

School Places – Frequently asked questions

Please view our frequently asked questions for further information on School Admissions.

Please be aware that it is no longer the case that you simply put your name down with your local school or the school of your choice and your child starts as soon as they reach the age of three. Neither can you just turn up at a school expecting your child to start.

Q: School places MUST be applied for by published deadlines, in accordance with the LAW.

A :Please be aware that Headteachers of schools are no longer able to allocate places in their schools. They cannot reserve places, neither can they make any promises to parents that places will be made available (nor can they refuse places). This is now the full responsibility of the Local Authority by law and no child should therefore start at any school until it has been agreed, in writing, by Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC's School Admissions Team.
(The only exception to this is in relation to all **voluntary-aided (church) schools** – applications for admission in these cases must be made directly to the school).

Pupils who live in the catchment area of a school no longer have an automatic right to attend that school. An application must be submitted and all applications will be considered by the Admissions Authority.

Q: How do I apply for a place at a school?

A:This is dependent on whether you are applying for a place in a community school or voluntary-aided (church) school.

If you are applying for a place at a **voluntary-aided (church) school**, applications should be made direct to the school. Please refer to the [Starting School Booklet LINK](#)

If you wish to apply for a place at a **community school**, you must complete an application :-

- You can apply online at <https://schooladmissions.rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk/>
This facility is available for applications for pupils to start Nursery, Reception, Infant to Junior/Primary School and Year 7 in a Secondary School for September 2017. For further information please see online applications-FAQs. [hyperlink] and online applications-user guide [hyperlink] Please note that the online facility will only be available up until the published deadline for applications.

- If a paper application is required, please contact Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC School Admissions Team on 01443 744232 or e-mail schooladmissions@rctcbc.gov.uk

Please ensure that you complete an application relevant to the year group your child will be entering in September 2017.

Please also refer to the 'Notes for guidance - admission forms' [[LINK TO NOTES FOR GUIDANCE](#)]

If applying online, there is no requirement to complete a paper form. Please do not do both. Please note that late applications will be processed but you may find your preferred school is full and we may not be able to offer you a place at this particular school.

There is no requirement for the Authority to meet the school preference expressed on the application. Whether there is an offer of a place at the preferred school will depend on the outcome of the application of the Authority's admissions policy which is detailed in the [Starting School Booklet](#) [[LINK](#)] and summarised here [[LINK TO SCHOOL ADMISSIONS CRITERIA ON GENERAL INFO PAGE](#)]

The information given on the application must be accurate. Parents/carers are required to evidence the information given on the form and other Council databases may be used to check information provided.

Q: What if there are more applications received than places available in any school?

A: Each school has a limit to the number of children it is able to admit (known as the Admission Number, AN), which is calculated taking into account the school's physical capacity to accommodate pupils.

If the number of preferences received for a school is **below** the school's Admission Number, all applications to the school will be granted.

If the number of preferences received for a school is **above** the school's Admission Number, the Local Authority will admit children in the following order of priority:-

1. 'Looked After' children (children in public care) and previously 'Looked After' children.
2. Children whose home is inside the school's catchment area who have an older sibling attending the school from the same address, at the date of the application, who will continue to attend that school in the September of the year of admission.

3. Children whose home is inside the school's catchment area who do not have an older sibling attending the school.
4. Children whose home is outside the school's catchment area who have an older sibling attending from the same address, at the date of the application, who will continue to attend that school in the September of the year of admission.
5. Children whose home is outside the school's catchment area who do not have an older sibling attending the school.

For the avoidance of all doubt the references to 'home' refers to the actual location of the residential dwelling in which the child lives.

If, within any one of the priority orders listed above, all applicants cannot be offered a place, preference will go to children living nearest to the school. Distance will be measured by the Authority using the shortest, safe walking route between the home address and the nearest open school gate.

The home address in instances where parents have shared responsibility for children will be the address to which Child Benefit is paid. **The distance will be measured by using the Mapinfo System only**, in order to ensure equality of opportunity to all applications. **Measurements calculated by any other system will not be considered.**

Q: What if I do not get offered a place at my preferred school ?

A: Parents/Carers are strongly advised to select up to three schools on your application, in order of preference.

If it has not been possible to admit a child(ren) to their first choice school, arrangements will be made for admission to the second choice school if places are available. If parents/carers are unhappy with this outcome, an appeal may be lodged. Further information is available in "Starting School" [\[hyperlink\]](#).

Please note that there is no appeal against refusal of Pre-Nursery or Nursery placements, as this is non-statutory education provision.

Q: How do I request a transfer to another school ?

A: 'In-year transfer' forms are available from all schools, or from Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC as above. All transfer applications must be submitted to School Admissions, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Education and Lifelong Learning, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash, RCT, CF45 4UQ

Transfers will be subject to the same admissions criteria as above [\[LINK TO WHAT IF MORE APPLICATIONS ARE RECEIVED SECTION\]](#).

For pupils in Years 10 and 11 of Secondary School, contact **must** first be made with the Headteacher of the school your child currently attends. This will enable an

'Intention to transfer school form' to be provided by the Headteacher to start the transfer process. Only your child's current school can provide this 'Intention to transfer school form', which must be completed jointly between parents(s)/carer(s) and the school. Where the reason for the transfer request is not due to a house move or foster care placement, parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting where representatives from both schools (current school, requested school) and a Local Authority Officer will be present to offer information, advice and guidance.

Please note: Changing schools can be a serious step for your child to take, at any age. This is especially so in the Secondary sector, in particular when they reach Year 10 or 11, and have already chosen, and are studying their selected exam options. Their choice of options, or exam boards may be completely different in a new school, even if this school is still within Rhondda Cynon Taf, and moving schools at this time could seriously affect their performance in vital examinations they will take in Year 11, such as GCSE's, BTEC etc. Careful consideration should therefore always be given before making any decision to change schools.

Q: When do I need to apply?

A: Parents are strongly advised to register their interest in a place at a particular school as soon as they can. This will enable the Headteacher of the school to send further information to you at the appropriate time. Please note, however, that registering an interest in a place at a particular school will not guarantee admission to that school, as places are not allocated on a 'first come, first serve' basis.

Please be aware that Headteachers of schools are no longer able to allocate places in their schools. They cannot reserve places, neither can they make any promises to parents that places will be made available (nor can they refuse places). This is now the full responsibility of the Local Authority by law and application processes must be followed [LINK TO HOW DO I APPLY FOR A PLACE]

Applications for admission to schools now need to be made at several stages of your child's education. Dates that applications for particular stages open and close are all detailed in our [school admissions timetable](#) [LINK].

Please note the key dates in the attached table so you will know when to apply and when you will be notified of the outcome of your application.

Q: What happens if I missed the published deadline date and still wish to make an application?

A: Late applications will be processed after applications which were received by the deadline date and therefore late applications may find that their preferred school is already full.

Q: What is my local catchment school ?

A: Within Rhondda Cynon Taf each school has an area that it traditionally serves, known as the catchment area.

You can check your catchment school using our Online Catchment Search Facility [LINK TO ONLINE CATCHMENT SEARCH]. Most parents/carers apply to send their child(ren) to their catchment school, **however, they have the right to express a preference for their child(ren) to attend any school.**

Q: What documentation is acceptable as proof of home address ?

A: The **only** documentation we will accept as proof of address is one of the following:-

- A recent utility bill (gas, water or electricity)
- A Council Tax statement
- A Child Benefit /Tax Credit confirmation letter from HMRC

If the permanent address of the child changes after making an application, it is essential that you let us know as soon as possible in writing. For those parents/carers who have moved into a new property within the last six months we will require further documentary evidence namely :-

- A photo card driving licence containing details of the new address, which has to be presented in person at Ty Trevithick **if requested.**
- If the house move has been caused due to a change in domestic circumstances e.g. Divorce or Legal Separation, then copies of Court/Solicitor's documentation will be required **if requested.**

Q: Where can I get further information?

A: For full details on school admissions please refer to the Council's **Starting School Booklet** [LINK]

To view information about a school in your local area including addresses, telephone numbers and Headteacher details, please use our **School Finder** service [LINK]

You can check your catchment school using our Online Catchment Search Facility [LINK TO ONLINE CATCHMENT SEARCH].

For further information about making an online application for a school place, please see '[Online Admissions FAQs.](#)' [hyperlink]

Contact us

For further information and advice, contact the School Admissions Team:-

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Education and Lifelong Learning

School Admissions

Ty Trevithick

Abercynon

Mountain Ash

CF45 4UQ

Telephone: 01443 744232

E-mail : schooladmissions@rctcbc.gov.uk