

Department for Education and Children

**Admissions to Carmarthenshire Community and Voluntary
Controlled Primary Schools**

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers.



November 2011

1. Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to assist parents and guardians with the process of seeking admission for a child to a Carmarthenshire Community or Voluntary Controlled School.

It is provided as a guide only and does not represent an authoritative legal definition.

Advice on admission to a Voluntary Aided School should be sought from the Governing Body of that school.

2. Does my child have to go to school.?

By law parents must ensure that all children of compulsory school age (5 to 16) receive a suitable full-time education either by registering a child at a school or by making other arrangements to give them a suitable, full-time education.

Local authorities have a duty to step in if they believe a child is not getting the education required by law, either at home or at school.

A child becomes of compulsory school age when they reach the age of five and, where a parent has elected to register their child at school, they must start school in the term following their fifth birthday. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday in June in the school year that they reach the age of 16.

3. What age can children be admitted to a School?

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

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

Admission for Pupils of other ages

Although not a legal requirement, the Authority will also allow admission, following application to the Admissions Authority, to nursery schools and nursery classes on a part time basis in the term following their third birthday.

In schools where there is no nursery age provision then pupils will be admitted, following application to the Admissions Authority on a full time basis at the following times:-

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

4. Can I express a preference for a particular school?

Q What is a school catchment area and why is it important for admission purposes.

A Each school has a defined geographical area which it serves. That geographical area is referred to as the school's catchment area and usually most of the pupils at the school will be from within the school's catchment area.

There are regulations which limit the number of pupils which can be admitted to a school in any one year . If there are more applications than places available then the Authority will apply its oversubscription criteria which will prioritise the applications.

Subject to the application being received in time and the other admission criteria being met, then pupils residing within the catchment area will have priority over those residing outside of the catchment area. **The catchment area is also important in considering entitlement for school transport.**

Copies of the catchment area maps are available at the school or alternatively there is a facility on the County Council website whereby you can check the catchment area for your home address.

Q Is it possible to choose a school other than a catchment area school.

A Yes – the School Governance Section will deal with any application for admission to a community or Voluntary Controlled School in Carmarthenshire.

Q Can I choose to apply for admission to more than one school

A Yes the form will allow you to register more than one choice of school and all preferences will be treated equally.

Q Could my application for admission to a school be refused even though I live in the catchment area.?

A Yes. Each school has a maximum number of pupils which it can cater for. There is also a limit on the number of pupils a school can admit into any year group. This is referred to as the Admissions Number for that school. The Authority will refuse admission to the school once that limit has been reached.

5. What is the procedure for applying for admission to a School ?

Q How do I apply for a place for my child at a school.

There is a legal requirement to submit an application for admission to a school.

There is a period of time each year referred to as the **admission round** when parents/guardians may make application for the admission of pupils to schools for the following school year.

For a Community School or Voluntary Controlled school you can apply on –line at www.Carmarthenshire.gov.uk or you the school may assist you with the application or you can get a form from the School Governance Section, Department for Education and Children, Building 2, St Davids Park, Jobs Well Road, Carmarthen SA31 2HB.

The Council is not the Admission Authority for Voluntary Aided, independent schools or Trust schools. Separate arrangements apply for these schools details of which are available from the school.

Q When should I submit an application apply for admission

A Applications should be made in the year before the pupil is to be admitted to the school. The usual admission round would be from November to the end of January for pupils to be admitted in the following September . Details of the dates for each admission round and the dates by which the forms are to be returned to the Council will be found on the Council's website , in the "Information for Parents booklet" or at the school.

If you are unsure of any matter please contact the School Governance Section.

Q I've handed the form into the school so everything should be alright for my child/ children to start in September.

A No. You will need a formal letter from the Council's School Governance Section before admission to a school can lawfully be granted

Q Could my application for admission to a school be refused even though I live in the catchment area.?

A Yes Each school has a maximum number of pupils which it can cater for. There is also a limit on the number of pupils a school can admit into any year group which is referred to as the Published Admissions Number for that school. The Authority will refuse admission to the school once that limit has been reached.

Q My child has brothers and sisters already at the school. Are siblings automatically granted admission to that school?

A No. There is no automatic entitlement for pupils with siblings already in the school to be granted admission. Whilst the Council will seek to assist parents in meeting their preferred choice of schools there is no guarantee that they will be able to do so.

Q My child has a statement of educational needs will that mean that they are admitted automatically to the school.

A. If the statement of Educational Needs names the school and states that the needs of the pupil can only be met at that school then admission will usually be granted. It is still a requirement however that an application for admission be made in accordance with the procedures outlined.

Q I have a recommendation from a medical officer which recommends that my child attends the school will that guarantee admission to the school?

A Each case will be considered on its merits. However there will be a need for you to include a signed statement from a medical officer which will need to explain how attendance at a particular school will meet the individual needs of the pupil. The Council will reserve the right to ask for additional information or for an independent assessment of the case should it feel it necessary.

Q I have spoken to the school following the birth of my child and asked the school to put their name down at the school for admission . Is that enough?

A No. The requirement is for a written application to be made during the **admission round** to the Authority's School Governance Section and for it to be made by the prescribed date.

Q Historically the children from the local Meithrin / Nursery class have always gone to the local school Isn't the transfer automatic.?

A No- it's still necessary to submit the application form by the prescribed date. There is no automatic transfer.

Q My child attends an Infant school and is due to transfer to the Junior school in September do I need to submit an application form?.

A Yes you will need to submit an application form. Legally the schools are two separate organisations and as such have separate admission numbers.

Q The school usually sends a letter out to parents telling them of the need to complete an application form for admission but I have not received any such letter although I know parents who have received a letter. As it's the schools fault will my child be admitted?

A Schools often seek to help parents by keeping a list of those who have expressed an interest in seeking admission for a their child/ children to the school by sending a reminder letter to parents/guardians at the appropriate time. There is no legal duty on schools to do so and doing so is purely a voluntary action by the school to try and assist parents. The responsibility for submitting the form rests with the parents/guardians and not the school.

6. Deadline date for applications?

What is the deadline date for Applications?

The form has to be completed and **received by the admissions Authority** by the **31st January in the school year before the child is due to start school. This applies to all pupils and includes Nursery age pupils as well as pupils residing within a school's catchment area. There is no automatic admission of pupils to a school.**

It is likely therefore that failure to submit an application by that date will mean that your child may not be successful in obtaining a place.

Q What happens if I miss the deadline for the admission round?

A The application will be treated as a late application. Late applications are not dealt with until all applications made on time have been dealt with. You are much less likely to be offered a place at one of your preferred schools. If you believe there are exceptional circumstances as to why you were not able to submit an application by the specified time then please write to the School Governance Section Admission Team giving your reasons and enclosing supporting evidence . This evidence will be considered by a panel of senior officers and each case will be decided on its own merits. Parents will be notified of the decision in writing.

7. How Will I know if the Council has received my Application?

If you submit an application on line from your home PC, an e-mail will be sent directly to the e-mail address you entered on the form. This will have a copy of the application form as a pdf document which you can print and retain as confirmation and will include a unique reference number for your application.

If the school has entered the application on your behalf then the the pdf copy will be sent to the school for you to pick up and retain.

8. What happens if there More Applications than there are places available?

Q If there are more applications than places available how will the Council decide which applications will be accepted?

A The Council will apply what is referred to as the over subscription criteria. This is specified in the Information for Parents Handbook. Applications will be prioritized as follows:-

- (i) Looked After Children
- (ii) Children who have a statement of educational need which names the school as the specific and nearest provider which can meet the pupil's psychological, medical or special educational needs.
- (iii) Children who live in the school's catchment area and have a sibling registered at the school at the time of the requested admission.
- (iv) Children who live in the school's catchment area but who do not have a sibling registered at the school at the time of the requested admission
- (v) Children who reside outside of the school's catchment area and have a sibling registered at the school at the time of the requested admission
- (vi) Children who reside outside of the school's catchment area but who do not have a sibling registered at the school at the time of the requested admission

Within each of the above categories the following will apply :

(a) Distance criteria

The distance from home to the school will be used as a determining factor with those living nearest the school being given priority and a place over those living further away. The distance will be measured along a public highway or footpath.

(b) Siblings

Children will be classified as siblings if they are:-

- Half or full brother or sister
- Adoptive brother or sister

(c) Multiple Birth Children

In circumstances where 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

These will be treated as being within the catchment area of the school if the application is accompanied by a Ministry of Defence letter specifying a return date and confirmation of new address.

9. Can I Appeal against a decision not to grant admission for my child?

If the child is of statutory school age then you can ask for the case to be reviewed by an Independent School Admissions Panel within a time period which will be specified in the letter which you receive from the Authority refusing admission. They are separate from the Admission Authority and their decision is binding on both parties.

There is no right of appeal for the admission of a pupil to early years provision.

10. I have been offered a place at a school do I need to do anything?

A Yes – there is a form attached to the letter which asks you to confirm that you accept the offer of a place at the school. If you do not return that form within the time indicated then the offer of the place will be withdrawn and the place offered to another pupil.