

Admission & Placing Requests Policy (sending your child to school)

PP5.1



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy outlines our position on admission and placing requests to all West Dunbartonshire schools.
- 1.2 Section 1 of the document provides information on arrangements for sending your child to school and includes guidance on: enrolment of children, including early entry; deferred entry; and delayed entry to primary school / school stage.
- 1.3 Section 2 provides guidance on placing requests, including the process for applying, the criteria to be used when there are more placing requests than places available, and the appeals process.

Catchment Area

- 1.4 Schools have a defined catchment area and children/young people living in this area are given priority for a place at the school. Your catchment schools (denominational and non-denominational school) are determined by your post code, and not attendance at primary or early year's establishment.
- 1.5 You can register your child at only one school, either the denominational or non-denominational school in your catchment area. When you have made your decision on the catchment school, this means in effect the place at the school within the other sector is no longer available and if you want your child to transfer to the other sector school at a later date you need to submit a placing request form.
- 1.6 If you are unsure of your associated catchment schools click on the attached link: [catchment area postcode search](#)

SECTION 1 – SENDING YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL

1.0 REGISTERING YOUR CHILD FOR EDUCATION

Enrolment – Primary

- 1.1 Your child will be admitted to school in August if they are 5 between 1 March of that same year and the last day of the following February. Entry to schools is on a once a year basis at the start of the new session in August each year. Public notifications and social media posts will be issued in December providing details on how to register your child.
- 1.2 Enrolment week normally takes place the second week in January in your local catchment school. This is an online process and you can register your child by completing the online Registration Form by the set registration date. Further information on schools admissions and the link to the registration form can be accessed from our website: <https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-admissions/>
- 1.3 In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, we are reducing parental contact with schools and we are not asking you to attend the catchment school to register your child. If your child is currently in attendance at a West Dunbartonshire Council nursery, or in one of our partnership nurseries, the nursery will provide the catchment school with confirmation of your child's date of birth and your home address. If your details change before the start of the school session in August, and you no longer reside within the catchment area for the school you must let the school know this.
- 1.4 If your child attends a private nursery you should contact your local catchment school for details of how to provide a copy of your child's birth certificate and proof of residency within the catchment area.

Entry Age / Early Entry

- 1.5 Your child will be automatically admitted to school in the new session in August if their fifth birthday falls between 1 March of that year and the last day of February of the following year. You can, however, make a request for early entry to school for a child whose birthday falls after the last day of February. Applications for early entry requests should be made by 1 February.

Deferred Entry

- 1.6 Choosing to defer when your child starts primary school is a big decision. If you want to delay the date your child starts primary school you must still register your child at their local school and can do this by completing the online registration form available on our website. The online registration form will take you to the relevant section to complete the online deferral form
- 1.7 If your child's birthday is on or between 1 March and the first day of school in August, your child will usually start school in the August (the beginning of Autumn term) of the year they turn 5. If your child is still age 4 on the day they would usually start primary 1, you have the right to delay (or defer) when they start primary school to the following year. This means your child can start school in August of the following year when they are 5.

Delayed entry to Primary School / Delay within school stage

- 1.8 In exceptional circumstances, a child may be granted an additional year at the pre-school stage as a result of identified additional support needs which have a bearing on their ability to

benefit from school education. A decision on delayed school entry will be made by the appropriate Senior Education Officer on the basis of an assessment and recommendation from the West Dunbartonshire Psychological Service.

- 1.9 Pupils normally progress through school spending an academic year at each stage of schooling. In exceptional circumstances, where pupils have missed a significant portion of an academic year due to medical or other factors, and would benefit from remaining at the same stage in school for another year, consideration may be given to a request to delay. The decision for the pupil to remain at the same stage for an additional year will be made by the appropriate Senior Education Officer based on a recommendation from West Dunbartonshire Psychological Service.

2.0 TRANSFERS FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

- 2.1 If your child is attending their catchment primary (based on post code) and will be attending the secondary school associated with your post code, there is no need for you to enrol your child to transfer to the secondary school as this will be done automatically. A transition pack will be distributed to all P7 pupils during the 2nd week in December, which provides further information. If you are unsure of your catchment secondary school click the link to check: [catchment area postcode search](#)
- 2.2 If you wish your child to attend a secondary school not associated with your postcode you need to make a placing request and this should be submitted by 1 February.

3.0 WHAT HAPPENS IF THE CATCHMENT SCHOOL IS FULL

- 3.1 Where a school has reached full capacity and does not have enough places for children living within the catchment area places are granted using our priority criteria. Children not accommodated locally will be offered a place in a neighbouring school and their names will be held on waiting list at their local school. If this happens free school transport to and from the neighbouring school will be provided in line with the Council's free home to school transport policy. Should a place become available at the catchment school and you choose to have your child remain at the neighbouring school, transport cost and arrangements would be met by the parent/s.

4.0 PUPIL TRAVEL

- 4.1 We provide free home to school transport for all primary pupils who live more than 1.6 kilometres (one mile) from their catchment school and to secondary pupils who live more than 3.2 kilometres (two miles) from their catchment school. The distances are based on the recognised shortest safe walking route (further details are available in the Council's policy on the provision of school transport - <https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-travel-and-trips/school-transport/>). This policy may be reviewed at any time.

5.0 HOUSE MOVE

Moving Catchment School

- 5.1 If you move house during term time you can register your child at their new catchment school at any time. Contact the school direct for information on registration. You need to provide proof that you now live in the area, as places cannot be allocated until we have proof that the child is resident within the property. You must provide the child's birth certificate and at least 2 proofs of residence which must include:

- council tax notice for the property, or proof that you have registered for council tax at that property, and
- Mortgage statement for address or solicitor's letter confirming missives have been concluded, or a rent book for rented property, or a tenancy agreement.

5.2 You must provide original documents and not copies and supporting evidence will be checked for accuracy.

Request to remain in current School

5.3 If the house move means you are no longer living within the catchment area of your child's current school you can ask that your child remains in this school. Complete the "Request to Remain Form and such requests are normally granted. You would not be eligible for free school transport in this case.

SECTION 2 - PLACING REQUESTS

- 1.1 Children and young people will be educated in their local mainstream school, known as the catchment school. There will be some children who will need, and are entitled to, additional support to help them overcome barriers to their learning and require additional support that cannot be met within their local mainstream school. We have specialist provision at nurseries, schools and support centres to support learning and places are allocated following a full assessment and consideration of the needs of the child by multi-agencies lead by our Psychological Services.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, you can ask for your child to go to a school other than your catchment school, or to the additional support provision recommended. This is called making a placing request. If your child is under 16, you can make the placing request on their behalf, and if your child is 16 or over they can make the placing request.
- 1.3 There are specific situations where a placing request must be made:
 - You wish your child to attend a school other than their catchment school.
 - When you have selected the catchment school for your child and your child attends that school and at a later date you wish your child to transfer from this school to the other sector school e.g. child attends catchment denominational school and you wish to move them to the non-denominational sector or vice versa (even if they reside in the catchment area for the requested school)

2.0 PLACING REQUESTS ARRANGEMENTS

- 2.1 Each December we detail arrangements for placing requests for the following August. There are good educational reasons for trying to ensure that the transfer or admission of children and young people happens at the start of a school session. Other than in circumstances of moving home to a new area, you are advised to time any placing requests so that they take effect from the start of the new school session.
- 2.2 Whilst every effort is made to try to meet parental wishes, you should note that it is not always possible to grant every placing request to a particular school. The size of the school, the current roll, the number of children who already live in the catchment area and other factors will affect our ability to grant a placing request.
- 2.3 **You should be aware that the granting of a placing request for one child/young person does not guarantee that any future placing requests made for a younger sibling for the same school will automatically be granted.**
- 2.4 You can ask for a place for your child at a school within West Dunbartonshire if you reside within another local authority area. If your placing request is successful responsibility for their school education transfers to West Dunbartonshire. For example, where the child / young person requires involvement of an educational psychologist, this service would be provided by West Dunbartonshire Psychological Service. However, the involvement of other agencies does not move to our Council, for example - support from Social Work or other support agency.

3.0 HOW TO MAKE A PLACING REQUEST/TIMESCALES

- 3.1 If you do not want your child to go to your local catchment school for P1 or S1 then you should submit a placing request through the on-line system, and you do this at the same time you complete the on-line registration form.

3.2 Placing requests should be submitted by 1 February, to enable them to be considered as early as possible. You still need to register your child at their local school to ensure that there is a place available should the placing request not be successful. The statutory timescales for considering placing requests are as follows:

- Application submitted by 15 March - notification of outcome no later than 30 April
- Application submitted after 15 March - notification of outcome within 2 months of your application (note this is considered a later request and there may be less spa

4.0 IN-TERM PLACING REQUEST

4.1 The in-term process differs from the process of allocating places for P1 and S1 for August, and you will receive notification of an in-term placing request within 2 months of your application.

5.0 HOW PLACES ARE ALLOCATED / CRITERIA

5.1 We will always prioritise places for catchment children, and have the right to reserve places within a school for catchment children moving into the area. Placing requests are considered in line with the criteria below, and as available places may be limited within some schools, you are encouraged to submit your placing request by 1 February to enable us to consider requests as early as possible.. It is important that you provide all relevant information to support your request, and supporting evidence will be checked for accuracy.

Criteria for the allocation of places for placing request applications

5.2 Where there are more placing request applications than places available, the following criteria set by the Council will be applied when allocating places:

1. Children residing within West Dunbartonshire area.
2. In relation only to denominational schools, those children/young people who have been baptised in the Roman Catholic (RC) Church. All applications seeking to receive recognition under this category should be supported by documental evidence (for example a baptismal certificate from the RC Church or a supporting letter).
3. Children with relevant medical conditions who require facilities or support available only in the requested school. All applications under this category should be supported by documentation evidencing the reasons for the request from a medical practitioner such as the family doctor or the community paediatrician. There is a separate process for placement for pupils with additional support needs and information on this process is available from our website.
4. Children who have siblings at the school during the next academic year. The number of siblings at the school will be taken into consideration and multiple siblings will be given higher consideration.
5. Children from single-parent families where, for example, proximity of school to the parent's place of work/study would be advantageous for the care and well-being of the child.
6. Travel distance from home to school by a suitable walking route. Those living closest to the school ranking highest.
7. Suitability of particular teaching methods to the child's needs or the availability of subjects which he/she was previously studying.

8. We then give children from outside West Dunbartonshire priority in order of categories 2-7

- 5.3 The criteria will be applied in the rank order shown above. If, for any category, the number of requests exceeds the number of places available the next succeeding criteria will be used to prioritise those requests, and so on until all priority criteria have been exhausted.
- 5.4 If, after this process, there are still more placing requests than places available, then a ballot will be held to allocate the places available. This ballot will be organised by the Senior Education Officer. Parents will be notified of the arrangements for the ballot.
- 5.5 If your placing request is accepted your child's place at their local catchment school will automatically be withdrawn. If you subsequently change your mind and wish to attend your catchment school, you would require to submit a fresh catchment enrolment online and if a space is still available this will be confirmed to you. You should not withdraw your granted placing request until you have received confirmation of an available space to return to your catchment school.
- 5.6 If your placing request is unsuccessful you must ensure that your child takes up their place within your catchment school. You do have the choice to submit a further placing request for an alternative school. You also have the right to submit an appeal against the refusal of the placing request.

6.0 REASONS FOR REFUSAL

6.1 We will make every effort to place a child/young person at the requested school but there may be times when we need to refuse a placing request. We can only refuse your request for certain reasons set out by law in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. We do not have to admit your child to the school of your choice in the following circumstances:

- If the school would have to employ an extra teacher or spend a significant amount of money extending or altering the building, for example if we have to provide an extra classroom.
- If accepting the request would make it necessary for us to create an extra class or employ another teacher at a future stage of your child's primary education.
- If your child's education would suffer as a result of changing school.
- If we think that your child would be likely to disturb the order and discipline in that school, or the educational wellbeing of other pupils at the school.
- If education in the school you want would not be suitable to the age or ability of your child. This might apply if you want your child to be admitted to a stage of education that they are not ready for yet, or to a school which cannot meet your child's needs.
- If the specified school you have requested is an ASN school and your child does not have additional support needs requiring the education or special facilities normally provided at that school.
- If the authority have already required the child to discontinue attendance at the specified school.
- If accepting the request would prevent us from reserving a place at the school for a child who is likely to move into the area.
- If the capacity of the school would be exceeded.

7.0 APPEALS PROCESS

7.1 We understand that you may be disappointed that your placing request is not accepted and you have the right to make an appeal to an appeal committee.

- 7.2 You can appeal against a placing request refusal only once in a 12 month period. This does not mean that you cannot make another placing request. It just means that if we refuse your first placing request and you lodge an appeal you cannot appeal to the appeal committee again, on another placing request decision, within 12 months of the date /of receipt of the original appeal letter.
- 7.3 You must appeal in writing to the Chief Education Officer, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton, or by email, within 28 days of the date on which the request was deemed to be refused. The refusal letter will provide you with details of the appeals process.
- 7.4 If the appeal committee agree that we were right to refuse your child a place in the school you want, you have 28 days from receiving the appeal committee's decision to appeal to the Sheriff Court.
- 7.5 In case places become available in the school you want, we will keep your request open until 30 June of the year you made it, unless you tell us you want to change your request to another school.

8.0 ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS TRIBUNAL

- 8.1 Where the placing request relates to an ASN school, you have the right to refer a decision refusing your placing request to an appeal committee. Such an appeal must be lodged within 28 days. There are specified circumstances when an appeal against the decision to refuse a placing request must be referred to the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland.
- 8.2 A reference should be made to the First-tier Tribunal where:
- An education authority decides to refuse a placing request in a Scottish ASN school.
- 8.3 A placing request to a mainstream school would also be referred to the First-tier Tribunal where the circumstances below apply:
- A co-ordinated support plan has been prepared (but not discontinued)
 - No such plan has been prepared but it has been established by the Education Authority that the child or young person requires such a plan, or
 - No such plan has been prepared but the Education Authority have issued their proposal to establish whether a child or young person requires such a plan, or
 - The Education Authority has decided that the child or young person does not require such a plan and that the decision has been referred to the First-tier Tribunal.