

CARMARTHENSIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY 2020-21

April 2019



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1.0 ADMISSION

1.1 The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 assigns functions to Admission Authorities, Appeal Panels and Admission Forum in relation to the admission of pupils to school.

1.2 **Carmarthenshire LA, and not the school, is the Admission Authority** for all maintained and Voluntary Controlled schools in Carmarthenshire. For Voluntary Aided schools the Governing Body acts as an admission authority.

1.3 Each of these bodies has a statutory duty to “act” in accordance with the School Admissions Code and the Schools Admission Appeals Code.

1.4 In accordance with the Admission Code the Authority is seeking to obtain the view of the Governing Body in relation to the Authority’s Admission policy and arrangements.

2.0 ADMISSION AUTHORITIES

2.1 Admission Authorities

The admission of children to schools is controlled by an Admissions Authority.

(a) For Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Carmarthenshire

In the case of community schools (formerly known as county schools) and Voluntary Controlled schools within Carmarthenshire, the Admission Authority is Carmarthenshire Local Authority (LA). The contact details for Carmarthenshire CC are as follows:-

Admissions Team,

Carmarthenshire County Council,

Department for Education and Children,

Block 2,

St David’s Park,

Job’s Well Road,

Carmarthen. SA31 3HB.

Telephone No: 01267 246449

E-mail: admissions@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

(b) For Schools in Neighbouring Authorities

Given its geographical location Carmarthenshire shares its borders with other Local Authorities.

Should the school you wish your child to attend be in another local authority area then you should contact that Authority.

(c) For Voluntary Aided Schools in Carmarthenshire

For Voluntary Aided Church in Wales schools and the Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Schools the Admission Authority is the School Governing Body.

2.2 CHOOSING A SCHOOL

(a) Local / Catchment Area School

The Council recognises that there is an important relationship between a school and its community. The Council has therefore identified a designated geographical area which the school serves and is referred to as the school's catchment area.

Details of a school's catchment area are available at the school, the County Council's [website](#) or are available from the relevant Admissions Authority.

Whilst living in a school's catchment area does not guarantee admission to the school it is an important factor as it will give the application a higher priority than those from individuals who live outside the catchment area.

Residency within the defined catchment area of a school is also important as it is one of the key criteria in assessing eligibility for assistance with home to school transport. Details of the home to school transport can be found [here](#).

Prior to making an application for admission to a school the Council strongly recommends that you contact, discuss and if possible **visit your local school** so that you are aware of the facilities and opportunities they are able to offer.

(b) Parental Preference

As indicated, the Council advises that the first point of contact in making a choice of school would be the local designated catchment area school.

Whilst, in practice, most parents send their child to their local catchment area school, parents have a right to state a preference for different schools. If you wish to do so it is recommended that you **contact the school you are considering before making a final choice**.

Where you choose a school which is not your designated catchment area school or the nearest school to your home there are some practical issues which you need to consider fully prior to making a decision.

The first is that if a child does not attend the catchment area school or the nearest school to the home address and this decision is based on parental preference, then the responsibility, as well as the cost, of transporting the pupil to and from school, rests entirely with the parents/carer.

Parents indicate that this can be a particular problem if they then subsequently have a younger sibling who is not admitted to the same primary school.

It is prudent, therefore, to consider and plan for this possibility prior to making an application for admission to an out-of-catchment school.

The second issue relates to the stage at which pupils move from the primary school to the secondary sector. Admission to secondary schools is based on whether or not your home address is in the secondary school's catchment area and not the primary school attended. Where therefore a pupil has attended a primary school which is not their designated catchment area school there is an increased probability that they may not be able to transfer to the same secondary school as their peers and fellow pupils.

These issues will not apply in many instances but as they have caused difficulties for parents in the past it is recommended that you consider and have planned for such eventualities before making your final choice.

The Council and school governors will lawfully comply with any preference for a particular school which is expressed. As with all applications a preference for a particular school will need to be considered and assessed as part of the admission process to ensure that the Authority does not exceed the limit for admission of pupils to that school for the relevant year group.

(c) Parental Preference - Twice Excluded Pupils

If a pupil has already been permanently excluded from two or more schools then, whilst a parent may express a preference for a school at which they wish their child to be educated, the Admission Authority does not have to comply with that preference for a period of two years from the date of the latest exclusion.

This does not apply to students with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN), children below compulsory school age, children who have been re-instated, or who would have been re-instated had it been practical to so, or looked-after children where the application for admission is made by the corporate parent.

(d) Meeting Additional / Special Educational Needs

Some children have additional or special educational needs and or a disability that require extra provision to be made for them to be able to learn effectively. For more information contact the Additional Learning Needs Manager (01267) 246451.

2.3 THE SCHOOL'S ADMISSION NUMBER – A LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF PUPILS ADMITTED

Every school has an Admission Number (AN) which specifies and limits the number of pupils who can be admitted to each year group in the school. The AN for each school is given in the schedule of schools in Appendix A.

The AN for each school has been set by using the capacity formula determined by the Welsh Government. The calculation is based on national guidelines (Measuring the Capacity of Schools In Wales Circular 021/2011) and relates to the physical area of the school buildings, the type of facilities at the school, the age range and number of year groups in the school.

As the AN is based on the school's capacity to provide appropriate accommodation and facilities for pupils it should not be exceeded.

The AN applies to the age group into which the pupils are admitted into the school and places a limit on the number of pupils that can be admitted. In the normal year of entry the Admissions Authority must admit pupils until the AN is reached. Should the number of applications received for admission to a school exceed the AN then the Authority will prioritise the applications it has received in accordance with the over subscription criteria detailed in this document.

In such circumstances parents may not therefore be successful in gaining a place for their child at their preferred school.

School governors and the LA must always keep the AN under review.

2.4 CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOLS

All Carmarthenshire schools are classified as co-educational schools in that they cater for boys and girls and unless noted otherwise are day schools and not residential schools.

Secondary Schools are, unless noted otherwise, classified as comprehensive schools.

2.5 OTHER YEAR GROUPS

Applications for admissions for pupils into year groups other than the usual year group, based on the date of birth of a pupil, will be considered on an individual basis and where applicable against the admissions over subscription criteria outlined in this document.

2.6 HOME EDUCATION

Parents may also choose to educate their own children at home. This is known as Elective Home Education. The decision to home educate requires careful thought, as it represents a considerable undertaking in terms of commitment, time and cost.

If you are considering this option, then you are advised to contact the local authority, and seek guidance from the Elective Home Education Officer on 01267 246727.

2.7 AT WHAT AGE CAN CHILDREN START SCHOOL?

3 Year Old Nursery Education – Part Time

Early Years education is a non-statutory provision available to 3 year olds and an application for admission to provision within a school, i.e. for categories (i) and (ii) below, will have to be made to the Admissions Authority by **the 31st January, 2020**, if the pupil is due to start nursery age provision in a school in **January, April or September 2021**.

There are various forms of provision:-

- i. Nursery School - Ammanford Nursery School is the only nursery school in the County.
- ii. Nursery/Early Years classes in Primary Schools.
- iii. Provision by the non-maintained sector who are partners in the Early Entitlement Group, such as Wales Pre-school Playgroup Association (WPPA) and Mudiad Meithrin (MM) and private providers. The Carmarthenshire Family Information Service can assist you in this process. Contact via ChildrenInfo@carmarthenshire.gov.uk or 01267 246555.

All 3 year olds are entitled to 10 hours per week free placement, at a registered setting, through the Early Entitlement Group from the term following their third birthday.

Children will normally be admitted to Early Years provision on a part-time basis at the beginning of the term following their third birthday as indicated below:-

- in January for those who have their 3rd birthday between 1st September and 31st December;
- in April for those who have their 3rd birthday between 1st January and 31st March;
- in September for those who have their 3rd birthday between 1st April and 31st August.

Parents **do not** have a right of appeal if a place is not secured at an early years setting of their choice. Pupils who are admitted to early years or part-time nursery age provision within a school **do not have an ‘automatic’ right to continue education within the full time nursery class at that school.**

A formal application must be made to the Council for admission into a Full time place at the school. Pupils are eligible to start school full time at the beginning of the term during which the pupil receives his/her fourth birthday.

Applications for part-time admission should be submitted to the Council by the 31st January, 2020, if your child is to start school in January, April or September, 2021.

Should there be more applications than places available then the Authority will prioritise applications in accordance with its over-subscription criteria detailed in this document.

Wherever practical the Admissions Authority allows non-maintained providers to use school premises and a number avail themselves of such a facility.

Full Time Place (4 Year old)

Where there is no early years provision in a maintained setting children are, following approval of application by the Authority, admitted on a full-time basis **at the beginning of the term they turn 4 years old**, at the following times:-

- in September for those who have their 4th birthday between 1st September and 31st December;
- in January for those who have their 4th birthday between 1st January and 31st March;
- in April for those who have their 4th birthday between 1st April and 31st August.

Legal requirement to start school (5 Year old)

By law parents must arrange for their children to receive full-time education at the beginning of the following terms:-

- the Autumn Term for those who are 5 years old between 1st April and 31st August;
- the Spring Term for those who are 5 years old between 1st September and 31st December;
- the Summer Term for those who are 5 years old between 1st January and 31st March.

Legislation does not require a child to start school until **the term following the child's fifth birthday**.

A parent may defer the admission of a child to school until the beginning of the term following the child's fifth birthday as long as that date is in the same school year.

In accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 a limit of 30 pupils is placed on Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes.

Applications for admission should be submitted to the Council by the 31st January, 2020, if a pupil is due to start school in September 2020, January or April, 2021.

Should there be more applications than places available then the Authority will prioritise applications in accordance with its over-subscription criteria detailed in this document.

2.8 APPLICATION PROCESS

Requirement to Make an Application

It is a requirement that a parent/carer must complete an application for a pupil to be admitted to a school to the Council or in the case of Voluntary Aided Schools applications should be made to the Governing Body.

The application form will ask a parent/carer to rank the school choice by 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

Only the latest application received by the deadline will be accepted, all previous applications will not be processed. Any subsequent application/s received after the published deadline will be processed as a late application.

You will be notified by the Admissions Authority as to whether or not the application has been successful. This includes applications made on behalf of a looked-after child by a corporate parent where the Council is both the corporate parent and the Admissions Authority.

No Community or Voluntary Controlled primary school can authorise the admission of a pupil.

How to Apply

Once the parent/carer has decided upon the school they wish their child/children to attend they should submit the application to the appropriate Admissions Authority.

For Community and Voluntary Controlled schools this can be done:-

- *Directly on-line using the Local Authority's website at www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/schooladmissions*
- *By contacting the school;*

For Voluntary Aided Schools

- *Apply direct to the School*
- *Online application via Carmarthenshire County Council Website*

It is recommended that **before submitting an application parents contact the preferred school direct**. The school will have a map of its catchment area and can assist parents by providing other information about the school and the admission procedure.

When to Apply – The Admission Application Round

The following closing dates for applications will apply:-

Closing Date: **31st January, 2020** for **3 year old Nursery Age Pupils** starting in **January, April or September 2021**.

Closing Date: **31st January, 2020** for **four year old pupils** starting in **September 2020, January or April, 2021**.

Closing Date: **20th December, 2019** for pupils starting **Secondary School in September 2020**.

Applying after the deadline dates will mean that the application loses its priority for a place at the school of your choice.

It is our intention to issue decision letters in respect of **Secondary School** applications on the **1st March, 2020** and for **Primary School** admissions on the **16th April, 2020**.

Completing the Application Form

Home Address

A pupil's home address is considered to be a residential property that is the child's only or main residency, and is either:-

- Owned by the child's parent(s) or the person with a defined legal parental responsibility for the child; or
- Is leased to or rented by the child's parent(s) or the person with parental responsibility under a written rental agreement, signed by the landlord and tenant, of not less than six months duration.

Proof of Address

The Authority reserves the right to request proof of address at the time an offer of a place is made.

In order for the application to be considered as part of the normal admissions round then you may need to provide proof that you are residing at the address stated on the application form.

The Authority will consider any two of the following documents as being of assistance to determine residency at a particular address:-

- (a) An original Council Tax or Housing Benefit bill or notification letter being not more than 12 months old;
- (b) An original utility bill (not more than 3 months old);

- (c) An original award letter of Child Benefit or Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit award letter (not less than three months old and stating the name of the child/children);
- (d) A signed and dated tenancy/lease agreement of at least six months duration but with not less than one month duration remaining;
- (e) Original credit card or bank statement showing the address (not more than one month old);
- (f) Written confirmation from the applicants Bank or Building Society confirming details of the change of address and also the date the change was effective from;
- (g) Valid current photo ID driving licence.

As part of the admission process you may be required to provide proof of your address in connection with your application. The Authority will seek to verify the information provided and reserves the right to require the applicant to provide any additional information it deems necessary to confirm residency or to take reasonable action to determine whether or not an application is fraudulent.

If a school place is offered on the basis of an address that is subsequently found to be different from a child's normal and permanent address, then the place is liable to be withdrawn.

If a school place is offered and a parent or person with a legal parental responsibility for a child, knowingly and willingly provides a false statement, which would affect the success of their application, they may have the place withdrawn.

If no proof of residency is provided on request then the Authority will be unable to process the application and the place may be awarded to another pupil.

Moving Residency/ Change of Address

If you intend to change residency and are applying for admission to a school based on the new address then the Council will take steps to verify the arrangements. The Council will also accept either a solicitors letter stating that contracts have been exchanged and specifying a completion date or a signed and dated tenancy agreement as indicated in (d) above. If you cannot provide proof of address by the date given for receipt of applications then your application will be based on your current address.

Shared Responsibility

Where there is shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives with both parents, or persons with a legal parental responsibility for the child, for part of the week, then the main residence will be determined as the address where the child lives for the majority of the school week. The person in receipt of Child Benefit will be used as the main residence where there is a 50:50 split in caring for the child.

Parents may be requested to supply documentary evidence to support the address used when offering a place.

Early Applications

Please note that early application cannot be used as a criterion for giving priority in allocating places.

Late Applications

Applications received after the admissions round deadline date will not be considered until those received before the deadline have been awarded.

Split Site

When an application is made for admission to a school which operates on more than one site, the Authority will approve admission to the school and not to a particular site. The site the children will attend is a matter for the school to decide.

Waiting List

Where it has not been possible to admit a pupil to a school due to over subscription, parents must inform the Authority by email or letter if they wish their child's name to be placed on the waiting list which will be retained until the **30th September, 2020**.

Should vacancies become available then they will be awarded in accordance with the over-subscription criteria outlined rather than the amount of time the application has been held on the waiting list.

Notification of Offer of a Place at a School

Parents will be advised by e-mail or letter confirming, or otherwise, that a place is available at the school and offering them the opportunity of accepting the place.

Parent must accept the offer email to secure a place in school. If a Parent does not respond the place may be withdrawn and the place offered to another pupil.

It is our intention to issue decision letters in respect of **Secondary School** applications on the **1st March, 2020** and the **16th April, 2020** for **Primary School** applications.

Withdrawing the Offer of a Place

The offer of a school place will be withdrawn on the basis:

- (i) that it is subsequently discovered that a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application was made (e.g. falsely claiming to reside within a catchment area of a school); or
- (ii) that the place is not accepted by the date given in the offer email/letter the Council may then withdraw the offer and the place may be given to another child.
- (iii) that a place at another school is confirmed by a parent/guardian.
- (iv) if a pupil has not started at a school at the end of the school term of which term they were due to start in accordance with the Authority's policy.

Admission to Schools at other times of the year

Parents/carers who wish to apply for a place for their child at a school during the academic year will still need to complete and submit an application form to the Admissions Authority.

Requests will be considered as and when they arise in accordance with the admission procedures and policies outlined in this document including the over-subscription criteria if the admission number has been exceeded.

Gypsy and Traveller Children

The Council is obliged, by statute, to ensure that all children of compulsory school age receive education that is appropriate to their age, abilities and any special educational needs, and promotes high standards in the provision of education and the welfare of children. These obligations apply to all children whether or not they are permanent residents in the area. Admission applications made in respect of gypsy and traveller families will be dealt with, with a view to placing these children as quickly as possible at the nearest available and appropriate school

2.9 ADMISSION TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS INCLUDING SIXTH FORM

Primary school children are required to start at a secondary school in the September following their 11th birthday.

It is a requirement that a parent/carer must complete an on-line application for these pupils by the **closing date i.e. 20th December, 2019** as those applications will be considered first for any places available.

Any applications received after the **closing date** will not be considered until those received before the deadline date have been allocated places.

Whilst it does not guarantee a place at a school the admission criteria gives a higher priority to pupils who reside within the designated catchment area of a secondary school. The primary school which the pupil is attending is not therefore a factor which is taken into account.

Summary Points - For Community and Voluntary Controlled Secondary Schools

- There is **no automatic transfer** from a primary to secondary school.
- **By law you must make an application** to the Council for a place.
- **Deadline** for submitting an application is the **20th December 2019**.
- The primary school a pupil attends is **not taken into account**. It is the home address which is taken into account when considering admission to a school.

- It is **not possible for any person or organization to guarantee**, in advance, a place for a child at a school. Any such comments or assurances must be disregarded.
- You will need to receive **an email or letter** from the Council advising you if your application has been successful or refused.
- **A child cannot start at a school until the parent/guardian has confirmed the place with the Council.**

Application forms must be completed online by the 20th December, 2019. If the form is not completed by the deadline date then the chances of getting a place at the preferred school is diminished as is the possibility of free transport to school.

It is our intention to issue decision letters in respect of these applications on **1st March, 2020.**

Parents of children who wish their child to be admitted to a secondary school at a time other than the usual primary to secondary year 7 admission should, in the first instance, contact and discuss the matter with the Headteacher of the school who will also be able to give advice in relation to applying for admission. Alternatively, advice may be sought from the Admissions Team at the Department for Education and Children.

Sixth Form Admission

Arrangements for admission to Sixth Form Community Schools should be discussed with the individual school prior to submitting an application for admission.

2.10 CHANGING SCHOOLS

Changing schools requires serious consideration and should be fully discussed with the Headteacher of your child's present school in the first instance. The Department for Education and Children will also provide advice if required.

Should you then wish to transfer your child from one school to another you must apply through completing the school admission application form which is available on the County Council website www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/schooladmissions

The application will be assessed in accordance with the admission procedure and criteria outlined in this document.

2.11 CONSIDERATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

In respect of the process for admissions to secondary schools then it should be noted that the following sections as detailed in 2.8 above will also apply:-

- Home Address
- Proof of Address
- Moving Residency/Change of Address
- Shared Responsibility
- Early Application
- Late Applications
- Waiting Lists
- Withdrawing Offer of a Place
- Gypsy and Traveller Children

3. OVER SUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED NURSERY, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

If there are more applications for admission than places available at a particular school, the allocation of places will be based on the following criteria listed in priority order:

1. Looked-after and previously looked after children.
2. Children who live in the school's catchment area and have a sibling on the roll of the school at the time the child is to start at that school.
3. Children who live in the school's catchment area and who do not have a sibling on the roll of the school at the time the child is to start at that school.
4. Children who reside outside of the school's catchment area and have a sibling on the roll of the school at the time the child is to start at that school.
5. Children who reside outside of the school's designated catchment area and who do not have a sibling on the roll of the school at the time the child is to start at that school.

N.B. Where there is a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming a particular school then this must be stated clearly on the admission to school application form. Such applications are dealt with before the award of any places by the Council through the application of the oversubscription criteria stated above.

The 3 year old Nursery places application cannot be used as a criterion for giving priority in allocating 4 year old places.

NOTES

Within each of the above categories:

(a) Distance Criteria

The distance from home to the school will be used as a criterion for determining priority, with those living nearest the school being given priority and a place at the school before those living further away. The distance will be measured using Google Maps.

The distance from the home address to school will be measured from the nearest available route from the nearest school entrance to the nearest available access point by highway or public footpath to the home address.

(b) Siblings

Children will be classified as siblings if they are full brother or full sister/half-brother or half sister/step-brother or step-sister; adoptive/fostered brother or sister living at the same address.

(c) Multiple Birth Children

In any circumstances in which there is one place available and the next eligible children are twins/triplets then the LA will admit both/all children.

(d) Children of UK Service Personnel

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

4. APPEALS REGARDING ADMISSION OF PUPILS TO COMMUNITY / VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY OR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Should parents be unsuccessful in obtaining a place for their child at their preferred school, they will be notified in writing of the reason(s) why a place has not been secured and also of their right to appeal against that decision and the process for doing so.

For Community Schools and Voluntary Controlled Schools the LA will make arrangements for an Independent Appeals Panel to consider appeals. The appeals procedure will be undertaken in accordance with Welsh Government's School Admission Appeals Code.

There is no right of appeal in the case of refusal of admission to 3 year old part- time nursery education.

Appeals will be heard in private, except when the body or bodies responsible for making appeal arrangements direct otherwise but parents will be afforded an opportunity of presenting their case either directly or with the assistance of their chosen representative.

The Clerk will notify all parties of the Panel's decision which will be binding upon the Council, the Governing Body and the parents.

An appeal by parents against refusal of a place at a Community or Voluntary Controlled School must be submitted in writing to Democratic Services, Chief Executive's Department, County Hall, Carmarthen, SA31 1JP or, via email at independentadmissionappealspanel@carmarthenshire.gov.uk.

Medical Condition

Where Medical Evidence is required you will need to provide copies of reports relating to the diagnosis from the relevant Consultant and/or Specialist.

Voluntary Aided Schools will have their own arrangements for appeals to be heard independently.

Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools - Admissions Timetable

Provision	Age	Starting School	Deadline Date for Applying	Notification Date	Appeals Closing Date
3 Year old Nursery Education (Part Time)	Born between 1 st Sept, 2017 to 31 st August, 2018	January, April, September 2021	31st January, 2020	October 2020	No right of appeal
4 Year Old 4-11 (Full time)	Born between 1 st September, 2016 and 31 st August, 2017	September 2020, January or April 2021	31st January, 2020	16th April, 2020	30th May, 2020
Moving from Primary to Secondary School (Year 7)	Born between 1 st September, 2008 to 31 st August, 2009	September 2020	20th December, 2019	1st March, 2020	11th April, 2020