

Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning

Admission Arrangements For 2016/17

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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 30th September of that school year.

After the 30th 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 31st 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 1st September and the 31st March or Good Friday depending on which date falls the latest maybe entitled to an Early Years placement (term after their 3rd 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 28th 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 23rd 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.

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

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.