

Report of the Cabinet Member for Education & Learning

Extraordinary Council – 20 March 2025

School Admission Arrangements 2026-2027



Executive Summary

Purpose of Report:

To determine the admission arrangements for maintained schools for the academic year 2026-2027. The local authority is responsible for determining the admission arrangements for County maintained schools under Section 89 of the School Standards and Framework Act (1998) and in accordance with the Education (Determinations of Admission Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2006.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that:

- 1) The proposed admission arrangements for 2026-2027 for Nursery as set out in Appendix A are approved.
- 2) The proposed admission arrangements for 2026-2027 for Reception as set out in Appendix B are approved.
- 3) The proposed admission arrangements for 2026-2027 for Year 7 as set out in Appendix C are approved.
- 4) The proposed admission arrangements for 2026-2027 for in-year transfers as set out in Appendix D are approved.
- 5) The proposed admission arrangements/criteria for entry for 2026-2027 for sixth forms set in Appendix E are approved.
- 6) The Schedule of Events for primary and secondary for 2026-2027 at Appendix F is approved.
- 7) The admission numbers for primary and secondary schools for 2026-2027 are noted, as set out in Appendix G.

Decision-Making Authority www.swansea.gov.uk/constitution:

Select from the list the constitutional basis www.swansea.gov.uk/constitution on which a decision is being sought (Please tick all that apply):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Article 4 "The Council Meeting" | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Procedure Rules |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scheme of Delegation | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Transaction Procedure Rules |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Terms of Reference | <input type="checkbox"/> Other "Please Specify" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contract Procedure Rules | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable. Explain Why |

Article 4, Service Strategies, Policies and Plans: The Admission Arrangements for Schools (local discretion)

Corporate Plan Wellbeing Objectives:

Select which Wellbeing Objectives are relevant to this report (Please tick all that apply):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education & Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Tackling Poverty & Enabling Communities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economy & Infrastructure | <input type="checkbox"/> Transformation & Financial Resilience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature Recovery & Climate Change | <input type="checkbox"/> All |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safeguarding | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable |

Relevance to Corporate Plan Wellbeing Objectives:	
The Admission Arrangements are set out in accordance with the Welsh Government (WG) School Admission Code (July 2013) and ensure that the admissions to schools are managed in a fair and equitable manner for all pupils.	
Reviewed and approved by:	
Access to Services, Finance, Legal & Relevant Cabinet Member / Committee Chair.	
Report Author & Job Title:	Melissa Taylor, Lead Admissions Officer

Introduction

1. Under Section 89 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 the local authority is responsible for determining the admission arrangements for local authority maintained schools. In accordance with Regulation 4 of the Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2006 Admission Authorities have a duty to consult and determine school admission arrangements annually. The Regulations set requirements for consultation and determination of admission arrangements.
2. The Welsh Government in July 2013 issued the School Admissions Code and the School Admission Appeals Code in December 2013. The School Admissions Code applies to arrangements made for the 2026-2027 academic year and covers admissions to primary and secondary schools.

Advice

3. Copies of the proposed admission arrangements for nursery classes are attached at Appendix A.
4. Copies of the proposed admission arrangements for primary schools are attached at Appendix B.
5. Copies of the proposed admission arrangements for secondary schools are attached at Appendix C
6. Copies of the proposed admission arrangements for in year transfers are attached at Appendix D.
7. Copies of the proposed admission arrangements and criteria for entry for sixth forms are attached at Appendix E.
8. The proposed 'Schedule of Events 2026-2027' for Reception (primary school) and Year 7 (secondary school) year of entry admission process is shown at Appendix F.
9. The admission numbers (ANs) for 2026-2027 for primary and secondary schools are shown at Appendix G.

10. The LA has consulted on a school organisation proposal that, if it proceeds, could affect the Admission Number of some schools (Cwm Glas Primary, *Morrison Primary, *Penyrheol Comprehensive) from September 2025. For these schools noted we have included the lowest possible admission number (AN) for 2026 with an additional note alongside which provides the potential alternative AN dependent on the outcome of the STF proposal. Should Cabinet proceed with the proposal a statutory notice will be published which will confirm the agreed AN. Final determination following statutory notice is expected in March 2025. The LA will update all relevant documentation/website.

11. **Admission limits**

The local authority (LA) is the admitting authority for all community schools (schools funded and maintained entirely by LAs). Requests for admission to Voluntary Aided schools - Church schools (e.g. Roman Catholic, Church in Wales schools) are administered and determined by the admission criteria set by the Governing Body of that school. Voluntary Aided schools are responsible for determining their own admission arrangements.

Primary

The capacity of each primary school, including its nursery classes, has been calculated using the Welsh Government formula and from this an admission number (AN) has been set. The admission numbers for primary schools are shown in Appendix G. All schools must admit up to their AN in the year of entry (i.e. Reception) in primary schools. In the year of entry, and in all other year groups, a child will be refused a place by the local authority (LA) once the AN is reached.

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (Wales) Regulations 2013, restricts infant class sizes to a maximum of 30 (i.e. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2). Welsh Government has also introduced a recommended limit of 30 for key stage 2 class sizes.

Secondary

The admission numbers (ANs) shown at Appendix G are the limits for each year group. Schools should not exceed their AN in the year of entry (i.e. Year 7 for secondary admissions) or in any other year group.

Primary and secondary

There is no guarantee of a catchment place at a school if the admission number (AN) has been reached, even if parents living within the catchment area of a school apply for a place before the published deadline (for Year 7 and Reception admissions). There is also no guarantee of a catchment place for applicants applying outside of the normal admission round (i.e. late applications for Reception and Year 7 admissions or in-year transfer requests), even if the pupil resides or moves into the catchment area.

In-year transfers

Availability of places is determined by reference to the school's admission number (AN). A child will be refused a place once the admission number has been reached. ANs shown at Appendix G are the limits for each year group. Schools should not exceed their AN in the year of entry (i.e. Reception for primary admissions and Year 7 for secondary admissions), or in any other year group. Also, for primary school admissions, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (Wales) Regulations 2013, restricts infant class sizes to a maximum of 30 (i.e. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2), and Welsh Government introduced a recommended limit of 30 for key stage 2 class sizes.

Sixth forms

Criteria for entry and admission arrangements for sixth forms, including admission limits, are outlined in Appendix E. For schools with a sixth form, admission numbers will be the same for Years 12 and 13 as they are for Years 7 to 11.

12. Admissions criteria

The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (Wales) Regulations 2009 places a duty on admission authorities in Wales to admit children looked after by a local authority in Wales where an application for admission is made, even if the AN has been reached. Should an admission authority wish to refuse an admission application for a looked after child then they must refer the matter to the Welsh Ministers within seven days of receiving the application for decision. The decision of the Welsh Ministers is binding. Previously looked after children (looked after children who cease to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a residence order, or special guardianship order immediately following having been looked after), are also included in this criteria under the Welsh Government's School Admissions Code.

Pupils for whom the LA holds an Individual Development Plan (IDP) where the LA has named a school in section 2D.1 of the IDP will be included and accounted for when places are allocated, and schools are informed of this (with the exception of pupils allocated a place within a Special Teaching Facility).

13. Oversubscription

Where more applications are received for a particular school than there are places available, places will be awarded using the oversubscription criteria set out in the admission arrangements (see Appendices A, B, C and D).

Stakeholder Participation

14. All local authority community maintained schools and governing bodies in Swansea were consulted on the Admissions Arrangements 2026-2027 in line with statutory requirements. The Admission Forum and neighbouring local authority's were also consulted. As there were no significant changes to the

proposed admission arrangements policy there was no requirement to consult with wider stakeholders (i.e. parents).

15. In Swansea we have 85 local authority community maintained schools and 6 voluntary aided (VA) schools. Only 1 school responded to the consultation. The submission is outlined below, along with the response from the LA.

Response 1 - The Governing Body at Newton Primary commented:

In response to the consultation process, we would once again like to raise concern that the over-subscription criteria do not give adequate priority to families who live in catchment and already have a sibling in attendance at the school. We feel that this policy risks separating siblings, negatively impacting child education and placing unnecessary stress on affected families.

The inclusion of a criteria which prioritised families living in catchment and who already have a sibling in attendance would be a welcome and relatively straightforward improvement to the policy. Every other Local Authority in England and Wales adopt such a policy. For example, see Carmarthenshire over-subscription criteria:

If there are more applications for admission than places available at a particular school, the allocation of places will be based on the following criteria listed in priority order: -

- 1. Looked-after and previously looked-after children.*
- 2. Children who live in the school's catchment area and have a sibling enrolled in the school at the time the child is to start at that school.*
- 3. Children who live in the school's catchment area who do not have a sibling enrolled in the school at the time the child is to start at that school.*
- 4. Children who reside outside of the school's catchment area AND have a sibling enrolled in the school at the time the child is to start at that school.*
- 5. Children who reside outside of the school's designated catchment area who do not have a sibling enrolled in the school at the time the child is to start at that school.*

Notes

Within each of the above categories.

Distance Criteria

The distance from home to the school will be used as a basis for determining priority, with those living nearest the school being given priority and a place at the school before those living further away. The distance will be measured using Google Maps.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our concerns.

LA Response:

Thank you for responding to our annual consultation on the local authority's proposed Admission Arrangements for 2026-2027.

The local authority want to be fair to all parents/families and it is difficult to have multiple criteria and to satisfy all families and all circumstances.

Every local authority (LA) must have its own oversubscription criteria as part of its admission arrangements and LAs will have slightly different oversubscription criteria. The criteria in Swansea is not unique to Swansea; Neath and Port Talbot have similar arrangements. Similarly, in Swansea we have additional criteria within our secondary admissions (attending a partner primary school), other LAs, such as Carmarthen, do not have.

The Welsh Government School Admissions Code provides guidelines and examples of good practice. It states, "it is possible for a criterion to be fair in some circumstances and not in others. It is for admission authorities, acting in accordance with the provisions and guidelines in this Code, to decide which criteria they will use and in what circumstances."

The LA and the Admission Forum appreciate that a refusal of a school place for any family can be upsetting, not just those in catchment with siblings, but also applicants who are out of catchment with siblings already attending their preferred school. Both the LA and the Forum wish to exercise fairness to all parents and recognise it is difficult to have multiple criteria and to satisfy all parents/families and all circumstances.

There have been many reviews of the admission arrangements by the Admission Forum and the policy has also been considered by the LAs Education Performance Scrutiny Panel. It has been recognised that there is a difficult balance to be had and therefore the Admissions Forum will, as it has in previous years, continue to monitor the admission arrangements each year to ensure there is no emerging pattern to suggest an unfairness towards any groups/families within Swansea local authority communities.

Your response will be included when the Admission Arrangements 2026-2027 are reported to Council for their determination.

16. Admission Forum

The admission forum has a role in ensuring a fair admissions system that does not disadvantage one child compared with another and is straightforward and easy for parents to understand. Admission forums are responsible for monitoring compliance with the School Admissions Code. The Forum provides a vehicle for the admission authority to discuss the effectiveness of local admission arrangements, consider how to deal with difficult admission issues and advise the admission authority on ways in which arrangements can be improved. Membership of the forum includes:-

- Local Authority representatives (Members and officers)
- Headteacher representatives for secondary schools
- Headteacher representatives for primary schools
- Governor and Local Community representatives
- Diocesan representatives
- Voluntary Aided schools representatives

17. The proposed Admission Arrangements 2026-2027 were put to the Admission Forum at a meeting held on 6th November 2024 and prior to wider consultation. The Forum were advised of minor updates and that there were no significant changes to the policy. The arrangements were discussed and

considered. The view of the Forum were that they were in agreement with the proposed admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria.

18. The response submitted during the consultation period from Newton Primary Governing Body, was reported to the Forum and considered by Forum members at a meeting held on 12th February 2025.
19. At their meeting on 12th February 2025, the Forum further considered the proposed admission policy, and also the Newton Primary School Governing Body response submitted as part of the consultation. The consensus of the Forum was they were in full agreement with the LAs proposed policy and recommended that the Admission Arrangements 2026-2027 be approved in their current format.
20. The admission arrangements will continue to be monitored and discussed by the Forum annually to ensure there is no emerging pattern or data that would indicate any unfairness or inequity that would require a significant change to the arrangements.

Risk and Issues Assessment

21. There are no risks or issues associated with the recommendation being made in this report. The determination of admission arrangements is a requirement under Section 89 of the School Standards and Framework Act (1998).

Integrated Assessment Implications

22. The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure. Further information is available at www.swansea.gov.uk/IIA
23. The admission arrangements are set out in accordance with the Welsh Government (WG) School Admission Code (July 2013) and ensure that the admissions to schools are managed in a fair and equitable manner for all pupils.
24. Once set, the school admission arrangements apply to all and take account of all protected characteristics to ensure that all applications for a school place are treated equally.
25. An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) screening has been undertaken and no adverse implications have been noted.

Financial Implications

26. There are no additional financial implications for the Council arising from the recommendations in this report.

Legal & Governance Implications

27. Section 89 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and Regulation 4 of the Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) (Wales)

Regulations 2006 require Admission Authorities to consult and determine school admission arrangements annually. The Regulations set requirements for consultation and determination of admission arrangements. The Welsh Government guidance circular 'Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales', sets out methodology for local authorities to follow when determining their admission arrangements. There is also a legal requirement to consider the guidelines contained in the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (July 2013).

Appendices:

- Appendix A - Admission Arrangements 2026-2027 Nursery
- Appendix B - Admission Arrangements 2026-2027 Reception
- Appendix C - Admission Arrangements 2026-2027 Year 7
- Appendix D - Admission Arrangements for 2026-2027 In Year Transfers
- Appendix E - Admission Arrangements/Criteria for Entry 2026-2027 Sixth Forms
- Appendix F - Schedule of Events for 2026-2027 (Reception and Year 7)
- Appendix G - Admission Numbers for 2026-2027 (Primary and Secondary Schools)

- Appendix H - IIA Screening Form

Background Papers:

Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2006 - www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2006/174/made

Welsh Government (WG) guidance 'Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales' - [Measuring the capacity of schools: guidance | GOV.WALES](#)

School Admissions Code – School admissions code | GOV.WALES [School admissions code | GOV.WALES](#)

School Admission Appeals Code WG December 2013 updated November 2023 – [School admission appeals code | GOV.WALES](#)