



School Admissions Policy

Policy for Admissions to Schools

The County Council, as the Local Authority, is responsible for determining the arrangements for admissions to all Community Primary, Welsh Medium Primary, Secondary, Welsh Medium Secondary, Special Schools and Voluntary Controlled Schools.

The Local Authority will consult annually with school Governing Bodies and the Diocesan Education Authorities in relation to admissions.

The Local Authority will comply with statutory requirements and the Welsh Government School Admissions Code and will take account of the expression of parental preference in the context of its duty to ensure the provision of effective education and the efficient use of education resources.

When considering applications, the Local Authority will observe the provisions of the School Admissions Code which states that admission authorities should admit to the school's admission number and will rarely be able to prove prejudice as a ground for refusing an additional pupil while the numbers remain below the admission number.

The Local Authority will comply with its duty to ensure the provision of effective education and the efficient use of resources. In so doing, the Local Authority will have regard to the total resources, including accommodation and staffing, available to each school and any constraints imposed by the school organisation and curriculum.

It will also consider the resource implications for the authority and impact on other education policies.

When a parent gives fraudulent or intentionally misleading information in order to obtain a place at a school for their child, the Local Authority reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place. Where a place is withdrawn on the basis of misleading information, the application must be considered afresh and a right of appeal offered if a place is refused.

Admissions Procedure

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

- Publication of the 'Guide to Education Services'.
- Arrangements to enable parents to express a preference for a school they wish their child/children to attend, and, in the case of sixth form admissions, expression of a preference by either a parent or a young person or both. By law, parents who express a preference are given priority for admission over those who do not.
- Consideration of preferences up to the Admission Number for each school.

Please Note Expressing a preference does not guarantee a place at your chosen school if that school is oversubscribed. If more parents apply for places at the school than the number of places available, the Authority will apply the oversubscription criteria for allocating places as set out in the policy.

Welsh Language Policy for all schools

The Authority's Welsh Language Policy aims to ensure that all pupils reach a standard of bilingualism. It will be the responsibility of the Authority, in conjunction with the Headteacher and the School Governors, to ensure the teaching of both Welsh and English is in accordance with National Curriculum requirements.

Primary Education will be provided for all children mainly through the medium of English, or mainly through the medium of Welsh.

To ensure continuity with the primary schools, Welsh will be taught as a second language in all secondary schools where the main medium of instruction is English.

Flintshire County Council, working in partnership with schools will provide parents with full information and understanding of the advantages of Welsh medium education and the opportunities which exist within Flintshire, explaining clearly that

- there is no need for parents to be Welsh speakers for their children to take advantage of this opportunity
- receiving education in a designated Welsh medium school enables pupils to become fully bilingual
- there are intellectual advantages to being equally fluent in two languages.

Pupils who have received their education through the medium of Welsh in primary school transfer to the Welsh medium Secondary School (Ysgol Maes Garmon) at Key Stage 3. Pupils can transfer from English medium primary schools to the Welsh medium Secondary School where they will be offered the immersion scheme that is available at the end of Year 6 and all the way through Year 7. For further details about the scheme please contact Ysgol Maes Garmon Tel: 01352 750678.

Nursery

Local Authorities in Wales have a duty to provide sufficient nursery places in their area. A child becomes eligible for a place at a nursery class in the September following the child's 3rd birthday. Nursery education is not compulsory and parents have no right of appeal regarding nursery admissions under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Nursery schooling in all schools/units will be provided on the basis of 5 x 2.5 hour sessions per week (or average) for each child.

Places are available in Nursery classes at all Flintshire primary schools, up to the Admission Number for each school.

Parents may express a preference for any nursery irrespective of where the child's home is in relation to the school. However, expressing a preference does not guarantee a place at that nursery. In the event of oversubscription, applications for nursery places will be dealt with by applying the oversubscription criteria in respect of primary schools as set out in this policy.

Notes: 1. Admission to a nursery class at a particular Primary School does not guarantee subsequent admission to reception class at that school. A fresh application will be required. 2. No transport is provided.

Primary

The Authority will admit a child to a maintained primary school at the beginning of the school year if the child has achieved his/her 4th birthday on or before August 31st of that calendar year. Once a reception place has been offered and accepted, parents may defer their child's entry until the start of the term following the child's 5th birthday. Parents are not able to defer entry beyond this point, or beyond the academic year for which the original application was accepted.

In accordance with legislation, infant class sizes (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) are restricted to a limit of no more than 30 per school teacher.

In respect of junior classes (Year 3 to Year 6), the target is no more than 30 per school teacher.

Secondary Pupils will normally be transferred from a primary to a secondary school in the September following their 11th birthday.

Application Forms

A parental preference form for nursery, primary and secondary school admission will be available on line on www.flintshire.gov.uk/schools/schooladmissions or by contacting the Admissions Team (admissions@flintshire.gov.uk; 01352 704068/704073).

Forms will be available according to admissions timetable as set out annually on FCC website.

Oversubscription Criteria

All pupils will be admitted if the Admission Number has not been reached. However, if the Admission Number has been reached, applications will be considered against the oversubscription criteria, which are listed in priority order.

Criteria to be applied in order of priority by the Local Authority for admission to Nursery, Primary and Secondary Schools:

- a) Looked after children (children in care) and previously looked after children
- b) pupils for whom the preferred school is the nearest appropriate school to the pupil's home address
- c) pupils who will have a sister or brother attending the preferred school on the expected admission date. The 'sibling rule' will only be applied for the statutory period of education i.e. up to Year 11.
- d) pupils for whom the preferred school is not the nearest to their home address. Pupils will be admitted in order of proximity to that alternative school and up to its Admission Number.

Tie-breaker

If there are more applicants than places in any of the above categories, priority will be given to applicants living nearest the school, measured from the child's home address to the recognised main entrance of the school.

If the authority is unable to comply with the parental preference(s) expressed then the parent will be offered a place at the next nearest appropriate school with an available place.

Where a school is named in a Statement of Special Educational Needs, the local authority has a duty to admit the child to that school.

For the allocation of places, the nearest appropriate school is interpreted as:

- (a) the school nearest to the child's home measured from child's home address to the recognised main entrance of the school.
- (b) the nearest Welsh medium school where parents wish their children to receive their education through the medium of Welsh.

(c) the nearest Denominational school where parents wish to have their children educated in a denominational school.

The Council uses Routefinder, a network analysis system fully integrated into the Geographical Information System (GIS) software, to calculate home to school distance in miles. The shortest route is calculated from an applicant's home address to the recognised main entrance of the school.

It should be noted that transport will only be provided in accordance with the Council's Transport Policy.

Nearest suitable school

When making a 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 residency at the relevant home address, such as evidence of Council Tax.

Parents are advised that a school place may be lawfully withdrawn if the information given on their application form is fraudulent or misleading.

Sibling (brother/sister)

A sibling is defined as a full, half, step, foster or adopted brother or sister living together as one household at the same address and where the elder sibling is of statutory school age and will still be registered at the preferred school when the younger child is eligible to attend.

In considering siblings, first priority will be given to applications from multiple birth children.

Multiple Birth

Children Twins, triplets, quadruplets, etc, residing at the same address and applying for places in the same year group will be given priority for admission in the main admissions round under the 'sibling' criteria. If it is not possible to offer places to all multiple birth children residing at the same address and applying for places in the same year group, the Authority will offer places for all of those multiple birth children at the next nearest appropriate school with available places.

Admissions to schools other than those maintained by the LA Parents wishing to express a preference for a school in a county other than Flintshire should still use the Flintshire preference form and it will be passed to the relevant Local Authority, with the exception of Cheshire West and Chester Council who request you contact them directly.

Please be aware of each Authority's admission timetable and closing dates.

Notifying Parents The outcome of an application for admission will be notified to parents in writing. Where the application has been refused, the letter will set out the reasons for the decision and the right of appeal and a return proforma will be sent.

Parents will be asked to decide by a specified date one or more of the following options:-

- Place child's name on a waiting list
- Proceed to appeal and place child's name on a waiting list
- Accept the place offered at an alternative school for which preference has been expressed
- Make a new application for an alternative school

Waiting Lists

Waiting lists for oversubscribed schools will be prepared and will consist of those children whose parents have specifically requested in writing (including email) to be placed on the school's waiting list, those for whom an appeal form has been received and any late applications.

Waiting lists will be maintained until 30 September in the school year concerned. After that date, any parents still wishing to be considered for a place must specifically request in writing to remain on a waiting list. Flintshire LEA hold the waiting lists.

Admission of Pupils from outside Flintshire

Pupils applying for admission to a school in Flintshire who do not reside in Flintshire will be offered a place at a school in accordance with the admissions policy.

Change of School within Flintshire during the year

Schools in Flintshire have an agreed protocol for transfers from one nominated school to another other than at the normal transition point. A parent seeking such a transfer should initially speak to the headteacher of the child's current school to discuss the reasons for that transfer. If, following this discussion, the parent wishes to continue the process, contact should then be made with the headteacher of the new school.

Headteachers will refer parents to the Local Authority, particularly in cases where pupil numbers in the new school have exceeded the Admission Number in the appropriate year group. In such circumstances admission to the new school may be refused. Parents who are dissatisfied with this may give notice of appeal, as outlined below.

Admissions other than at normal entry point (ie September each year)

For pupils moving into the area at times other than the normal admission round (September of each year), the Local Authority will endeavour to meet parental preferences as far as possible.

Where a school is oversubscribed, parents will be offered a place at an alternative school.

The parent may then accept the alternative placement, or may give notice of appeal.

Appeals Procedure

If the Authority is unable to comply with the parental preference the parent will be given the reason in writing and offered a place at another school. The parent may then accept the alternative placement and may give notice of appeal. Information on how to appeal will be provided. Details describing the appeals procedure are also available on www.flintshire.gov.uk/schools/schooladmissions.

Alternatively, please contact the Admissions Team on 01352 704068/704073. Appeals must be made in writing giving reasons, and sent to the Admissions Team. The Authority will initiate the appeals procedure.

Appeals will be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being received in writing (or within 30 working days if received during the school summer holidays). Every effort will be made to hear appeals as quickly as possible. The parents, or parent accompanied by a friend if desired, will be given an opportunity to appear before an Independent Appeal Panel. The decision of the Independent Panel will be notified to the parent in writing and is final and binding on all parties.

Provision for Children with Additional Needs

The Authority must have regard to the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs when identifying, assessing and providing for children with additional needs. Some children may require special educational provision which is over and above that which a mainstream school could reasonably be expected to provide.

The Local Authority will assess the needs of such pupils in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Code of Practice. Where the assessment indicates this to be necessary, it will arrange for extra provision to be made for them.

This provision will be included in a statement of special educational need for the child concerned. This document is negotiated with parents and schools. It states the child's needs and how and where those needs will be met.

All Governing Bodies have a Governor with responsibility for the Special Needs Policy, which parents are entitled to see. Each school has an Additional Needs Co-ordinator who oversees the day to day operation of the policy.

Parents who wish to discuss any aspect of their child's additional educational needs should first contact his or her Headteacher.

Admissions to Resource Class

Schools will normally only admit pupils with a statement of special educational need issued under the 1996 Education Act. In exceptional circumstances, they will admit pupils who are being assessed under the 1996 Education Act. The statementing procedure is administered by the Inclusion Service at County Hall. (Telephone: 01352 704028/704029).