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## **Policy and Procedures for Admission to Schools**

The County Borough Council, as Local Authority (the LA), is responsible for determining the criteria and procedure for admissions, and for the admission of all pupils to community primary, secondary and special schools and voluntary controlled schools. The LA will consult school governing bodies annually in relation to any changes in admission criteria.

The governing bodies of aided and foundation schools are responsible for determining the criteria and procedure arrangements for admissions, and for the admission of pupils to their schools. The LA will consult and co-operate with the governing bodies and the Diocesan Education Authorities in relation to admissions.

The LA will comply with statutory requirements and will give full recognition to the expression of parental preference in the context of its duty to ensure the provision of efficient education and the efficient use of education resources. The LA will not refuse applicants for a particular suitable school unless that school has reached its admission number, that being the number that can be admitted to a school in any one year group.

The LA will admit pupils up to the admission number of each school.

The LA will only admit pupils in excess of the admission number where it is deemed not to be prejudicial to the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.

The **Admission Number** is the number of children that can be admitted to each year group during the school year. This admission number is established in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements. Information about the admission number for each school can be found in the School List (pages 36 onwards).

### **Admission Forum/Consultation**

The Education (Admission Forums) (Wales) Regulations 2003 requires all Admission Authorities to consult at least twice annually on proposed arrangements. Its role is: to consider existing admission arrangements within a forum area; to promote agreement on admission issues; to consider the admission literature produced by each admission authority; to monitor the admission of excluded children, children in public care (looked after children), children with special educational needs and children who arrive outside the normal admission round; and to consider any other admissions issues arising. Core members of the Forum comprise: representatives of the community and voluntary controlled schools, voluntary aided schools, foundation schools, parent governors, local community (Elected Members), and officers of the LA. In addition, representatives of neighbouring LAs, Early Years Partnerships and Special Education Needs are invited to attend. For further information about the Wrexham Schools Admission Forum, please contact the Admissions Team on 01978 297505.

## Admission Procedure

The annual admission procedure, applicable to the relevant age group, includes the following stages:

- publication of information on individual schools (school prospectuses) and on the LA's services to the primary and secondary schools (this guide);
- arrangements (admission pack) to enable parents to express preferences as to which school they would wish their child(ren) to attend;
- if two parents cannot agree on a preference of school, they must seek independent legal advice, and if necessary, an appropriate court order, before submitting their single application form to the LA;
- consideration of preferences by the LA/Admission Authority in accordance with the published admissions criteria and in compliance with preferences up to the admission number for each school;
- in cases where preferences are not met, parents may discuss the matter with the Admissions Officer of the Children and Young People Service/Aided Sector and, in the event of no agreement being reached, to appeal to an independent appeals panel. The right to appeal does not apply at nursery stage;
- parents who express a preference other than at the normal stages/phases of admission will be given the same opportunities as those outlined under Policy and Procedures for Admission to Schools (page 9); (see also late or early applications page 3). Normally, a change in school can only be effected at the beginning of a school term but changes arising from exceptional circumstances may be effected during the course of a school term.

**Please note** - Expressing a preference does not guarantee a place at your chosen community or voluntary controlled school, especially if that school is over-subscribed. If more parents apply for places at the school than the number of places available, the Authority will apply the over-subscription criteria for allocating places (overleaf)

## Admission Criteria

The LA will comply with its duty to provide an effective education system and in so doing, will have regard to the total resources, including accommodation and staffing, available to each school. It will consider the resource implications for the Authority and the impact on other education policies.

The LA's criteria for admission to schools are listed overleaf.

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They are subject to:

- the LA's obligation to ensure that a pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Need is admitted to a school able to meet those needs;
- the LA's obligation to comply with the limitation on infant class size legislation (see below);
- the LA's obligation to ensure the provision of efficient education and the efficient use of resources; and any limitation which may arise in relation to a particular school resulting from the application of the admission number, which is **the number of children that can be admitted to each year group during the school year.**

### **Over-Subscription Criteria**

In considering parental preferences, the criteria will be applied unless the LA has agreed with an individual governing body an alternative order of priority, as published in the school's prospectus. Where more parents have expressed a preference for a school in a particular year than there is room for, selection criteria will be applied in the following rank order:

1. the LA will consider the needs of children in public care (Looked After Children);
2. the LA will maintain the links between designated infant and junior schools, and between designated junior or primary schools and specific secondary schools as determined by the County Borough Council;
3. the LA will consider the additional learning needs of children; other special circumstances of the child, including medical reasons;
4. the LA will allow younger brothers or sisters (siblings) to be admitted to that school at which the older child is registered for the year of admission;
5. the LA will take full account of the proximity of the child's home to the school for which a preference has been expressed. The LA will ensure as far as possible that a place will be offered at the child's nearest suitable school within the County Borough. In implementing this criterion, account will also be taken of transport arrangements and any potentially hazardous routes between home and school. Proximity will be measured in accordance with the LA's School Transport Policy.

### **Looked After Children**

A 'Looked After Child' is deemed to be one who is 'Looked After' by a Local Authority in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act. Wrexham County Borough Council follows regulations set by the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure that the interests of these most vulnerable children are protected. These children are given top priority in the over-subscription criteria for all schools, including applications outside of the normal admissions period.

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## **Sibling (brother/sister)**

Brothers and sisters whether full, half, step or foster will be considered relevant where living together and where an older child will be still registered at the school when the younger one would be eligible to attend.

## **Limitation on Infant Class Sizes**

The Welsh Assembly Government, as outlined in The Education (Infant Class Sizes) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2009, is committed to ensuring that no child aged 5, 6 and 7 years will be in a class of more than 30 pupils for every one qualified teacher. The statutory infant class size limit of 30 pupils applies to reception, year 1 and year 2 classes.

## **Interviews**

Interviews are not used as part of the application or admission process to those schools maintained by the Authority.

Voluntary Aided schools may carry out discussions, but these will be held only in order to assess religious or denominational commitment. Parents may contact the school for a prospectus which should state which particular factors will be assessed at the discussion.

## **Waiting Lists (over-subscription)**

In the event that a parent is refused a place for their child at their preferred school, the LA will, in agreement with the parent, place the child's name on a waiting list, that will remain open until the end of the Autumn half term. Placing a child's name on the waiting list does not affect the parent's right of appeal against the refusal to admit. The waiting list is maintained only to keep parents informed should a place subsequently become available at the requested school. Should a place become available before any admission appeals are heard, those places will be offered to parents with a child on the waiting list. Placing a name on a waiting list, however, is not a guarantee of an eventual place, as places are ranked, and offered, in accordance with the over-subscription criteria (page 11) and not according to the date when the application was submitted.

## **Welsh Language**

The LA makes provision for parents who wish their children to receive their education through the medium of Welsh (see page 19 for Welsh Language Policy). For further information, please contact the Admissions Team.

## **Denominational Schools (Voluntary Aided)**

The LA will ensure that parents wishing to have their children educated at a denominational (Church) school will have the opportunity to express their preferences for such a school. Admissions to voluntary aided schools are subject to the criteria established by the governing body of such schools. (Refer to page 8 Voluntary Aided). Admission policies can be viewed online at [www.wrexham.gov.uk](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk), following the link to Education and Learning, School Admissions and Transfers, Admission Policy. Anyone interested in applying for places should approach the schools directly for further information before stating their preferences on the LA's admission application form.

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## **Admission to Schools in Other LEAs and Independent Schools**

Parents wishing to express a preference for a school in another LA, other than Wrexham County Borough, should still use Wrexham LA's admission application form. The Authority collates this information and passes it to neighbouring authorities, or direct to independent schools. In such cases, unless that school is the nearest suitable school, this LA will not be responsible for meeting the costs of transport between home and school. Parents should, however, still state a preference for a Wrexham school in case their application for a non-County Borough or Independent school is unsuccessful.

Children living outside Wrexham County Borough will be admitted in accordance with the stated criteria (page 10). Parents will need to be aware that the timetable for admissions to out of county schools may differ to Wrexham's and should contact the school or LA directly to ensure forms are submitted by the closing date. (Addresses of neighbouring LA's are detailed on page 5).

It is the policy of this Authority to place children of secondary school age in appropriate independent schools only in exceptional cases. The Authority will consider such a placement where it considers that a special aptitude or need in the child requires special education beyond that which can be provided within the County Borough.

### **Admissions to Early Education (3 year old)**

#### **Education for Younger 3 Year Olds - Spring Term & Summer Term**

In addition to LA nursery provision in the September following a child's 3rd birthday, a half-time educational place will be available for children the term following their third birthday, i.e. Autumn Term birthday - provision for Spring and Summer Term; Spring Term birthday - provision for Summer Term.

This additional provision will be offered in a variety of Approved settings.

For Spring term (January) Admissions - (Children who will have their THIRD birthday between 1 September - 31 December) - Admission Forms will be available from the second week in September from Approved settings or from the Early Education Administration Officer on 01978 317666, to be returned to the preferred Approved setting as soon as possible. Admission forms to be submitted by Settings to the Lead Officer for Early Education at Erlas Centre by the end of October.

For Summer Term (April) Admissions - (Children who will have their THIRD birthday between 1 January - 31 March) - Admission Forms will be available from the first week in January from Approved settings or from the Early Education Administration Officer on 01978 317666, to be returned to the preferred Approved setting as soon as possible. Admission forms to be submitted by Settings to the Lead Officer for Early Education at Erlas Centre by the end of February.

In the event of over-subscription within a **school** setting, normal admissions criteria will apply (see over-subscriptions criteria, page 11).

For further information on approved settings please contact: The Early Education Team on 01978 317666.

**Note: Admission to an Early Education (3 year old) setting at a particular school does not guarantee subsequent admission to nursery at that school.**

## **Admission to Schools Maintained by the LA Nursery Education**

The Authority will admit a child to a maintained nursery school in the September following their 3rd birthday. Nursery schooling, in both English and Welsh medium schools within the Authority, is provided on the basis of 5 x 2.5 hour sessions per week, for each child.

Though every effort will be made to meet parental preference, nursery education is not compulsory and parents have no right of appeal under Education Legislation if they are unsuccessful in gaining a nursery place for their child at the school of their preference.

Parents may express a preference for any school irrespective of where the home is in relation to the school, however, expressing a preference does not guarantee a place at that school.

Transport to nursery school will only be provided by the Authority in exceptional circumstances.

In the event of over-subscription, applications for nursery places shall be dealt with by applying the criteria (see page 11).

**When making the decision about the 'nearest suitable school' the Authority will accept only the pupil's home address and not that, for example, of childminder or grandparents. Parents may be asked to provide official documentation showing home address. Parents are advised that a school place may be lawfully withdrawn if the information given on their application form is fraudulent or misleading.**

Application forms for nursery school admission are available from headteachers at all nursery/infant/primary schools. These are available following the Christmas holiday prior to the school year when the child is eligible to start nursery school (see page 3). Parents may be asked to provide official documentation showing their child/ren's date of birth.

### **NOTE**

**Admission to a nursery class or unit at a particular infant or primary school does not guarantee subsequent admission to reception at that school.**

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## **Admission to Infant/Junior/Primary Schools in Wrexham County Borough**

### **Maintained Primary/Infants School Admission - Admission to Reception**

The Authority will admit a child to a maintained primary/infant school in the September following their 4th birthday.

Once a reception place has been offered and accepted, some parents may wish to defer their child's entry until the start of the term following the child's fifth birthday. Parents would not however be able to defer entry beyond this point, nor beyond the academic year for which the original application was accepted. It should also be noted that the statutory Foundation Phase 'Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7 year olds in Wales' is a continuous teaching and learning framework which commences the term following a child's third birthday. Deferment would lead to a gap in this provision causing a lack of continuity in a child's early education.

Parents may apply to the headteacher of a primary/infant school for an application form for a place at reception for their children in September 2009. The completed form will then be forwarded to the LA/Admitting Authority for allocation. Admission (which is the responsibility of the County Borough Council) will be based on the criteria listed on pages 10/11. Parents may be asked to provide official documentation showing their children's date of birth. If the Authority is unable to allocate according to parents' first preference, and parents do not wish to accept a place at an alternative school, then they are entitled to appeal against that decision. The right to appeal applies to all stages, except nursery which is non-compulsory educational provision (please refer to 'Appeals' page 16).

### **Infant to Junior Transfer - Admission to Year 3**

Parents of children who are due to transfer from an infant school, to a junior school, will be invited to express a preference for a school in September 2009. Parents may express a preference for their local junior school or may opt for another preferred school. Where the local infant and junior schools are separate schools, parents should not assume that there is an automatic transfer.

Application forms are available from infant schools. The completed forms will then be forwarded to the LA for allocation. Admission will be based on the criteria listed on pages 10/11. It must be noted that parents who select a school other than the nearest suitable junior school will be fully responsible for transporting their children to and from school.

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## Admission to Secondary School in Wrexham County Borough

If a primary or junior school is not the designated feeder school of a particular high school, there is no guarantee that a place will be made available for your child. Although every effort will be made to conform with parental preference, where a school is over-subscribed, the over subscription criteria will be applied (see page 11).

Parents are invited to express their preference for a secondary school for their child. An admission form will be sent to each parent/carer via the junior/primary schools in September 2009. Alternatively, parents may apply to the LA directly for forms. The completed forms will then be forwarded to the LA/Admissions Authority for allocation. Admission will be based on the criteria listed on page 10/11.

Parents applying for places at St Joseph's Catholic and Anglican High School, The Maelor School, Penley or an independent school or a school in another local authority should complete the LA's application form, but must also contact that school in the first instance to make an appointment to visit the school and meet the headteacher. **Parents may have to complete further admission forms for these schools.**

It must be noted that parents who select a school other than the nearest suitable secondary school will be fully responsible for transporting their children to and from school (free transport will only be provided if the applicant meets the criteria of the County Borough's Transport Policy). Each admission form will have a printed list of designated secondary schools. Parents may express a preference for any of the schools listed or may insert the name of another school as their first preference. If the Authority is unable to admit according to parents' first preference, and parents do not wish to accept a place at an alternative school, then they are entitled to appeal against that decision (please refer to 'Appeals' below). Parents will be provided with details of this process within a reasonable timescale.

### Appeals

If the Authority is unable to allocate a place at the school for which the parent has expressed a preference, the parent will be offered a place for their child at an alternative school. The parent may then accept the alternative placement or make representation to the Authority in terms of their preferred school. If still dissatisfied, parents may give notice of their wish to appeal against the Authority's decision to refuse to offer a place at the preferred school. Further details regarding this process will be made available to parents by contacting the Admissions Office at 16 Lord Street, Wrexham, LL11 1LG. Appeals must be made in writing, giving the reason(s) for instigating the process. In the case of an appeal, the Authority will initiate the statutory appeals procedure. Parents may be accompanied by a friend at the hearing and will be given an opportunity to present their case to an independent appeal panel. The decision of the appeal panel will be binding on all parties.

Appeals relating to admissions into community and voluntary controlled schools should be sent in writing to the Chief Learning and Achievement Officer at 16 Lord Street, Wrexham, LL11 1LG.

All appeals to the foundation/aided sector are dealt with by the governing bodies of those schools. Appeals relating to admissions into aided and foundation schools should be sent in writing directly to the governing body of the particular school. **The right to appeal does not apply at nursery stage.**

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## Transfer Between Schools Outside of Normal Admission Times

Transfers normally take place at the beginning of each term, only in exceptional circumstances should a transfer take place at any other time. A straightforward transfer should not take longer than 15 school days. Please note where there are significant issues such as behaviour difficulties the transfer may take longer. It is essential that pupils remain in school while the transfer request is being processed.

Normally, a change in school can only be effected at the beginning of a school term but changes arising from exceptional circumstances may be effected during the course of a school term.

The Authority is prepared to consider requests for transfers between schools other than at normal admission times when it is in the best interest of the child(ren). However, Years 10 & 11 in a secondary school are considered to be a '2 year course' consequently transfer requests to another school within Wrexham, after Year 9, often have a negative impact on pupils' academic progress and are not considered appropriate by the Local Authority.

Parents seeking transfer other than at the normal transition times are advised as a first step, to discuss their child's progress and any problems with the headteacher of the child's present school. Following these discussions, parents who still wish to seek a transfer, should contact the LA/Admissions Authority (address see page 5). The transfer request will be considered within the context of the Authority's admission policy. If the Authority is unable to admit in accordance with the parents' preference, then the parents are entitled to appeal against that decision. **The right to appeal does not apply at nursery stage.**

## Education After Compulsory School Age

Pupils who wish to continue their education beyond compulsory school age may remain at their secondary school, providing the school offers post-16 education courses. Alternatively, they may apply for a place at another school that has post-16 provision, namely Ysgol Rhiwabon, The Maelor School (Penley), and Ysgol Morgan Llwyd for Welsh medium provision, or at a local further education establishment such as Yale College (see addresses on page 36 onwards).