

2018/19

Blaenau Gwent Admission Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education



Blaenau Gwent Proposed Admission Policy for Statutory Education 2018/19

1. Introduction/ Purpose

There is a requirement upon Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council as a directive from Welsh Government, to develop, consult upon and annually review the localised Admissions Policy. The purpose of the policy in question is to guide and inform the statutory admissions function within Blaenau Gwent ensuring equality of opportunity for all. ***Please note that the following non-maintained schools are responsible for the development of their own individual Admissions Policies:**

- All Saints Roman Catholic Primary School
- Brynmawr Foundation School
- St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School
- St Mary's Church in Wales Primary School
- St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

The Blaenau Gwent Admissions Policy for Nursery (non-statutory) and Statutory Education has been updated to incorporate learning from the 2017-2018 admission round, and in line with changes to local admissions procedures. The policy is fully compliant with key legislation including, the Welsh Government School Admissions Code 2013 and School Admissions Appeal Code 2013. Finally, this document outlines requirements associated with and guidance relating to pupil admissions and transfers for nursery, primary, and secondary school place allocation within Blaenau Gwent.

The Welsh Minister for Education and Skills in 2013, outlined the following key considerations in relation to how pupil place allocation in respect of admissions should ensure equality of opportunity:

“The process of starting or transferring between schools can be a time of uncertainty or anxiety, therefore, it is essential that the principles of fairness and openness are applied to all aspects of school admissions. A properly functioning admissions system, that reflects this, can play a vital part in helping to minimise concerns. It is crucial in delivering equality of opportunity.”

Minister for Education and Skills (2013)

2. Admission Types

2.1 Nursery Education

The Council provides free part-time nursery education to every child and every child is entitled to a 'rising 3' place from the start of the term following their third birthday, at either school nursery provision or a quality assured early years education provider.

- Nursery places are in the main offered on a part time basis (am and/or pm sessions). Children start attending nursery classes at the age of 3 or 4 years.
- There are three intakes for rising 3 pupils per year as follows:
 - **January**
 - **April**
 - **September**

*Please note that the specific dates for intake change on an annual basis linked to school term dates. These dates are communicated within the Starting Schools Booklet and application forms distributed annually in line with the admission round for nursery, reception and secondary places.

- Some governing bodies offer full-time provision, which schools fund from their own school budget.
- The regulations pertaining to nursery education are specific and confirm that **attending a nursery class does not give a child priority for a place in the reception year group. A separate application is required for this purpose.**

2.2 Admission to Primary Education

Children are eligible for admission to school at the start of the school year in which their fifth birthday falls (i.e. 1st September to 31st August inclusive).

It is against the law to prevent your child from accessing a form of schooling (e.g. a pupil place at a school of your choosing and/ or home tuition) at the start of the school year in which their fifth birthday falls.

The Council must provide suitable places for the admission of all children in the September following their fifth birthday, however, parents have the right to:

- a. request that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until the term after the child's fifth birthday, or
- b. request that their child takes up the place part-time until the term after their fifth birthday.

2.2.1 Allocation of Primary School Places at Abertillery Learning Community

In the case of Abertillery Learning Community Primary Phase, the admission authority (Blaenau Gwent Council), is responsible for placing applicants at the Learning Community. These applicants are then allocated a site within the Learning Community by the Governing Body, who in partnership with the admissions authority, notify pupils of the site at which they have been given a place. This process has been established in accordance with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) point 2.51 which states:

“Where split site schools are in operation, the admission authority **should** in most cases, apply the admission arrangements as if the school were a single unit. They **should** make it clear to parents that admission applications are made to the school as a whole and not to a particular site. The site that children attend is a matter for the internal organisation of the school. Appeals **cannot** be made against the site allocated”.

The Council's School Organisation Policy (2015) advocates having the right schools, of the right size, in the right places. This Council, therefore, is committed to providing a local place in a local setting for local pupils. In the event of an all-through School / Learning Community reaching capacity, the Admission Policy's over-subscription procedures would be applied.

2.3 Admission to Secondary School

Children/ young people normally transfer from primary school to secondary school at the beginning of the school year following their eleventh birthday.

2.3.1 Allocation of Secondary School Places 3-16 Learning Communities

In the case of both Ebbw Fawr Learning Community and Abertillery Learning Community; pupils who are on roll in Year 6 at the primary phase will automatically transfer to the secondary phase and so a separate admission application is **not** required.

2.4 In-Year Transfers (admissions outside the normal admission round)

In-Year Transfer refers to applications made in order to transfer children between schools outside of the normal admission round. All In-Year Transfers are dealt with in date order of receipt. Where there are a greater number of applications received within the same week than the number of places that are available within the school(s); the Council will apply their oversubscription criteria (see page 7) in order to determine place allocation and refusal.

Applications are usually processed within 7-14 working days of receipt. However, in certain circumstances, e.g. if a child has been identified as having specific needs, it may not be possible to process the admission within the target timeframe outlined above. In cases where the latter applies, the

applicant would be informed of increased processing timescale requirements with regards to their application.

As part of the transfer allocation process, the Council will contact the child or young person's current school to obtain information and share this information with the recipient school, in order to ensure that they are equipped to meet the pupils' educational, learning and any other needs.

It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to notify the Admissions Officer if they no longer wish to transfer their child to the newly allocated school.

***Please note: The admissions authority does not encourage transfers from one local school to another due to the potential disruption that it causes to all parties involved. However, it does recognise that this process may be required in line with putting the needs of the child and/ or young person first.**

Previous research has determined that, the transfer process can impinge upon the educational achievement and success of children unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as the transfer being (as mentioned above) in the best interest of the child/ young person. Transfers are also dependent (as with general admissions), upon place availability at the preferred school. Parents will be encouraged to discuss at length their reasons for wanting to change schools with the admissions authority and/ or school.

2.5 Requests for Admission Outside of Chronological Year Group

It is the Council's policy that children are admitted into their chronological year group. It is only in exceptional circumstances that the Council will support admission into a year group that is not within the chronological year. For example, where there is an appropriate evidence base that suggests the chronological year group is not able to meet the needs of the child e.g. on medical grounds, due to ill health, additional learning needs, and/ or are new to the UK. Evidence of the placement being 'essential' will be required.

Applicants submitting requests for admission into a year group that is not the chronological year for the child will be given the opportunity to share their reasons for the application with the Council. The Headteacher of the preferred school will be consulted during the processing of the application and their views considered as part of the decision making process.

Parents/carers who have been refused a place at the preferred school will have a statutory right of appeal against the decision that has been made; however, there is no right of appeal against a decision to refuse a place in the preferred school into a non-chronological year group.

2.6 Managed Moves, Resource Bases, Special School and Complex Placements

The Council has a protocol in place which ensures that children and young people who may benefit from what is called a managed move are able to move schools in an organised and coordinated way, ensuring that their needs are appropriately met. This protocol is called the Managed Move protocol and is implemented via the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Panel. Where appropriate the Admission Officer will consider the individual circumstances in line with the Welsh Government Admissions Code and if the school is over subscribed, utilise and implement the 'excepted pupil' (for more information please see the aforementioned Welsh Government School Admissions Code 2013, page 27) status in order to admit the pupil.

The ALN Panel comprises representatives from the Inclusion Team, Educational Psychology Service, Headteachers/Senior Leaders as well as other professionals/officers as and when required. As well as implementing managed moves it is responsible for the allocation of placements into Resource Bases and Pen-Y-Cwm Special School. Decisions are made on strict criteria to ensure placements are appropriate and processes are managed by the Inclusion team to ensure that pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are admitted in a timely way and in line with their identified needs. Processes are carried out in consultation with the Admissions Officer to ensure all pupils are accounted for.

The Council also has a number of Resource Base provisions throughout Blaenau Gwent to meet the needs of those pupils with complex needs, social emotional and behavioural needs, or with ASD whose needs cannot be met within a mainstream environment.

Pen-Y-Cwm Special School caters for children and young people with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties throughout the 3-19 age range.

A complex admission is characterised by the child or young person's needs and or circumstances, being unable to be met within the normal admissions round and general admissions process/ arrangements. Cases characterised as complex often require careful consideration and involvement from a wider network of partners, in order to ensure that the child's educational needs can be met within an appropriate school setting/ placement. Where there is a complex admissions case outside of the remit of the Managed Move protocol and SEN processes the Admissions Officer will coordinate all information along with the involvement of relevant Council Officers, schools and wider partners, in considering the prospective pupils circumstances. The complex admission will be managed in line with the School Admissions Code (2013) and in consideration of the pupils needs. Where appropriate Welsh Government advice may be sought in line with the decision making process.

3. **School Admission Criteria**

The determination of school admissions differs between Local Authority maintained and non-maintained schools. The faith, foundation schools and non-maintained early year's education settings within Blaenau Gwent, maintain their own policies and criteria. These differ in respect of their status to the standardised criteria of the Council. The faith and foundation schools are also responsible for administering their own transfer and appeals procedures. Applications for the aforementioned schools may be submitted to the Councils' Education Transformation team on the basis of informing any secondary preference that is maintained by Blaenau Gwent. ***Please note that the Council are unable to allocate pupil places within the following non-maintained faith and foundation schools:**

- All Saints Roman Catholic Primary School
- Brynmawr Foundation School
- St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School
- St Mary's Church in Wales Primary School
- St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

Additionally, the Council cannot allocate pupil places to/ within schools outside of Blaenau Gwent. Out of county school admissions and placements are managed by the admissions authority of the County within which they reside, and/ or the schools themselves (in cases where they are not maintained by the Council).

The Council works jointly with the faith, foundation schools and non-maintained early year's education settings to ensure that all pupils applying either via the schools/settings directly or the Councils processes are allocated a place. Joint monitoring also takes place around transfers and appeals.

Each school has a limit to the number of children that it can accommodate per year group. This limit is called the published admission number, which takes into account the physical space within the school building relevant to each age group, as determined by the Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales Guidance (2011). There are two figures derived from this formula, the admission number for nursery and the admission number for reception. The nursery area includes the available space for all pupils who are eligible to attend nursery, which includes rising threes (as detailed within the nursery section above). For those schools that run both morning and afternoon sessions, the admission number is applied to each session, and so in theory can be doubled. Schools will be asked to confirm their sessional plans for the admission round in line with annual capacity calculations and Admission Policy review. Schools will then be bound by the information which is provided. In the case of non-statutory nursery admissions, the capacity calculation is advisory based on the guidance detailed above.

In the event of a school reorganisation taking place, the admission arrangements will be determined and confirmed as part of the statutory consultation and transition processes.

4. **How to apply for a School Place in Blaenau Gwent (excluding the Faith and Foundation Schools and non-maintained early years education settings)**

Parents/carers are required to make an application for a school place. Completed forms with supporting evidence are to be returned by the closing date as detailed in Section 6 (below). In order to process an application linked to allocation of a school place, only **one** of the following types of evidence within each category below, will be required to be submitted with the application form:

- **Proof of Residency (copies of one of the following)**
 - Valid driving licence including paper licence
 - Council tax bill (for the 2016/17 year)
 - Recent child benefit / child tax credit notification, naming the child for whom the application has been made
 - Utility bills (within the last three months)
 - NHS Medical card
- **Proof of Date of birth (copies of one of the following)**
 - Child's birth certificate
 - NHS medical card
 - Valid passport which displays your child date of birth

All completed application forms are then to be returned to: The Education Transformation team, School Admissions, Floor 8, Anvil Court, Church Street, Abertillery. NP13 1DB.

Applications to the Council can also be made online via <http://blaenauqwent.mycouncilservices.com/> . In making an online application applicants will receive immediate confirmation that their application has been submitted then written confirmation will be sent on the offer date. Alternatively, parents can request an application pack from the Admissions team on (01495) 355340 or via schooladmissions@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

As previously outlined the faith and foundation schools within Blaenau Gwent have additional criteria linked to their independent status, which needs to be fulfilled in line with the child securing a place. Applications to non-maintained early year's education settings are dealt with directly by the settings concerned.

Where a parent, guardian or carer does not provide the relevant evidence, the application will be treated as incomplete until such time all supporting evidence is received. Consequently, should the supporting information be received after the closing date of the relevant admissions round, then this will render the application as a 'late' submission. If the information is not provided upon initial request, the Council will then attempt to chase the parent, guardian or carer for the information a further three times. Should the information not be received post the chasing process, the application will

processed and treated as late (please see the next section for details in relation to the processing of late applications).

In the case of a double allocation as a result of an error occurring in the admission process, the Council would need to ensure that adequate places are available and follow the code and criteria in order to meet the 1st preference place request.

In addition accusations of fraudulent claims will be investigated and places may be withdrawn, if parents, guardians or carers have knowingly provided false information in order to obtain the advantage of a particular school.

Information provided within the application in respect of additional learning needs, will require further consultation with the Special Educational Needs (SEN) team. This will ensure effective, suitable provision and placement in line with additional educational needs and/ or a successful transition for the pupil.

5. Oversubscription Nursery, Primary and Secondary Criteria for the Normal Round of Admissions

The admissions authority will consider each individual application received by the published closing date. If the number of applications for an individual school is greater than the admission number, the allocation of places will be carried out using the following criteria, which are listed in order of priority below;

i) Children in Care

Priority to be given to looked after children/previously looked after children (children under Local Authority care); following consultation on the appropriateness of the named school.

Children in care means children who are in care of a Local Authority in accordance with Section 22 Children Act 1989.

ii) Catchment School

Children who live in the catchment area of the school on or before the published closing date.

iii) Social/Medical

Children who the Authority accepts have an exceptional medical or social need for a place at one specific school. Applications will only be considered under this category if they are supported by a medical consultant's report. The information must specify the medical advantage of the child attending the preferred school. Please note that reports from family doctors are NOT accepted for this purpose.

iv) Brother or Sister

Children who will have a brother or sister at the school to which the parent is applying, after the date of admission, will be given a higher priority than those who do not. Please note however, that having a sibling at the school does not guarantee admission for any other children in the family. Where there is more than one such case, priority will be given to those children closest in age to the sibling already attending the preferred school as of the admission date. Brothers and sisters whether half, full, step or foster will be considered relevant where living in the same household.

v) Distance

Children living closest to the preferred school measured by the shortest recognised permitted walking route between the pupils' front door of the home and school gate using a digital mapping system.

It should be noted that a child with a statement of Special Educational Needs which names a school will be admitted in accordance with Section 343 of the Education Act 1996.

Deciding Factors associated with prioritising Admissions

In the event of oversubscription/ the requirement to prioritise admissions the determining factors for all criteria are as follows: children living closest to the school measured using a digital mapping system. Places will be allocated on the basis of distance between the shortest recognised permitted walking route between the pupils' front door of the home and the main school gate using a digital mapping system. Children living closest to the school are given the highest priority.

Multiple births

In the case of multiple birth relating to a single family; if only one place is available at the school, with the second child who qualifies for a place being a sibling; the school will exceed their published admission number to accommodate both potential pupils.

6. Timeframe for Processing Admissions as Part of the 2018/19 Admission Round

The proposed timeframe is detailed on page 11 (overleaf);

Nursery

For places to be allocated in spring summer and autumn term of 2018;

Admission round commences on 4th September 2017

Closing date for applications	5pm on 27 th October 2017
Offer date	24 th November 2017

Reception

Admission round commences on	8 th January 2018
Closing date for applications	5pm on 23 rd February 2018
Offer date	16 th April 2018

Secondary

Admission round commences on	25 th September 2017
Closing date for applications	5pm on 30 th November 2017
Offer date	1 st March 2018

7. Arrangements with Neighbouring Admissions Authorities and Neighbouring Local Authorities

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has made arrangements with the following neighbouring Councils' and schools, in order for parents to express a preference to attend a school outside of the borough. The Council's schools and admissions team would then liaise with the relevant admissions authority to secure a pupil place along with transition arrangements:

- **Brynmawr Foundation School**

Parents can express a preference to attend;

- Brynmawr Foundation School

- **Caerphilly County Borough Council**

Parents can express a preference to attend;

- Newbridge High School

- **Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council**

- Bishop Hedley High School (children living in Ebbw Vale, Beaufort and Tredegar)

- **Torfaen Borough Council**

Parents can express a preference to attend;

- Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw children from the whole of the borough.

- St. Albans R.C. High School (children living in Abertillery and Brynmawr)

8. **Late Applications**

Applications received '**after the closing date**' detailed within the application documentation, will be classed as late. These will be considered as a secondary priority to those applications that were received on time. As outlined above, incomplete applications and those without relevant supporting evidence will also be considered as late, should the information requested not be received by the closing date for application.

Late applications may be unlikely to be offered one of their preferred schools due to demand for pupil places.

9. **Change of Preferences**

Should a parent/carer wish to change their preference, this needs to be done in writing to the admission authority. Any changes in preference received after the deadline date will be treated as a late application.

10. **Waiting Lists**

Following the allocation of places during the normal admission round, children will remain on the waiting list for their preferred school until 30th September of that school year. Thereafter, the parents will be required to make a new application for admission. If additional places become available, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list on the basis of the published oversubscription criteria. **Waiting lists do not give priority to children based on the date the application was added to the list.**

11. **Notifying Parents, Guardians or Carers of the Outcome of the Application**

The Council will inform parents, guardians or carers of the outcome of their application on the offer day. If the application is rejected, parents will be written to and informed of the outcome and will also be provided with the 'Appeals Guidance for Parents' document, providing them with details of the procedure. As part of the refusal letter, the Council will allocate a place at the 2nd or 3rd preference if one is stated or at the next nearest school where a place is available, should all preferences be unavailable and/or an alternative preference not specified.

12. **Admission Appeals for Primary and Secondary School Places**

Parents will have 10 working days to submit their appeal and their appeal will be heard within 30 school days from the specific closing date.

Appendix 1 – Published Admission Numbers

***Please note in order to apply for a place in one of the following schools, an application will need to be made directly to the school of your choice:**

- **All Saints Roman Catholic Primary School**
- **Brynmawr Foundation School**
- **St Joseph’s Roman Catholic Primary School**
- **St Mary’s Church in Wales Primary School**
- **St Mary’s Roman Catholic Primary School**

Published Admission Numbers for 2018/19

School *The school highlighted in red are responsible for their own admission arrangements and as such, applications need to be submitted directly to the school.	Nursery Admission Number	Session	Statutory Admission Number (Reception or Year 7)
All Saints R.C. Primary School	26	am	26
	26	pm	
Beaufort Hill Primary School	34	am	30
Blaen y Cwm Primary School	26	am	38
	26	pm	
Brynbach Primary School	26	am	30
Brynmawr R.C. Primary School	53	am	30
	53	am	
Coed y Garn Primary School	61	am	35
	61	pm	
Cwm Primary School	53	am	34
	53	pm	
Deighton Primary School	38	am	26
Georgetown Primary School	30	am	60
	30	pm	
Glanhowy Primary School	65	am	42
	65	pm	

Glyncoed Primary School	52	am	45
	52	pm	
Rhos y Fedwen Primary School	26	am	25
St. Illtyd's Primary School	41	am	30
	41	pm	
St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School	41	am	15
	41	pm	
St. Mary's Church-in-Wales Primary School	30	-	30
Soffryd Primary School	19	am	23
	19	pm	
Willowtown Primary School	30	am	60
	30	pm	
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg	60	am	36
	60	pm	
Ystruth Primary School	37	am	42
	37	pm	

	Nursery Admission Number	Session	Statutory Admission Number (Reception or Year 7)
<u>Secondary School</u>			
Brynmawr Foundation School			151
Tredegar Comprehensive School			152
<u>Middle School</u>			
Abertillery Learning Community – Primary Phase	141		140
Abertillery Learning Community – Secondary Phase			150
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community -	58	am	51

Primary Phase		
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community - Secondary Phase		238