

***A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR
EDUCATION AND CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER***

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Blaenau Gwent Information for Parents/Guardians booklet, is intended to help you both understand the education system within Blaenau Gwent and make the right decision for your child.

If you require guidance on the issues covered in the booklet, please contact staff of the Department on 01495 311556 or (*see over for specific areas).

Councillor Steve Bard
Executive Member - Education

Mr Robert Barbour
Chief Education Officer

This booklet contains general information and policy guidelines on the provision of education by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council for the school year 2009/2010.

More detailed information is available from the Chief Education Officer.

*Blaenau Gwent Education Department, Community Services Directorate,
Central Depot, Barleyfield Industrial Estate,
Brynmawr NP23 4YF Tel No: 01495 311556 or (*see over for specific areas).*

*E-mail: education.department@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk*

Education Department

If you require advice, information or guidance on any of the following services provided by the Education Department, it can be obtained by telephoning the following numbers.

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| • Free School Meals/Clothing Grants | 01495 311556 |
| • Student Support for Further and Higher Education | 01495 311556 |
| • Home to School Transport | 01495 311556 |
| • Admissions to Nursery/Primary And Secondary School | 01495 311556 |
| • Special Educational Needs Provision | 01495 355329 |
| • Education Welfare Service | 01495 357712 |

You may also telephone to make an appointment with a member of staff if you wish to discuss an issue personally.

Department can also be contacted by email - education.department@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

School Term And Holiday Dates 2009/2010

| | Term Begins | Half Term | Term Ends | Days |
|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Autumn 2009 | Wednesday 02/09/09 | Monday - Friday 26/10/09 – 30/10/09 | Tuesday 22/12/09 | 75 |
| Spring 2010 | Monday 04/01/10 | Monday - Friday 15/02/10 – 19/02/10 | Friday 26/03/10 | 55 |
| Summer 2010 | Monday 12/04/10 | Monday - Friday 31/05/10 - 04/06/10 | Monday 19/07/10 | 65 |
| Total | | | | 195* |

- Includes 5 days for teachers in-service training

May Day - Monday, 3rd May, 2010

Any closure(s) for election purposes to be balanced during the academic year

This page is removable – to be kept as a handy reminder of term times

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Publications and Changes

This booklet relates to the admission arrangements for the school year 2009/2010 and, is correct at the time of going to print. The County Borough Council reserves the right to make any adjustments to its published admissions and other policies where it is necessary to enable it to comply with legislation, or the requirements of the financial support to the Council.

Information regarding individual schools, together with a copy of the school's prospectus, can be obtained from the Headteacher of the schools listed on pages 19 - 22.

Explanation of Terms

Local Education Authority (L.E.A.)

The Local Government Body responsible for the organisation and maintenance of the Education Service in its area. In Blaenau Gwent, this responsibility is undertaken by the County Borough Council.

Co-Educational School

A school catering for both sexes (all the schools in Blaenau Gwent are co-educational).

Comprehensive School

A secondary school catering for all aptitudes and abilities.

Day School

A school not offering boarding facilities.

Community/Maintained School

A school funded and maintained by the Local Education Authority.

Non Maintained or Independent School

A school not funded or maintained by the Local Education Authority.

Voluntary Aided School

A maintained school which controls its own admissions and where the provision of religious instruction is in the control of the School's Governing Body.

Foundation School (Former Grant Maintained School)

A maintained school which controls its own admissions and where the Governing Body employs the staff.

Catchment Area

The geographical area intended to be served by a school.

Cross Boundary Catchment Area

A catchment area which crosses into another Unitary Authority.

Admission Number

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

The admission number replaces the standard number (STN) or the published admission limit (PAL) that was previously used for school admissions. It is calculated by dividing the capacity in the school by the number of year groups to be accommodated at the school. Details of these admissions numbers are given later in the Schools' Directory commencing on page 19.

The Curriculum

The curriculum consists of all the learning opportunities provided by the school, many of which take place in the classroom under the direct control of the teacher, supplemented by a range of activities outside the classroom including educational visits and field studies.

Year Groups

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|------------------------|------------|
| Nursery Class | | | 3 - 4yrs |
| Reception Class | = | 1st year infant | 4 - 5yrs |
| Year One | = | middle infant | 5 - 6yrs |
| Year Two | = | top infant | 6 - 7yrs |
| Year Three | = | 1st year junior | 7 - 8yrs |
| Year Four | = | 2nd year junior | 8 - 9yrs |
| Year Five | = | 3rd year junior | 9 - 10yrs |
| Year Six | = | top junior | 10 - 11yrs |
| Year Seven | = | 1st year secondary | 11 - 12yrs |
| Year Eight | = | 2nd year secondary | 12 - 13yrs |
| Year Nine | = | 3rd year secondary | 13 - 14yrs |
| Year Ten | = | 4th year secondary | 14 - 15yrs |
| Year Eleven | = | 5th year secondary | 15 - 16yrs |
| Year Twelve | = | 1st year in sixth form | 16 - 17yrs |
| Year Thirteen | = | 2nd year in sixth form | 17 - 18yrs |

Nursery Education and other Pre-School Provision

From September 2004, all children are able to attend, free of charge, in the term following their third birthday, a nursery unit, or a quality assured playgroup or childminding setting, on 5 days per week.

Within Blaenau Gwent there are 28 nursery units at schools, including one welsh medium nursery unit and several quality assured playgroups. Each nursery unit has an exclusive catchment area and all children from within a catchment area will be considered for admission before those living out-catchment. In certain circumstances full-time places can be offered. For further information regarding the availability of full-time places ring 01495 311 556.

Details of nursery provision can be obtained from headteachers of primary schools, or the Education Department. Applications for children to attend nursery units should be made to headteachers. Parents are notified of the outcome of their applications in due course. When submitting applications, parents will be asked to provide the child's birth certificate to verify the date of birth and any appropriate documents considered necessary to verify the home address.

As well as the Authority's nursery units, pre-school playgroups for both English and Welsh-medium children are widely available. Parents requiring information should contact the CHILDREN'S INFORMATION SERVICE on 08000 323339.

Children's Information Service

As part of the National Strategy for Wales, local authorities are obliged to provide childcare information for their area.

The National Assembly for Wales requires that the Children's Information Service (CIS) should provide free information on children's services within the Authority such as Parent and Toddler Groups, Playgroups, Childminders, Day Nurseries, Nannies, Out-of-School Clubs, Holiday Playschemes, Leisure activities, Organisations for Children and Young People, Schools, Social, Health and Education Services and the local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

The Service should also include information on other related topics including choosing and paying for childcare, Community and Voluntary Schemes, (including Scouts, Brownies etc.), national helplines, and help for parents of children with special needs.

Children's Information Service Freephone 08000 323339.

A quarterly newsletter is provided for the children and young peoples partnership. For the latest copy please telephone the above number.

Out of School Childcare Clubs

Out of School Childcare Schemes cater for children between the ages of 4-14 years old, they provide care before and after school hours and during school holidays.

Out of School Childcare Clubs offer reliability and peace of mind to working parents; parents who want to pursue training opportunities or take up voluntary work also use them. It can be lonely and dangerous for a child to go home to an empty house after school. Out of School Childcare Clubs are flexible and children can attend full-time or whenever spaces are available.

Childcare Clubs have a planned programme of activities such as arts and crafts, games and sports, drama and music, plus a quiet corner for reading, homework and videos. These Childcare Clubs are fun and safe places for children to go and make friends. For fees and locations of the Clubs available or further information of your local group, please contact the Children's Information Service on 08000 323339.

Flying Start

Flying Start is an initiative of the Welsh Assembly Government, aimed to improve outcomes for children 0-3 years within target areas, through the provision of high quality early years services. The menu of services provided locally will include high quality childcare for 2 year olds on a half time basis (only available in designated flying start areas), increased health visiting, parenting programmes and basic skills.

Designated flying start areas include Sirhowy, Garnlydan, Coed y Garn, Deighton, Swfrydd and St Illtyd's (based on school catchment areas).

If you live within a designated flying start area and would like further information please telephone the Children's Information Service on FREEPHONE 08000 32 33 39.

Genesis Cymru Wales – new Beginnings for Parents and Children

Genesis Wales is a project to help parents overcome many of the barriers they face when wanting to return to work.

Childcare for example can be a huge barrier for parents. It is often expensive and difficult to find. Through working closely with families, the Genesis project can offer financial assistance and other support to parents who need affordable childcare for them to access courses and work opportunities.

For further information, advice and guidance, please telephone a member of the Genesis team on FREEPHONE 08000 32 33 39.

Play

Play Development staff help improve current play provision and to develop more play opportunities within the area. They promote good quality play and fun learning to both adults and children. Particular attention is paid to promoting the importance of quality staffed open access play provision. This is play that happens in a range of settings, such as in the Integrated Children's Centre in Blaina, sports centre playschemes, or local play parks/areas and school playgrounds during the summer holidays.

Open access play provisions means children and young people, aged 5 – 15 years, can come and go as they please. Playworkers run the play sessions and will not stop children leaving if they so choose.

Staff also offer support to Out of School Childcare Clubs in improving the quality of the play opportunities they provide. They also provide play workshops and training for groups and individuals interested in running play sessions for children and young people.

For further information on open access play, or support for developing local community-based play provision, please contact the Children's Information Service on 08000 32 33 39.

Heart of the Valleys Integrated Children's Centre

The Integrated Children's Centre is based in Blaina (Blaina Old Infants School) and is open daily to all families living in Blaenau Gwent.

The centre offers a wide range of services including playgroup, Meithrin, baby club, crèche facilities, open access play sessions, Children and Young Peoples Information Service drop-in, counselling service, language and play sessions and parenting.

The centre is also able to offer a varied training programme that meets community needs. For further information, please contact The Children's Information Service on Freephone 08000 32 33 39.

Parenting Project in Blaenau Gwent

The Parenting project within Blaenau Gwent provides a range of programmes and workshops to support Parents and Families at all levels of need. The project aims to provide 'good quality' programmes and consistent parenting advice, encouraging parents and carers to access support on a voluntary basis.

There is compelling evidence that parenting has a major impact on a child's life chances. Strong and affectionate relationships between a parent and child can build a child's confidence and self-esteem, which will make the transition into adulthood a happy and pleasurable journey.

All parenting programmes are free – for further information, advice and guidance contact the Children's Information Service on Freephone 08000 32 33 39.

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) is a UK charity providing children's rights and socio-legal services. They offer information, advice, advocacy and legal representation to children and young people up to the age of 25. NYAS seeks to provide and develop its services through the active participation of young people, who are involved at all levels of the organisation.

If you are a child, young person or ringing on behalf of a child or young person and need help, information or advice, you can contact the service on help line number FREEPHONE 0800 61 61 01 or send a text message to 0777 333 4555 or send an email to help@nyas.net.

A One-Stop Shop for Children's Complaints and Representations

The Local Authority has set up a One-Stop Shop for children called Service Buddies. This service is for young people, aged 5 to 18 years of age, to be able to access a service that makes it easy for them to complain, compliment or make representations about any local authority service, and also encourages them to do so.

A child can access the service via a freephone, a text or e-mail. A Service Buddy will take their call, investigate their complaint, and get back to them with a response. All complaints will be logged, and reported via the formal reporting cycle of the Authority.

Young people have designed leaflets and posters about the service, and the service is being widely publicised throughout the Authority.

The service is also supported by advocacy for certain groups of children. An advocate will help a child to make a complaint, and have their voice heard.

Certain policies of the Authority are being revised to ensure that all local authority employees, and contracted in employees, have a duty of care to report any malpractice with children.

The Service Buddy telephone number is:

FREEPHONE 08000 121 123 or
Text to 07786 202915
e-mail: help@servicebuddy.co.uk

Arrangements for the Admission of Pupils to County Borough Community Schools

(a) Primary schools

Headteachers of primary schools will provide parents with admission forms, and arrangements are made for parents to visit schools during the term preceding admission.

Children are eligible for admission to school at the start of the school year in which their fifth birthday falls (i.e. 1st September to 31st August inclusive). Children are not legally required to attend school until the start of the school term following their fifth birthday.

Parents are requested to express a preference for the school they would wish their child to attend. This is either their catchment area school or a school outside the catchment area in which they live. Parents may name more than one school in order of preference and the Authority will try to comply with at least one of the preferences, provided compliance does not prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources, and the Local Education Authority being able to meet the infant class size requirements. When dealing with admissions the Authority will take into account the views of the headteacher and the school's governing body.

Parents of children not residing within the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent but who wish their children to attend a school in the area must apply in writing to the Chief Education Officer. Admission forms must be returned to the catchment area school, irrespective of choice by the 30th November 2008. Parents will be notified during February/March.

(b) Secondary Schools

Children are transferred from primary to secondary schools at the start of the school year in which their twelfth birthday falls (i.e. 1st September - 31st August inclusive).

During the school term preceding admission every year 6 pupil will receive, via their school, an admission form from the Local Education Authority, which will need to be completed and returned to the school by the date indicated. These forms are then forwarded to the LEA for processing (closing date 30th November 2007). All those children living within a school's catchment area would be automatically entitled to attend that school, while those who apply to attend a school outside their catchment area will be notified during February/March as to whether the Authority has been able to allocate a place at the school of your choice. i.e. as long as the placement does not prejudice the provision of efficient education and/or the efficient use of resources. When dealing with admissions the Authority will take into account the views of the headteacher and the school's governing body.

Parents of children not living in the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent but who wish their children to attend a school in the area must apply in writing to the Chief Education Officer by 30th November 2008 (special arrangements apply for admission of pupils with special needs).

Parents are urged to complete and return all admission forms by the closing date as failure to do so could lead, if demand exceeds the number of places available, to pupils being refused a place at their chosen school.

Arrangements for Transfer between Schools

Parents are required to make written application to the Chief Education Officer when a transfer is sought, giving full details of the reasons for their request. Parents may name more than one school in order of preference and the Authority will try to comply with at least one of the preferences, provided compliance does not prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources. The Authority will

take into account any school records and other information that may be available, the general type of education most suitable to the particular child and the views of the governors and headteachers.

Admission to Special Schools and Units

Admission to special schools and to mainstream schools hosting specialist facilities catering for children with a wide range of special educational needs is dealt with by special arrangement through the Chief Education Officer.

Admission Policy for Voluntary Aided Schools

Due to individual Voluntary Aided Schools' Governing Bodies being responsible for admissions, each has its own policy. Preference is normally afforded on such grounds as denomination, residency, siblings, etc.

For full details of the procedure, parents need to contact individual schools. Please remember that each school has deadlines and you should make direct contact as soon as possible.

All Saints R.C. Primary School and Nursery Unit

Copies of the admission policy can be obtained from the Headteacher at All Saints R.C. Primary School, Heol-yr-Ysgol, Ebbw Vale, NP23 6QP.

Brynmawr R.C. Primary School and Nursery Unit

Copies of the admission policy can be obtained from the Clerk to the Governing Body at Brynmawr R.C. Primary School, Catholic Road, Brynmawr, NP23 4EF.

St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School

Copies of the admission policy can be obtained from the Headteacher at St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School, Ashvale, Dukestown, Tredegar, NP22 3QT.

St. Mary's Church in Wales Aided Primary School

Children will be considered on the following criteria:-

1. Children with brothers or sisters currently attending or who have attended the school will be given priority in respect of admission.
2. In the event of over-subscription, remaining places will be allocated to:-
 - (a) Children who have been baptised into an Anglican Christian Church, or who attend Sunday School or whose parents are regular communicants of the Church-in-Wales or of a non-Anglican Christian Church. (Documentary evidence must be provided with the application form).
 - (b) Children of parents who are committed members of another faith who require an education with a religious basis.
 - (c) In the event of other factors being equal, places will be allocated based on proximity of residence to the school.

Admission Policy for Foundation Schools

The Governing Body of a Foundation School is directly responsible for controlling the school's admission process. Should the number of applications to a Foundation School exceed the number of available places, then allocation will be made according to the over-subscription criteria agreed by the governing body of each school. Please remember that schools may have deadlines.

Brynmawr Comprehensive School

Those children, whose parents have expressed a preference, will be offered places first. When these children have been identified, the allocation of the places will be selected according to the following criteria, which are listed in the priority order, up to the admission limit for that particular year group.

- i. Children recommended for placement for medical psychological or special educational reasons. These must be confirmed by the LEA's specialist advisers. In addition looked after children (children under local authority care).
- ii. Children with siblings living in the same household and currently attending Brynmawr Foundation School.
- iii. After taking account of the above categories, priority will be based on the closeness to the school.

Along with the above criteria, once a pupil has been offered a place at Brynmawr Foundation School parents and pupils will be invited to school to sign a 3 way partnership agreement linking:

School Commitment
Pupil Commitment and
Parent Commitment

Parental Choice of School

It is the Authority's policy that children resident within a school's catchment area will be given priority for admission to that school, subject to the expression of a preference by parents and the L.E.A. being able to meet the infant class size requirements.

The School Standards and Framework Act requires the Authority and school Governing Bodies ensure that reception, year one and year two classes are limited to 30 per class. In considering applications for admission or transfer, the Authority will have regard to:-

- the existing and projected number of pupils from within the school's catchment area;
- teaching staff available and pupil-teacher ratios;
- the physical limitations of the school site and buildings;
- future increased pupil numbers in the school arising from matters such as increased birth rate or housing development in the area;
- the infant class size requirements;
- any other factors which may affect the provision of efficient education and/or the efficient use of resources.

All maintained schools are required to admit pupils up to its admission number (AN) for the year of normal admission to school. Younger brothers and sisters living outside the catchment area of the school of their choice (whether primary or secondary) are not automatically allowed to attend the same school as older brothers or sisters still in attendance.

Where applications exceed the number of places available, the following criteria will be used to determine which applicants may be offered places:-

- (i) priority to be given to children seeking admission on medical grounds, supported by a medical officer;
- (ii) children who have older siblings at the school at the date of admission, will be admitted in preference to those who do not;

- (iii) where there is more than one case as in (ii), priority to be assessed on the basis of those children closest in age to the elder siblings already at the school at the date of admission;
- (iv) in respect of controlled voluntary schools, preference at this stage to be given to those parents expressing a preference on denominational grounds and who are themselves regular churchgoers;
- (v) after taking account of categories (I-iv), priority will be based on closeness to the school, measured by nearest available walking route from the child's home.

Should admission to a school not be possible due to class size requirements, transport will be provided only to the next nearest school with available places (subject to distance limits).

Appeals procedure

In the majority of cases, children are offered places at their parent's first choice of school. However, if this is not possible, parents are able to appeal against any decision taken by the Authority in respect of school admissions and transfers.

Where it has been necessary to refuse admission, parents will be notified of the reason(s) for refusal and the subsequent appeals procedure to be followed.

Appeals will be dealt with by an independent appeals committee established in accordance with current legislation and parents will be informed in writing of their rights.

Permanently Excluded Pupils

An admissions authority may refuse to comply with a parental preference for a period of two years following a second or subsequent exclusion. Parents have no right of appeal against such a decision.

School Leaving Date

The Government has introduced a single school leaving date, which is the last Friday in June in the school year in which a pupil reaches the age of 16. Pupils are unable to take up full-time employment until after this date.

Post - 16 Education

In 11 - 18 schools, pupils will have the opportunity to take 'A' level examinations and other vocational courses.

Pupils at 11 - 16 schools wanting to take such courses will have the opportunity to attend another school with a sixth form in the area or to transfer to a College of Further Education.

Parental choice of college will be agreed provided it does not lead to additional use of resources. Where the course required is available at the nearest appropriate school and a preference to attend elsewhere is agreed, that will be on the understanding that no transport is provided.

Teaching of Welsh in English - Medium Schools

Under the requirements of the National Curriculum for schools in Wales and regulations laid down by the Welsh Assembly Government, all pupils are entitled access to Welsh medium education if their parents so wish and for all pupils aged 5-16 in English medium schools Welsh as a second language is a compulsory subject.

Exemptions

Regulations exempt pupils from outside Wales who enter a school in either the 3rd or 4th year of secondary education.

Education through the Medium of Welsh

For parents who wish their children to be educated through the medium of the Welsh language, the Authority currently provides Welsh medium education for primary aged pupils at Ysgol Gymraeg Brynmawr. This school caters for demand throughout the County Borough for the year groups from nursery to year 6.

Pupils of secondary school age are catered for at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw which is situated in Pontypool. However, parents may also apply for their children to attend other Welsh medium secondary schools in other LEAs. As in the case of English medium education, parents who wish their children to attend a Welsh medium school or unit, outside the County Borough must apply in writing to the Director of Education of the Local Education Authority concerned.

Children attending Ysgol Gymraeg Brynmawr, will qualify for free transport if they live the appropriate distance from the school in accordance with Authority's normal arrangements.

Pupils attending secondary schools e.g, Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw will also be entitled to free transport, subject to the limits set out on page 11.

School and College Transport (Other than for Special Education)

Pupils Aged 5-16

General criteria for provision of free transport:-

- (a) Free transport is generally restricted to pupils who attend their catchment area schools and live the necessary distance from the school.

The distances quoted are subject to review up to the statutory limit.

Under 8 years of age - if living more than 1.5 miles from school. (Statutory limit 2 miles).

8 years of age and over - if living more than 2 miles from school. (Statutory limit 3 miles).

Distances are measured by the shortest walking route between home and school. It is not possible to arrange the routes of vehicles to pass close to the homes of all pupils. Therefore, it may be necessary to make arrangements for them to reach the nearest 'pick-up' point of the vehicle. Every effort is made to keep this distance as short as possible and it should not exceed 1 mile.

- (b) Danger Grounds - free transport may be provided where the Authority is satisfied that the route between home and school is sufficiently dangerous to warrant such provision, even though the distance is under those quoted above. The Authority will have regard to the following criteria:-
- i. that there is no bus service travelling along the route between home and school, and
 - ii. that the degree of danger involved is such that escorting parents themselves are at risk from the particular traffic situation.
- (c) Spare Seats - Pupils may be allowed to occupy spare seats on school buses on a short term basis even though they do not satisfy the criteria referred to above. Examples of this may be serious illness of a near relative e.g. mother/father. All applications will need to be accompanied by a doctor's note. No charges are currently imposed by the Authority for providing transport in such cases. Concessions may have to be withdrawn at short notice.
- (d) Other Expenses - Expenses incurred in travelling to and from school are not reimbursed.
- (e) Moving Home - Pupils who move home to an address outside the catchment area of the school attended will not normally continue to be provided with free transport to that school if the move takes place during years 7, 8 or 9 of education at that school even if the criteria stated in (a) or (b) above are met. Applications for pupils moving home in the fourth or subsequent year of attendance will be considered only if transport can be provided by the use of a season ticket or by existing services.
- (f) Private Schools - Free transport is not provided for pupils attending private schools. Parental concerns or queries in respect of transport should be referred to the school or the Education Department.

Pupils Aged 16-19

Free transport is not provided for pupils/students aged 19 and over.

For those pupils/students, aged 16-19, the Authority provides a travel grant of £213, either as a contribution towards the purchase of a season ticket or as a monetary allowance, subject to distance limits (provision is subject to annual review). A Code of Practice for pupils, students, parents, schools and transport operators is available from the Authority.

Milk

Free milk is provided for pupils attending nursery/infants in schools who have chosen to participate in the scheme for the provision of free milk. The provision of milk is, however, subject to parental agreement. Milk is also provided to pupils in residential special schools and to pupils in other schools who require milk on medical grounds.

Meals

A main meal is provided in all primary and secondary schools.

Current prices which are subject to review are:-

| | | |
|-----------|---|-------|
| Infants | - | £1.70 |
| Junior | - | £1.80 |
| Secondary | - | £1.95 |

* In all comprehensive schools there is also a buttery bar service. The charge for the main meal can be wholly remitted in certain cases. Pupils who qualify for remission of the charge but who prefer to use the buttery bar service are allowed an amount equivalent to the cost of the main meal, to be offset against the cost of the items purchased. Social Security Act 1986 requires the Council to provide free meals to pupils from families in receipt of Income Support, Income based Job Seekers Allowance, Child Tax Credit (but not Working Tax Credit) with annual income of below £14,495, guarantee element of State Pension Credit and support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. This also applies to pupils at special day schools.

Application forms are available from headteachers or from the Education Department.

Clothing Grants

Information with regard to clothing grants can be obtained from the Benefits Division of the Resources Department. Telephone number 01495 311556.

Support for Pupils with Additional Learning Needs

The Authority provides additional resources to all schools to enable them to meet the educational needs of a wide range of pupils. This means that a lot of pupils with additional learning needs can attend their local mainstream schools and be effectively included in the full range of educational opportunities available there.

The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice for Wales contains guidance on how parents, schools, Local Authorities and other agencies should deal with the identification, assessment and provision for pupils with SEN. All schools are required to appoint a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) who can provide parents with advice and guidance on both provision at their schools and also more generally, on other aspects.

All schools are also required to publish their Policy on SEN and all parents (existing or prospective) have a right to request a copy of this policy, for which no charge can be made. This document will outline the SEN provision made at the school and specifies how the school provides for pupils with SEN and how additional support and interventions are managed.

Sometimes pupils will need to be formally assessed, and this can sometimes lead on to the Authority issuing and maintaining a 'Statement' of Special Educational Need. This defines and describes the identified needs and specifies the provision required to meet those needs. A statement will also name the most appropriate school for the pupil's placement. Further information on these formal procedures can also be found within the Code of Practice and further advice and guidance can also be obtained by contacting the SENCO at the school, or by telephoning the Inclusion Service on 01495 355443 especially if the pupil is of a pre-school age.

Within the Authority, there are a number of schools which host more specialist facilities for pupils with SEN but Blaenau Gwent also has access to a number of specialist units in other Authorities through the collaborative arrangements for SEN across the region. Further details are available on request.

In addition, the Authority provides additional support and provision for 'inclusion', available to all schools for pupils in particular circumstances. For example 'vulnerable' pupils including those being 'looked after' by a Local Authority, pupils from travelling families and others with additional needs by virtue of their circumstances, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

As well as the SEN aspects above, the Authority now co-ordinates its support for 'inclusion' under one management framework which covers the areas listed below.

Vulnerable Pupils

Looked After Children: An education support project is in place to support Looked After Children attending schools within Blaenau Gwent. Three Learning Support Assistants are employed, two at Primary and one at secondary. The aim of the primary project is to support the emotional and academic development of pupils. Schools, social workers or foster carers are able to refer pupils to the project; a programme of support is then developed by the teacher and LSA to best suit individual pupils. At secondary level KS3 pupils are supported in a similar manner.

The project also offers support and guidance to GCSE pupils. The support worker takes on a mentoring role encouraging KS4 pupils to complete coursework tasks, assisting with revision schedules, liaising with subject teachers with regard to coursework deadlines and any difficulties the pupil may be experiencing.

Gypsy/Traveller pupils: Pupils from Gypsy or Traveller families are supported within school by designated support staff at three schools within the borough. The aim of this support is to ensure that pupils from Gypsy/Traveller background engage positively with education and every effort is made to ensure that pupils leave education with recognised qualifications.

Ethnic Minority Pupils: Blaenau Gwent Education Department is supported by Gwent Ethnic Minority Support Services (GEMSS) to ensure that pupils from all ethnic minority background are able to access and engage in education.

PROTEUS Project: Education Otherise than at School

This covers a range of provision including ‘home tuition’ for pupils who are unable to attend school for medical reasons. All provision for pupils other than at a school is now managed under one project called PROTEUS. This brings together a number of approaches for pupils in difficult circumstances as well as some elements of provision for pupils requiring alternative curriculum approaches especially where emotional and behavioural difficulties have also been identified.

Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service has evolved from its early roots, where officers were known as “The Boardman” or “The Kid Catcher”, into a highly skilled, experienced and valuable service, using the many talents of the professionals who now comprise the service.

The Education Welfare Service carries out the statutory duty of the LEA by supporting schools to ensure that all pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly and punctually in order for them to achieve their appropriate educational and social potential in accordance with the 1996 Education Act and 1989 Children’s Act.

The Education Welfare Service also investigates and records all incidents of child employment and child performances in the County Borough in accordance with the Children and Young Persons Employment Act (1933).

As well as the statutory duties mentioned above the Education Welfare Service will also: -

- Provide links between school, parents, young people and other agencies as and when required;
- Advise schools and parents on how to tackle welfare issues such as juvenile crime, bullying, substance, abuse, etc;
- Investigate issues relevant to the Children’s Act (1989);
- Advise Child Protection Case Conferences of relevant information regarding children and families.

In Blaenau Gwent, every comprehensive and primary school has a designated Education Welfare Officer to advise and support them. Operating the Education Welfare Service in this way enables schools, pupils and parents to build up a relationship with their designated Officer. Schools are able to request an Education Welfare Officer to make a home visit or see a child in school at any time. Parents can also request to see an Education Welfare Officer about welfare and attendance issues. Young people can also discuss problems in confidence with their Education Welfare officer if necessary.

Specific Learning Difficulties

The Authority has a central service to support pupils with identified specific learning difficulties (for example dyslexia), which will provide additional specialist tuition at the pupil’s local school.

Elective Home Education

This is where parents provide for their children's own education by making alternative arrangements, rather than sending them to a local school. The Local Authority however has to monitor all education provided in its area wherever it is provided. Parents who elect to educate their children themselves therefore must have the provision approved by the Local Authority. In order to do this, parents will need to provide the Authority with evidence of the provision and the Authority will need to ensure that it is 'suitable'.

Complaints in Relation to Special Education Needs

Schools are required to specify in their SEN Policies how parents can make formal complaints about issues to do with SEN. The policy should outline what procedures and processes will apply and what parents have to do if they have concerns about the arrangements being made to meet the needs of their children.

Psychology Service

The role of the Psychology Service is to promote the psychological welfare of children, young people, their families and schools. To do this the Service contributes to the LEA's planning and policies, provides training for school staff and works with other agencies.

The service provides direct work with individual children, their parents and teachers and assists the LEA in the assessment of Special Educational Needs. Psychologists visit schools on a regular basis but can be contacted directly by parents and other agencies as necessary.

Family Holidays During Term Time

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils for holidays during term time. Prior application should be made to the Headteacher who will take into account relevant factors such as:-

- Age of child;
- The time of year proposed for the trip;
- The nature and parental wishes;
- The overall attendance pattern of the pupil.

Where a school does not grant leave of absence and the pupil still goes on holiday, such absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Charging and Remissions Policy

Information regarding a school's charging and remissions policy can be obtained from the headteacher of the school concerned at the addresses listed on pages 19 - 22.

The Inspectorate

All schools are inspected by Estyn. Summary reports for parents, following formal inspections, are available from the school and full inspection reports are also available from the school, local libraries or by visiting Estyn's own website at: www.estyn.gov.uk/inspection_reports.asp

The National Curriculum

The National Curriculum consists of the core subjects English, Mathematics, Science, and Welsh, where it is a principal medium in the life and work of the school. The other foundation subjects are Design & Technology, Information Technology, History, Geography, a modern Foreign Language (in Comprehensive Schools only), Music, Art, Physical Education and Welsh (where it is not a core subject). In addition, all schools must make provision for Religious Education and personal, social and health education.

For each of the core and foundation subjects, attainment targets, programmes of study and assessment arrangements are specified for four key stages within the years of compulsory schooling. These stages are:-

- (i) Key Stage 1 - from 5 - 7 years of age
- (ii) Key Stage 2 - from 7 - 11 years of age
- (iii) Key Stage 3 - from 11 - 14 years of age
- (iv) Key Stage 4 - from 14 - 16 years of age

Baseline Assessment

Blaenau Gwent has an accredited Baseline Assessment Scheme. Assessments are carried out in the first 7 weeks of reception class and help teachers to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses and then plan suitable learning programmes.

Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning

Young children need a less formal curriculum providing a wide range of experiences appropriate to their age and stage of development. Nursery and reception pupils experience a curriculum based on the desirable outcomes for children's learning to a compulsory school age, produced by Awdurdod Cymwysterau Cwricwlwm Asesu Cymru (Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales) based on activities in the following areas of learning: - personal, social, language, literacy and communication, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.

Education in nursery and reception is subject to the same inspection arrangements as primary and secondary schools, but considering desirable outcomes rather than the National Curriculum.

Complaints

Recent regulations introduced under the Education Act 2002 requires the governing body of all maintained schools in Wales, including nursery schools to establish procedures for dealing with complaints from parents, pupils, members of staff, governors, members of the local community and others.

As a result it will soon be possible to obtain full details of a school's complaints procedure from the schools listed on pages 19 - 22. Non-school related complaints will continue to be made to the Interim Chief Education Officer. Further advice and guidance on the new procedures can be obtained by contacting the Education Department on 01495 311556.

School Governors

Each school has a governing body which plays an important part in the life of the school. It has a general responsibility for the conduct of the school and a range of specific responsibilities, including the school's finances and the appointment of staff.

Governing bodies are made up of local people and will include parents, persons appointed by the Local Education Authority, teachers, headteachers and may include representatives of the local business community and the Church. The number of members will depend upon the size of the school.

Information on the work of the school governing bodies and details of how to become a school governor may be obtained from the Interim Chief Education Officer, Festival House, Victoria Business Park, Ebbw Vale.

Public Examinations

School Governors have a responsibility for entering pupils for prescribed public examinations although they may delegate this function to headteachers. The suitability of the pupils for the examination concerned will be of particular relevance.

Targets for Improvement

Governing bodies are required to set targets for improvement at Key Stages 3 and 4, based on statutory assessment results and results of public examinations.

Serious Illness

In the event of an outbreak of illness of a serious nature, which may include contagious diseases, or illness of unknown cause, there will be close liaison between the school, Education Department, Environmental Health Department and the Health Authority, with a view to providing informed advice to parents at the earliest opportunity. Parents are advised to contact the school initially, if they have concerns and require information and not give credence to rumours which may be circulating within the community.

Explanation of Symbols

* Schools where pupil numbers already exceed, or are expected to exceed the number which they are intended to accommodate are indicated by an asterisk * in front of their name. The Local Education Authority will attempt to meet parents' first choice of school. If, however, parents fail to get their children into their first choice school there is no guarantee that they will be able to obtain a place at their second choice school, as that school may be filled by other people's first preferences. Parents should, therefore, give careful consideration to their choice of school in order that they do not waste their first choice on a school where it is unlikely that they will be able to gain admission for their child(ren).

✓ Nursery Unit attached.

ABERTILLERY SCHOOLS LIST

| <i>Name of School</i> | <i>Address and Telephone Number</i> | <i>PC</i> | <i>AN</i> | <i>ENR</i> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Primary Schools | | | | |
| ✓ Abertillery Primary | Newall Street, Abertillery. NP13 1EH Tel: 01495 212684 Fax: 01495 321116 | 454 | 64 | 331 |
| ✓ Blaentillery Primary | Bridge Terrace, Abertillery. NP13 1LD Tel: 01495 212412 Fax: 01495 214875 | 125 | 17 | 80 |
| ✓*Bryngwyn Primary & SEN Unit | Bryngwyn Road, Six Bells, Abertillery. NP13 2PD Tel: 01495 212678 | 236 | 33 | 194 |
| ✓ Queen Street Primary | Queen Street, Abertillery. NP13 1AP Tel: 01495 212179 Fax: 01495 212179 | 184 | 26 | 131 |
| ✓ Roseheyworth Millennium Primary | Roseheyworth Road, Abertillery. Tel: 01495 322020 Fax: 01495 321830 | 236 | 33 | 148 |
| ✓ Sofrydd Primary | Sofrydd Road, Crumlin. NP13 5DW Tel: 01495 244003 Fax: 01495 243334 | 210 | 30 | 118 |
| ✓ St. Iltyd's Primary | Llanhilleth, Abertillery NP13 2JT Tel: 01495 321718 | 237 | 33 | 178 |

Comprehensive Schools (AGE RANGE 11 – 16 YEARS)

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| * Abertillery Comprehensive & SEN Unit | Alma Street, Abertillery. NP13 1YL Tel: 01495 217121 Fax: 01495 211545 | 919 | 184 | 805 |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|

BRYNMAWR AND NANTYGLO SCHOOLS LIST

| <i>Name of School</i> | <i>Address and Telephone Number</i> | <i>PC</i> | <i>AN</i> | <i>ENR</i> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Primary Schools | | | | |
| ✓ Blaenycwm Primary | Blaenafon Road, Brynmawr. NP23 4BR Tel: 01495 313524 Fax: 01495 313293 | 359 | 51 | 227 |
| ✓ Brynmawr RC Primary | Catholic Road, Brynmawr. NP23 4EF Tel: 01495 310596 Fax: 01495 310596 | 135 | 19 | 144 |
| ✓ Coed y Garn Primary | Parrot Row, Blaina NP13 3AH Tel: 01495 290044 Fax: 01495 293039 | 300 | 42 | 223 |

PC – Pupil Capacity **AN** – Admission Number **ENR** - Expected Number on Roll September 2008

BRYNMAWR AND NANTYGLO SCHOOLS LIST (Cont.)

| <i>Name of School</i> | <i>Address and Telephone Number</i> | <i>PC</i> | <i>AN</i> | <i>ENR</i> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| ✓*St. Mary's Church-in-Wales Primary | Intermediate Road, Brynmawr. NP23 4SE Tel: 01495 310525 Fax: 01495 313694 | 180 | 25 | 202 |
| ✓ Ysgol Gymraeg Brynmawr | King Street, Brynmawr. NP23 4RG Tel: 01495 310735 Fax: 01495 313203 | 358 | 51 | 266 |
| ✓ Ystruth Primary & SEN Unit | East Pentwyn, Blaina. NP13 3XG Tel: 01495 290955 Fax: 01495 290955 | 314 | 44 | 298 |

Comprehensive Schools (AGE RANGE 11 - 18 YEARS)

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|-----|
| * Brynmawr Comprehensive Foundation | Intermediate Road, Brynmawr. NP23 4XT Tel: 01495 310527 Fax: 01495 311944 | 1022 | 166 | 934 |
| Nantyglo Comprehensive & SEN Unit | Pond Road, Brynmawr, NP23 4WX Tel: 01495 310776 Fax: 01495 313315 | 891 | 161 | 443 |

EBBW VALE SCHOOLS LIST

| <i>Name of School</i> | <i>Address and Telephone Number</i> | <i>PC</i> | <i>AN</i> | <i>ENR</i> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| ✓ All Saints RC Primary | Heol-yr-Ysgol, Ebbw Vale. NP23 7QP Tel: 01495 303631 Fax: 01495 350024 | 134 | 19 | 136 |
| ✓ Beaufort Hill Primary | Beaufort, Ebbw Vale. NP13 QG Tel: 01495 302624 Fax: 01495 302624 | 198 | 28 | 223 |
| ✓*Briery Hill Primary | Woodside Crescent, Ebbw Vale. NP23 6BY Tel: 01495 304292 Fax: 01495 304292 | 161 | 23 | 99 |
| ✓ Cwm Primary | Canning Street, Cwm, Ebbw Vale. NP13 6RD Tel: 01495 370437 | 240 | 34 | 184 |
| ✓ Garnlydan Primary | Commonwealth Road, Garnlydan, Ebbw Vale. NP23 5ER Tel: 01495 357737 | 55 | 7 | 28 |
| ✓*Glyncoed Primary & SEN Unit | Badminton Grove, Ebbw Vale. NP23 5UL Tel: 01495 302402 Fax: 01495 302402 | 296 | 42 | 265 |

PC – Pupil Capacity **AN** – Admission Number **ENR** - Expected Number on Roll September 2008

EBBW VALE SCHOOLS LIST (cont.)

| <i>Name of School</i> | <i>Address and Telephone Number</i> | <i>PC</i> | <i>AN</i> | <i>ENR</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| ✓ Pontygof Primary | Pontygof, Ebbw Vale. NP23 5AZ Tel: 01495 303210 | 144 | 20 | 124 |
| ✓ Rhos y Fedwen Primary | Honeyfield Road, Rassau, Ebbw Vale. NP23 5TA Tel: 01495 302465 Fax: 01495 302465 | 236 | 33 | 112 |
| ✓ Waunlwyd Primary | Hillside Terrace, Waunlwyd. NP23 6TY Tel: 01495 370235 Fax: 01495 370235 | 182 | 26 | 134 |
| ✓ Willowtown Primary & SEN Unit | Brynheulog Street, Ebbw Vale. NP23 6NJ Tel: 01495 302436 Fax: 01495 307012 | 390 | 55 | 296 |

Comprehensive Schools

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| * Ebbw Vale Comprehensive (AGE RANGE 11-18 YEARS) | Waun-y-Pound Road, Ebbw Vale. NP23 6LE Tel: 01495 303409 Fax: 01495 304857 | 978 | 171 | 583 |
| Glyncloed Comprehensive (AGE RANGE 11-16 YEARS) | Badminton Grove, Ebbw Vale. NP23 5UW Tel: 01495 303216 Fax: 01495 307829 | 944 | 189 | 795 |

Special Schools

| | | | | |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|
| Penycwm | Beaufort Hill, Ebbw Vale. Tel: 01495 304031 Fax: 01495 302448 | 80 | - | - |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|

TREDEGAR SCHOOLS LIST

| <i>Name of School</i> | <i>Address and Telephone Number</i> | <i>PC</i> | <i>AN</i> | <i>ENR</i> |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Primary Schools | | | | |
| ✓ Brynbach Primary | Merthyr Road, Tredegar. NP22 3AY Tel: 01495 722569 Fax: 01495 722569 | 236 | 33 | 203 |
| ✓ Deighton Primary | Stockton Way, Tredegar. NP22 3EF Tel: 01495 722567 Fax: 01495 722567 | 352 | 50 | 227 |
| ✓ Georgetown Primary | Oakfield Road, Tredegar. NP22 4LJ Tel: 01495 717341 Fax: 01495 717341 | 393 | 56 | 324 |
| ✓ Glanhwy Primary & SEN Unit | Coach Bach, Tredegar. NP22 4RW Tel: 01495 722312 Fax: 01495 722318 | 448 | 34 | 209 |

PC – Pupil Capacity **AN** – Admission Number **ENR** - Expected Number on Roll September 2008

TREDEGAR SCHOOLS LIST (cont.)

| <i>Name of School</i> | <i>Address and Telephone Number</i> | <i>PC</i> | <i>AN</i> | <i>ENR</i> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| ✓ St. Joseph's RC Primary | Ashvale, Dukestown, Tredegar. NP22 3QT Tel: 01495 722899 Fax: 01495 725134 | 96 | 13 | 72 |

Comprehensive Schools

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|-----|
| Tredegar Comprehensive (AGE RANGE 11-18 YEARS) | Stable Lane, Tredegar. NP22 4BH Tel: 01495 723551 Fax: 01495 725686 | 1106 | 193 | 935 |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|-----|

PC – Pupil Capacity **AN** – Admission Number **ENR** - Expected Number on Roll September 2008

QUESTIONNAIRE

to be completed and returned by parents

The Authority is continuing to improve its services to the people of Blaenau Gwent.

Please take a few minutes to answer this brief questionnaire and return to:

**Schools Services Division
Central Services
Barleyfield Ind Est
Brynmawr
NP23 4YF**

1. Is this booklet easy to understand?

YES

NO

2. Does this booklet help you make an informed decision on your child's education?

YES

NO

3. Do you find this booklet is useful in providing information about the Education Authority?

YES

NO

4. Do you think the Authority's provision of Welsh Medium Education is adequate?

YES

NO

5. Would you take advantage of Welsh Medium Education if the service was provided locally?

YES

NO

6. Please provide any other comments and/or suggestions for improvement below
(continue on a separate sheet if necessary).
