Denbighshire County Council

School Admissions Arrangements

For School Year 2020/21

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Section 1: Introduction and Timetable

Denbighshire County Council is the admission authority for Community & Voluntary Controlled schools within its area, that is to say, it is the body responsible for making decisions regarding pupil entry to those schools. There are two other types of schools in Denbighshire: Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Aided Trust. The Governing Bodies of these schools are responsible for their own school admission processes.

A full list of schools is available in the current 'Denbighshire Schools' information booklet 2020-21 and on the Denbighshire website (www.denbighshire.gov.uk/education) under the 'find a school' facility. There are 54 schools in Denbighshire, including special schools.

This policy has been developed in compliance with The Education Act 2002 and The School Standards & Framework Act 1998, based on guidance provided in the School Admissions Code 2013.

Admissions Timetable

Admission Phase	Admission forms available to parents w/c	Parents' consideration period	Closing date for receipt of completed forms	Allocation period by LA/ admitting authority	Parents informed by ("Offer date")
Secondary	09/09/19	09/09/19- 08/11/19	08/11/19	11/11/19- 10/01/20	02/03/20
Junior	30/09/19	30/09/19- 22/11/19	22/11/19	25/11/19- 28/02/20	16/04/20
Reception	30/09/19	30/09/19- 22/11/19	22/11/19	25/11/19- 28/02/20	16/04/20
Nursery	30/09/19	30/09/19- 21/02/20	21/02/20	24/02/20- 27/03/20	08/05/20

Note – The Authority is presently in discussion with the Governing body / Diocese regarding future admissions arrangements for the new Faith school in Rhyl, Christ the Word. If any changes are forthcoming, the Authority and School will make the necessary changes to their policies and ensure this is communicated and reflected in relevant parent / carer documentation and on their websites.

1.1 Types of schools

All types of schools below are maintained fully or partly by Denbighshire County Council. Voluntary Aided Trust schools maintain their own buildings and are responsible for general maintenance and repairs, and Voluntary Aided schools are partly maintained by the associated diocese and Denbighshire County Council.

	English	Welsh	Dual Stream	Bilingual
Community School	26	13		2
Voluntary Controlled School	5	2	1	
Voluntary Aided School	2			
Voluntary Aided Trust School	1			

Community Schools

Community schools are not affiliated with any religious body, though the school service may include a Christian prayer at the Headteacher's discretion.

Voluntary Controlled (VC) Schools

In Denbighshire, all VC schools are affiliated with the Church in Wales and are considered to be faith schools.

Voluntary Aided (VA) & Voluntary Aided Trust Schools

One VA school is affiliated with the Church in Wales, and one is affiliated with the Roman Catholic diocese. Another school adopts the ethos of a Roman Catholic school but is not officially recognised by the diocese. All are considered to be faith schools.

Section 2: The normal admission round

The 'normal admission round' refers to the transition point from:

- Year 6 to Year 7 (primary to secondary)
- Year 2 to Year 3 (infant to junior only)
- Nursery to Reception (in an infant/primary school only)
- Playgroup to Nursery

The transition from one stage to another is not automatic; parents **must** submit an application for each of their children to be considered at the preferred school, and attendance at a particular school or playgroup will not influence or guarantee admission to the preferred school. See the oversubscription criteria listed in section 2.3 for details of what information is considered.

The table below shows the educational provision available to children born between the following dates:

	Child must be born between:
Nursery	1 September 2016 & 31 August 2017
Reception	1 September 2015 & 31 August 2016
Junior (yr 3)	1 September 2012 & 31 August 2013
Secondary	1 September 2008 & 31 August 2009

Please note that applying for Junior school is only necessary where a child attends Year 2 at either St. Asaph Infants or Ysgol Y Parc. Parents whose children attend an infant school but wish to send their child to a primary school (to commence September 2020) must submit a school transfer application form no earlier than the first day of term following the 2019 Easter holidays.

2.1 Applying for a September 2020 placement

In order for your child to be considered for your preferred school, you will need to apply for a place either online or by submitting a paper form. Once we receive your form we will provide a text/email receipt if one is requested (this is automated when applying online). Please note that only persons with parental responsibility (PR) can submit an application (e.g. step-parents and grandparents can only obtain PR by way of adoption or a court of law). If parents are in dispute over the preferred school, this must be resolved privately or via the courts. Only the application received first will be dealt with; subsequent requests will not be considered unless both parties consent to the preference(s).

Application forms are made available at different times in the year. The table below again summarises the same information shown in the admissions timetable (section 1). It highlights the dates of availability and the associated deadline dates.

	You can apply from:	**Deadline date:**	**We will respond by:**
Nursery	30/09/2019	21/02/2020	08/05/2020
Reception	30/09/2019	22/11/2019	16/04/2020
Junior (yr 3)	30/09/2019	22/11/2019	16/04/2020
Secondary	09/09/2019	08/11/2019	02/03/2020

Please note that if you apply after the deadline date, this may negatively impact upon your chances of receiving an offer for your preferred school. If you are applying late for any admission stage, it is recommended that you name more than one school as in some cases all available places may have already been allocated to those that applied before you.

On the specified dates, you should receive our decision either by email or post dependent upon your preference when applying.

If you live outside of Denbighshire but wish to apply for a Denbighshire school, you and the local authority you applied to **must** ensure your application reaches us by the dates shown above. See section 2.2 for how late applications are handled.

Denbighshire works closely with neighbouring LAs to coordinate admission arrangements in Wales. Information will be passed on to the appropriate admissions authority. Please note that neighbouring local authorities' timetables may be different to that above. If the school for which you wish to express a preference is in another County please contact the respective Local Authority to ensure you do not miss the closing date:

Flintshire County Council – admissions@flintshire.gov.uk; Tel: 01352 752121
Wrexham County Borough Council – admissions@wrexham.gov.uk; Tel: 01978 298991
Conwy County Council - education@conwy.gov.uk; Tel: 01492 575031/032

Parents applying for a Nursery 2020 placement will be given the opportunity to provide additional information relevant to their child's medical condition(s). While this information will not impact upon the decision to admit, it will be useful for the receiving school which will be responsible for supporting the child(ren). This information will be handled confidentially, and shared with internal departments only as necessary.

2.2 On-time & late applications

In accordance with the School Standards & Framework Act 1998, on-time applications must be dealt with before late applications.

On-time applications are dealt with together and in line with the oversubscription criteria detailed in section 2.3. Applicants applying during the relevant 'late period' (below) will also be considered against the same criteria once the on-time applicants have been dealt with.

	'Late' period		
Nursery	22/02/2020	to	22/03/2020
Reception	23/11/2019	to	23/01/2020
Junior	23/11/2019	to	23/01/2020
Secondary	09/11/2019	to	23/01/2020

If there are sufficient spaces for all applicants who applied during the relevant late period, all will receive offers. If there aren't enough places, the remaining vacancies will be allocated according to the oversubscription criteria.

Applications received after the relevant period will be dealt with in date order, with the earliest considered first. If we receive multiple applications on the same day naming the same school, we will use the oversubscription criteria to rank those applications & offer to the most eligible child(ren).

If there are no remaining vacancies once the on-time applications have been dealt with, no offers will be made to those that apply late.

If there is good reason as to why you were unable to apply by the published deadline, we will require that you submit evidence to support this. If the Authority can reasonably believe you could not have applied on-time strictly as a result of your circumstances, your application may be considered as on-time. If you are unable to provide evidence or the evidence is insufficient, your application will be considered as late. It will only be possible to accommodate such circumstances in good time before offers are made; if there is insufficient time to consider your application before we issue offers or your application is made after offers are issued, the application will remain a late submission.

2.3 Oversubscription

If a school is oversubscribed by the relevant closing date, all on-time applications for that school will be ranked against Denbighshire's oversubscription criteria. Different criteria are applied to primary and secondary schools.

To resolve oversubscription within each criterion, we will use the remaining criteria to shortlist those who will receive offers from those that are least eligible e.g. if too many families are eligible under criteria 3 for Reception entry, we will use criteria 4, 5 and 6 to shortlist them.

If the requested school is **not** oversubscribed, all applicants will receive offers. If the requested school **is** oversubscribed, each application will be ranked and offers will be made up to the admission number; those least eligible will therefore be refused.

2.3.1 Primary

1. Children who have Looked After Child status, and "previously Looked After Child" status
2. Children who have a statement of Special Educational Needs, which names the requested school
3. Children for whom the preferred school is the nearest 'suitable school' by shortest walking route, in terms of the child's age, and parental language preference or faith preference (for schools associated with the Church in Wales)
4. Children who will have a sibling at the requested school on the expected admission date
5. Multiple birth children, whose siblings have applied for a place in the same year group
6. Distance from their home to the requested school's gate, measured by the shortest walking route

2.3.2 Secondary

1. Children who have Looked After Child status, and "previously Looked After Child" status
2. Children who have a statement of Special Educational Needs, which names the requested school
3. Children for whom the preferred school is the nearest 'suitable school' by shortest walking route, in terms of the child's age, and parental language preference or faith preference (for schools associated with the Church in Wales)
4. Children who will have a sibling at the requested school on the expected admission date
5. Children whose primary/junior school is a designated feeder* for the requested secondary school
6. Multiple birth children, whose siblings have applied for a place in the same year group
7. Distance from their home to the requested school's gate, measured by the shortest walking route

* The child's primary/junior school is only considered a 'feeder' if, at the point of joining the school, it was the nearest suitable to the child's home at that time.

2.4 Proof of residency

In the event a particular school is oversubscribed by the relevant deadline, all on-time applications will be provisionally assessed and proof of residency will be required from all those that fall under any criterion that references the home address, though requests may be issued to all applicants. You will be given a specified period (approximately 6 weeks) to submit an appropriate form of proof which shows the applicant's details. Accepted forms of proof will be specified in the request, but will at least include:

- A recent council tax bill,
- A recent TV license,
- A valid UK driver's license
- A recent utility bill,
- A valid, signed tenancy agreement

Certain types of proof will NOT be accepted. This includes, but is not limited to, the following document types:

- Mortgage documents or statements
- Bank documents or statements
- Child benefit documents
- HMRC documents
- NHS documents
- Home insurance documents
- Wages slip

Those that fail to provide acceptable proof (or submitted nothing) will be considered under the next applicable criterion to their circumstances. If your next applicable criterion is distance from home to school then you will be considered after all other applicants that **did** return acceptable proof.

If you applied on-time but failed to provide acceptable proof (or submitted nothing), your child will still be considered **before** late applicants.

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

Section 3: Transferring between schools

Changing schools should be viewed as a last resort and every effort should be made to maintain your child's current school place before applying; changing schools even once can be detrimental to a child's education & wellbeing.

For your child to be considered for a school transfer, you must first complete the appropriate application form. When considering your request we will review the class arrangements & year group structure at your preferred school(s) to decide if admitting one more child would cause prejudice to those already registered in the school, and if it would have an adverse impact upon the delivery of effective education. The School Standards & Framework Act 1998 permits admission authorities to decline admission requests if doing so would prejudice either efficient education or the efficient use of resources (or both).

In most cases the admission number will be used as an indicator as to whether an additional child can be admitted however, in smaller schools or where there are mixed-year arrangements in place, we also consider the physical space in the relevant classroom and whether class size limits have already been reached in that cohort. In a small number of cases the admission number may not be reached but prejudice would still arise depending on teaching structures.

If you have parental responsibility (PR), you can submit a school transfer request if you need to move your child from one school to another, and you can provide reasons for your request on your application. If parents are in dispute over the preferred school, this must be resolved privately or via the courts. If the child already attends a local school within a reasonable distance from the main place of residence, the transfer request will not be dealt with until both parties consent to the change in school.

If you and your family are moving area and you have been offered a place(s) for your child(ren) then we will hold that place(s) until the end of that school term – and – at our

discretion - upto 3 weeks into the following term. If you are unable to take up these places within this timescale you will need to re-apply nearer the planned date of move/uptake.

Please note that if you have chosen to send your child to a school which the Authority does not consider to be the nearest suitable to your home, you will not be eligible for free school transport. Parents/ Carers are advised to consider the school transport implications before making an expression of preference for a school place. The Authority's Learner Transport policy provides further information and is available on Denbighshire's website.

3.1 Starting at the new school

If we are able to offer your child a place, the start date will usually be the beginning of the next school term or half term, whichever comes sooner. We will consider circumstances which require an immediate start such as a house move (does not include relocating within the same town), child protection issues/concerns, medical reasons et cetera to ensure those children are admitted to the new school as soon as possible. You may be required to provide evidence supporting your request for an immediate start.

3.2 Admitting hard to place/vulnerable pupils

Denbighshire County Council aims to place vulnerable children as quickly as possible, though this may not always mean you will receive an offer at your preferred school.

'Vulnerable children' include, but are not limited to:

- Looked After Children / Previously Looked After Children
- Children with Special Educational Needs
- Children with behavioural support needs
- Young carers
- Children of armed forces families
- Refugee children / children from overseas
- Children you are considered by professionals to be in danger of "going missing from education".

Section 4: Unsuccessful applicants

4.1 Refusals & appeals

If you have been unsuccessful in gaining a place at your preferred school, you can formally appeal against the decision to refuse. However, if your child has been declined a nursery placement, there is no right of appeal as this is not compulsory education.

In our correspondence stating why we have declined your request, we will include an appeal form and appeal guidance. If you choose to appeal you must complete and return the form to the address provided.

All appeals are heard by an independent panel, and its decision is legally binding on the Authority, the school and on the parent. If you are unsuccessful at appeal stage, there is no further right of appeal with respect to the same academic year.

4.2 Waiting lists

We hold two kinds of waiting lists – one for school transfers, and one for the normal admission round.

Whenever a place becomes available, we consult the waiting list for that school and rank the pupils using our oversubscription criteria (see section 2.3). If your child is the most eligible, the authority will contact you to discuss.

4.2.1 School transfers

When a child has been declined a place at any community or voluntary controlled school, parents will be offered the opportunity to contact the Authority and place their child(ren) on a waiting list.

Children remain on the waiting list for one school term. Parents can contact the authority at the end of this period to extend the duration their child(ren) remain on the list for another full term. This can be done term by term indefinitely.

If we can offer you a place from the waiting list, the start date will usually be at the beginning of the next school term/half term.

4.2.2 Normal admission round

Being placed on this list is automatic if your child has been declined a Nursery, Reception, Junior or Secondary 2020 placement. Parents wishing for their children to be considered for places beyond this point must submit a School Transfer form no earlier than 1st October 2020.

Section 5: Glossary and definitions of terms

Parental Responsibility

Unless otherwise determined by a court order:

- Mothers automatically have parental responsibility
- Fathers also have parental responsibility for a child if the father is married to the mother at the time of the child's birth. This continues after any divorce/separation/remarriage even if the child lives apart from them
- Unmarried fathers have parental responsibility where the mother and father register the birth of the child together (this is an amendment to the Children Act 1989, which came into force on 1st December 2003 and is not retrospective)
- Unmarried fathers, step-parents, relatives and other persons can obtain parental responsibility but they do not have it automatically. In such cases parental responsibility can be granted through the obtaining of a Residence Order; a Parental Responsibility Agreement or Order; being appointed a Guardian/Special Guardian; being named in an emergency protection order (limited to taking reasonable steps to safeguard or promote the child or young person's welfare); or by adoption.

Nearest suitable school

A suitable school is deemed to be one that is appropriate for the child's:

- Age
- Welsh/English language preference
- Faith preference (VC schools affiliated to the Church in Wales)

as determined by the distance of the shortest walking route from the pupil's home to the nearest available school gate.

All distances are calculated using an ordinance survey-based mapping system.

The home address must be the pupil's home and not that, for example, of a child minder or grandparents.

Looked After Children

A "looked after child" is "looked after" by a Local Authority in accordance with Section 22 of the Children Act 1989.

"Previously looked after children" have been "looked after" by a Local Authority at some time in their life in accordance with Section 22 of the Children Act 1989.

Sibling (brother / sister)

A sibling is defined as a full, half, step (whether by marriage or co-habiting), adopted or fostered brother or sister.

For a sibling link to be considered:

- siblings must reside at the same address as the applicant at the time of the application
- the elder sibling must be of statutory school age and still be registered at the requested school when the younger child is eligible to attend.

Multiple birth children

Twins, triplets, quadruplets etc. residing at the same address and applying for places in the same year group at the same school.

In instances where there is one remaining place at a school, legislation allows all multiple birth children to be admitted to the school. Regulations state that Infant classes must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single teacher, but the Welsh Government's Code on School Admissions now considers that where the size of the class exceeds 30 because of the admission of children from a multiple birth, these children can be considered as exceptions to this ruling.

Access to Welsh Medium education

Denbighshire's policy is that every child should have the opportunity to learn and use the Welsh language effectively. In addition, the Authority is committed to expanding the provision of Welsh Medium education and that all children and young people in Denbighshire have the opportunity to be bilingual.

Pupils who have attended a Welsh Medium Primary school will be expected to continue their education at a Secondary school offering Welsh medium education.

Pupils can transfer from English medium primary schools to the Welsh medium Secondary school where they will be offered the immersion scheme that is available at the end of Year 6 and all the way through Year 7. For further details of the scheme please contact Ysgol Glan Clwyd, tel: 01745 582611.

Admission to Special Schools

Special Schools will usually only admit pupils with a statement of special educational need issued under the 1996 Education Act. The statementing procedure is administered by the Inclusion unit in County Hall, Ruthin. (Telephone: 01824 708064)

Placement of Vulnerable children

There are groups of vulnerable children who may have experienced certain life events that make them more at risk of going "missing from education". In cases where we are made aware of a "vulnerable" child's or young person's particular circumstances, we will offer a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. The application must be supported by factual evidence from either a registered medical professional, an education professional or registered social worker.

Early Education

Children can access playgroup provision, free of charge, from the school term following their 3rd birthday until the end of the same academic year. This is funded by the Welsh Government. You can obtain an application form from the playgroup, and will be expected to provide a copy of your child's birth certificate and proof of address in order to register.

Feeder school

Junior and primary schools have a recognised link to particular secondary schools, and are referred to as feeder schools. Pupils from these feeder schools typically join the designated secondary school and entire communities have maintained this practice for generations. While attending a feeder school does not grant automatic admission to that secondary school, it is taken into account in the event of oversubscription. There are no feeder school systems in place for any other transition point.