



Policy Review

Darnhall Primary School Admissions Policy

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1 School admission arrangements

Under section 90 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, relevant parents and other bodies have the right to object to the Schools Adjudicator about admission arrangements after the arrangements have been determined.

Admission authorities must determine their arrangements by 15 April in the year proceeding the admission year, i.e. before they take effect.

In accordance with the Department for Education Regulations, the admission arrangements for Cheshire West and Chester community and voluntary controlled schools were determined on 15 April 2015.

1.1 Department for Education

Copies of the School Admissions Code are available on the [Department for Education](#) website or by order from TSO, PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN.

1.2 September 2024 applications

You can apply online for a September 2024 reception class or year seven school place from October 2023. The schools' PAN was reduced to 45 from September 2020 and increased to 50 from September 2023.

1.3 September 2024 applications

If you have not yet applied for a place in reception or year seven for September 2024, you will need to contact Cheshire West and Chester Admissions team. If you wish to apply for a place at any other time after September you will need to speak to the school direct to discuss the in-year school transfer process and complete the in-year transfer application form. The schools' PAN is currently 60 in Years 2 to 6 and 50 in Reception & Year 1, we are now working at a new PAN of 50 for all new in year admissions.

2 School transport

Following consultation there are changes to the Home to School Transport policy which may affect your eligibility for school transport.

Urgent update at 20 July 2015

Cabinet have agreed to **reinstate the travel subsidy for SEN post 16 and SEN 0-4 year olds**. All accompanying documents are in the process of being amended to reflect the decision.

2.1 School admissions process and transport

Before applying for a school place, we urge you to consider how you will transport your child to school, taking into account any potential transport costs. Please be advised that school admissions and school transport policies are prescribed through different pieces of legislation. School admission applications are calculated using a straight line distance.

School transport applications are assessed using an in-house GIS mapping system that measures the nearest available walking route. From September 2015 travel assistance will only be offered to pupils attending their nearest school subject to the distance criteria. For further information on how our policies are administered, please read the information below or call 0300 123 7039 and ask to speak to a member of the transport team.

The Council has recently undertaken a consultation exercise on a number of proposed changes to its home to school transport policies. These changes are now being implemented. For a summary of the agreed changes please follow the link below:

2.2 Changes to transport policies

Under 16 school transport – catchment school

For new applicants from September 2015, eligibility for free transport will be based only on distance (over the statutory walking distance) from home to the nearest qualifying school

2.3 Under 16 school transport - statutory walking distance

From September 2015, any pupils transferring into school years 4, 5 and 6 (age eight onwards) to a new school will only be offered free transport if their nearest qualifying school is over the three miles statutory walking distance from their home address. (For those children in receipt of free transport under the existing policy up to August 2015, a protection will apply and they will continue to receive the same level of support up to the end of year 6).

3 Medical needs

From September 2014 an annual charge of £660 will be applied for pupils of statutory school age with medical needs not attending their nearest qualifying school (or an apportioned amount if it is a short term arrangement). From September 2015 the annual charge will increase to £880. The Director of Children and Young People's Services will retain the discretion to consider cases on an exceptional basis. For those pupils with medical needs attending their nearest qualifying school that is under the statutory walking distance but due to disability or mobility they are unable to walk there in reasonable safety, even when accompanied, free transport will be provided.

4 Independent Travel Training

A suitability assessment for Independent Travel Training (ITT) as part of the annual SEN statement review (or replacement review process as we move to Education Health and Care plans) has been introduced for all children and young people from school year 6 onwards who have special educational needs and are entitled to transport provision by the Council. The assessment will determine the level of ITT to be offered to the individual. The Council remains committed to offering training towards full and independent travel for individuals assessed as being capable of doing so. Children in care who are eligible for local authority transport provision will also be assessed on an annual basis and ITT will be offered on the basis outlined above.

4.1 Under 16 school transport – increase to spare seat charges

From September 2014, an annual charge of £660 will be implemented for spare seats. This charge will increase to £880 in September 2015.

5 In year admissions

Applications for in year school transfers once submitted will go directly to the school for them to process.

5.1 Key Factors for In Year Admissions

There are two main reasons why you might be applying for a school place other than at the time of the normal admission rounds;

- Moving house
- Unhappy with your child's current school

Whatever the reason for the transferring to a different school; moving your child is a serious step to take and it is important to consider whether the transfer is really the best option.

If you are experiencing problems at your child's current school, moving to a new school may not mean that a problem is resolved. Many things that worry parents and pupils can be sorted out without the need to move and it is always better to try and sort problems out rather than simply walking away from them. It is recommended that you talk to your child and staff at the current school to discuss your concerns and look to resolve outstanding issues.

If a move of school is unavoidable e.g. due to a house move, it is **strongly advised** that you discuss this with both the current school and the new school that you are hoping to secure a place at. This is especially important once pupils reach years 10 and 11, when it is possible that their preferred options may not be available at a new school.

You will need to consider how to get your child to school when making your preferences. You are responsible for getting your child to school. If your child gets a place at a school that is distant from your home address, this could mean that you pay the transport costs.

5.2 What do I do next?

- Contact the Admissions Team by phoning 0300 123 7039, or school's Admin by phoning 01606 593315 to see which schools or if this school currently have / has vacancies. Please be aware that notification of a vacancy is not a guarantee that this place will still be available when you apply to the school/academy.

- Complete the [e-form](#). Once submitted this will be sent to the school/academy for them to process. The contact details of all schools/academies can be found in the 'Starting School' or 'Transferring to Secondary School' booklets which are on this website or you can ring 0300 123 7039 for information.
- You will be required to complete a form for each child for each of the school you are interested in. You are strongly advised to take into consideration when making your preferences as to how you intend to get your child to school. Information on eligibility for transport can be obtained at www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/schooltransport or by ringing 0300 123 7039.

5.3 How will the school process my form?

- If they have a vacancy the school will contact you to confirm a start date and will confirm in writing the offer of the place plus the start date you have agreed within five days. Please note: It is expected that you will take up the place on the date agreed with the school. Failure to do so may result in the offer being withdrawn.
- Once you have accepted the place offered the school will inform your child's current school of the offer and the agreed start date. Your child should continue to attend their current school until the day before the agreed start date at the other school.
- If they do not have a vacancy, because they are full in that year group, the school will confirm in writing within five days the reason why they cannot admit your child, and in addition they will inform you of your legal right to appeal against this decision and provide details of how to appeal.

5.4 What happens if my preferred school is full?

- You can appeal for any of the schools where you have been unsuccessful.
- You can check with the school to see if they hold a waiting list and ask for your child to be put on that list. Please be aware that waiting lists for in year applications for community and voluntary controlled schools will not be held from 1 September 2013 and beyond.
- You can either contact the school regularly or contact the Council to see if any vacancies have become available at the schools where you were unsuccessful.
- You can contact the Council again to see which other schools have vacancies and make further applications to these schools
- In the event that you are unsuccessful in obtaining any of your preferences please [contact the School Admissions Team](#).

6 Appeals

It is not always possible to offer your child a place in your preferred school, however, you can appeal the decision.

6.1 Appeals guidance

Choosing your child's primary or secondary school can be a difficult decision for you to make. The law does not give you a choice of school but it allows you to 'express a preference'. In Cheshire West and Chester, most parents and carers get a place for their child the school they want. However, occasionally demand is higher than there are places available; therefore, some parents are refused a place for their child. If this happens you have a legal right to appeal.

You cannot appeal unless you have made an application for a school place and have been notified in writing of the reason why your child could not be admitted into the relevant year group.

You may appeal for each school at which a place has been refused and this must be in writing. Each appeal will be considered at separate hearings and you will need to complete a separate appeal form for each school and each child.

6.2 Infant class size appeals

Statutory limits on class sizes mean that, subject to certain limited exceptions, infant classes of five, six and seven year olds may not contain more than 30 pupils with a single qualified teacher. Appeals against decisions not to admit further pupils will only be considered on extremely limited grounds.

Additional information which is very important for you to read and consider before submitting your appeal

Infant class sizes

Limitations of Independent Admission Appeal Panels

- Where a child has been refused admission to a school on infant class size prejudice ground, an appeal panel can only offer a place to a child where it is satisfied that either:
- The admission of additional children would not breach the infant class size limit
- The admissions arrangements did not comply with admissions law or were not correctly and impartially applied and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied or had been correctly and impartially applied
- The decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

In relation to point number two it is not enough to say that there has been a mistake in implementing the school's admission arrangements. The appeal panel can only uphold the appeal in cases where

it is clear that the child would have been offered a place if the admission arrangements had been properly implemented or were not contrary to mandatory provisions in the School Admissions Code and the SSFA 1998.

In relation to point three, the appeal panel must consider whether admission authority's decision was one which a reasonable authority would have made in the circumstances of the case. In order for an appeal panel to determine that the decision to refuse was unreasonable, it will need to be satisfied that the decision to refuse to admit the particular child was perverse in the light of the admission arrangements i.e. 'it was beyond the range of responses open to a reasonable decision maker' or 'decision which is so outrageous in its defiance of logic or of accepted moral standards that no sensible person who had applied his mind to the question could have arrived at it'.

In view of these limitations, parents have a very limited chance of success in relation to infant class size appeals.

6.3 Appealing and alternative schools

Appealing for a community or voluntary controlled school

- If you decide to appeal you are strongly advised to seek a place at an alternative school in case your appeal is unsuccessful. Securing a place at an alternative school will not prejudice your right of appeal for any other school.
- Information on current vacancies can be obtained by:
- telephoning the Authority on 0300 123 7039
- Please note: Cheshire West and Chester are not the admissions authority for Voluntary Aided, Foundation Schools and Academies therefore you will need to contact the school or academy directly to enquire how to appeal.

6.4 Where to find help

- Address: School Admissions, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Wyvern House, The Drummer, Winsford, CW7 1AH
- Telephone: 0300 123 7039
- Fax: 01606 288793

This policy is in line with the agreed Cheshire West and Chester Admissions arrangements as Darnhall Primary School is a maintained school. The policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the Headteacher. www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/admissions