6 and 7 year olds is 30. But admissions outside the normal admissions round which would increase the number of pupils in an Infant Class to over 30 are permitted where there is no other suitable school within a reasonable distance. The resulting breach of the 30 class size limit can only continue for the remainder of that school year.

## **2. Admission to Secondary Schools**

Children normally transfer from primary school to secondary school at the beginning of the school year following their eleventh birthday. If your child was born between 1st September 2004 and 31st August 2005 she/he will transfer to secondary school in September 2016. Headteachers of primary schools will be able to inform parents of the secondary school which their children should normally attend. Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate pupils, an application must be made for transfer to secondary schools at the appropriate time. Applications for admissions should be made as early as possible and before 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2015.

### **2.1 Changing Secondary School**

Changing secondary schools is a significant step for your child to take. In the case of moving the family home, such a decision may well be a necessity and you will need to contact your local school or the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning for assistance. If however, you would like your child to transfer from one secondary school to another, please contact your present Headteacher first. Should you still wish to proceed with these transfer arrangements; you must contact the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning for advice in making your application, which will then be required in writing. In considering your request for transfer, the LA will review the number of pupils in the year group relevant to your child. If the child is in years 10 or 11, the range of subject options chosen may also be a factor. If that particular year has not reached the school's admissions number, then your child will be admitted to the school. Parents should note, however, that curriculum option choices may vary from school to school.

#### **Applying for a Place**

When you apply for a place at a particular school, you must complete the relevant application form, which is available at the school. You must apply by the closing dates shown below for admission in September 2016. The LA will inform you whether or not it is possible for your child to attend your preferred school. Each school produces a prospectus, which contains relevant information including school aims and educational beliefs, the organization of the school and curriculum opportunities, including out of school activities. This school prospectus is available from the Headteacher.

<b>Timetable for admissions to schools September 2016</b>
The proposed timetable to process applications for <b>Secondary</b> schools for September 2016 is:
Admission Forms distributed to parents <b>11th September 2015</b>
Forms returned to LA <b>23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015</b>
Parents notified of outcome <b>1<sup>st</sup> March 2016</b>
The proposed timetable to process applications for <b>Primary</b> schools for September 2016 is:
Admission Forms distributed to parents <b>6th November 2015</b>
Forms to be returned to LA <b>18th December 2015</b>
Parents notified of outcome <b>28th February 2016</b>
The proposed timetable to process applications for <b>Nursery</b> schools for September 2016 is:
Admission Forms sent to parents <b>15th January 2016</b>
Forms to be returned to LA <b>28th February 2016</b>
Parents notified of outcome after the <b>1<sup>st</sup> May 2016</b>

### **Late Applications**

Any applications that are received after the closing date for admission will be refused if the school is oversubscribed unless the family has just moved into the catchment area and the application is received before the offer of places are made. If the application is received after the places have been offered and documented evidence is provided to demonstrate that the family have moved into the catchment area of the school the pupil will be given higher priority on the waiting list.

### **Withdrawing Offers of Places**

The offer of a school place will be withdrawn on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application being received (e.g. falsely claiming to reside within a catchment area of a school).

## **What Happens if your Child is Refused a Place?**

In the vast majority of cases children are offered places at their parents' first choice of school. If, however, your child is unable to gain admission, you will need to decide whether you are willing to accept a place offered at a different school, or whether you wish to continue with your first application. If you choose the latter course, you may appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. This Independent Appeal Panel will judge whether the school is full and, should that be the case, whether the parent's application is so strong that the child should still be offered a place. Before you appeal, please consider the LA's admissions criteria (outlined previously on page 5). It should be noted that Nursery age pupils have no right of appeal.

## **Registering your Appeal**

You may make a formal appeal against the LA's decision, but this must be received within 28 calendar days of you being notified of the decision not to admit your child to your chosen school. You should forward this appeal in writing, to the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning. The LA will refer the appeal to the Council's Legal Department who will arrange for the appeal to be heard by an Independent Appeal Panel and will set a time and place for the hearing. The Panel will afford parents an opportunity of appearing and making their representations (oral and/or written). Parents are advised that agencies such as SNAP & ACE are available to provide assistance in making appeals.

## **Secondary Rationalisation Phase 1 – Islwyn West**

In accordance with the Statutory Public Notice the new replacement Comprehensive School on the Oakdale Plateau will be established as from January 2017. This will replace the existing Oakdale Comprehensive School and Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School.

The new school's Admission number from September 2016 will be 220. This number will be reduced to 180 from September 2017. For September 2016 pupils will be expected to attend the existing sites of the old schools but the Admission Number of 220 will apply. Allocation of placement will be carried out using the Authority's published Admission Arrangements.

**Parents, however, are advised that: -**

1. they may elect not to attend the appeal meeting and, instead, allow the appeal to be considered on a written statement;
2. the appeal will be decided on the information available if, having failed to give a reasonable explanation, they do not appear;
3. they will be given at least fourteen days (from the date of posting) written notice of the meeting of the Appeal Panel;
3. they are welcome to be accompanied by a friend, or represented by a solicitor, but that, in the latter case, the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning should be informed at least seven days before the hearing. Please note that a separate Appeal Panel hears appeals against decisions of the Governing Body of a Voluntary Aided or Foundation School. Guidance on such an appeal should, therefore, be sought from the school concerned. Please note that limitations will be placed on the powers of the appeal panel to allow appeals against the refusal to admit a child to a school where infant class size legislation applies. The LA will not consider a second admission application unless there is a significant change in circumstances (which will need to be evidenced).

**Sixth Form Admissions**

The admission of Sixth Form pupils to Community Schools is determined by individual schools. Therefore applications should be made directly to the school.

**Disability Discrimination**

The Council has in place an Accessibility Strategy, which details how the Council will meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and preceding Disability Discrimination legislation.

The Strategy covers all aspects of accessibility including access to premises, curriculum and written information. The strategy contains the Council's plans to improve physical access to school premises across the borough to minimise the barriers to disabled pupils accessing education. In a number of cases due to the topography of a school site, it may not be deemed accessible for a child with a physical disability. In such cases parents/guardians will be provided with the details of the nearest accessible school which is able to meet the child's needs.

Admissions forms are screened by Education in order to highlight any children with medical condition/physical disability. Parents will be contacted at the earliest opportunity to discuss the child's needs and a suitable school placement will be considered.

The School and Officers of the Council work closely with parents to ensure that detailed assessments are in place to support the inclusion of pupils, where possible within their chosen school.

**Usage of Accommodation**

The LA continually reviews the usage of accommodation at all Infant, Junior and Primary schools and subsequently updates the Capacity and Admission Number to reflect this review.

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