



Blaenavon Heritage Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Admissions Policy 2014/15



BHVCPS – Local Authority Adopted

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INTRODUCTION

Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary School, as a Torfaen Local Authority Primary School, follows the Torfaen Authority policy on admissions to local primary schools.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Your child's formal education begins at the age of three. From this point, until leaving school, they will follow the revised curriculum for Wales: a planned route of learning designed for all children.

Between three and seven the Foundation Phase will be the core of your child's learning. This focuses on the ability of your child and not their age. It involves learning through play in safe but stimulating environments.

The Foundation Phase is based on the principle that early years' provision should offer a sound foundation for future learning through a developmentally appropriate curriculum; it brings more consistency and continuity to children's education at such an all-important period in their development.

The Foundation Phase places great emphasis on children learning by doing. Young children will be given more opportunities to gain first hand experiences through play and active involvement, rather than by completing exercises in books. They will be given time to develop their speaking and listening skills and to become confident in their reading and writing abilities.

Mathematics will be more practical so that children can see how problems are solved and how important mathematics is in their everyday lives. There will be more emphasis on children understanding how things work and on finding different ways to solve problems.

The Foundation Phase will be implemented over four years as follows:

- September 2008 for all 3 to 4-year-olds in the Foundation Phase;
- September 2009 for all 4 to 5-year-olds in the Foundation Phase;
- September 2010 for all 5 to 6-year-olds in the Foundation Phase;
- September 2011 for all 6 to 7-year-olds in the Foundation Phase.

From these dates, the existing national curriculum for Key Stage 1 is superseded.

A series of guidance documents have been developed to support the implementation of the Foundation Phase, available from the Welsh Assembly Government website www.wales.gov.uk.

Until the end of primary school, between 7 and 11, what your child learns is determined by Key Stage 2 of the curriculum.

From 11 years old until 14, while in secondary education, Key Stage 3 will be taught to your child. This involves mandatory subjects including English, Welsh and mathematics.

At the age of 14 your child will need to decide what they want to study. There are a variety of options, including GCSEs, the Welsh Baccalaureate and vocational courses. These are taught alongside core subjects.

Applying for a school place

When should my child start nursery, reception and secondary school?

Nursery

Your child can start Nursery at the start of the school year in which he/she will be 4 years old. Sometimes, it is possible to start the term following their 3rd birthday, if there is a place available. The placement of your child in Nursery does not guarantee a Reception place in the school and a fresh application will need to be completed. Please see Reception (below).

How do I apply?

When you receive an application form you must complete and return this to the Nursery, along with proof of your child's date of birth and address by the closing date. (Medical cards, birth certificates and council tax bills are accepted – originals only).

Reception

Your child will start Reception Class at the start of the school year (ie September) in which he/she will be 5 years old, even though the law does not require a child to start school until the start of the term following their 5th birthday.

How do I apply?

You should receive a letter by the end of December 2013 which will provide you with a unique identification number (UID) for your child. The UID can be used to apply online by following this link: www.torfaen.gov.uk/primaryadmissions which will take you through the admission application process. If, however, you would prefer to complete a paper copy, please either download a copy from www.torfaen.gov.uk or telephone 01495 766915.

If you complete a paper copy you must complete and return this to Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary School, along with proof of your child's date of birth and address, by the closing date. (Medical cards, birth certificates and council tax bills are accepted – originals only).

Transfer to Key Stage 2 (Junior Department)

Your child will start Key Stage 2 at the start of the school year in which he/she is 8 years old. Your child will automatically progress to Key Stage 2 without the need for you to make an application.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ADMISSION OF PUPILS TO COUNTY BOROUGH AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS

Admission criteria

The admission of children to schools is controlled and administered by an 'Admissions Authority'. In the case of county borough and voluntary controlled schools, this is recognised as Torfaen County Borough Council (Local Authority (LA)). In the case of voluntary aided schools and foundation schools (church schools), the admissions authority is the governing body of the individual school.

Changes in the law mean the LA must allow parents/carers the opportunity to express a preference for the school they would wish their child to attend. In the vast majority of cases, parents/carers are quite happy to choose their local school but it is now legally necessary for that school to be named on an application form.

Following the closing date, any change of circumstances notified to the Authority by the end of February will be considered. Although most children will be admitted to the school with their own chronological age group, from time to time, parents seek places outside their normal age group. Please note that the Authority does not operate a policy to accelerate pupils into advanced year groups (those who have experience problems or missed part of a year, due to the child's ill health) or earlier year groups, unless there are extenuating circumstances and clear reasons ascertainable for sure decisions to be made. Due regard will also be given to an Educational Psychologist report where available.

When applying, parents/carers may name more than one school in order of preference and the Authority will try to comply with at least one of the preferences.

The Authority (including the Governing Body of a voluntary aided school) may refuse to comply with parental preference for a period of two years following a second or subsequent exclusion. In such circumstances a parent is unable to appeal against the LA's decision.

All maintained schools must admit pupils up to its admission number (AN). The admission number is the number of pupils who should be admitted to a relevant age group if sufficient applications are received.

Where the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the following over subscription criteria will be used to determine which applicants would be offered places in the following priority order:

- Children who are looked after by the Authority;
- Children who have previously been looked after;

- Children on medical grounds which are supported by a medical consultant's report, obtained by the parents, specifying the medical advantage of the child attending the preferred school compared with the normal catchment school - **N.B. Reports from family doctors are not accepted for this purpose;**
- Children residing in the catchment area of their chosen school, with siblings;
- Children residing in the catchment area of their chosen school, without siblings;
- Children residing out of the catchment area of their chosen school, with siblings;
- Children residing out of the catchment area of their chosen school, without siblings.

If children have older brothers or sisters at a school at the date of admission, they will be admitted in preference to those not having brothers or sisters at that school.

N.B. Brothers and sisters (whether full, half, step or foster) will be considered relevant where living together at the same address. This only applies when an older child will definitely be registered at the school when the younger one will be eligible to attend.

Finally, all admissions into any school are dealt with in accordance with the admissions policy of either the LA or a school's admission policy and, at no stage are pupils 'selected' or are interviews held to determine admission. Whilst residing within the catchment area for your preferred school forms an element of the oversubscription criteria it does not guarantee a placement on this basis.

General admissions' information

- Where the Authority is unable to offer your child a place in your catchment school, free transport will be provided (if requested) to the nearest school with an available place, subject to the distance criteria laid down in the Authority's transport policy;
- Pupils with defined ALN will, in the majority of cases, be able to attend their catchment school. In exceptional circumstances, this may not be appropriate for the individual child and a placement in an alternative school would then be considered;
- All applications received by the closing date, Friday 31 January 2014, will be considered together and, if necessary, the over-subscription criteria will be applied.

Appeals

In Torfaen we strive to work in partnership and ensure that all parents get their first choice of school for their children. We do our best to tell parents the outcome of their application as soon as possible. If it is not possible to allocate a place for

your child at the school of your choice we will tell you about your right of appeal. We do this because we always want to be fair and transparent.

If you choose to appeal, this will be to an Independent Appeal Panel and arrangements will be made for this to happen in May or June 2014. Further information about appeals can be obtained from Democratic Services, Civic Centre, Pontypool telephone 01495 766294.

Multiple birth children (eg twins / triplets)

If when applying the oversubscription criteria the last child to be admitted is one of a multiple birth then the LA will admit the other sibling(s).

Waiting lists

We also keep a waiting list for the admission round in September. We will place your child's name on the waiting list even if you choose another school or decide to take up your right of appeal. Your child's name will stay on the list until 30th September 2014. If a place becomes available during that time we will allocate places to children on the waiting list on the basis of our over subscription criteria and are not based on the date the application was added to the schedule.

The School Prospectus gives information and policy on admissions and catchment area. All admissions are directed to Torfaen Local Authority in the first instance.