



Starting School 2019 – 2020

A guide to Bridgend County Borough Council's
admission arrangements for schools

[Bridgend County
Borough Council's
website](#)

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Mr Lindsay Iorwerth Harvey
Corporate Director,
Education and Family Support



Councillor DR.C E Smith
Cabinet Member for
Education and Regeneration

Foreword

Dear Parent/Carer,

All local authorities have an obligation to provide an opportunity for parents/carers to express a preference when choosing a school for their children. This is one of the most important decisions you will take on behalf of your child. This information document has been prepared to assist you with your decisions.

As a parent/carers, you have a right to expect your child to receive a good education, but also important is your interest in your child's work at school which will provide encouragement for the school and complement the efforts of teachers. I encourage you to take part in your school's parents' association which will give an opportunity for you to have a closer involvement with the school.

You may be interested to know that there are parent representatives on the governing body of each school and that these are elected by the parents themselves, normally every four years. Each year, you will receive a written report of the work undertaken by the governing body of the school and a meeting will be held for the purpose of giving parents an opportunity to discuss this annual report with the governors.

I hope that your child will settle easily into their new school and that they will derive many benefits from the opportunities offered.

I trust that this booklet will prove to be informative and useful and that it will promote a greater understanding between yourselves and the education service as a whole.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'L Iorwerth Harvey'.

Lindsay Iorwerth Harvey (Mr)
Corporate Director, Education and Family Support

We want the county of Bridgend to be a good place in which to be a child or young person, or to bring up a family. Through our schools and children's services, we want to help all children and young people to:

- thrive and make the best use of their talents;
- live healthy and safe lives;
- be confident and caring individuals; and
- know and receive their rights.

Parents/Carers are a child's first and enduring teacher. They play a crucial role in helping their children to learn. This role should continue and extend when a child begins school. Our schools offer a great range of quality learning experiences and opportunities, but to make the most of these opportunities and help children and young people to reach their potential, it is important that parents form a productive and supportive partnership with school staff, starting with ensuring that their child attends school.

Regular communication between home and school is an essential part of the partnership, which helps children and young people succeed.

Our aim is for every local school to be a good school, but we recognise that parents have the right to express a preference that their child attends any school listed in the middle of this booklet, subject to the admission arrangements specified.

The booklet aims to provide parents with general information about Bridgend's County's primary, secondary and special schools, and more specifically, details about the admission and appeals arrangements governing those schools.

We have also included some additional information that may help parents in selecting a school. In some parts of Bridgend County, for a range of reasons, there is pressure on school places. This means that, in those areas, parents may not always be successful in getting a place at a preferred school, especially if they do not live in the school catchment area.

As a Council, we think it is important for us to conduct our business in ways which are:

- **Fair** – taking into account everyone's needs and situation;
- **Ambitious** – always trying to improve what we do;
- **Customer-focused** – remembering that we are here to serve the local community; and
- **Efficient** – delivering services that are value for money.

If you require further information or would like to provide feedback on this booklet or the admission process as a whole, we would be pleased to hear from you. Please e-mail pupilservices@bridgend.gov.uk

A. School admissions policy and arrangements 2019-2020

To view the school admissions policy and arrangements for 2019-2020, please [visit our 'enrol a child' page](#).

B. School term dates

Term	Term begins	Mid-term break		Term ends	Days
		Begins	Ends		
Autumn Term 2019	Monday 2 September 2019	Monday 28 October 2019	Friday 1 November 2019	Friday 20 December 2019	75
Spring Term 2020	Monday 6 January 2020	Monday 17 February 2020	Friday 21 February 2020	Friday 3 April 2020	60
Summer Term 2020	Monday 20 April 2020	Monday 25 May 2020	Friday 29 May 2020	Monday 20 July 2020	60

C. School catchment maps

To view school catchment maps and information on feeder schools, please visit [our 'school catchment maps and feeder schools' page](#).

D. Admission to voluntary aided schools

In Bridgend County, there are five voluntary aided schools, which are financed largely by the local authority but which are organised and run by the respective governing bodies.

The governing body of each voluntary aided school is the admission authority with responsibility for all admission arrangements.

Parents/carers who wish to seek admissions to these schools are advised to contact the relevant school for further information.

The five voluntary aided schools within the county borough are detailed in section E to I below.

E. St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Bridgend - admissions policy

This policy refers to admissions in 2019-2020 at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, which is a Catholic School founded by the Church to provide education for Catholic children. The Governing Body has sole responsibility for admissions to this school.

The Education Act 1980, Section 6, gives parents the right to express **a preference with regard to which school their children attend**. Admission to the school will be made in accordance with parental choice **subject to the order of priority listed below**.

The school tries to allow all who express a desire for a Christian education to come to this school.

All applicants are required to sign a statement to indicate positive support for the aims and ethos of the school as expressed in its Mission Statement.

The criteria for admissions are, in order of priority:

1. Baptised looked after Catholic children.
2. Baptised Catholic children.
3. Looked after children who are baptised in another Christian denomination.
4. Children who are baptised in another Christian denomination.
5. Whose parents/carers wish them to be educated in a Christian School and who support the Catholic ethos of the School.

In considering applications relating to these categories, a priority order may have to be established by reference to:

- a) The age of any sibling in the receiving school; the youngest sibling commanding the highest degree of priority.
 - b) The proximity of the pupil's home to the receiving school as measured by the shortest practicable walking distance. The governors will use the GIS (geographic information system) software system to measure all distances.
- In the above category, 'looked after children' will be given top priority.
 - Applications from children with special needs or additional learning needs will be considered within the context of each of the criteria and in accordance with the governing body's special needs policy.

Parents/Carers seeking a Christian education for children under criteria two should expect to provide documentary support from their current priest/minister of religion. If any child should not be admitted to the school, a parent/carer may appeal in writing to:

**The Clerk to the Governors
St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Llangwydd Road,
Bridgend
CF31 4JW**

F. St Mary's and St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Maesteg - admissions policy

*“The school was founded by and is part of the Catholic Church. The school is to be conducted as a Catholic School in accordance with the canon law and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, and in accordance with the **TRUST DEED OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CARDIFF** and in particular:*

- (a) religious education is to be in accordance with the teachings, doctrines, discipline and general and particular norms of the Catholic Church;*
- () religious worship is to be in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church;*

and at all times the school is to serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Instrument of Government, 2012)

As a voluntary aided school, the governing body is responsible for admissions to St Mary’s and St Patrick’s Catholic Primary School and tries to allow all who express a desire for a Christian education to come to this school.

The current published admissions number for the school is 25.

All applications for admission to St Mary’s and St Patrick’s Catholic Primary School, including those currently in the school’s nursery class, must be via an application form available from the school. This form must be submitted for consideration by the published closing date, which can be obtained from the school, found on the application form or from the local authority composite prospectus.

Being a pupil of the nursery at St Mary’s and St Patrick’s Catholic Primary School does not guarantee a place in, or give priority for admission to, the school’s Reception Class.

Children can commence reception class from the September of the school year in which they reach age five. However, admission can be delayed until (but no longer than) the term after the child’s fifth birthday.

Oversubscription criteria

If there are more applications for admission than there are places, then the following oversubscription criteria will be used:

1. Baptised Catholic looked after children.
2. Baptised Catholic children.
3. Non-Catholic looked after children.
4. Siblings of baptised Catholic children who will be attending the school at the time of admission (siblings in the lower years commanding greater priority).
5. Children who are baptised or recognised members of other Christian denominations and whose parents/guardians wish them to be educated in a Christian school.
6. Children who will have siblings at the school at the time of admission (siblings in lower years commanding greater priority.)
7. All other applicants.

A sibling is classified as a half or full brother/sister, an adopted brother/sister, or a child living in the same household. When allocating places, if the last place is offered to a multiple birth child (eg a twin or triplet), the governing body will also admit the other siblings.

If circumstances arise where it is possible to admit some but not all children in any of the above categories, preference will be given to children whose homes are within the shortest walking distance as measured by the current local authority approved GIS (geographic information system) system.

Applications wishing to be considered for priority in categories 1, 2 and 5, will need to provide a copy of baptismal certificate or letter confirming membership from their own minister as appropriate.

All applications received by the application deadline will be considered together and letters containing an offer or refusal of a place will be sent out on the 'common offer' date. Late applications will be considered after those that have met the deadline.

The application deadline and 'common offer' dates can be confirmed by contacting the school or referring to the local authority's composite prospectus.

Successful applicants will be expected to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission by the deadline indicated in the offer letter. Failure to do so may result in the offer being withdrawn and the child's place allocated to another applicant.

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list until 31 August. Any additional places will be allocated in line with the oversubscription criteria as above.

In-year applications for admission will be admitted when there are places. Where more in-year applications are received than there are places, all the applications will be considered against the above oversubscription criteria.

Anyone wishing to appeal a decision of the governing body's Admissions Committee (note, there is no appeal regarding nursery admissions) should complete the appeals form attached to the notification letter. The completed form **must** be returned within 14 days (10 working days) of notification of refusal to:

**The Clerk to the Governing Body
St Mary's and St Patrick's Catholic Primary School
Monica Street
Maesteg
CF34 0AY**

All appeals will be heard by an independent appeals panel and conducted in accordance with the *School Admission Appeals Code*.

G. St Robert's Catholic Primary School, Aberkenfig - admissions policy

This policy refers to admissions in 2019-2020 at St Robert's Catholic Primary School, Aberkenfig, Bridgend.

St Robert's is a Catholic school founded by the church to provide education for Catholic children. The governing body has sole responsibility for admissions to this school.

Under the Education Act 1980, Section 6 gives parents the right to express a **preference as to which school their children attend**. Admission to the school will be made in accordance with parental choice **subject to the order of priority listed below**.

The school tries to allow all who express a desire for a Christian education to come to this school.

All applicants are required to sign a statement to indicate positive support for the aims and ethos of the school as expressed in its mission statement.

The criteria for admissions are in order of priority:

1. Baptised Catholic children.
2. Children who are baptised in other Christian denominations and whose parents/guardians wish them to be educated in a Christian school and who support the Catholic ethos in the school.

In considering applications relating to these categories, a priority order may have to be established by reference to:

- a) The age of sibling in the receiving school; the youngest sibling commanding the highest degree of priority.
 - b) The proximity of the pupil's home to the receiving school as measured by the shortest practicable walking distance.
- In each category, looked after children will be given top priority.
 - Applications from children with special needs or additional learning needs will be considered within the context of each of the criteria and in accordance with the governing body's special needs policy.

Parents/guardians seeking a Christian education for children under criteria 2 should expect to provide documentary support from their current priest/minister of religion.

If any child should not be admitted to the school, a parent/guardian may appeal in writing to:

**The Clerk to the Governors
St Robert's Catholic Primary School
Dan y Lan
Aberkenfig
Bridgend
CF32 9AB**

H. Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School - admissions

policy General

Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School is an English-medium, mixed, voluntary aided secondary school. It serves the parishes of Our Lady's and St Patrick's (Maesteg), St Robert's (Aberkenfig), St Mary's (Bridgend), Our Lady Star of the Sea (Porthcawl) and St Joseph of Arimathea (Pyle).

The Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, Section 86, gives parents the right to express a preference as to which school their children attend.

Oversubscription criteria and order of priority

Where the number of applicants for admission exceeds the admission number of **131** places available, places will be allocated to applicants in the under-mentioned categories in the following order of priority:

1. Looked after baptised Catholic children
2. Baptised Catholic children.
3. Other looked after children
4. Siblings of baptised Catholic children who will be attending Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School at the time of admission.
5. Children who are attending a Catholic primary school at the time of application and for whom the parents/guardians continue to seek a specifically Christian education.
6. Children who are attending a Church in Wales primary school at the time of application and for whom the parents/guardians continue to seek a specifically Christian education.
7. Siblings of other children who will be attending Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School at the time of admission.
8. Other children for whom parents/guardians seek a specifically Christian education.

Notes

1. Evidence of baptism must be submitted with the application form in all cases.
2. In this context, 'siblings' would share a common mother or father, adopted mother or father, or form part of an established family unit. When allocating places, if the last place is offered to a multiple birth child (eg a twin or triplet), the school will also admit the other sibling(s).

In circumstances where, for reasons of capacity, it is not possible to admit all the children within a particular category, preference will be given those whose homes are closest to the school as determined by the shortest practicable walking route; this is determined using the current Bridgend County Borough Council approved GIS (geographic information system) system.

Application

Application forms and, where appropriate, supporting documentation, must be returned to the school no later than **Friday 11 January 2019**. For children attending one of the above Catholic primary schools, the form can be handed into the school. For other applications, the form should be sent directly to the admissions panel at Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School.

Applications received by this date will be considered together and places allocated. Letters confirming the outcome of your application will be sent on Friday 1 March 2019.

Admissions policy

The governing body of the school is responsible for determining and administering the policy relating to the admission of pupils to the school. It is guided in that responsibility by the requirements of the law, by the advice of the Diocesan trustees and its duty to the school and the Catholic community.

In accordance with the provisions of the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005, the governing body has delegated responsibility for determining admissions to its admissions panel, a sub-committee of the board of governors. The admissions panel will consider all applications made in accordance with the criteria set out on page two of this document, without reference to the race, gender, ability, disability, social background or aptitude of the child.

Having consulted with the local authority and others in accordance with the requirements of the law, the governing body has set its planned admission number at **131** pupils for the school year commencing September 2018. Places in other year groups are also limited to 131.

Parents/carers wishing to apply for a place for their child for the **start of the academic year 2019-2020** must complete the designated application form in full, and return it to the school no later than the published closing date for applications. Please note that ALL applications **must** be submitted on this form and all applications will be considered at the same time.

Letters will be dispatched on the published 'common offer' date, informing you of the decision of the admissions panel in respect of your application. Where the application is unsuccessful, the reason(s) will be stated clearly in the letter, and you will be provided with information as to how to appeal the decision. Applicants who are not accepted will be placed on the school's waiting list. Applicants will remain on the waiting list until the end of the academic year. In the event that places become available, the applicants on the waiting list will be reviewed against the oversubscription Criteria and offers made to fill available places.

Applications for **transfer to the school from another secondary school** during the academic year should be made using the specific schools transfer application form. The governing body admissions panel will consider each application. If the number requesting transfer exceeds available places, the oversubscription criteria will be used to determine successful applicants. Where the particular year group is full, applicants will be placed on the school's waiting list. Applicants will remain on the waiting list until the end of the academic year. In the event that places become available, the applications on the waiting list will be reviewed against the oversubscription criteria and offers made to fill the available places.

Parents have a **right of appeal** against a refusal by the governing body to admit their child. If they wish to do so, they should put their appeal in writing to the clerk to the governors at the school within 14 days (10 working days) from the notification date. Appeals will be arranged, with an independent panel and conducted in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code.

For all successful applications, the data contained in the application form will be stored on the school management information system and used for purposes outlined in the 'fair processes order'. Every effort is made to secure the accuracy and security of personal data held by the School. Under the Data Protection Act, individuals have the **right of access to personal information** held about them, and also the right for any errors to be corrected.

Please send application form (and supporting documentation) to:

**The Governors' Admissions Panel
Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School
Oak Tree Way
Brackla
Bridgend
CF31 2DN**

Relevant dates referred to in the foregoing can be found via the school's website or from the local authority website.

[Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School's website.](#)

[Our school admissions webpages.](#)

H. Archdeacon John Lewis Church in Wales Primary School, Bridgend - admissions policy

a. The admissions authority

The governing body of the Archdeacon John Lewis Voluntary Aided Church in Wales Primary School is the admissions authority for the school. While it has responsibility for its policy and procedures, the governing body must consult annually with other admissions authorities within a three mile radius of the school. This statement and rules are made under the provisions of the education acts, specifically the Welsh Government Code of Practice on School Admissions and Admissions Appeals and in accordance with the Trust Deed and Instrument of Government of the school.

b. Parental preference

Parents/Carers who wish their child/children to attend this school must contact the school to obtain the relevant application forms. Parental preference does not apply where:

- To admit the child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or use of resources.
- The child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools. The requirement to comply with parental preference is dis-applied for a period of two years following the second exclusion. This does not apply to pupils below statutory school age when they were excluded nor does it apply to pupils who were reinstated after exclusion.
- To admit would be incompatible with the statutory duty to meet infant class size limits of 30.

c. Admission to nursery

The school's published admissions number is 30. The admissions number is based on the physical capacity of the school to accommodate pupils and, therefore, should not be exceeded in normal circumstances.

Subject to not exceeding statutory numbers, part-time nursery places are made available to children the term following their third birthday. Full time nursery places are available for children in the September of the academic year in which they will be four.

Admission forms are available from the school and parents who have requested a nursery place will be contacted the term prior to the child's admission. As with all schools, entry into reception class from nursery is not automatic. Parents need not re-apply for a place in reception class as the school's standard admissions form, completed on entry to nursery, will be used. If the application is refused, a letter will set out the reasons for the decision and advise parents/carers on the appeals process.

d. Infant Class Size Regulations

In order to improve educational standards in schools, it is government policy to limit the number of pupils in infant classes to a maximum of 30 pupils per class. Schools may only refuse admission on the basis of infant class size when this number has been reached.

e. Religious education and collective worship

Religious education and collective worship form a central focus of the experiences pupils receive in our school. Religious education and collective worship is in accordance with the denominational teaching and practice of the Church in Wales. More information regarding this can be found in the school's prospectus.

f. Equality of opportunity

The governing body seeks at all times to achieve full compliance with the relevant legislation and guidance with regard to equal opportunities, human rights and the Welsh Language Act.

g. Statutory school age

Children of statutory school age must attend full time education from the term after their fifth birthday.

h. Criteria for determining admissions

The school is open to any child of statutory school age whose parents wish them to be educated in a school with distinctive Christian character and in accordance with the teachings of the Church in Wales. Should there be more applications than there are places available, the governing body will award places to applicants according to their ability to satisfy the following admissions criteria in order of priority.

The school makes every effort to comply with Section 106 of the Education Act 2005 to give priority to looked after children (LAC):

1. Looked after children of practising Anglican families;
2. Children of practising Anglican families;
3. All other looked after children
4. Children of all other faiths who worship regularly;
5. Children who already have a sibling in the school;
6. Children resident within the County Borough of Bridgend whose parents choose to have their child/children educated in a Church in Wales primary school. Priority will be given to those living nearest the school using the GIS (geographical information system) software system to measure distances.

Definitions

- *Regular – at least twice a month. A clergy reference will also be required.*
- *Siblings – a sibling is classed as half or full brother/sister; adopted brother /sister; a child living in the same household.*
- *Living nearest the school – permanent address of parent or legal guardian. Proof of address will be required.*

i. Oversubscription

All unsuccessful applicants have the right of appeal to an independent admission appeal panel. Letters of appeal should be sent to the clerk to the governors at the school within 10 school days.

Parents whose child/children have been unsuccessful in securing a place may ask the school to keep their application on file. If additional places become available these will be allocated using the school's admissions criteria and not on the length of time the name has been on the list.

j. Transfers mid-term/year

Parents who move into the County Borough of Bridgend during the academic year will be required to complete the school's admission form requesting admission to school. If parents move within the County Borough of Bridgend and wish to seek admission to this school a school transfer form will need to be completed too.

Parents/Carers may also wish to apply for a place in this school for reasons other than moving house. In these cases, they will be encouraged to speak to the

headteacher to explain the reasons for the change of school and a school transfer form and school admissions form will need to be completed.

k. Admission outside the normal age group

The governing body would not normally expect to admit a child out of his/her normal chronological age group. However, occasionally parents/carers may seek a school place for their child outside their normal year group. The governing body will consider each case individually and make its decision in consultation with the school, parents/carers and any other agencies involved.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body on an annual basis in consultation with other relevant admissions authorities.

If any child should not be admitted to the school, a parent/carer may appeal in writing to:

**The Clerk to the Governors
Archdeacon John Lewis Church in Wales Primary School
Brackla Way
Brackla
Bridgend
CF31 2JS**

I. Timetable for admissions to voluntary aided schools - September 2019-2020

The expected timetable to process applications for admissions to voluntary aided primary and secondary schools for September 2019 is as follows:

Timetable for (Year 6) pupils transferring from primary school to secondary school in September 2019

Action	Date
Application forms sent to schools/parents	Monday 22 October 2018
Completed application forms must be returned for consideration by	Friday 11 January 2019
Admission panel notifies parents of outcome	Friday 1 March 2019
Notification of any appeals	From April 2019

Timetable for admission to reception class, September 2019

Action	Date
Application forms sent to Parents/Schools	Monday 26 November 2018
Completed application forms must be returned for consideration by	Friday 15 February 2019
Admission panel notifies parents of outcome	Tuesday 16 April 2019
Notification of any appeals	From May 2019

J. Examinations

Secondary-aged pupils, if considered suitable by the headteacher, are entered for the examinations of the Welsh Joint Education Committee and/or other examining boards. The timetables for the examinations are arranged by the Welsh Joint Education Committee and other examining boards. Headteachers are notified of these, and the subsequent examination results, directly by those boards.

K. School attendance

It is a duty of all parents/carers to ensure their child/children attend school regularly. Regular attendance at school is vital for all children if they are to gain the best outcomes from their statutory education.

The local authority seeks parental co-operation to ensure their child/children attends school on a regular basis.

Parents/carers should not normally take children on holidays in term time. However, the regulations do allow schools the discretion to grant up to 10 days authorised absence for family holidays. Parents/carers have to apply for the 'leave' in advance and each request is considered individually, taking account of:

- the age of the child;
- the time of the year;
- the child's stage of education and progress; and
- the child's overall pattern of attendance.

The following examples illustrate the impact of a family holiday on a child's overall attendance:

- A primary-aged pupil who is authorised to take 10 days holiday during the course of a whole academic year can only then obtain a maximum attendance of 94.7%.
- A secondary-aged pupil who is authorised to take 10 days holiday during the period September – May (Welsh Government's absence survey time period) can only attain a maximum attendance of 93.8%.

L. Role of the Education Welfare Service

Promoting regular attendance is a joint approach with the school and the Education Welfare Service. Education welfare officers work within a legal framework that relates to the duty of parents/carers to ensure their child/children received efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and ability. In fulfilling this role, individual education welfare officers meet regularly with headteachers, or other designated staff, to identify pupils whose attendance is a cause of concern. Education welfare officers work closely with parents, pupils and other agencies to ensure regular school attendance. All referrals are followed up with the family to ascertain whether there are underlying causes preventing regular attendance. Education Welfare officers will encourage parental involvement in school and assist families in the alleviation of social problems that can affect a child's educational progress. Where intervention and support fail to secure regular attendance, the Education Welfare Service will use the Courts in an attempt to enforce school attendance.

Education welfare officers work as part of the Early Help Service. There are three multi-disciplinary teams co-located with safeguarding colleagues in the North, West and East of the Bridgend County Borough. Each school has a nominated education welfare officer. The Early Help teams can offer a range of co-ordinated family interventions, based on the individual support needs of each family. For families requiring additional support for issues affecting attendance, families can request a referral to the Early Help Service from the school, education welfare officer, or can self-refer by emailing earlyhelp@bridgend.gov.uk

For more information, please contact 01656 815276.

M. Home to school/college transport policy

1. Introduction

This policy has been produced by Bridgend County Borough Council to comply with the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 to make available information about its policy and the arrangements it puts in place to transport learners from home to school and from home to college.

It is the intention of Bridgend County Borough Council to provide a reliable system of transportation that will seek to carry learners safely, punctually and in reasonable comfort.

In all cases, the efficient use of resources will dictate the mode of transport provided, subject to any special needs requirements. Transport may be provided by means of contracted school transport services or existing public transport services such as bus, minibus, train, taxi, etc.

2. Provision of free transport

There is a statutory duty placed upon the local authority to provide learners with free transport to the nearest suitable school if they reside beyond 'walking distance' to that school. In the Bridgend County Borough, the term 'nearest suitable school' applies to the local catchment area school and this can be an English-medium, Welsh-medium, voluntary aided or maintained special school.

However, where a pupil attends a school other than the catchment area school as a result of parental preference, it must be understood that the parents accept full responsibility for transport costs and arrangements.

Welsh Government has defined the statutory 'walking distance' as two miles for primary-aged learners and three miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving secondary education. From September 2016, Bridgend County Borough Council changed its policy in line with these statutory distances.

Distances are measured by the nearest safe, available, walking route from home to school/college. The local authority uses a dedicated geographical information system (GIS) to measure these distances and ensure accuracy.

The changes applicable from September 2016 are as follows:

- Primary school pupils will be provided with free transport if they attend their catchment school and live two miles or more from the school.
- Secondary school pupils (including post-16 pupils) will be provided with free transport if they attend their catchment school and live three miles or more from the school.
- Post-16 pupils living three miles or more from Bridgend College will also receive free transport, via public transport service pass.

For pupils who are below the threshold for free transport but were in receipt of free transport prior to September 2016, free transport is maintained until they transition to the next stage of education or leave the school.

Pupils who started either primary or secondary school after September 2016 who are below the new threshold for free transport but have a sibling in that school in receipt of free transport, receive free transport until they transition/leave that school.

Pupils who are not eligible for free school transport may be able to purchase a seat on a school bus if surplus seats are available. The cost of this seat will increase and will be reviewed annually. For up to date details please see [our webpages for school transport](#).

Home to school transport will be arranged to coincide with the start and end of the normal school day and shall be provided during school term time. No transport is provided for breakfast clubs, after school clubs or summer schools.

Where the local authority has arranged for a learner to attend an out of county residential school, transport will only be provided at the start and end of each half term. Transport, except for learners with special educational needs, will normally be provided from pick-up points at approved bus stops on the nearest public transport route to the learner's home.

3. Nursery-aged learners

There is no statutory obligation on local authorities to provide transport for nursery-aged learners. However, Bridgend County Borough Council has chosen to use its

discretionary power to provide free transport for nursery-aged learners subject to the Council's distance qualifying criterion.

Nursery-aged learners may travel on the same contracted vehicle as those learners of statutory school age.

Where nursery-aged learners attend on a full-time basis (ie they are Nursery Two learners), they travel to school at the beginning of the school day and home at the end of the afternoon session. However, where schools offer places on a part-time basis to three-year-old learners (ie they are Nursery One learners), it is the responsibility of parents to either collect their child at the end of the morning session or ensure their child is transported to school for the afternoon session, depending on the mode of attendance.

4. Looked after children

The same age and distance criteria apply to children 'looked after' by the local authority as to children who are not looked after. However, if the local authority determines that a looked after child should attend a school other than their catchment area school, then transport to and from that school will be provided.

5. Special arrangements - hazardous routes

A route is considered to be available if it is safe (as far as reasonably practicable) for a learner without a disability or learning difficulty to walk the route alone or with an accompanying adult if the learner's age and level of understanding requires this.

In determining the comparative safety of a walking route, the local authority conducts assessments of the risks that children might encounter along the route between home and school.

All assessments follow the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance, June 2014. As routes are reviewed, provision may be withdrawn where, for example, identified hazards have been mitigated against. This will then be classed as an identified and available safe walking route. Parents will be given advance notice of at least one term of the withdrawal of transport and any withdrawal will normally be implemented to coincide with the start of an academic year.

6. Transport to Welsh-medium schools

Learners attending the nearest Welsh-medium school receive free transport in accordance with the local authority's agreed policy on walking distance and safe routes (see sections 2 and 5 above).

7. Transport to voluntary aided schools

Learners attending the nearest voluntary aided school of the parent's denomination receive free transport in accordance with the local authority's agreed policy on walking distance and safe routes (see sections 2 and 5 above).

8. Learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities

Free transport is provided for all learners who attend special schools, pupil referral units and learning resources bases that are not located within their catchment school in accordance with the local authority's agreed policy on walking distances.

Learners with special educational needs who attend mainstream schools and who do not otherwise qualify for free transport, may qualify for free transport if their application is accompanied by appropriate evidence and confirmed by the local authority's Inclusion Service.

Learners with disabilities (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) may be entitled to assistance with transport from home to an appropriate school/college even though the local authority's agreed criteria on safe walking distances are not met. Such provision is subject to approval by the local authority's Inclusion Service. Any such referrals must be supported by appropriate evidence.

The mode of transport provided will be dictated by the needs of the learner.

9. Cross border arrangements

Transport may be provided to eligible learners attending schools in neighbouring local authorities, where such attendance is consistent with the local authority's admission policy, eg Tonyrefail Comprehensive School for learners living in Evanstown and Dolau Primary (Welsh unit) for learners living in Pencoed.

10. Oversubscribed schools

If a learner cannot be admitted to his/her catchment school and, as a result, has to attend another school beyond the walking distance from their home, then transport will only be provided to the next nearest suitable school. This may not be in accordance with the preferred school of the parent/carer and in such circumstances the parent/carer will be responsible for transport costs and arrangements.

11. Transport on medical grounds

Transport to and from school may be provided for short periods on the recommendation of an appropriate Health/Medical Officer and will be subject to confirmation by the local authority. Where agreed, this provision will be subject to regular review.

12. Special arrangements – payments to parents/carers

The Council may agree, in special circumstances, to a parent/carer transporting their child to and from school and then receiving reimbursement of petrol expenses. Such cases are considered individually.

13. Special arrangements – applications for use of local authority discretion

The Council may consider exercising its discretion to assist with the provision of transport for learners who are not otherwise eligible for free transport, where special circumstances are present.

Parents/carers need to submit an application if they consider there are special circumstances. Every application is considered on its merits.

The Council does not maintain a list of circumstances that support the provision of discretionary transport; however, to assist parents/carers, the following are examples of such circumstances:

- Where a learner has had to change address, to move to a different area of the county borough to escape a domestic violence situation.
- Short-term emergency situations that necessitate a learner having to move to a different area of the Borough.
- Where a learner has a medical condition that requires transport to be made available in the short-term (eg a broken leg).

Parents should contact the Learner Support Team on telephone number 01656 642622 for further advice on how to make an application.

14. Paying places scheme

From time-to-time, it is possible that the numbers of learners to be transported by the local authority will be below the capacity of the particular vehicle being used. In such cases, the local authority will make the spare capacity available to children who live below the limit listed in section 2 above by way of a paying place. Paying places are allocated on an annual basis and the provision of this facility does not represent an obligation on the local authority. Availability is entirely dependent on the capacity of the vehicle used and this may result in withdrawal of the facility at relatively short notice.

The local authority also reserves the right to withdraw a paying place in cases where the parent/carer refuses to pay the charge. The local authority will take a parent's/carer's previous payment record into account when considering a new application. Where a parent/carer has refused/failed to pay in previous years, this may result in the new application being refused.

Parents/carers are advised to contact the School Transport Team regarding the availability of paying places on telephone number 01656 642654 or by email schooltransport@bridgend.gov.uk

15. Transferring to another school – transport arrangements

Learners whose families move to an address outside the catchment area of the school attended will not continue to be provided with free school transport if that move takes place during primary education, or in Year 7, Year 8 or Year 9 of secondary education.

Applications made on behalf of pupils who move in Year 10, Year 11, Year 12 or Year will be considered individually, and if approved, a bus pass would normally be provided.

16. Monitoring and complaints procedure

All vehicles will be available for random checks by the traffic commissioners or other appropriate body, when required. Any complaints received by the local authority

from parents concerning services or vehicles will be immediately investigated. In the event of the complaint being upheld, the necessary and appropriate steps will be taken in accordance with the contract as a matter of priority. Parents/carers should contact the School Transport Team on telephone number 01656 642654 by [e-mail: schooltransport@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:schooltransport@bridgend.gov.uk)

The local authority will, on unspecified days, undertake random checks on contracts, to ensure that the contracts are being complied with.

17. Transport from home to college

All learners aged 16 years, 17 years or 18 years on 1 September and who are attending their first course of full-time study at a further education college in that academic year, will be entitled to free transport subject to them:

- living beyond the three mile distance criterion; and
- attending the nearest college to their home that provides the course.

The usual mode of transport for college students is by bus/train.

18. Travel Behaviour Code: Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008

As part of the above Measure, Welsh Government has introduced The Travel Behaviour Code (the Code) to promote safe travel for all children and young people, by setting out the standards of behaviour required by learners when travelling between home and school.

The Code, which has been issued to all learners, encourages schools and local authorities to work proactively with learners, their parents and the community to promote positive behaviour. The Code also allows the local authority to temporarily withdraw transport in circumstances where a learner has misbehaved while travelling to school/college.

The local authority will follow the procedures outlined the Code if it is considering withdrawing transport.

The discretionary elements of the Council's policy are subject to review and may be discontinued. Any proposed changes will be subject to consultation with learners and parents and, if agreed, will usually apply from the start of a school year and will have regard to the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance – June 2014.

N. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs

(ALN) The policy

It is the local authority's LA's policy to educate pupils with additional learning needs with others of their own age in their local community, wherever practicable. There will, however, be occasions where the specialised provision required to meet certain exceptional needs has to be made in special designated facilities, possibly outside the local community and, in some exceptional circumstances, outside the local authority. Each case will be considered individually.

Within the context of its policy, the local authority is committed to the following general principles for pupils with additional learning needs:

1. The provision of quality educational opportunities for all children and young people, and a recognition of their entitlement to equal access to a broad, balanced and relevant education irrespective of their gender, race or special need.
2. The provision of advice, guidance, support and appropriate training for governors, headteachers and staff in relation to their duties and responsibilities for pupils with special educational needs.
3. An acknowledgement that a pupil may, at any time, have educational needs that will require special educational provision.
4. The delivery of a flexible continuum of special educational provision designed to meet the additional learning needs of individual pupils. Within this continuum of special provision it is acknowledged that the majority of pupils with additional learning needs will have those needs met in their school from the school's resources. However, it is also recognised that there are pupils whose additional learning needs require additional or different provision.
5. As with all other admission arrangements, the local authority is classified as the admission authority for special education provision.
6. The maintenance of a range of central services including specialist teachers and educational psychologists within the Inclusion Service to assist with the assessment, monitoring and evaluation of special provision.
7. A commitment to the principle of inclusion, which takes into consideration the efficient use of resources.
8. The additional needs of children, including those of pre-school age, will be identified and assessed, and appropriate provision made as early as possible. This will then be monitored and evaluated regularly.
9. Parents/carers will be encouraged to participate in the process of identification, assessment and intervention of their child's additional learning needs. Decisions about how and where a pupil's additional needs might be met will involve parents and take into account the pupil's own views. The process will involve giving guidance about statutory rights and ways in which parents can work in partnership with their child's school.
10. The importance of effective liaison with other agencies, both statutory and voluntary, is recognised in determining the nature of the pupil's additional learning needs, and the provision necessary to respond to those needs.
11. The provision of medical, nursing and paramedical advice, guidance and support is regarded as primarily being the responsibility of the local health services.
12. A recognition of the duty on the local authority in its strategic planning role to monitor and review regularly the provision of special education.

Special designated facilities

Through discussions and the assessment of children by the appropriate outside agencies, it may be considered that specialised provision would be the best way of meeting the needs of the child. The following provision is currently available:

Learning Resource Centre at primary and secondary education levels for pupils with:

- Hearing impairment
- Visual impairment (primary education level only)
- Motor impairment, complex and medical needs (secondary education level only)
- Communication difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders
- Moderate learning difficulties

For children and young people with more complex needs, smaller, specialist teaching environments are provided through specialist schools:

- **Héronsbridge School** catering for children and young people with severe or profound multiple learning difficulties and for children and young people with severe autistic spectrum disorder whose needs cannot be met in any other mainstream or specialist provision.
- **Ysgol Bryn Castell** caters for children and young people with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties whose needs cannot be met in any other mainstream or specialist provision.

Advice for parent/carers

If parents/carers consider that their child may have additional learning needs, they should first discuss the matter with the headteacher of their child's school.

Any further information about the provision available in the local authority can be obtained from:

**Education and Family Support Directorate
Inclusion Service
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB**

Telephone number: 01656 815230.

O. Child protection

In Bridgend County, all schools and support agencies have the protection and wellbeing of all children as their priority. All schools have a designated teacher (and deputy) with responsibilities for dealing with child protection issues and providing advice and support to other staff.

Child abuse includes physical violence, emotional cruelty, neglect and sexual abuse. It can involve deliberate harm to a child or the failure of a parent to safeguard the child. It can also happen when a child is not given appropriate supervision, care and attention.

Schools have a statutory requirement to report concerns when they have knowledge that a child is or has been suffering significant harm. Parents/carers will be notified if a referral is made to Children's Social Care service and parental/carers consent requested, when appropriate.

The local authority provides advice and support to schools and the Education and Family Support Directorate has a dedicated Vulnerable Groups Team and the team can be contacted as follows:

Education and Family Support Directorate
Vulnerable Groups Team
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB

Telephone number: 01656 815270.

P. School governors

Every school has a governing body that plays a key role in improving standards. Governors have a responsibility for school improvement and ensuring the school provides a good quality education for all its pupils, school policies and the conduct of the school. They also oversee the school's finances and the appointment and dismissal of staff. Governors are not involved in the day-to-day running of the school, which is the headteacher's responsibility. The headteacher would normally deal with general queries and matters concerning pupils and staff.

Governing bodies are made up of local people who are ready to give their time on a voluntary basis because of their interest in the school. They will include parents/carers, governors appointed by the local authority, teachers, the headteacher and other members of the local community.

Each year, the governing body provides a written report to parents/carers detailing what has been happening at the school during the previous year and the governing body's plans for promoting high standards of educational achievement. If enough parents/carers make a request to meet with governors regarding an issue affecting the whole school, then all parents/carers will be invited to this meeting. Parents/carers can request to meet with governors up to three times in a school year, providing certain criteria are met.

All parents/carers of children attending the school are eligible to put their names forward for a parent governor position when a vacancy arises; parents/carers are also able to vote in parent governor elections when they occur. The school makes parents/carers aware of these procedures at the appropriate time. Parent governors are elected to represent the interests of parents/carers and pupils. They are not able

to help solve specific problems that individual parents/carers or pupils may encounter; the school will have procedures in place to deal with these.

For more information about governing bodies, or details on how to become a governor, please contact:

**Education and Family Support Directorate
Learner Support Team
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB**

Email: pupilservices@bridgend.gov.uk
Telephone number: 01656 642622

Q. Grants to pupils

There are a number of grants available to pupils and these are listed below.

1. Welsh Government – school clothing grant

Welsh Government introduced an all-Wales school uniform grant scheme from the 2005-2006 academic year to assist families on low income with the purchase of school uniform for their children. The grant is administered by the local authority.

The scheme provides a grant of £105.00 to each pupil entering Year 7 of secondary school in Wales who is eligible for free school meals. The grant is also available to pupils attending a special school, special needs resource base and pupil referral units in Wales who will be aged 11 at the start of the academic school year and who are eligible for free school meals. Accordingly, children of families in receipt of the following benefits will be eligible:

- Income Support (IS); or
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (IBJSA); or
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; or

- Child Tax Credit (with no Working Tax Credit) with an annual income of less than £16,190.
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' - the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- (Income-related) Employment Support Allowance (Income-related) (ESA(IR)).
- Universal Credit.

2. Discretionary grants to pupils – distinctive school clothing

It is the policy of Bridgend County Borough Council to make a Distinctive School Clothing Grant available to all eligible pupils attending a secondary school in year groups 7-11. This means that the grant is **not** available for those pupils attending infant, junior or primary Schools.

The grant is intended to be a contribution to the cost of distinctive school clothing.

As the grant is discretionary, it is for each secondary school to determine the amount of grant and method of payment. Parents/carers are advised to contact the respective secondary school for further information. The current recommended level of the local authority grant exceeds that of the Welsh Government and parents/carers are advised that only the higher grant will be paid.

For those families in receipt of the benefits referred to in section 1 above, the Distinctive School Clothing Grant is an automatic entitlement.

Application forms are available from the Council's Financial Assessments and Benefits Team, or schools, in the Spring Term prior to the start of the academic year in September. Application forms should be forwarded to the Financial Assessments and Benefits Team before the last week of the Spring Term to avoid delays in clothing grants being dealt with and issued and to allow time for notification to secondary schools of the pupils that are eligible.

Any parent/carer requiring further information in relation to the clothing grants available is advised to contact:

**Chief Executive's Directorate
Financial Assessments and Benefits Team
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB**

Email: FSM@bridgend.gov.uk
Telephone number: 01656 643396.

3. Education maintenance allowance (EMA) and Welsh Government learning grant (further education) (WGLG (FE)) schemes

Information about the EMA and/or WGLG (FE) schemes is available from [Student Finance Wales](#).

4. Free school meals

Children and young people attending school on a full-time basis may be entitled to receive free school meals (FSM).

Your child may be eligible for FSM if you are in receipt of any of the following benefits/support payments:

- Income Support; or
 - Income Based Jobseekers Allowance; or
 - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; or
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
-
- Child Tax Credit, (with no Working Tax Credit) with an annual income of less than £16,190
 - Guarantee element of State Pension Credit

- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' - the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit.

Initial applications can be made at any time during the school year. Application forms are available from:

Chief Executive's Directorate
Financial Assessments and Benefits Team
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB

Email: FSM@bridgend.gov.uk
 Telephone number: 01656 643396.

Children starting school for the first time **must** complete an application for FSM, even if they have a sibling at the same school or another school who is already getting FSM. Awards will not automatically be made where siblings are in receipt of FSM

R. Catering services

The Council's Catering Services provide school meals in all nursery, 47 primary schools, 6 secondary Schools and 2 special Schools throughout the borough.

Catering Services believes there are no healthy or unhealthy foods, only healthy or unhealthy diets and it works continually working towards providing a healthier service. The menus contribute to a child's healthy balanced diet, with plenty of variety in all forms of food. By providing tasty and nutritious meals, Catering Services hopes to encourage pupils to improve, secure and maintain a healthy diet for the future. The Catering Services' menus comply with Welsh Government's Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013.

Primary school meals consist of a balanced two-course meal and cold drink for just £2.20 per day (price correct as at September 2018). The menu is run on a three-week rotational cycle to ensure all pupils receive a varied, balanced diet.

Catering Services operates a hot meal menu and salad options. Nursery pupils are served the single, hot menu.

The commitment of Catering Services to healthy eating is reflected in the products it uses, with the majority containing reduced saturated fat, sugar and salt. Good practice ensures all foods are oven baked or steamed, except chips, which are served only once a week. Fresh fruit, vegetables, wholemeal bread and yoghurt are available daily. To accompany the school lunch, each child can choose between chilled milk or water.

Secondary school meals are provided via a cash cafeteria service named 'Trackers'. There are three service zones or 'tracks':

- 1. Trackers salad/milk bar** – serving healthy foods, eg salad and pasta pots, yoghurts and milk.
- 2. Trackers main meals** – serving a choice of traditional meals with a daily vegetarian option, eg roast pork, lasagne or shepherd's pie.
- 3. Trackers lite bites** – a swift service offering hot, filled baguettes, rolls and tortillas, sandwiches and fresh fruit.

In most secondary schools, 'pupils on the move' have access to vending machines..

Parents/carers of a child/children with a medical diet requirement may contact the Catering Services office and the well-trained staff will try to ensure that the requirements are met.

For weekly menus and more information on school meals, please visit [our school meals webpage](#).

Contact details for Catering Services are:

**Catering Services
Bryncethin Depot
Blackmill Road
Bryncethin
Bridgend
CF32 9YN**

Email: catering@bridgend.gov.uk
Telephone number: 01656 815963

S. Employment of children

Bridgend County Borough Council has produced byelaws in respect of the employment of children (the definition of a child in this context is a young person of statutory school age).

The byelaws regulate the types of employment permitted for children, the maximum number of hours a child may work and stipulate the types of employment that are prohibited.

The onus to obtain a work permit for a child rests with the employer. Within one week of employing a child, the employer must send written notification to the local authority stating:

- his/her own name and address;
- the name, address and date of birth of the child;
- the hours and days on which the child is to be employed, the occupation in which the child is to be employed, including details of the task involved;
- a statement of the child's fitness to work, and of approval for the child to be employed, completed by the child's parent/carer;
- details of the school at which the child is a registered pupil; and approval from the headteacher;

- a statement to the effect that an appropriate risk assessment has been carried out by the employer; and
- two recent passport type photos of the child, signed on the rear by both the child and the employer.

If the local authority is satisfied that the proposed employment is lawful, and the child's health, welfare or ability to take full advantage of his/her education would not be jeopardised, it will issue:

- an employment permit to the employer; and
- an identification photo card to the child, which will contain the child's name and photograph and date of issue.

Further details in relation to child employment can be obtained from [our child employment rules webpage](#).

**Education and Family Support Directorate
Learner Support Team
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB**

Email: pupilservices@bridgend.gov.uk
Telephone number: 01656 642622

T. School milk

Free school milk is available in schools for:

1. children under the age of five in maintained schools and nurseries, provided the child attends the school for at least two hours duration in any one day; and
2. all pupils in primary education from the academic year in which the children attain the age of five years, until the end of key stage 1 (Year 2); and
3. individual pupils in primary and special schools where any appropriate medical officer has certified that the pupil's health requires that he/she should be provided with milk at school.