

2025/26

# Blaenau Gwent Admission Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education



## **Consultation Process**

In accordance with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council consults upon its admission arrangements on an annual basis, attempting where possible to mirror the admission round timescales of neighbouring admission authorities. The coordinated admission arrangements will determine the date at which application forms are sent to parents as well as the publication of an agreed closing date (For more information please refer to page 13).

Consultation will commence on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and conclude at 5pm on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The admission arrangements will then be published on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024, the year preceding the 2025/2026 admissions round. The Local Authority will ensure that the following information is provided during the consultation process:

- i) Admission numbers for each school
- ii) Application procedures and the timetable for the admission process
- iii) The criteria to be applied to applications in the event that there are more applications than places for a School
- iv) Arrangements for waiting lists and how they operate
- v) Arrangements for the processing of late applications
- vi) Details of how parents will be notified of a decision on their application, as well as appeal procedures should their application be unsuccessful.

The Local Authority will consult with the following parties on its admission arrangements:

Headteachers of relevant Schools:	All headteachers of community Schools in Blaenau Gwent
Governing body of relevant Schools:	All governing bodies of community Schools in Blaenau Gwent
All neighbouring Local Authorities within the area:	Caerphilly County Borough Council Torfaen County Borough Council Monmouthshire County Borough Council Newport City Council
Admission Authorities for all other schools in the area:	All headteachers of voluntary aided schools in Blaenau Gwent All governing bodies of voluntary aided schools in Blaenau Gwent Brynmawr Foundation School All Saints RC Primary School St Marys Church in Wales Primary School St Marys RC Primary School St Joseph's RC Primary School

## **Blaenau Gwent Proposed Admission Policy for Statutory Education 2025/26**

### **1. Introduction/ Purpose**

There is a requirement upon Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council as a directive from Welsh Government, to develop, review and consult upon the Blaenau Gwent School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education, on an annual basis. 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 current and prospective pupils. **\*Please note that the following non-maintained schools and non-maintained early year's education providers are responsible for the development of and governed by their own individual Admissions Policies:**

- Acorns Nursery
- All Saints Roman Catholic Primary School
- Brynmawr Foundation School
- Cylch Meithrin Brynithel
- Tiggys Day Care
- 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 in line with confirmed admission numbers and the dates from the 2024/25 admission round. All other content remains the same. The policy is fully compliant with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) and School Admissions Appeal Code (2013). This document outlines requirements associated with and guidance relating to pupil admissions and in-year transfers/admissions 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 which vary in each school throughout the year). 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 on nursery application forms, in line with the admission rounds for nursery, reception and secondary school places.

- Some governing bodies offer full-time provision, which is funded directly from the school budget. The nursery entitlement within Blaenau Gwent is part-time which equates to 12.5 hours per/week (2.5 hours per/day), other than the following nursery provisions, which offer:
  - Blaen y Cwm Primary School - full time rising 3 and nursery places
  - Coed y Garn Primary School - full time nursery places
  - Rhos y Fedwen Primary School - full time rising 3 and nursery places
  - St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School – full time rising 3 and nursery places
  - St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School - part-time rising 3 places and full-time nursery places
  - Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg & Ysgol Gymraeg Tredegar – full time rising 3 and nursery places
- 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. 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> August inclusive).

It is against the law to prevent your child from accessing education at the start of the school year in which their fifth birthday falls.

The Council must provide education places for the admission of all children in the September following their fifth birthday; however, parents/ guardians or carers 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 pupils at the Learning Community. These pupils are then allocated a site within the Learning Community by Abertillery Learning Community Leadership team and Governing Body in line with the following criteria:

1. Siblings in the campus already
2. Catchment area
3. Ensuring each session stays within the agreed teacher to learner ratio

Once the site has been confirmed the notification process is then administered by the admissions authority. 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. All school organisation proposals are assessed in line with the Council's admissions and pupil place planning arrangements, to ensure that there is sufficient capacity within Blaenau Gwent Schools to accommodate local pupils.

### **2.2.2 Allocation of School Places at Ysgol Gymraeg Brohelyg**

In the case of Welsh Medium Education, the admission authority (Blaenau Gwent Council) is responsible for placing pupils at the federation of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg and Ysgol Gymraeg Tredegar. These pupils are then allocated a place at either the Blaina or Tredegar Campus by Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg Leadership team and Governing Body.

Parents should clearly note their preference when completing the admission form for Welsh-medium education.

### **2.3 Admission to Secondary School**

Children/ young people 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 at Middle Schools**

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/ be allocated a place at the secondary phase. In this instance a separate admission application is **not** required. **\*Please note all other secondary settings require an application to be made in order for a place to be allocated. When making an application for an alternative secondary school automatic place allocation will be removed from the secondary phase.**

#### **2.3.2 Allocation of School Places at Brynmawr Foundation School**

In the case of Brynmawr Foundation School, the admission authority (Blaenau Gwent Council) is responsible for placing pupils within the school on behalf of the Brynmawr Foundation School Leadership team and Governing Body.

### **2.4 In-Year Transfers (admission that is requested outside of the normal admission round)**

In-year transfer/ admission refers to applications made in-year (during and not prior to the academic year commencing), and outside of the normal admission round, i.e. pupils moving into the borough, wishing to change schools etc. All In-year transfers are dealt with in date order of receipt. Where there are a greater number of applications received than the number of places available, the Council will apply their oversubscription criteria (see page 12) in order to determine place allocation and/or refusal.

Applications are processed within 7-15 working days of receipt, confirmation of a place is proved by the Council, and confirmation of a start date is provided by the school. Where possible the start date provided by the school is within 10 days of place allocation being confirmed.

In the following circumstances pupil allocation will be managed differently to that of a standard transfer request:

- **Hard to place pupils**– applicants who are considered hard to place, fall into one or more of the categories presented below. The 14 categories cover circumstances and/or needs which would deem or contribute to a learner being considered as hard to place:
  - Children who were permanently excluded from their last maintained school placement and are able / ready to integrate to an alternative school;
  - Children returning from the criminal justice system (secure estate);
  - Child victims of serious crimes (child cruelty, kidnapping, sexual or violent crime, FGM);
  - Children who are CLA;
  - Children who have been out of education for longer than two months;
  - Children with below 50% attendance;
  - Children with disabilities or medical conditions which have already impacted on their attendance or participation at school;
  - Children of carers, Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, children whose parents offend, asylum seekers and refugees who have been in the UK less than two years and need a supported entry to school;
  - Homeless children who have been placed in temporary housing;
  - Children who are in a refuge due to domestic violence;
  - Children of UK service personnel where a change of location ordered by the service leads to a need for a change of school and will have experienced multiple moves;
  - Children who have received 10 day exclusions in the last twelve months; and/or,
  - Children on the child protection register.

It may not be possible to process complex and hard to place admissions within the target timeframe outlined above. In such cases, the applicant would be informed of any increases to the processing timescales with regards to their application, and the process through which the application will be managed. The Additional Learning Needs Panel and Vulnerable Learner Panel would be responsible for managing applications as outlined above (please refer to section 2.6 below for further information on the panel's).

As part of the transfer allocation process, the Council will contact the child or young person's current school to obtain information in order to support and ensure a smooth transition. This information will then be shared with the recipient school in order to make sure that they are equipped to meet the pupils' educational, learning and any other identified needs upon transfer.

It is the responsibility of the parent/ guardian or carer to notify the Admissions Officer if they no longer wish to transfer their child to the newly allocated school, as confirmed within the offer letter.

**\*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. However, it does recognise that this process may be required in putting the needs of the child and/ or young person first.**

**Previous research has determined that the transfer process can impinge upon a pupil's educational achievement and success, unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as the transfer being 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 school and admissions authority.**

**Parents should also consider prior to making a transfer request, differences in curriculum offer available at the child's current school and requested recipient school, i.e. the schools may not offer the same subjects at GCSE level.**

## **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 if a pupil is new to the UK. Evidence of the placement being 'essential' will be required should a placement of this nature be requested.

Applicants submitting requests for admission into a year group that is not the chronological year for the child/ young person, 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, guardians or 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 into a non-chronological year group.



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

The Council has a policy 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 policy is called the Managed Move policy and is implemented via the Vulnerable Learner Panel. Where appropriate the Admissions Officer will consider the individual circumstances in line with the Welsh Government Admissions Code (2013), and if the school is over subscribed, utilise and implement 'excepted pupil' status (for more information please see the aforementioned Welsh Government School Admissions Code, 2013, page 27), in order to admit the pupil.

The Vulnerable Learner Panel consists of the following representatives:

- Senior Education Welfare Officer – Chair ((in the Senior Education Welfare Officers absence the Service Manager for Inclusion will attend)
- School Admissions Officer;
- Youth Service; and,
- Headteachers/ Senior Leaders and school ALNCOs as well as other professionals/officers as and when required.

The Council has a number of Resource Base provisions throughout Blaenau Gwent to meet the needs of pupils with ALN including: Cognition and Learning Difficulties, or autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). A resource base will be considered by the ALN panel where it is felt that the mainstream setting cannot meet the needs of the child/young person.

The Council also has two special schools:

- Pen-Y-Cwm Special School, which caters for children and young people with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties throughout the 3-19 age range.
- River Centre 3-16 Learning Community which caters for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

All placements into resource base and special school provision are agreed and managed by the Additional Learning Needs Panel, which is comprised of the below representatives:

- ALN Manager – Chair (in the ALN Managers absence the Service Manager for Inclusion will attend)
- Educational Psychologist
- Education Welfare Officer
- Headteachers
- ALNCOs as well as other professionals/officers, or specialist services as and when required.

If the application is for Ty Afon then this will be determined by the Vulnerable Learner Panel.

Ty Afon is a Provision within the River Centre 3-16 Learning Community. This provision is for learners who present with difficulties related to high levels of anxiety. Admission must be via a referral to the Vulnerable Learners Panel: It is expected that referrals are supported by:

- Clear evidence of mental health difficulty and reported on from senior CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) professionals
- Evidence of ongoing intervention from CAMHS
- Information regarding work already carried out by the school, including the impact of advice/strategies implemented following Educational Psychologist involvement
- Clear evidence that the home school has tried EVERY possible approach to re-engage the learner and has evaluated the impact that these approaches have had.
- A consensus amongst involved professionals that a referral to Ty Afon is likely to be the most effective way forward
- The learner must not have any evidence of disruptive or aggressive behaviours or incidents of exclusions.

Decisions are made based upon strict criteria to ensure placements are appropriate. Processes are managed by the ALN team to ensure that pupils with additional learning needs are admitted in a timely manner, whilst ensuring that all of their identified needs can be met by the recipient school. All processes are carried out in consultation with the Admissions Officer in order to inform the allocation and planning of school places.

Where an application is received for a pupil in receipt of either a Statement of Educational Need or a Local Authority Individual Development Plan (IDP), the application is shared with the ALN team. Based on need identified in the IDP ALN Panel will determine placement.

The Welsh Government admission code states there are certain categories of children where schools **must** admit and without delay as follows:

- Children with Statements of SEN; and
- Children with a Local Authority IDP

*In general, the admission of children with statements of SEN is covered by the Education Act 1996. Guidance on the admission of children with statements is provided in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales. Consequently, the admissions provisions in the 1998 Act do not generally*

*apply to children with statements of SEN. Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires a maintained school that is named in a statement of SEN to admit the child. Schools cannot refuse to admit even if by doing so they would exceed their admission number.*

*If a LA has provided a statement for a child with SEN it is responsible for ensuring that the special educational provision is made for the child. The LA may identify a particular school which it considers to be suitable for the child's needs, and name the school in the statement. Admission authorities must be mindful of their duties with regards to Equalities Legislation and guidance on improving the accessibility of schools. If the parent of a child with a statement of SEN wishes to appeal against the school named in the statement, or the fact that no school has been named, the appeal is to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales, not to the admission appeal panel.*

In certain cases, pupils may be granted excepted pupil status in compliance with the School Admissions Code, which determines that:

*Where certain types of children ("excepted pupils") cannot be provided with education at the school in another infant class in which the limit is not exceeded without relevant measures being taken which would prejudice efficient education or the efficient use of resources, those children are not to be counted for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not the limit of 30 pupils is exceeded. Excepted children are:*

- *Children whose statements of SEN specify that they should be educated at the school concerned, and who were admitted to the school outside a normal admission round.*
- *Children who are looked after by local authorities (looked after children), or who have ceased to be looked after (previously looked after children) as a result of being adopted or being placed with a family or given a special guardian and are admitted to the school outside a normal admission round.*
- *Children initially refused admission to a school, but subsequently offered a place outside a normal admission round by direction of an admission appeal panel, or because the person responsible for making the original decision recognises that an error was made in implementing the school's admission arrangements.*
- *Children admitted outside the normal admission round who:*
  - *the maintaining local authority confirmed cannot gain a place at any other suitable school within a reasonable distance of their home because they have moved into the area outside a normal admission round, or*
- *Children who were admitted to the school outside the normal admission round after which the school has arranged its classes, and after the first day of the school year, the effect of which would mean that the school would have to take a relevant measure if such children were not excepted pupils.*
- *Children of armed forces personnel who are admitted outside the normal admission round.*

- *Children whose twin or other sibling from a multiple birth are admitted as non-excepted pupils, as the final pupil(s) allocated a place before the admission number is reached.*
- *Children who are registered pupils at special schools, but who receive part of their education at a mainstream school.*
- *Children with SEN who are normally educated in a special unit in a mainstream school, who receive part of their lessons in a non-special class*
- *Children who are issued with a school attendance order:
 
  - *If it appears to the local authority that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, then they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order. The order will require the child's parents to register their child at a named school. If they fail to comply with the order the parent can be prosecuted.**

*Section 437 of the Education Act 1996 states the local education authority is responsible for identifying the school to be named. The local education authority is responsible for ensuring that the naming of the school is compliant with legislation and statutory guidance i.e., it must be the school named in any Statement/IDP the child holds, otherwise, the catchment, or nearest local school will be named. If there are known exceptional circumstances why naming the catchment school, or nearest school, would not be in the child's best interest the local education authority will name the next nearest school.*

*A school attendance order once issued will remain in force until the child ceases statutory education or the local authority revokes it. Section 439 of the Education Act 1996 also allows for children to be admitted into a school, where they would exceed the fixed pupil numbers.*

*Excepted pupils will remain so, once admitted, for the remainder of their time in an infant class or until class numbers fall back and they can be organised to comply with the infant class size limit. For example, because a non-excepted child leaves the class, an additional infant class is created, or an additional teacher is appointed, then that child ceases to be an excepted pupil. Classes **must** be organised so as to comply with the limit wherever possible.*

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 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 policy and Vulnerable Learner panel the Admissions Officer will coordinate the development of a working group aligned to the needs of the pupil, in

considering the prospective pupil's circumstances and ensuring appropriate school placement. Complex admissions will be managed and processed in accordance with the School Admissions Code (2013). 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 schools, foundation school, and non-maintained early year's education providers within Blaenau Gwent, maintain their own policies and criteria. These differ to the standardised criteria of the Council. The faith and foundation schools are also responsible for administering their own transfer and appeal procedures. Applications for pupils where a faith school is a first preference, should only be submitted to the Councils' Education Transformation team in respect of second and third preference schools that are maintained by Blaenau Gwent. **\*Please note that the Council are unable to allocate pupil places within the following non-maintained faith schools and non-maintained early year's education providers:**

- Acorns Nursery
- All Saints Roman Catholic Primary School
- Cylch Meithrin Brynithel
- Tiggys Day Care
- 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 within schools outside of Blaenau Gwent. Out of county school admissions and placements are managed by the admission authority of the Borough within which they reside, and/ or the schools themselves, when they are not maintained by the Council.**

The Council works jointly with the faith, foundation schools and non-maintained early year's education providers; 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 (please refer to **Appendix 1** of this document for more information). The admission number 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 for primary school admissions, 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 can be doubled. For secondary the figure derived indicates the admission number for all year groups. Schools are asked on an annual basis each autumn-term, to confirm their sessional plans etc. for the admission round and capacity calculations, which are then presented within the admissions policy, two years preceding the academic year to which it applies. Schools will then be bound by the admission numbers for primary and secondary school places. In the case of non-statutory nursery admissions, the capacity calculation is advisory based on the guidance detailed above.

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

#### **4. How to apply for a School Place in Blaenau Gwent (excluding the Faith Schools and non-maintained early year's education providers)**

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 for submission with the application form:

- **Proof of Residency (copies of one of the following)**
  - Valid driving licence including paper licence
  - Council tax bill (for the 2023/24 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

Applications to the Council should be made online via the following link:

<https://citizenportal.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/CitizenPortal/en>

In making an online application, applicants will receive immediate confirmation that their application has been submitted, then confirmation of pupil placement will be sent on the offer date. Alternatively, parents can request an application pack from the Admissions team on (01495) 355340 or via the following email address: [schooladmissions@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:schooladmissions@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)

As previously outlined the faith 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 providers are dealt with directly by the providers 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 only**.

In the case of a double allocation as a result of an administrative error, the Council would need to ensure that adequate places are available and follow the School Admissions Code and oversubscription criteria, in order to meet the 1<sup>st</sup> preference requested.

In instances where fraud is suspected, or accusations of fraudulent claims have been made, an investigation will take place. Places may be withdrawn if it is discovered that parents/ guardians or carers have knowingly provided false information in order to obtain the advantage of a particular school place.

Information provided within the application in respect of additional learning needs, will require further consultation with the 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 Looked After**

Priority to be given to children looked after/previously looked after (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 (GGP which is a geographic information system).

It should be noted that a child with a statement of special educational need or equivalent (i.e. individual development plan) which names a specific school, will be admitted in accordance with Section 343 of the Education Act 1996.

**6. Deciding Factors associated with prioritising Admissions**

In the event of oversubscription and/or the requirement to prioritise admission based on distance, places will be allocated on the basis of distance between the shortest recognised walking route between the pupils' front door of the home and the main school gate. Distance is calculated using a digital mapping system. Children living closest to the school are given the highest priority.

**7. Shared residency**

In the event that the residency of a child is shared between two parents, the address where the child concerned resides for the majority of the school week will be used for allocation purposes. This is the address that should be declared on the application.



However, if the residency with both parents during the school week is equal, the address for where the child benefit is paid will be used for allocation purposes.

## **8. Person making the application form**

Only persons holding parental responsibility for the named child are able to make an application and they will be required to make a declaration to this effect as part of the application process. Ordinarily it is expected that this person resides at the same address as the child and is referred to as the parent for admission purposes.

Where parental responsibility is equally shared, the Council will ask the child's parents to determine which parent should submit the application.

It is expected that parents will also agree on school preferences for a child before an application is made. The Council is not in a position to intervene in disputes between parents over school applications and will request that these are resolved privately.

If parents cannot agree and neither has obtained a court order stating who should be making the application/what the preference should be, the Council will accept an application from the parent in receipt of Child Benefit for the child.

## **9. Multiple births**

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

## **10. Timeframe for Processing Admissions as Part of the 2025/26 Admission Round**

### **Nursery**

For places to be allocated in spring summer and autumn term of 2024;

Admission round commences on	7 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Closing date for applications	5pm on 18 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
Offer date	22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2024

### **Reception**

Admission round commences on	6 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
Closing date for applications	5pm on 21 <sup>st</sup> February 2025
Offer date	16 <sup>th</sup> April 2025

### **Secondary**

Admission round commences on	23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024
Closing date for applications	5pm on 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
Offer date	3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2025

**11. Arrangements with Neighbouring Admissions Authorities and Neighbouring Local Authorities**

Where parents wish to apply for their child to attend a school in another admission authority (i.e. Torfaen, Monmouthshire, Powys, or Caerphilly), you are required to apply via the relevant admission authority in accordance with their admission arrangements.

Applicants living in other authority (council) areas who want their children to go to a Blaenau Gwent school should apply via Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in accordance with the agreed timescales.

**12. Late Applications**

Applications received ‘**after the closing date**’ will be classed as late. These will be considered as a secondary priority to applications received on time. Incomplete applications and those without relevant supporting evidence will also be considered as late, if the information requested is not received by the closing date for admission round to which the application relates.

Late applicants are unlikely to be offered a place at their preferred school, due to places being allocated to on-time applicants, particularly where there are high levels of demand.

**13. Change of Preferences**

Should a parent/guardian or carer wish to change their preference, they will need to do so in writing. Letters expressing a change of preference are to be directed to the admission authority. Any request of a change in preference received after the closing date will be treated as a late application.

**14. Waiting Lists**

Following the allocation of places during the normal admission round, children will remain on the waiting list for their preferred school until 30<sup>th</sup> September the following academic year. Thereafter, parents/ guardians or carers 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.**

**15. Children of UK Service Personnel and other Crown Servants (including diplomats).**

Families of UK personnel and other Crown Servants are subject to frequent movement within the UK and from abroad, often at relatively short notice. School places should be allocated to children and their families in advance of the approaching school year if accompanied by an official Ministry of Defence(MOD) or Foreign or Commonwealth Office (FCO) letter declaring a return date and confirmation of the new address wherever possible.

**16. Children Housed via Domestic Violence Services and Organisations**

Children temporarily housed under the protection of approved Domestic Violence agencies will be admitted as a priority to the catchment school if the application form is accompanied by an official letter from the relevant agency.

**17. 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 they are permanent residents in the area.

**18. 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 published offer date (please refer to pages 13 and 14 for more information). If the application is rejected, parents will receive written confirmation informing them of the outcome and will also be provided with the 'Appeals Guidance for Parents' document, which provides details of the appeals procedure. As part of the refusal letter the Council will allocate a place at the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> preference school, if a 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> preference has been indicated within the application. A place will be allocated at the next nearest available school, should all preferences be unavailable or if an alternative preference has not been specified.

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

In accordance with the School Admissions Code of Practice 2013 and the School Admission Appeals Code of Practice 2013, the Local Authority will make arrangements to enable the parent of a child to appeal against a decision to refuse a place at the preferred school.

The appeal will be determined by an appeals panel established in accordance with School Admission Appeals Code 2013. The panel must consist of three to five members appointed by the Local Authority from the following categories:

- People who are eligible to be lay members (persons without personal experience in the management of a school or the provision of education in

any school, disregarding experience as a governor or in any other voluntary capacity).

- People who have experience in education; who are familiar with educational conditions in the LA's area or who are parents of registered children at a school (other than the school at which the appeal is made).

Independent Appeal Panels must consider each case individually on its merits and they cannot limit themselves, in advance, to the admission of any particular number of pupils.

Consideration by an Appeal Panel should be in two distinct stages:

- a) The Factual Stage, where the panel decides as a matter of fact whether there was a lawful reason to refuse admission; if there was not, the child must be admitted; if there was, the committee must move on to:
- b) The Balancing Stage, where the panel exercises its judgement to balance the degree of prejudice to efficient education which would result from admitting the child, and the strength of the parents' case, so as to arrive at a decision which is binding on the admissions authority.

The decision of the appeal panel will be binding on the Local Authority.

Parents will receive a letter refusing admission and will be advised of their right of appeal. The decision to appeal does not prevent the parent / carer accepting a place at an alternative school whilst the hearing is convened, as the panel will determine the appeal on the basis of application. Appeal Hearings are convened by the Council's Legal team and will be heard within 30 School days of the date of application for appeal.

## **20. Home to School and Post 16 Transports**

Blaenau Gwent Council will provide free transport for children attending their nearest suitable school, where the distance from home to school is over the specified walking distance detailed below:

- more than 1.5 miles from home for children aged under 8 years but of statutory school age; and,
- more than 2 miles from home for children aged 8 years and over.

Distances are measured by using the Council's Digital Information Mapping System, to determine the shortest available safe walking route between the home address and the main gate of the school to be attended.

Parents are able to choose an English-medium, Welsh-medium or a denominational school for their child. The child will qualify for home to school transport to the appropriate catchment area of the school. When the catchment area school is full and unable to admit a pupil, free transport will be provided to the next nearest available school that has room to take the child,

as long as the home is 1.5 miles or more away from the school for pupils under the age of 8 years, or 2 miles for pupils aged 8 and over.

The provision of free school transport will be arranged to coincide with the start and end of the normal school day and shall be provided during the school term time. Home to School transport is not provided for breakfast clubs, after school clubs or summer schools. Transport will be provided from pick-up points at approved bus stops on the nearest public transport route to the learner's home, where possible.

## **21. Post 16 Travel**

All students living in Blaenau Gwent will be provided with a discounted bus ticket or travel grant to the Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone, Ebbw Vale Campus as their designated Post 16 provider; or, the nearest institution where their course is available depending on the following criteria:

- students must be between the ages of 16 to 19 (under 19 prior to the 1st September of the commencement of their course) to qualify;
- students shall reside in the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent;
- students must reside 2 miles or over (nearest walking distance) from their nearest college campus; and, the students should attend a full time course which requires attendance of 16 or more hours per week or a minimum 4 days attendance per week at the institution.

Students and pupils aged 19 or over at the commencement of the course are not eligible for travel assistance from the Council and in these circumstances they are advised to contact their respective college for details of any available transport provision.

All transport for Post 16 pupils including those with additional learning needs is provided based on strict criteria as set out in the Home to School Transport Policy. The Council may provide transport up to a maximum of three years until the pupil's 19<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

## **22. Travel Grant**

The Council's present policy is to provide travel assistance to those who meet the criteria up to a maximum of £150 per academic session. This will be paid termly as follows: £50 autumn, £50 spring and £50 summer.

## **23. Welsh Medium / Faith Education**

Pupils who wish to undertake their Post 16 studies via the medium of Welsh or attend a Faith school are required to travel further distances for their education, with no direct public service bus routes. These students have the opportunity to utilise the existing contract bus provision in lieu of the Travel Grant, if appropriate.

All awarded transport will be reviewed periodically. For more detailed information on home to school and post 16 transport, along with details on how to apply, please refer to the Blaenau Gwent Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy (2021/22) via the following link: <https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/resident/schools-learning/school-transport/>

### Appendix 1 – Published Admission Numbers

**\*Please note in order to apply for a place in one of the following schools/early years' education providers, an application will need to be made directly to the school of your choice:**

- **Acorns Nursery**
- **All Saints Roman Catholic Primary School**
- **Cylch Meithrin Brynithel**
- **Tiggys Day Care**
- **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 2024/25

<b>School</b> *The school highlighted in <b>red</b> are responsible for their own admission arrangements and as such, applications need to be submitted directly to the school.	<b>Nursery Admission Number</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Statutory Admission Number (Reception or Year 7)</b>
<b>All Saints R.C. Primary School</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>am</b>	<b>26</b>
Beaufort Hill Primary School	<b>30</b>	<b>am</b>	<b>30</b>
Blaen y Cwm Primary School	<b>26</b>	<b>full time</b>	<b>38</b>
Brynbach Primary School	<b>30</b>	<b>am</b>	<b>30</b>
Coed y Garn Primary School	<b>30</b>	<b>full time</b>	<b>30</b>
Cwm Primary School	<b>52</b>	<b>am</b>	

	52	pm	30
Deighton Primary School	30	am	30
	30	pm	
Georgetown Primary School	23	am	60
	23	pm	
Glanhowy Primary School	65	am	42
	65	pm	
Glyncoed Primary School	52	am	45
	52	pm	
Rhos y Fedwen Primary School	26	full time	25
St. Illtyd's Primary School	30	am	30
St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School	41	full time	15
St. Mary's Church-in-Wales Primary School	30	am	30
St. Mary's R.C Primary School	53	Full time	30
Soffryd Primary School	19	am	23
	19	pm	
Willowtown Primary School	30	am	60
	30	pm	
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg	60	full time	30
Ystruth Primary School	37	am	42
	37	pm	

	Nursery Admission Number	Session	Statutory Admission Number (Reception or Year 7)
<b><u>Secondary School</u></b>			
Brynmawr Foundation School			151
Tredegar Comprehensive School			152
<b><u>Middle School</u></b>			
Abertillery Learning Community – Primary Phase	141		140
Abertillery Learning Community – Secondary Phase			150
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community -	47	am	38

Primary Phase		
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community - Secondary Phase		<b>207</b>



## Appendix 2 - Blaenau Gwent Schools Catchment Area Overview Map



