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EDUCATING YOUR CHILD

Starting school, and later moving on to high school, are two of the most important events in any child's life. At those times, parents are naturally concerned to do the best for their children, but many feel uncertain about what to do. Our aim is to make it as easy as possible for parents to understand the procedures involved.

Most parents prefer their children to go to the local school and a place can nearly always be found for them without difficulty. Sometimes, however, parents prefer a school outside their own area but may find that all the places have to be allocated to local children. Inevitably, therefore, some parents have to be disappointed.

This booklet contains all the information parents need to understand the arrangements for the admission of children to Herefordshire schools. It goes into a lot of detail to explain the rules and procedures the Council has to follow to ensure that the system works as fairly as possible. The rules and procedures have been agreed by the Local Admissions Forum through which the Council, Diocesan Education Authorities, Church schools and community schools work closely together to produce the best possible arrangements for parents. The rules and procedures are particularly important when more parents apply for a particular school than there are places available.

In the booklet, you will find details about -

- How the County's admission arrangements work, the admissions timetable for the 2005/2006 school year and the options that are open to you. This will be important for parents whose child will be starting school in September 2005 because of the new co-ordinated primary admission scheme, which will allow parents to express 2 preferences.
- Details of all maintained schools in the County, including the number of children that can be admitted to each primary school and high school in the 2005/2006 school year.
- Information about the Church of England and Roman Catholic aided schools and what you have to do to apply if you would like your child to attend one.
- Information about nursery education and special education
- Information about school and college transport
- Other issues to do with schools – school uniform requirements and how parents can discuss concerns with individual schools

Staff in the Education Directorate do all that they can to offer a friendly and efficient service to parents. Short leaflets are also provided to highlight the most important points parents need to bear in mind when they apply for a place in a primary or secondary school. Please get in touch with us if you need any help or advice, using the contact points shown inside the front cover of this booklet.

EDDIE ORAM
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

September 2004

1: ABOUT THE EDUCATION SERVICE

Herefordshire has 102 maintained schools - 84 primary, 14 high (all of which are comprehensive day schools for both boys and girls), and 4 special schools, which are also for boys and girls. A full list of maintained schools in Herefordshire is given in Appendix 4 at the back of this booklet.

Admissions to community and voluntary controlled schools are on a non-selective basis. All such schools have defined catchment areas. Different admission arrangements apply to voluntary aided schools where the Governing Bodies make the decisions.

- **PRIMARY SCHOOLS** (age range 4-11 years or 4-7 years)
Of the 84 primary schools, 41 are community, 40 Church of England (20 Aided and 20 Controlled) and 3 Roman Catholic (all Aided). At Leominster and Hunderton (Hereford), primary education is provided by separate infants and junior schools with transfer between them at age 7. 12 of the primary schools have nursery classes for 3 and 4 year olds.
- **HIGH SCHOOLS** (age ranges 11-16 or 11-18)
12 high schools are community schools, while 2 are voluntary aided (1 Church of England, 1 Roman Catholic). The high schools in Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross have their own Sixth Forms. At the other 10 high schools, the pupils generally move at 16+ to a Sixth Form College or to one of the further education colleges.
- **SPECIAL SCHOOLS**
There are 4 special schools for children with Statements of special education needs (SEN). Admissions are arranged in consultation with the parents.

2: EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

2.1 Education For 3 And 4-Year Olds

Local Education Authorities (LEAs) are required to arrange **half-time** education (i.e. 5 half-day sessions per week of 2½ hours each) for 3 and 4 year olds whose parents would like their children to attend. From April 2004, all 3 year olds will be included on the same basis from the term **after** their 3rd birthday. Children with April birthdays will be admitted in the September (following their 3rd birthday).

A leaflet entitled “Guide to Early Years Education for 3 and 4 Year Olds” is available from the Early Years Development & Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) Childcare Information Service, on request.

Early years education in Herefordshire is provided through a mixture of LEA, private, independent and voluntary settings, which include -

- LEA nursery classes attached to 13 primary schools

- voluntary playgroups

- private nurseries

- LEA reception classes in primary schools (in the school year of the child's 5th birthday only - see sections 4.1 and 4.2 below)

- independent schools

2.2 What Rights Do Parents Have?

Parents have a right to 5 half-day **education places** per week for their 4 year olds and 3 year olds in the term after their 3rd birthday. The places are free of charge provided they have been approved through the Herefordshire EYDCP. Parents are not obliged to take up such places if they do not wish their children to attend.

Parents do **not** have a right to a place in any particular setting. Nor can parents insist on any particular 'pick and mix' arrangement to make up the 5 days (e.g., some half-days in one setting and others elsewhere), **if** that does not fit the way in which the relevant settings work. All settings are allowed to have an admissions policy, and they can also decide the minimum and maximum levels of attendance per week for any child they agree to admit. Parents wanting more than the 5 x 2½ hour education sessions available (for example, full day care) will have to pay for the extra provision where it is available.

Any parent having difficulty obtaining their free provision for 5 half-day education sessions, or the level of provision to suit their needs on a paying basis, should contact the Childcare Information Service (see Section 2.6 below)

2.3 LEA Nursery Classes

The Council maintains nursery classes for pupils aged 3 or 4 years in the following 13 primary schools-

Schools with nursery classes:

Bromyard, St. Peter's Primary School	01885 483237
Hereford, Broadlands Primary School	01432 266772
Hereford, Hunderton Infants' School	01432 274653
Hereford, Lord Scudamore Primary School	01432 273951
Hereford, Marlbrook Primary School	01432 266643
Hereford, St. Martin's Primary School	01432 273633
Kingstone and Thruxton Primary School	01981 250338
Kington Primary School	01544 230363
Ledbury Primary School	01531 632940
Leominster Infants' School	01568 612029
Ross-on-Wye, Ashfield Park Primary School	01989 562738
Weobley Primary School	01544 318273
Withington Primary School	01432 850289

2.4 How Do You Apply For A Place In A Nursery Class At A Primary School?

Each of the nursery classes, at 13 primary schools, serves quite a wide catchment area. The places available are allocated on a half time basis for either the morning or afternoon sessions on all days the nursery class is open. Acceptance of a place in an LEA Nursery is for the full 5 half days of each school week, so that the children can experience the full range of learning activities. However, there can be a flexible induction period for 3 year olds in the first half term, in negotiation with the school, whereby a child may attend for fewer than 5 sessions. This arrangement may be extended to the end of the first term in exceptional circumstances.

You can apply for a place in a nursery class by contacting the headteacher of the school in which it is based. It is advisable to apply as soon as possible **after** your child's 2nd birthday. Some priority is given to children with special needs or according to family circumstances.

It should be noted that admission to a nursery class is quite separate from admission to the main school. Consequently:

- i) there is no guarantee that a child in a nursery class will have a place in the reception class of the same school, especially since nursery classes serve an area that extends beyond the catchment area of the school;
- ii) the school cannot insist that nursery children remain at the school beyond the age of five.

2.5 Primary School Reception Classes

Details of when 4 year olds can be admitted into primary school reception classes are set out in sections 4.1 to 4.4 below.

2.6 Childcare Information Service

The EYDCP provides a Childcare Information Service, the C.I.S., which works to ensure that a comprehensive and accurate record of information is available to parents and carers about childminders, playgroups, nursery education, crèches, parent and toddler groups, before and after school clubs and services available for parents and children throughout the County of Hereford. The service is provided both in person at the Education and Conference Centre, Blackfriars Street, Hereford, and by telephone on 01432 261681.

2.7 Sure Start Area

A national programme called SureStart aims to improve the health and wellbeing of families and children before and from birth so that they flourish at home and when they go to school. In Herefordshire, the Sure Start area covers Leominster and Kington towns and much of the rural area between the two. A mini SureStart programme is also running through voluntary organisations working in partnership with health, social services and education. The programmes aim to reduce child poverty and social exclusion by pioneering new ways of working to improve and sustain service. SureStart can be contacted at the “Info In Herefordshire” Offices in Leominster by phone on 01432 383340 or in Bromyard on 01885 488495.

2.8 Children’s Centres

Three Children’s Centres will be established in Herefordshire. The services will encompass the renaming of Greencroft Early Excellence Centre, the local SureStart programme in Leominster and Kington (see above) and services based around the Hollybush/Hunderton network (ie Hunderton Primary, Hollybush Family Centre and Hunderton Neighbourhood Nursery).

The intention is to offer a seamless service for parents and carers of children 0-4, incorporating integrated care and education, health services, family support and a base for childminders.

This integrated approach that will be easily accessible to families and lie at the centre of their communities, will provide holistic approach for children’s development, support to families with young children and will facilitate the return to training and work for those parents who wish it.

3. GENERAL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRIMARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS

This short Chapter explains basic terminology and general rules affecting primary schools. Chapters 4 and 5 explain how the specific admissions arrangements work for primary and secondary schools, and include the timetable for entry to schools in September 2005.

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS TO SCHOOLS

- **Catchment Areas**

Each community and voluntary controlled school serves a defined catchment area. That is also the case for most voluntary aided schools, although they also have a commitment to genuine church applicants for which details can be found in their school prospectus. Children whose parents apply on time are given priority for a place at the school serving their ordinary place of residence unless their parents ask for a place at a school in another area. The procedure for expressing a preference is described in chapter 4 (primary schools) and chapter 5 (high schools). **All parents must express a preference.** Catchment areas are kept under review and may be changed from time to time. Changes are made only after careful review and consultation with parents, schools and local communities.

- **Ordinary Place of Residence**

A child's ordinary place of residence is the address at which the child normally lives. **There are some rules which apply when a child moves to a different address.** Those rules may affect a child's entitlement for school admission. Please contact the Pupil Admissions Office if you have any queries about changes of address.

- **Change of Home Address**

If you move house, your child may remain at the school at which they are registered, should you so wish, but you may not be eligible for free transport if the move is to a property outside the catchment area.

- **Published Admission Numbers (PAN)**

Each school has an admissions number, which is the number of pupils that the school can admit each year. **Published admission numbers** for each school are shown in Appendix 4. The admissions number will be taken into account by the Council and the Governing Body of a voluntary aided school when considering applications from parents. Some applications will be turned down if the total number of applications is greater than the published admission number. In such circumstances, parents have a right of appeal.

- **Definition Of 'Sibling'**

Paragraph 6.1 on page 16 sets out the Council's oversubscription policy and category 4 defines the brother/sister qualification. To qualify under this category a child must have a brother or sister at the preferred school both at the time of application and when the younger sibling is due to start. Qualification under this category is not only natural brothers and sisters but also stepbrothers/stepsisters and children legally adopted as well. Those applications which involve partners' children or foster children do not qualify. However, the Council will consider applications for partners and foster children under category 4 of the oversubscription policy if there are special circumstances to maintain the importance of daily family life.

- **Class Size Regulations for Key Stage 1 Pupils (ages 4-7)**

The law requires pupils aged 4-7 generally to be in classes no larger than 30 pupils. However, the law on class size makes sensible allowance for the entry of an additional child in certain circumstances where not to admit the child would be prejudicial to his or her interests ('excepted pupils'). Such circumstances include:

- * where a child moves into an area outside the normal admissions round and there is no other school that would provide suitable education within a reasonable distance of his or her home.
- * where the child receives a Statement of special educational needs naming the school, or a pupil with a Statement naming that school moves into the area, in each case outside the normal admissions round.
- * where a pupil is initially refused admission to a school but is subsequently offered a place there for one of two reasons: the person making the original decision recognises that an error was made in implementing the school's admission arrangements; or an admission appeal panel decides that an error has been made or that the Council or the Governing Body of a voluntary aided school had acted unreasonably in refusing to admit the child to the school.
- * where a child who is normally educated in a special school, or in a special education centre in a primary school, spends part of the school week in an infants class of a primary school.

In the first three of these cases, the class may be above 30, but only for the remainder of that school year.

- **Parental Interviews**

Parents should note that interviews are not part of the admissions process, though it is sensible for parents to visit the school before deciding whether or not to apply.

4: ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

4.1 At What Age Can Your Child Start Primary School?

Children reach compulsory school age at the beginning of the term **following their 5th birthday**. In Herefordshire, however, most children start school at least a term earlier than the law requires. The Council's **standard admissions policy** entitles parents to places for their children, in one of the Council's maintained schools, according to the date of their child's 5th birthday, as follows -

in the Autumn term if 5 between 1st September and 31st December inclusive
in the Spring term if 5 between 1st January and 30th April inclusive
in the Summer term if 5 between 1st May and 31st August inclusive

The autumn term begins after the summer holidays, the spring term after the Christmas and New Year holidays, and the summer term after the Easter holidays.

4.2 Can Schools Let My Child Start Earlier?

If your child has his or her 5th birthday between 1st January and 31st August, your school might allow your child to start earlier. Each school makes its own decision, after considering whether or not they are able to provide the accommodation, staffing, curriculum and care arrangements suited to the needs of the age group. Parents are not entitled to such arrangements for their children. Nor are parents obliged to take up places any earlier than they would wish (see paragraph 4.3 below). **Whatever the arrangements that schools make, allocation of places to individual children will be decided according to the procedures set out in paragraphs 4.5 to 4.10 below.**

You will need to check with the school you would like your child to attend, to see what their admissions arrangements are **for pupils with 5th birthdays on or after 1st January**. Some schools may decide to admit as set out in the Council's **standard admissions policy**. Other schools may allow all children who become 5 during the school year to start in September. Some schools may allow the older children to start in September, with the rest starting in January. Many schools provide for children to attend part-time at first. Any period of part-time attendance could vary according to the circumstances at each school and perhaps also according to the age of the child.

(For details about Early Years education for 3 year olds and younger 4 year olds, please see Section 2)

4.3 Can Parents Keep Their Children Out Of School Until They Are 5?

Parents are not obliged to take up places for their children any earlier than the law requires (i.e. currently from the term following the 5th birthday). Schools cannot require children to start sooner than parents wish. If you do wish to defer taking up a place for your child, you are strongly advised to discuss the matter first with the school or with the Pupil Admissions Office, and you must apply by the closing date for applications (14th January 2005). Parents who have applied for and been allocated a place for a particular school have every right to wait until the term specified in the Council's standard admissions policy (see paragraph 4.1 above) or until compulsory school age. They can do so **without risking the place allocated to their child**, though there will be complications for pupils with birthdays between 1st May and 31st August, as the term for compulsory admission would be in September at the start of the following school year. In the case of a summer born child therefore the admission would normally be directly into Year 1 (i.e. missing the reception class) in order to keep the child in his/her correct year group. In this respect a child would normally be placed directly into Year 1 and therefore would have missed the reception class.

4.4 What If Your Child Is 5 Between 1st September And 31st December?

The Council does not allow schools to admit children before the school year in which they become 5. Children whose 5th birthday occurs between 1st September and 31st December, therefore, could **not** start school until the autumn term in which they become 5. Such children may instead go to one of the nursery units listed at paragraph 2.3 of this booklet, if there are places available, in the period before they are due to start school. They may also attend those playgroups, private nurseries, and independent schools included in the LEA's Directory of Early Years' providers.

4.5 Can I Apply For A Place At Any Primary School?

You may apply for a place at any primary school maintained by Herefordshire Council. For the school year commencing September 2005, you will be able to express two preferences, in ranked order, on the common application form PA1.

4.6 How do you apply for a place at a Primary School?

As previously stated, children who will commence school in the reception year after September 2005, the parents will be given the opportunity to express two individual preferences for primary schools of their choice. This position only relates to applications for the initial allocation process for forms received by 14th January 2005, or by September 2005 which will be dealt with as late applications.

Parents should give or send new applications to the Admissions Office of the LEA, for their highest preferred school, using the form (PA1) available from the school or from the Pupil Admissions Office. Applications are required from all parents, including parents whose preference will be for the school provided for the child's home address.

It is advisable to **apply as soon as your child is 3 years old** and no later than the date indicated in paragraph 4.8. **Late applications are always considered, though it might not be possible to allocate a place in the school you prefer, if it is over-subscribed, even if the school is the one provided for your home address.**

It would be very helpful if you would let the headteacher or the Pupil Admissions Office know if you are withdrawing your application for any reason. **You should notify the Pupil Admissions Office of a change of address immediately.**

4.7 When Are Decisions Made?

Community, Voluntary Controlled and Voluntary Aided Primary Schools

Places in reception classes in community, voluntary controlled and voluntary aided schools are allocated on the basis of applications received by the school or by the Pupil Admissions Office on or before:

14th January 2005 for admissions in school year September 2005 to August 2006

That date applies for all admissions during that school year, **including** children who might not be entitled to start school until January 2006 or April 2006. Parents who do not wish their children to start until the statutory school age (i.e. the term **after** the 5th birthday) should discuss their intentions with the school, and must also apply for a school place by the date above, so that their application can be considered.

All offers of places, including voluntary aided schools, will be made by the Pupil Admissions Office on **Monday, 21st March 2005**.

4.8 What Happens If I Apply After The Closing Date Of 14th January 2005?

Applications received after 14 January 2005 will be allocated to the preferred school on the understanding that admissions do not exceed the published admission number or conflict with the requirement not to exceed 30 pupils in a key stage one class. When considering the late application the Council or the relevant Voluntary Aided School will have regard to the reason for the delay in applying together with the distance to the nearest alternative school. However, the formal offer date for primary places will be 21st March 2005, so late applications received between 14th January and 1st March 2005, if the reasons are acceptable, will be able to be considered in the formal application process.

4.9 What Happens If You Are Moving Into A New Area and Your Child Is Beyond Reception Age?

When families with children of school age move into a new area, and wish to transfer their children to a different school, parents should at the earliest opportunity either ask at schools in the area or contact the Pupil Admissions Office.

Even if parents apply for the school provided for the child's home address, a place cannot be guaranteed if the year group is overcrowded. In these situations the Council may designate an alternative primary school or the parents may decide to use the appeal process.

4.10 How Many Children May Be Admitted To Each Primary School?

The Council has a duty to ensure the provision of efficient education and the efficient use of resources. Schools cannot be allowed to become overcrowded. The number of pupils that may be admitted to a school in the relevant year group is known as the **Published Admission Number (PAN)**. Details for each school are given in Appendix 4.

The law on Key Stage 1 class size requires the Council and the Governing Bodies of voluntary aided schools to adjust standard admission numbers so that they are suitable for the class size limit of 30 pupils per class. The new law also introduces different arrangements for the consideration of parental appeals where the child concerned is in a relevant age group, to prevent the appeals panel from allowing appeals that would cause the class size limit to be exceeded.

For further details about the allocation of places, the appeals procedure and transport arrangements which might affect your decisions, you should refer to chapters 6 and 7 of this booklet.

5: TRANSFER TO HIGH SCHOOLS

Children are normally admitted to high school at the beginning of the school year following their 11th birthday. In very exceptional cases, early or late admission is possible, where it is agreed between the school, the parents and the Council that this would be in the best interests of the child. However, it is rarely advisable for a child to transfer early to high school. When making its decision the Council would have regard to the child's physical, mental and psychological well being before agreeing to the request.

5.1 When And How Should You Apply For A Place In A High School

During the child's last year in primary school (i.e. Year 6) the following action is taken:

Parents will be invited to indicate **3 preferences** on the common application form (SA1). Parents will be able to give reasons for their preferences and will also be asked to name their chosen schools in order of preference.

Early September The Pupil Admissions Office sends parents, via the child's current school:

- ❖ Information about the school provided for the child's home address
- ❖ The official application form (SA1)

29 October 2004 Closing date for parents to return the application form to the Pupil Admissions Office, via the child's current school. Applications are needed from all parents, **including** those parents who want their catchment school or The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat and St Mary's R C high schools. This form will also be used by parents living in Herefordshire seeking a school in another Council area. Herefordshire has an agreement that the Herefordshire closing date of 29th October 2004 will also be acceptable in Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Powys, Shropshire and Worcestershire even if their closing dates are different.

1 March 2005 This is the "**national offer day**" for secondary schools. All parents who complete a secondary application form will be told of the allocated high school for their child on this day.

Late Applications Late applications received between 29th October 2004 and the national offer date will be included **only if** the reason for the delay was genuine and acceptable. Late applications, including applications received after 1st March 2005, will be considered only after the initial offers to parents who applied in time have been decided.

5.2 How Many Pupils May Be Admitted To Each High School?

The Council has a duty to ensure that schools are not overcrowded. The number of pupils that may be admitted to a school is known as the **Published Admission Number (PAN)**. Details for each school are given in Appendix 4 of this booklet. The admission number is critical to the admissions process, as the relevant admission authority has to offer places to all applicants within the admission number. An applicant for a place cannot be refused if the admission number has not been reached. The Department for Education and Skills have indicated in their Code of Practice that these numbers should not be exceeded unless the circumstances are exceptional and only then after the matter has been considered by

the Local Admission Forum.

5.3 How Do Parents Apply For A High School?

Having read all the information available from the Council and from individual schools, and, if possible, having visited schools by attending open evening or by making other arrangements with the headteachers, parents should indicate **three preferences in priority order** on the SA1 application form.

However, you need to consider carefully **how your child will travel to school** as you will not normally be eligible for transport assistance if your child is offered a place at a high school which is not your catchment school for your home address (See Chapter 7 for details of the Council's School Transport policy).

5.4 Can we apply for a place at a Church School

Yes. There are 2 Church Schools in Herefordshire: Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School, which is Anglican, and St. Mary's R.C. High School, Lugwardine, which is Roman Catholic. You can include one or both of these schools **within** the 3 preferences you are able to express on the SA1 form. You will be required to provide additional information if your request is based on denominational reasons. The school's own form requesting further information, is obtainable from the school or your local priest/vicar. It must be returned to the Council with the SA1 form by 29th October 2004 via your child's present school.

5.5 What Are The Possible Difficulties If Your 3 Preferences Do Not Include The School Provided For Your Child's Home Address?

As previously stated, parents will be able to express 3 preferences for the September 2005 transfer. In practice, a parent applying for their catchment school by 29th October 2004 is most likely to be granted their local school, irrespective of the priority order in which the school has been placed on the application form, as most of the places in high schools are filled by local children. However, if parents do not include their catchment school in the 3 preferences they may lose their priority for that school if all their chosen schools are oversubscribed and they fail to gain a place. The child may then have to attend another school altogether which may involve the parents having to meet any additional transport costs. For these reasons, it is advisable for parents to include the catchment area school as one of the 3 preferences..

5.6 Who Will Make And Announce The Decision, In Response To My 3 Preferences?

Herefordshire Council will make the decision on school places in the 12 community high schools based on the criteria defined in paragraph 6.1. In the case of the Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat and St. Mary's R.C. Schools, the Governing Body will make the decision based on the application forms (SA1) and additional supporting information that the Council receive by 29th October 2004. Once the Governing Body have made their decision the Council will be given the school allocation list and it will be the Council **NOT** the Governing Body that will announce the offer to parents on 1st March 2005.

A parent living in Herefordshire, but wanting a place in another Council area, should nevertheless state their preferred out-county school(s) on the standard application form (SA1). The Herefordshire Pupil Admissions Office will notify the other Council(s) of the preference after the 29th October 2004 even if the closing dates are different. Although Herefordshire LEA implemented the co-ordinated scheme from September 2004, this is

not the case with all Local Education Authorities. Monmouthshire and Powys have decided to delay the co-ordinated scheme until 2005 or later which means that parents could receive an offer or refusal of a place before 1st March 2004. However, this will not be the position in Shropshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, where a parent seeking a school place in that Council area would receive an offer or refusal from Herefordshire Council on 1st March 2005.

5.7 What Is the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme?

The 1998 Act, as amended by the Education Act 2002, requires every LEA to draw up a scheme (or schemes) covering every maintained school (but not special schools) in its area. Regulations also require LEAs to exchange specified information on applications with their neighbours. The Herefordshire Scheme is set out at Appendix 3 of this Booklet.

Parents must be invited to express at least 3 preferences, which may be for schools within or beyond their home LEA's area, on a 'common application form' which the LEA should provide and make available to all parents resident in its area. This may be complemented by a form on the LEA's website for online applications. The Herefordshire Website address is www.education.herefordshire.gov.uk. The common application form can be supplemented (but not replaced) by additional forms where particular schools in the area might need extra information, e.g. to assess denominational commitment or in relation to testing. The LEA must ensure that the form enables parents to:

- express their preferences, i.e. name the schools they are applying to;
- give the reasons for applying for their preferred schools; and
- rank those preferences – parents must be allowed the opportunity to rank their preferences, even if other admission authorities in the area do not use a ranking system as part of their individual admission arrangements.

5.8 If My Preferred School Is Independent Should I Include It On The Application Form?

No, you should make direct application to the headteacher of the Independent school not Herefordshire Council. **However**, we would recommend that you still indicate three preferences for maintained schools on the application form just in case you decide not to go forward with your application or do not accept an offer of a place at an Independent School. If you gain a place at an Independent school, you will be responsible for your own transport costs together with any fees associated with your child's attendance at that school. If you are offered, but turn down, a place at an independent school, the LEA accepts no responsibility for any financial loss incurred.

5.9 If My Preferred School Is In Another LEA, Should I Include It On The Application Form?

Yes, the co-ordinated admission scheme allows parents to express a preference for any maintained school including those administered by another Council. If you wish your child to be considered for a school in Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Shropshire, Powys or Worcestershire, please include the name of the school and its ranked position on the application form SA1.

5.10 Can Applications Be Considered For Pupils Who Do Not Live In Herefordshire?

Any applications for the admission of pupils who live outside the county are always

considered on an equal basis. In the case of secondary transfer for children at age 11, parents should apply to their home LEA who will send the details to Herefordshire LEA after the closing date for that Council area. If the preferred school in Herefordshire is oversubscribed, such applications will be determined in accordance with the priorities listed in paragraph 6.1. In the case of Shropshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire residents, any offer for a Herefordshire high school will be made by those Councils on 1st March 2005.

In the case of primary school admissions, parents should approach their preferred school who will provide the necessary information and advice. Parents will need to complete an application form (PA1) indicating the Herefordshire school and formally apply by the 14th January 2005. The offer of a place will be made by Herefordshire LEA on 21st March 2005 and not the Council where the parents resides.

6: ALLOCATION OF PLACES IN PRIMARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS

Although the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 gives parents the right to express preferences for their child to be admitted to any school maintained from public funds, there are 4 reasons why one or more of their 3 preferences might have to be refused:

- i) the school(s) might be oversubscribed;
- ii) the classes for infants (aged 4-7) in primary schools have reached the legal limit of 30 pupils;
- iii) the child does not meet the requirements of the admissions policy or subsequently fails to do so;
- iv) information provided by the parents (including information about addresses) is found to be fraudulent or intentionally misleading (such information may also be grounds for withdrawal of any place that has been allocated, even after the child has started at the school).

6.1 What happens if the school is oversubscribed?

When there are more applications than places, in a community or voluntary controlled school, children are admitted on the basis of the published policy listed in the following order of priority:

- i) pupils with a Statement of **special education need** which names the school; (see Footnote 1)
 - ii) pupils in the '**looked after**' system where the approved agencies agree that the preferred school meets the child's social, pastoral and educational needs; (see Footnote 2)
 - iii) pupils whose principal home address is within the **catchment** area of the school; (see Footnote 3)
 - iv) pupils who have a **brother or sister** at the preferred school not only at the time of application but also when the younger child is due to start; (see Footnote 4)
 - v) pupils with exceptional **medical, social or compassionate** grounds for admission and whose parents can show that entry to a particular school is necessary for the well being of their child. Parents are required to produce a medical certificate or other appropriate information preferably from an independent source. Applications on such grounds will not be considered by the Director of Education or his advisory panel unless this supporting information is attached to your application form when you apply – 29th October 2004 (high schools) and 14th January 2005 (primary schools); (see Footnote 5)
 - vi) pupils who live **nearest** to the school by the shortest available walking route. (See paragraph 7.1 for how walking distance is measured). (see Footnote 6)
- General notes:

No priority is given to pupils living outside, but attending a primary school within, the catchment area of the relevant high school, i.e. the determining factor is the child's home address.

Footnote 1: This is the first priority because the Council must comply fully with the requirements of the Statement of SEN.

Footnote 2: This is the 2nd priority because the Council wishes to protect children in public care from further disadvantage that can arise from possible changes of school when the care placement changes.

Footnote 3: This is the 3rd priority because the Council gives high importance to trying to ensure that children are able to attend the school within their local community.

Footnote 4: This is the 4th priority to recognise the importance to daily family life, including travel arrangements, of having brothers/sisters at the same school where possible. The rule is **not** intended to favour parents with a previous but no longer current family connection with the school (see also Section 3 for definition of 'sibling').

Footnote 5: This is the 5th priority to be sensitive to exceptional needs that individual children and families may have.

Footnote 6: The 6th priority is a measurable, objective way of allocating the remaining places.

Where, at any school, applications exceed the number of places, the priorities will be applied in the sequence indicated above, i.e. after SEN and children in the 'looked after' system it will be catchment area children 3rd, brothers and sisters 4th, special reasons 5th, then according to distance, each assessed as indicated above.

If the admission of the top 3 categories can be satisfied, but there are insufficient places for all out-area brothers and sisters, priorities will be decided first by reference to special reasons, then according to distance (as defined under paragraph 7.1.).

Following the allocation of the top 2 categories, there may be an occasion when it is not possible to offer places for all children living in the catchment area. In that situation, the places will be allocated in the sequence of the criteria listed above, i.e. first to children with brothers and sisters who would still be at the school in September 2005, next to pupils with validated medical, social or compassionate grounds, and finally according to distance from the school.

PRIMARY SCHOOL ALLOCATIONS AT RECEPTION AGE

6.2 Who determines the allocation of places?

STAGE 1 All the applications received, by the closing date of 14th January 2005, from parents will be analysed together, along with any late applications for which there are good reasons (see paragraph 4.8). The applications for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools will be considered against the 6 priorities explained in paragraph 6.1. The Governors of Voluntary Aided Schools will make their decisions based on the published admission criteria defined in Appendix 4. At this stage, the two preferences are treated as a first preference, i.e. the priority order shown by parents will not count at this point.

STAGE 2 Following analysis, lists will be drawn up of all parents who have applied (whether as first or second preference) for each school. At the top of each list, for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, will be the applicants whose children live in the catchment area and living nearest to the school. At the bottom of the list will be the applicants whose children live outside the catchment area and live furthest from the school. Voluntary Aided Schools will define their order as per Appendix 4.

STAGE 3 Each parent will then be offered a place at the highest of their 2 preferences (if any) that is available after all higher priority applicants have been allocated places.

STAGE 4 It is possible that some parents will not be offered a place at either of their 2 preferred schools. That could only happen in the case of parents who have applied for 2 over-subscribed schools and have not included their catchment area school as one of the 2 preferences or parents who have submitted a late application by the offer date without good reason. In such circumstances, the parents will be offered a place at the nearest or most

accessible school that still has places available, taking account of any information the parents may have already provided.

6.3 When, and by whom, will the offers to parents be made?

Offers will be made on the same day from all parents who have applied in time. The day will be:

MONDAY, 21ST MARCH 2005

All offers will be announced by the Council, including in the case of Voluntary Aided Schools. Please note that only one school will be offered on the 21st March 2005, which will be the highest ranked, with spaces available, that you have defined on your application form. **The LEA is unable to provide any information about places to be offered before this date.**

6.4 Is there a waiting list for primary schools that have too many applicants?

A waiting list will be maintained for primary schools for the reception allocation year only.

6.5 Can you appeal if your request is unsuccessful?

If parents are sent a refusal letter after the 21st March 2005, for either the first or second school preferred, they would be able to appeal. Appeals by parents, setting out the grounds upon which the appeal is made, should be submitted in writing, using the form sent to all unsuccessful applicants, to the Education Directorate **within three weeks of the date of notification of the refusal of a place.** All appeals are heard by an independent appeals panel which holds most of its meetings between April and July, though meetings are arranged at any time of year, when necessary. The appeals for each school are held separately. Further information about the appeals procedure is available from the Pupil Admissions Office or from the County Secretary and Solicitor, The Herefordshire Council, PO Box 185, Hereford HR4 9ZR. In the case of voluntary aided Schools the parents will appeal to the Governing Body which in the case of a Church of England Primary School will be through the Diocesan Education Office, The Palace, Hereford.

HIGH SCHOOL ALLOCATIONS

6.6 How will the decisions be made about parents' 3 preferences for high schools?

STAGE 1 All the applications received by the closing date of 7 November from parents will be analysed together, along with any late applications for which there are good reasons. The applications for the 12 community high schools will be considered against the 6 priorities explained in paragraph 6.1. The Governors of the Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat and St Mary's R.C. High Schools will make their decisions based on the published admission criteria defined in Appendix 4. At this stage, all 3 preferences are treated as a 1st preference, i.e. the priority order shown by parents will not count at this point.

STAGE 2 Following analysis, lists will be drawn up of all the parents who have applied (whether as 1st, 2nd or 3rd preference) for each school. At the top of each list will be the applicants whose children live in the catchment area, and living nearest to the school. At the bottom of the list will be the applicants whose children live outside the catchment area, and live furthest from the school.

STAGE 3 Each parent will then be offered a place at the highest of their 3 preferences (if any) that is available after all higher priority applicants have been allocated places.

STAGE 4 It is possible that some parents will not be offered a place at any of their 3 preferred schools. That could happen only in the case of parents who have applied for 3 oversubscribed schools and have not included their catchment area school as one of the 3 preferences, or parents who have submitted a late application by the offer date without good reason. In such circumstances, the parents will be offered a place at the nearest or most accessible school that still has places available, taking account of any information the parents may already have provided.

6.7 When, and by whom, will the offers to parents be made?

Offers will be made on the same day for all parents who have applied in time. The day will be –

1 March 2005

All offers will be announced by the Council, including in the case of voluntary aided schools (see paragraph 5.5 above). **Please note that only one school will be offered on the 1st March 2005, which will be the highest ranked with spaces available that you have defined on your application form.**

6.8 Is There A Waiting List For High Schools That Have Too Many Applicants?

The position of waiting lists for high school is complex because of the co-ordinating scheme which will allow parents to express 3 preferences by 29th October 2004.

If parents are not able to receive their first preference, the child will be placed on the waiting list after the 1st March 2005 according to their admission qualifications. If vacancies occur after that date the Pupil Admissions Office will make offers, including in the case of voluntary aided schools.

The waiting will be kept open until the start of the school year in September after the registration of pupils has been confirmed. It is possible that vacancies may occur and

places offered at this late stage but the lists will be closed down after this initial checking. If your child has still not received a place at one of your preferred schools, the LEA would expect that your child should be enrolled at the school offered by the Council, an independent school, or be educated otherwise.

6.9 Can You Appeal If Your Request Is Unsuccessful?

Community High Schools

If parents submit 3 preferences by 29th October 2004 and include their local catchment school, it is highly likely that an offer for one of the preferences will be made on 1st March 2005. However, if the 1st or 2nd parental preference cannot be met, you may, if you wish, appeal against the decision. Appeals by parents, setting out the grounds upon which the appeal is made for a named school, should be submitted in writing, using the form sent to all unsuccessful applicants, to the Education Directorate **within three weeks of the date of notification of the refusal of a place**. All appeals are heard by an independent appeals panel which holds most of its meetings between April and July, though meetings are arranged at any time of year, when necessary. The appeals for each school are held separately. Further information about the appeals procedure is available from the Pupil Admissions Office or from the County Secretary and Solicitor, The Herefordshire Council, PO Box 185, Hereford HR4 9ZR.

Voluntary Aided High Schools

As previously stated, offers of all places for high schools, including voluntary aided schools will be made by the Council on 1st March 2005. However, separate appeals procedures and arrangements exist to consider decisions by voluntary aided schools. The arrangements are published by the governors of the relevant schools and should be obtained from them direct.

ALLOCATION OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PLACES OUTSIDE NORMAL ADMISSIONS ROUND

6.10 Can a child transfer to another school at any age other than the normal transfer age?

If parents wish to transfer their child to the same age group in another school, parents should discuss the transfer with the Headteacher of the pupil's present school in the first instance. If it is then decided to make a formal request for transfer, parents should complete an application form (PA2 for primary school/SA3 for secondary school) available from the school to which you are applying. Parents should be aware that any information provided on the application form will be cross-checked and any fraudulent or misleading statement will result in the school place being refused.

The Council's policy in such circumstances is essentially the same as for admissions to schools at the normal age and time of transfer (i.e. as in paragraph 6.1 above). However, when determining the number of places available in the relevant age group, the Council will refer to the Published Admission Number (PAN) that was in operation when that year group was at the normal transfer age, in order to judge whether or not admission would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources. In the case of primary schools, the Council will also take into account the regulations that limit to 30 the size of classes for children under the age of 7 at the start of the school year. Parents should note that interviews are not part of the admissions process, except in the case of Church place applications to a voluntary aided school, where the sole purpose of any interview would be to establish the denominational qualification of the parents. In no other circumstances should interviews be held before a place has been allocated, though it is sensible for parents to visit the school before deciding whether or not to apply. Headteachers of

Community Schools are unable to offer places.

6.11 Can a child be allocated a school place following permanent exclusion?

If a child has been excluded from two separate schools it is unlikely that another primary or secondary school will be provided. The Council will arrange alternative provision through the Medical and Behavioural Support Service.

However, where possible the authority will try to place a pupil at a suitable alternative school at a reasonable distance from the home address. Currently, the Council has a rota system working with the high schools in order to ensure a fair distribution of pupils. In certain cases, the Council may direct the Governors to accept a pupil even though this may take the year group above the agreed PAN.

7: SCHOOL TRANSPORT UP TO THE AGE OF 16

The policies set out in this Section are the general policies in force, but the Council also considers individual circumstances that may justify a variation in policy.

7.1 For whom is assistance with transport provided?

Assistance with transport is provided for children who are attending the designated school provided for their home address and whom live beyond walking distance from the school they attend.

Walking distance is defined in law as up to 2 miles for children under 8 years of age and up to 3 miles for older children. It is always assumed that a child will be accompanied as necessary. The distance is measured by the shortest available walking route along a road or made up footpath, as measured from the nearest pedestrian access to the school site to the nearest entrance to the external boundary of the pupil's home address.

(NB: In general, children eligible for free transport may be required to walk or be taken by parents up to one mile to or from a designated boarding or alighting point.)

7.2 What happens if there is disagreement about walking routes?

In cases of disagreement about walking routes, you may consult the Admissions and Transport Manager, The Herefordshire Council, PO Box 185, Hereford HR4 9ZR (01432 260927).

7.3 Is transport provided for under 5s?

The Council does not provide transport for under 5s, until the term in which children are entitled to start school under the Council's **standard admissions policy**, as described in paragraph 4.1. In other words, transport is not provided for children attending nursery classes, or for children attending reception classes under earlier admission arrangements allowed by schools, as described in paragraph 4.2 above.

7.4 What types of transport assistance are available?

The Director of Education decides on the most suitable transport arrangements, bearing in mind all relevant factors, including cost.

Depending on individual circumstances, transport is arranged usually by contract bus, service bus or rail, though sometimes other individual arrangements have to be made. Transport is provided at the beginning and end of the normal school day, but is not provided for out of hour's activities.

7.5 How far will I need to walk to the nearest boarding point?

In general, children, accompanied by their parents where appropriate, may be required to walk up to one mile to or from a designated boarding or alighting point. (In the case of denominational transport the distance to the boarding could be further than one mile) However, in certain circumstances the cost of redesignating a new boarding point may not be economic or cost effective and therefore parents may be expected to take their child up to the limit of the statutory walking distances.

7.6 If I move home whilst my child is engaged on an examination course will I continue to receive free transport?

Each year, some Year 10/11 pupils and Year 12/13 students engaged in examination courses move home address into another part of the County (i.e. into the catchment area of a different school). In such situations, which arise from decisions taken by parents, the normal expectation is that parents will take responsibility for getting their son/daughter to the school (including under the vacant seats payment scheme, if available) at which the pupil is enrolled, or make arrangements for the pupil to transfer to another school. Only in exceptional family circumstances, would free transport assistance be offered, on an individual basis. Even in such situations, transport assistance would normally be allowed only where provision could be made within an existing Home to School Transport route, with the parent being responsible for taking the pupil to and from the relevant boarding point.

7.7 Will travel assistance be given to a school other than one provided for the home address?

Assistance with transport is normally given only to pupils attending the school(s) **provided** for their home address. Parents are responsible for transport when their child attends, by parental preference, an alternative school. However, some exceptions may be made in the following circumstances:

- (a) address and the nominated alternative school is situated beyond the defined walking distance (see paragraph 7.1 above);
- (b) a pupil with problems associated with special education needs for whom attendance at a particular school is considered to be appropriate and the school is situated beyond the defined walking distance, or if walking is too difficult for the pupil.

7.8 What travel arrangements apply to Aided church schools?

The Council will provide assistance with transport where a child attends, on **genuine denominational grounds**, the nearest appropriate or designated voluntary aided church school, **and** it is beyond statutory walking distance from the home address. Genuine denominational grounds, for transport entitlement purposes, requires in the case of the Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School the child being offered a category 3 place (see Appendix 5). In the case of St. Mary's R.C. High School, the child must be offered a category 1 place defined in the oversubscription criteria (see Appendix 5). It must be noted that parents are expected to take their child/ren to the nearest/defined boarding point.

As in the case of transport to community schools, statutory walking distance is up to 2 miles for children under 8 years of age, and up to 3 miles for older children.

7.9 Can children who do not qualify for assistance with transport take up spare seats on school buses?

Each term, the Admission and Transport Section identifies any spare seats on school buses. Spare seats are sold at either the current standard rate for each child (£80 per term in 2004/2005) or at the lesser rate for each child (£25 per term in 2004/2005) who is in receipt of free school meals. There is no guarantee that a seat will be available at the start of the following term, or continued throughout a term. In the event of more applicants than vacant seats being available, the allocation of places will be on the basis of nearness to the provided/preferred school. It is also important to note that the Council is reviewing all routes now that pupil numbers are falling and there are likely to be an increasing number of

situations in which routes will be combined or simplified, and this may mean that vacant seats will reduce in number.

7.10 Will transport be provided for medical reasons?

The Council may provide free transport for medical reasons, if necessary, on the recommendation of the Senior Clinical Medical Officer.

7.11 Will transport be provided to and from Independent Schools?

No travel assistance will be given to pupils attending Independent primary and secondary schools.

7.12 What happens if a pupil/student is disruptive on the provided transport?

Parents must appreciate that the authority will not tolerate anti-social behaviour on its home to school transport. The authority has issued various sanctions to deal with these situations which in the most serious of cases could result in the pupil/student being banned from all authority transport. In these situations the parents will become responsible for transporting the child to school.

8: POST 16 TRANSPORT

This section has been amended because of the changes under the Education Act 2002. The Act required the Council to set up a Post 16 Transport Partnership which included the colleges, public transport and representatives from the schools with sixth forms and the Connexion Service.

This Transport Partnership has defined a number of policies which are listed below and full details can be found in Appendix 7.

- **Policy One** - concerns students living in Herefordshire and attending Post-16 provision within the County (and the provided places at Ludlow);
- **Policy Two** - deals with students resident out of county who seek a place within the County;
- **Policy Three** - concerns Herefordshire students seeking Post-16 elsewhere or training out of County;
- **Policy Four** - relates to students who are over 19 years of age on 1 September;
- **Policy Five** - relates to overseas Post-16 students.

8.1 What education opportunities are there after the age of 16?

There are four high schools with Sixth Forms offering 'A' level study and also, in some cases, vocational qualifications. The schools with Sixth Forms are at Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye. The DfES Access Fund now provides limited grants to assist Sixth Form students with necessary expenditure such as equipment, materials and visits. Students applying for this fund should do so on application forms supplied by the Council through the Sixth Forms. The grants are means tested.

Alternatively, there are Sixth Form Colleges and Colleges of Further Education offering a wide range of 'A' level and vocational study, as shown at the end of this section.

All enquiries for admission to School Sixth Forms or colleges should be made direct to the school or college. The admission policies of school Sixth Forms together with their PANs can be found in Appendix 6.

8.2 What are the normal associated feeder areas for Sixth Form provision?

Catchment areas served by 11-16 age range High School	Designated Post-16 Establishment
All Hereford City High Schools Bromyard, Queen Elizabeth High Kingstone High Peterchurch, Fairfield High	Hereford VI Form College or Herefordshire College of Technology or Herefordshire College of Art and Design or Holme Lacy College
Weobley High Wigmore High	Kington, Lady Hawkins (see footnote*) Ludlow College of FE (see footnote*)
Catchment areas served by 11-16 age range High School	Pupils served
Kington, Lady Hawkins Ledbury, John Masefield Leominster, The Minster Ross-on-Wye, John Kyrle	All pupils living in the relevant school Catchment area including pupils who attended an 11-16 high school

*Footnote: Some civil parish areas within Weobley and Wigmore relate to the Sixth form at the Minster College, Leominster - see Appendix 4 for details.

8.3 Colleges of Further Education, Hereford Sixth Form College and School-based Sixth Forms

Colleges	Address	Tel:
Hereford Sixth Form College	Folly Lane, Hereford HR1 1LS	01432 355166
Herefordshire College of Art and Design	Folly Lane, Hereford HR1 1LT	01432 273359
Herefordshire College of Technology	Folly Lane, Hereford HR1 1LS	01432 352235
Holme Lacy College	Holme Lacy, Hereford HR2 6LL	01432 870316
Ludlow College of FE	Mill Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1BE	015484 872846

School-based Sixth Forms:

Lady Hawkins' High School	Church Road, Kington, Herefordshire HR5 3AG	01544 230441
The John Masefield High School	Mabel's Furlong, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 2HF	01531 631012
The Minster College	South Street, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 8JJ	01568 613221
The John Kyrle High School	Ledbury Road, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 7ET	01989 764358

The Education Reform Act (1988) introduced a National Curriculum for all pupils aged 5-16 years in all publicly funded schools, including special schools. The main aims of the National Curriculum are to provide pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development. The following information explains the position for the school year 2005-2006.

9.1 What must pupils up to 14 years study?

Pupils up to 14 years of age must study: English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information technology, history, geography, art, music, physical education, a modern foreign language (from 11 years) citizenship and careers. Citizenship is now like modern foreign language (compulsory from age 11). Schools must also teach religious education (RE) and provide a daily act of collective worship from which parents may withdraw their children if they wish. Community schools and voluntary controlled schools follow the religious education curriculum agreed by the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

9.2 What must pupils 14-16 years study?

All pupils at Key Stage 4 (aged 14-16 years) must study: English, mathematics, science, physical education, religious education, information technology, citizenship, work-related learning and enterprise. The majority of pupils should also study design and technology, and a modern foreign language. However, pupils' individual needs may be better met by extra study of the core subjects or of a subject they excel in or by following a work-related curriculum. History, geography, art and music are optional. However, many schools require pupils to study a broad range of subjects, including those from the humanities and the arts.

Many schools are offering new courses for students of all abilities that are of a more vocational nature in accordance with the national strategy to modernise education for the 14-19 age group. Some of these courses may be taught in other institutions under collaborative arrangements, e.g. car vehicle maintenance, engineering.

9.3 What about pupils with special education needs?

Pupils with special education needs also follow the National Curriculum so that they have similar education opportunities. However, in particular circumstances, parts of the National Curriculum can be withdrawn for short periods of time. This is known as 'disapplication'. (See Chapter 12 of this booklet about Special Education Needs.) Pupils attending Pupil Referral Units follow a broad and balanced curriculum which includes important aspects of the National Curriculum.

9.4 What else is taught in addition to the National Curriculum?

Many schools provide opportunities for pupils to study other areas of the curriculum besides those laid down by the National Curriculum - for example, business, drama, environmental education, careers, personal, social and health education and economic and industrial understanding.

9.5 Specialist Schools

In schools that are designated and funded as specialist because they are centres of excellence for a certain subject, the government requires enhanced provision and opportunities for pupils in that subject.

9.6 Who makes the decisions about the curriculum in schools?

The content and assessment procedures of the National Curriculum are determined by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, and are overseen by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (Q.C.A.). In all parts of the curriculum, the manner in which the curriculum is taught is a matter for individual schools, taking account of external guidance which includes the national literacy and numeracy strategies. It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to ensure each school has a curriculum policy, which must include the National Curriculum determined by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

9.7 What do you do if you are unhappy about the curriculum your child is studying?

Most problems can be solved by discussing them with your child's teacher and/or headteacher. If a problem cannot be solved in that way, please contact the Inspection and Advisory Service at the office of the Education Directorate, P.O. Box 185, Hereford HR4 9ZR, telephone: 01432 260813.

9.8 How is the National Curriculum assessed?

The National Curriculum is organised into the Foundation Stage and four other Key Stages.

Foundation Stage for pupils age 3-5 years
Key Stage 1 for pupils aged 5-7 years
Key Stage 2 for pupils aged 7-11 years
Key Stage 3 for pupils aged 11-14 years
Key Stage 4 for pupils aged 14-16 years

Regular assessment is not new; it lies at the heart of effective teaching and helps in the planning of the next stage of a pupil's learning programme. During each school year, teachers continually assess pupils' work.

National Curriculum statutory assessment takes place at the end of the Foundation Stage and at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 (i.e. for pupils aged 7, 11, and 14). It includes both teacher assessment and externally set tasks/tests in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science as follows:

End of Foundation Stage	*	Teacher assessment using the Foundation Stage Profile
End of Key Stage 1	*	Externally set tests and tasks in reading, writing, handwriting, spelling and mathematics.
	*	Teacher assessment in English, mathematics and science.
End of Key Stage 2	*	Externally set tests in English, mathematics and science.
	*	Teacher assessment in English, mathematics and science.
End of Key Stage 3	*	Externally set tests in English, Mathematics and Science

For pupils aged 16 years, GCSE continues to be the main method of assessment, though a growing number of pupils look towards vocational qualifications, such as General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), or towards pre-GCSE qualifications such as Certificates of Achievement (COAs).

9.9 Where can you find out more about the curriculum your child will study and how will you be kept informed of progress?

Each **school's prospectus and governors' annual report** must include information about what is taught and how the curriculum is arranged. Schools must also provide information about examinations and vocational qualifications, school results in tests, and teacher assessments at the end of each Key Stage.

Schools must provide a written **annual report** for your child, detailing attendance and progress, with comments on all National Curriculum subjects. At the end of the Key Stage, the report must give your child's National Curriculum assessment results in Mathematics, English and Science and how these compare with the results of pupils of the same age in the school and, where relevant, nationally. The results of any public examinations taken by your child must also be given. Schools must give general information about the attainment of other pupils of the same age, so that you can compare your child's results with those details.

All schools must also make **arrangements for parents to discuss their child's progress with appropriate teachers, at least once a year.**

9.10 How can you best help your child?

There are many ways in which you can assist your child's progress, including:

- looking at books and reading to and with your child before and after they first start school;
- talking to your child about school;
- contacting the school about any concerns or worries you or your child have;
- keeping in touch with teachers who are in the best position to answer questions about what pupils are learning and the progress they are making;
- attending open evenings;
- encouraging your child to do homework the school has set.

Headteachers and teachers are always willing to discuss your child's progress with you, by appointment.

10: CHARGES, SCHOOL MEALS AND MILK, AND ALLOWANCES

10.1 Are any charges made for school activities?

In general, schools may not charge for the education of pupils, but there are some circumstances in which charges may be made, as explained below.

Instrumental Music Tuition

Charging arrangements exist for parents to pay part of the cost, if their children receive instrumental music tuition in a small group (up to and including 4 children) or have individual lessons with one of the County's specialist teachers. The Authority also provide an instrument leasing scheme which is chargeable

Residential Activities

Parents will be required to pay all or part of the cost of accommodation and meals for residential activities organised by the school as part of the curriculum. Transport for curriculum activities is provided free of charge by the school, though schools may ask parents for voluntary contributions.

Swimming

No charge is made to parents for swimming instruction organised by the school, though schools may ask for voluntary contributions towards the cost of pool fees and transport.

Examinations

Fees for public examinations are usually paid by the Council. Entry for approved public examinations is encouraged as long as pupils have a reasonable chance of success. Decisions on such matters are normally left to the professional judgement of the headteacher and staff. Parents might be asked to pay fees if pupils fail to attend an examination for which they have been entered.

Milk

Milk is not provided free of charge by the Council. However, some schools choose to operate a European Community Scheme where milk is provided at subsidised rates, and a Department of Health Scheme which provides free milk for Under 5s.

Meals

Although the Council does not have a school meals service, many schools have arrangements with private caterers to provide food for sale to pupils. Children who are eligible for free meals receive either a sandwich pack or a contribution towards the cost of a meal available at the school. Free school meals are available only to pupils whose parents are receiving a Department of Social Security Award of Income Support or Job Seeker's Allowance (Income based). Application forms are available from all schools and from the Free Meals Unit, The Herefordshire Council, PO Box 185, Hereford HR4 9ZR or 01432 260921.

10.2 Are there any allowances available?

The only allowance available is for essential clothing. In the most recent financial year, the essential clothing allowance was available only for a limited range of items such as shoes. Grants are considered only for children as they start school and later when they move on to each stage of schooling. The scheme is subject to revision each January. Applications for assistance should be addressed to the Director of Education, The Herefordshire Council, PO Box 185, Hereford HR4 9ZR or 01432 260000.

11. EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE AND SCHOOL UNIFORM

Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service provides support to children, families and schools ensuring school attendance. Each Education Welfare Officer works with particular high schools and their local primary schools.

The Service advises on pupil welfare matters and issues related to attendance at school, including child employment matters.

Should you experience problems which directly or indirectly affect your child's attendance, a Welfare Officer will be pleased to provide advice and support.

For further information contact:

Principal Education Welfare Officer,
Education Directorate,
P.O. Box 185,
Hereford HR1 9ZR.

Tel: 01432 260861

School Uniform and Appearance Codes

Many Governing Bodies have made a policy to define a 'school uniform' as it can make a considerable contribution towards the school's ethos or image. Schools, in setting their uniform policy, must act reasonably. Recently legal advice has been given indicating that it would be inappropriate for any school to have a policy for uniform which did not include provision for girls to wear trousers.

The policy on uniform varies between schools and parents should seek information on the policy by reference to the school prospectus. Prospectuses are supplied to parents by the individual school concerned. Any parent wishing to know more about the uniform policies of a particular school should make inquiries at the school.

School Leaving Date

Following the Education (School Leaving Date) Order 1997, which came into effect from 1998, the school leaving date is the last Friday in June for all pupils who will be 16 by 31st August.

12. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

12.1 What are Special Educational Needs?

It has been estimated that about one child in every five may have some form of special educational needs during his or her school life. More often than not, such difficulties are short term or are not severe and can be dealt with appropriately by school staff, sometimes with the occasional help of outside specialists. Less frequently, children may have educational difficulties which can be complex and severe in nature. They may have moderate or severe learning difficulties, a specific learning difficulty, language difficulties, physical, visual or hearing difficulties or significant behavioural/emotional problems. Some children may suffer from a combination of two or more such difficulties.

12.2 How are Special Educational Needs Identified?

Children's special educational needs may be identified and brought to the attention of the Education Directorate through a number of sources - by a medical officer, doctor, health visitor, school staff, teaching support staff, an educational psychologist, a social worker or Education Welfare Officer. In each case, parents should be involved in discussions before any action is taken. Parents should always feel free, however, to make a direct approach to the Children's and Student's Services of the Education Directorate if they have any concerns about their child's special educational needs.

12.3 What provision is made for children with Special Educational Needs?

In the majority of cases school staff, working in co-operation with the Council's support services (Learning Support Service, Medical and Behavioural Support Service, Physical and Sensory Support Service, Herefordshire Psychological Service and Pre-School area SENCO's) will be able to identify, assess and provide for children with special educational needs. All schools and early years' settings use the Code of Practice on Special Educational Needs, to guide their procedures for deciding which children need special help and their arrangements for providing that help.

The Code of Practice recommends that schools should deal with children's needs in stages, matching the level of help to the needs of the child. Most children with special educational needs will have these needs met at 'Early Years School Action' and 'Early Years School Action Plus'. These stages are school based. A small minority of children with special educational needs may require a statutory assessment. The Council has also put into place a system of banded funding in primary schools to simplify and speed up the way in which schools can make a range of special needs' arrangements for children with significant needs. Banded funding will apply to some pupils in High Schools by September 2004. School staff will talk to you about your child's special educational needs and keep you fully involved if particular support arrangements are to be provided.

Schools must consider what the Code of Practice says when they draw up their policies for children with special educational needs and must include within the school's policy the name of the teacher who is responsible for children with special needs (often called the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator or SENCO).

12.4 What is a statutory assessment and Statement of Special Educational Needs?

Where it appears that a child's special educational needs are likely to be severe or complex, a Statutory Assessment may be requested following a standard procedure set out in the Education Act 1996. The parents of children whose needs are assessed in this way are asked for their views and can submit any information they may wish about their child's educational needs. Parents also have the right to be consulted throughout the assessment process and can also make a parental request for statutory assessment.

During a Statutory Assessment, the Council is legally bound to seek reports about a child from certain professionals, such as school staff, teaching support services, an educational psychologist, a medical officer and Social Services staff. When all these reports have been made available, the Council will consider them and decide how the child's needs might best be provided for.

If the child's needs are severe and complex and require special educational provision the Council will issue to parents a 'Proposed' Statement of Special Educational Needs. The Statement proposal will outline both the child's special educational needs and the provision which it is assessed ought to be made. Each assessment report about the child's needs and the written comments provided by the parents will form part of the proposed statement. When they receive a proposed statement, parents will be asked to express a preference for the school they would like their child to attend.

A Statutory Assessment will usually lead to agreement that the child's special educational needs can be properly met in a local primary school or high school, perhaps with the assistance of a specialist, such as a teacher from the Physical and Sensory Support Service or other resources including classroom support. Sometimes it will be clear that the child would be appropriately placed in the school's special needs support group or department, if the school is large enough to have one.

Alternatively, the Assessment may lead to the conclusion that the child's special educational needs can more suitably be met by placement in a special school.

If there is some disagreement between parents and the Council over the child's special educational needs and the most appropriate provision for him/her, the Council will reconsider all the evidence submitted as part of the Statutory Assessment together with the views of the parents. Any parental concerns will usually be resolved following meetings with an officer of the Council or with the professionals who have assessed the child's needs. However, if it is not possible to come to an agreement about the child's special educational needs and/or a school placement, or the Council does not feel that a statement of special educational needs should be issued, parents have the right to appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. The Tribunal is an independent body set up to consider cases where parents and the Council have not been able to reach agreement. However, the vast majority of cases are resolved through consultation between the parents, Council Officers and, in some cases, the Parent Partnership Service.

12.5 School Placement

It is usually possible, at an early stage, for parents to visit any new school that may be suitable for their child's special educational needs. Such visits give parents the opportunity to resolve any concerns they may have and to gather additional information from the Headteacher or school staff. The date of admission will depend upon availability of places. Assistance with travel will be considered where attendance at a particular school is agreed to be appropriate (see chapter 14).

On the rare occasions when it is impossible for the Council to make placements within LEA schools, it may be necessary to consider an independent school that is privately owned or owned by a Trust or a Charitable Society. Such placements may involve a residential element which will be made only with the agreement of parents and, in some cases, with the County's Social Services Directorate and/or the Primary Care Trust (PCT). All fees incurred where such placements are made for Education reasons will be met by the Education Directorate, although in some circumstances the Social Services Department and the PCT may also be involved. Where placements are made for children with statements of special educational needs in independent privately owned or Trust Schools, the school must either have been approved by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment under Section 347 of the Education Act 1996 or consent must be sought separately from the Secretary of State.

The Council will arrange for the progress of each child with a statement of special educational needs to be reviewed annually by the school. The Annual Review held during the school year in which a child reaches the age of 14 is particularly important in beginning to prepare for his/her transition into further education and adult life.

12.6 In Conclusion

When parents consider that their child may have special educational needs their first step, where the child is already attending school, should be to discuss those needs with staff of the school.

Parents are also entitled to ask the Council to carry out a Statutory Assessment including where a child is below school age. In considering whether or not to do so the Council will usually seek further advice from the PCT, an Educational Psychologist and, where appropriate, the Herefordshire Teaching Support Services, before proceeding with the statutory assessment.

The most important law in dealing with special educational needs is the Education Act 1996. Under the Education Act, all schools and LEAs must have regard to the 2001 Code of Practice which gives practical guidance on how to identify and assess special educational needs. All schools must have a policy on Special Educational Needs to guide their practice and must report annually to parents on the implementation of that policy.

Further information and advice on all aspects of Special Education is available from The Education Directorate, The Herefordshire Council, PO Box 185, Hereford HR4 9ZR. Telephone 01432 260869.

13. SPECIAL SCHOOLS, CLASSES AND CENTRES

SPECIAL SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN WITH SEVERE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

HEREFORD

Barrs Court School (40 places)
Barrs Court Road
Hereford HR1 1EQ Tel: 01432 265035
Age range 11 - 19

Blackmarston School (40 places)
Honddu Close,
Hereford HR2 7NX. Tel: 01432 272376
Age range 2 – 11

LEOMINSTER

Westfield School (30 places)
Westfield Walk
Leominster
Herefordshire HR6 8HD Tel: 01568 613147
Age range 2 - 19

(Leominster Early Years Centre is based at Leominster Infants School and provides assessment and education for children in the 3 - 5 age range who may have special educational needs).

SPECIAL SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES

HEREFORD

The Brookfield School (48 places)
Grandstand Road,
Hereford.
Age range 5 - 16

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS WITH RESOURCED PROVISION FOR CHILDREN STATEMENTED UNDER THE EDUCATION ACT 1996

DESIGNATED SCHOOLS WITH PROVISION FOR CHILDREN WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

Hereford, Trinity Primary 01432 266268 Age range 3-11
Hereford, Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat 01432 357481 Age range 11-16

SCHOOL WITH A RESOURCE BASE FOR CHILDREN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

Weobley High 01544 318159 Age range 11-16

SCHOOL WITH A CLASS FOR CHILDREN WITH LANGUAGE DISORDERS

Hereford, Hampton Dene Primary 01432 273232 Age range 5-11

INFANT SCHOOLS WITH ASSESSMENT CLASSES FOR VERY YOUNG CHILDREN

Hereford, Hunderton Infants' 01432 274653 Age range 5-7
Leominster Infants' 01568 612029 Age range 3-7

PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS

Hereford, St. David's Centre (KS4) 01432 274485 Age range 14-16

Hereford, The Aconbury Centre (KS3) 01432 341096 Age range 11-14

Leominster, The Priory Centre (KS4) 01568 610733 Age range 14-16

SCHOOL WITH A CLASS FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Hereford, Hampton Dene Primary 01432 273232 Age range 5-11

14: TRANSPORT FOR PUPILS AND STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

14.1 What transport assistance is available for pupils attending Special Schools and Centres?

Special education provision in Herefordshire is explained in Chapter 12.

In the case of pupils with statemented special education needs the Council may when appropriate:

- i) provide free daily transport to the nearest appropriate school/centre if they live more than the normal walking distances defined for primary and secondary pupils, or if walking is too difficult for the child (there may be advantages for a child's development if they are able to make their own way to school, accompanied by a parent if necessary);
- ii) provide transport at the beginning and end of terms and at half terms for pupils attending residential establishments;
- iii) provide other types of transport assistance where necessary in relation to residential schooling, including transport for parents and children for pre-admission assessments (in-County and one out-County) and for subsequent case conferences/reviews - if necessary reasonable overnight accommodation costs will be met by the Council.

Parents often prefer to make their own arrangements to take their children to special schools and centres, rather than use the transport provided by the Council, to enable daily contact with the school staff to be maintained more easily. Where that is agreed to be more appropriate for the child, a mileage allowance would be available to the parents if walking were too difficult for the pupil.

It is important to note, however, that parents have full responsibility for transport arrangements when their child attends, by parental preference, a school other than the one provided for their child's home address, or for their child's type of statemented special need. In a few such cases, it may be possible for parents to pay to use spare seats that are occasionally available on school transport on the terms indicated in paragraph 7.9 above.

In most cases where transport is provided:

- escorts are employed, if necessary, to supervise the children on their journeys to and from school;
- safety equipment, such as harnesses, is made available on all vehicles if needed.

14.2 What transport assistance is available for post-16 Students with Special Education Needs?

In the case of students with special education needs, in the age range 16 years to 25* years on 1st September, free transport is provided to the appropriate school or further education institution, irrespective of the normal statutory walking distances defined for primary or secondary pupils, if walking is too difficult for the student. Students cease to be eligible at 31st August following their 25th* birthday. Some further education institutions consider that use of public transport is part of independence training for a student with special educational needs. (*please note that the Council proposed to change the age qualification from September 2005 to 16 to 19 years)

The range and nature of help provided with transport for out-County placements is outlined in the following paragraphs.

14.3 Journeys supported for post 16 students (and parents where appropriate)

Transport assistance may be given, in appropriate cases:

- (a) to view a college prior to a firm application;
- (b) to and from college each day or (in the case of residential courses) at the beginning and end of terms and at half terms;
- (c) to attend a period of assessment required as part of the application and recruitment process;
- (d) to attend any necessary case conferences and reviews.

The location of some colleges occasionally requires reasonable overnight accommodation costs to be met. Such costs are limited to the student and his/her parents only.

14.4 Types of travel assistance for post 16 students:

- (a) if the Council provides transport through the Post 16 Partnership, students are expected to use it;
- (b) if students are capable of using public transport independently, they are expected to do so - some colleges regard use of public transport as part of their students' training;
- (c) minibuses or taxis are arranged, with escorts when necessary, by the Education Department's Admissions and Transport Section;
- (d) if it is necessary for private transport to be used, a mileage rate is paid.

15. DO YOU HAVE A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

If your child attends a maintained school in Herefordshire and you are unhappy about any aspect of their education, you should refer to the school's prospectus. The prospectus will tell you how to register a concern or complaint. However, schools and local authorities are expected to provide parents with good opportunities to raise issues of concern through the following general procedures.

Step 1

- **Talk to the teacher about your concerns** and explain them carefully. (Often this is all that is needed to find a solution)

Note: In large primary and high schools it may be appropriate for your concerns to be dealt with by a senior member of staff such as a Deputy or Head of Year. This procedure may be necessary before the Headteacher becomes involved.

If you still have concerns and do not feel that the teacher has addressed them adequately

- **Make an appointment to talk to the Headteacher.** Say that you have already talked to the teacher but you still have concerns.
- Discuss the matter with the Headteacher.

If you still have concerns and do not feel that the Headteacher has addressed them adequately

Step 2

- **You should write to the Chair of Governors** of your child's school. The address is available from the school or from Governor Services in the Education Directorate, on 01432 260929. Depending on your complaint, the chairman may refer the matter to a committee of the Governors.
- Your letter should state clearly the concerns that you have and should contain all the relevant facts of which you are aware. If possible, include dates, times and the names of staff and/or pupils who know about the matter.

If you do not feel that the Governors have addressed and dealt with your concerns to your satisfaction.

Step 3

- You can refer your concerns to the Education Directorate (contact details on the front of this leaflet) who will look into the matter. Sometimes the Diocesan Director of Education may also become involved in Catholic or Anglican Church schools.

Your letter should state clearly the concerns you have and should contain all the relevant facts. If possible, include dates, times and the names of staff and/or pupils who know about the matter.

- Your letter of complaint will be acknowledged and will be passed to an appropriate member of staff for their attention.
- This officer will investigate the complaint and speak to the people involved.
- You will receive a written response to your complaint letting you know what action, if any, will be taken.

We will deal with your complaint as quickly as possible. However, in some cases, when complex issues are involved, it may take some time to complete the inquiries.

There may be other areas of concern which do not directly involve a school and do not need to be dealt with as outlined in this leaflet. In such cases you are advised to telephone the following numbers:

Early Years and Childcare:

Herefordshire Childcare Services 01432 261681

Exclusions from Schools

Manager of Pupil, School and Parent Support 01432 260816

Pupil Admissions to Schools

Admissions and Transport Manager 01432 260927

School Transport

Admissions and Transport Manager 01432 260927