



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

Information for Parents about Ceredigion Schools

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Chief Education Officer

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INTRODUCTION

As a parent you have a responsibility to make sure that your child, between the ages of 5 and 16, is provided with a suitable education. The parents of the vast majority of pupils in Ceredigion have decided for their children to be educated in schools which Ceredigion Local Authority maintains.

You will want the best for your child, so take every opportunity to learn as much as possible about the Schools Service and what it offers. Most importantly make sure you find out as much about the school which you wish to apply for your child to attend. The governors and staff at the school will look forward to working with you to help to develop your child's potential ability. They too want the best for your child.

This booklet aims at providing parents/guardians and others with general information about primary and secondary education in Ceredigion. The booklet contains the basic details on how pupils are admitted to the schools and some of the policies and support given by the Local Authority.

Each school on the list will have its own school prospectus which will describe in detail the school, its aims and its organisation. If you are interested in learning more about a particular school then ask the Headteacher of the school for a copy of their prospectus.

The information in this booklet refers as far as possible, and the information is correct at the time of publication, to the school year beginning in September 2024.

The Schools Service in Ceredigion

The Local Authority has a legal obligation to ensure that all 5 to 16 year olds receive appropriate full-time education. Approximately 9,500 pupils attend the Authority's schools.

Ceredigion Local Authority maintains 36 primary schools. About 25% of the Authority's primary schools have 50 pupils or fewer on roll. In most of these schools, Welsh is the main medium of the life and work of the school. At secondary level the Authority promotes 4 comprehensive schools, varying in size from 550 pupils to 1100 pupils. The Authority also maintains one 3-16 school and two 3-19 schools. These schools provide education for pupils from three years old to sixteen and nineteen years old, respectively.

In order to cater for children with additional learning needs/special educational needs, the Authority has a wide range of provision, including specialist resource centres and behavioural units, some of which are attached to mainstream schools. In addition to these facilities, a range of specialist support staff assist in ensuring that, wherever possible, children with additional learning needs/special educational needs are educated in mainstream schools.

In Ceredigion the Welsh Government funds a part-time early education place (10 hours per week) for every 3 year old child (also known as Foundation Learning). Places are available in nursery units attached to schools, playgroups/early years settings e.g. Cylch Meithrin or day nurseries registered for funding with the Authority. The funding is for 2 hours a day, 5 days a week (some early years settings may offer 2½ hour sessions over 4 days). It is available for the three terms following the child's third birthday.

The Authority no longer has responsibility for Further Education Colleges of which there is one such establishment within the County, namely Coleg Ceredigion.

Ceredigion's Schools Service is based on the philosophy of offering lifelong learning opportunities for each member of the community. In co-operation with our partners, we attempt to provide youth activities, adult education, basic skills for adults, opportunities to learn Welsh, training and a number of community development projects. We believe that these opportunities contribute to developing the individual and forming an inclusive society within a bilingual Ceredigion.

The Local Authority not only concerns itself with what happens in the classroom, it also provides a whole range of associated services including school transport, school meals, cleaning, training, buildings, development, educational advice and governor support. Although the Careers Service is not directly provided by the Local Authority, the Authority continues to support career guidance throughout the Schools Service. Careers Wales has been formed as an independent provider and provides a careers guidance service in Ceredigion.

The Schools Service employs in the region of 1,600 people and is the largest of the Local Authority's services with an annual budget of £67 million for 2023/24. The administrative headquarters for the Schools Service is situated at **Canolfan Rheidol, Rhodfa Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3UE** and provides a focal point of contact for parents, pupils, elected members, staff and the general public. In addition to advice on the services noted above which can be obtained from the Schools Service, a number of support agencies such as advisors, educational psychologists and inclusion officers are also located at Canolfan Rheidol.

Further Information

Where can I get more information?

Parents are encouraged to contact schools, speak with the headteachers and to read the schools' prospectuses which are available from the school. If further information or assistance is required the staff at the Schools Service will help wherever possible.

Enquiries relating to Primary and Secondary Education should be addressed to:

Chief Education Officer

Canolfan Rheidol

Rhodfa Padarn

Llanbadarn Fawr

Aberystwyth

Ceredigion

SY23 3UE

Tel: 01545 570881

E-mail: education@ceredigion.gov.uk

Website: www.ceredigion.gov.uk

Parents are requested to express a preference for a school(s) prior to a school place being allocated by the Chief Education Officer.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Must my child receive full-time education?

Yes. By law parents must ensure that their child receives full-time education from the beginning of the term following the child's 5th birthday until he/she is of school leaving age at 16. Parents can be taken to court if they do not carry out this legal requirement.

The Local Authority has a legal obligation to ensure that all 5-16 year olds receive appropriate full time education.

Who has parental responsibility for the child?

You should be aware that following changes made to the law about children by the Children Act 1989, which became law in October 1991, schools need to know who has "parental responsibility" for each child. This is to ensure that proper authority is given when the school needs parental permission. It will also make sure that persons with parental responsibility who do not live with a child can be provided with school reports and given an opportunity to take part in the child's education. Further changes in the law took place in 2003.

- Mothers always have parental responsibility (unless a Court Order is in place that states she will no longer have the responsibility). e.g. in adoption cases;
- Fathers who were married to the mother prior to 2003 have parental responsibility;
- Fathers also have parental responsibility for a child if the child was born after 2003 and their name is on the child's birth certificate;
- Unmarried fathers, step-parents, relatives and other persons can obtain parental responsibility but they do not have it automatically.

Parents are asked to co-operate with school staff by providing the school with details of the persons with parental responsibility for a pupil. Any changes in the arrangements for parental responsibility or in the day to day care of the child should be notified to the school.

Any reference to parents within this booklet extends to include anyone having responsibility for pupils.

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Types of Schools

What are the different types of schools in Ceredigion?

Most schools in Ceredigion are maintained by Ceredigion County Council through the Local Authority. These include 36 primary schools, 1 3-16 school, 2 3-19 schools and 4 secondary schools. Amongst these, there is one voluntary aided primary school, namely St. Padarn's Roman Catholic School. Admission enquiries for this school should be made to their Governing Body. Contact details for all schools are included at the end of this booklet.

Church Schools

General enquiries about Church Schools should be made to:

Catholic Schools

Mr Paul White
Diocesan Director of Education
27 Convent Street
Greenhill
Swansea
SA1 2BX

(01792) 652 757

education@menevia.org

Church in Wales Schools

Reverend John Cecil
Diocesan Director of Education
The Vicarage
Steynton
Milford Haven
Pembrokeshire
SA73 1AW

(01646) 692 974

revjohncecil@btinternet.com

Choosing a School

How do I choose a school for my child?

Within Ceredigion most parents send their child to their local school, however, parents may express a preference for a different school. Parents should read the school prospectus or arrange with the Headteacher(s) to visit the school(s) prior to expressing a preference.

Parents may express a preference:

- when their child starts school at the Foundation Learning Phase;
- when their child transfers to the Secondary School;
- at any time parents wish to transfer their child to another school.

Parents should express a preference for more than one school, failure to do so might mean that your child could be allocated to a school which is not your preference.

Must the Authority provide a place for every child who wishes to be admitted to a particular school?

No. The Admission Authority must meet the preference if it can, but certain factors will be taken into account. These include:

- the school admission number
- the efficient use of resources and accommodation
- the character of a school (generally religious).

It is possible that parents may not be successful in gaining a place at their first choice school. It is important therefore to understand that the Authority can only admit pupils within the resources available.

Does the school select its pupils?

No. None of the schools are allowed to select pupils.

Who controls admission to schools?

The admission of children to school is controlled by an “Admission Authority”. In the case of community schools in Ceredigion the Admissions Authority is Ceredigion County Council (the Local Authority or LA). In the case of Voluntary Aided Schools the Admissions Authority is the Governing Body of the school (St Padarn’s School).

Do schools have a limit upon the number of pupils that can be admitted?

Yes. All schools must admit pupils up to their published admission number.

Where applications exceed the admission number for a school, all applications will be assessed against the oversubscription criteria and places will be allocated up to the admission number.

Oversubscription Criteria

Where there are more children wishing to enter a particular school than there are places, the following oversubscription criteria will be used in order of priority:

- looked after children and previously looked after children;
- the school for which a preference has been expressed is the nearest suitable school and the child will have a sibling* attending the school at the time of admission;
- the school for which a preference has been expressed is the nearest suitable school;
- children for whom the school is not the nearest suitable school but will have a sibling* attending the school at the time of admission.

(*Siblings includes half-siblings, step siblings, adoptive and foster children living in the same house.)

Where more than one child meets these criteria and applicants still remain then the child living nearest to the school will be admitted. **All distances will be measured by the shortest walking distance between the main school gate and the point where the child’s dwelling meets the public highway.**

The LA uses Google Maps to measure all distances.

Please note that the above oversubscription criteria applies to applications for Nursery, Primary and Secondary Education.

Refusal and Appeal

What if my request is refused?

If your request is refused then you may appeal against the decision. The Local Authority has established an Independent Appeals Panel to consider appeals from parents whose application for a preferred school has not been approved. Appeals Panels will normally be held in private but parents will be given an opportunity of presenting their case either directly or with the assistance of their chosen representative.

N.B. There is no right of appeal against non-statutory nursery provision.

Can I be placed on a waiting list?

Yes. Should the Authority not be able to offer a place to a child at their first choice of school during the normal admission round their name will be kept on a waiting list until the 30th September. Priority for places will be given according to the over-subscription criteria and not according to the date on which application for a place was originally submitted.

Twins or other sibling from a multiple birth

If the final place allocated up to the admission number is one of a multiple birth, then the Authority will also admit the other sibling(s).

Children of UK Service personnel and other Crown Servants (including diplomats)

Families of UK Service personnel and other Crown Servants are subject to frequent movement within the UK and from abroad, often at relatively short notice.

As a result, applications for school places for the approaching school year will be considered if accompanied by an official Ministry of Defence or Foreign and Commonwealth Office letter declaring a return date. School places will then be allocated in advance if the applicant would meet the criteria when they move to their destination.

Unit postal addresses for applications from service personnel will also be accepted, in the absence of a new home postal address.

Admissions Timetable

<i>Type of Provision</i>	<i>Closing date</i>	<i>Decision letter sent</i>
Nursery	31 st January 2024	16 th April 2024
Primary/Reception	31 st January 2024	16 th April 2024
Secondary	21 st December 2023	1 st March 2024

Please note: Parents must apply for a place at whatever school(s) they would like to send their child.

Applications can be made online at www.ceredigion.gov.uk

Late Applications

Late applications, i.e. applications received after the closing date will be considered after all applications which were received on time.

Nursery Education

Is it possible for my 3 year old child to receive nursery education?

The Local Authority is under a duty to provide free part time nursery places to all children in the Local Authority area in the term after they have attained their third birthday. This will be available in nursery classes in some primary schools, local playgroups/Cylch Meithrin and day nurseries that meet the criteria set by Ceredigion's Early Years and Childcare Partnership. Please ask your local playgroup / day nursery for further details.

What are the dates by which my child has to reach the right age before being allowed to go to school and by when must I apply?

<i>Type of Provision</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Date by which the appropriate age must be reached</i>	<i>Term for Admission</i>
Nursery	3	31 st December 2024	Spring 2025
		31 st March 2025	Summer 2025
		31 st August 2025	Autumn 2025

Admission to a Reception Class of a school with a Nursery Class

Must I apply when my child is ready to move from the nursery class or unit in a school to the reception class in the same school?

Yes. Being a pupil in a nursery class or unit does not automatically make your child eligible for admission to the reception class in the same school.

Admission to a Primary School/Reception Class

When can I apply for my child to be admitted to a primary school?

Where there is no nursery class or unit a child may be admitted the term after he/she has reached the age of 4 years.

What are the dates by which my child has to reach the right age before being allowed to go to school and by when must I apply?

<i>Type of Provision</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Date by which the appropriate age must be reached</i>	<i>Term for Admission</i>
Primary / Reception	4	31 st December 2024	Spring 2025
		31 st March 2025	Summer 2025
		31 st August 2025	Autumn 2025

Deferred Entry

Parents may apply for a school place for a child who is not of compulsory school age, and the admissions authority, at the request of the parent, may agree to the child deferring entry to the school until he/she is of compulsory school age (5 years old). The effect of this is that the place is held for that child and is not available for another child. Applications for deferred entry must be submitted by the same closing date as non-deferred applications. If you delay applying until your child has reached compulsory school age, your preferred school may already be full.

Infant Class Size

Statutory limits on class sizes provide that when a single school teacher is present, infant classes (reception year, year 1 and year 2) may not contain more than 30 pupils.

The admission authority can refuse to admit a child to a school where to do so would cause class size prejudice, that is to say, prejudice to efficient education or efficient use of resources as a result of the relevant measures that would be needed to comply with the duty to limit the size of infant classes.

Admission to Secondary School

When should my child start in the secondary school?

Pupils usually transfer to a Secondary School at 11 years of age. Pupils reaching the age of 11 by 31 August will transfer from primary to secondary school at the start of the next academic year i.e. 1st September.

How many secondary schools are there in the county?

There are four comprehensive schools, one 3-16 school and two 3-19 schools in Ceredigion.

What are the dates by which my child has to reach the right age before being allowed to go to school and by when must I apply?

<i>Type of Provision</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Date by which the appropriate age must be reached</i>	<i>Term for Admission</i>
Secondary	11	31 st August 2024	Autumn 2024

School Leaving Date

When are pupils allowed to leave school?

When your child reaches the age of 16 during a school year, he/she can leave school on the last Friday in June.

VOLUNTARY AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICY

St Padarn's Roman Catholic Primary School's Admissions' Policy

St. Padarn's is a Catholic Primary School situated in the Diocese of Menevia and is maintained by Ceredigion Local Authority. The ethos of this school is Catholic. The school was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families. We ask all parents applying for a place here to support and respect this ethos, its importance to the school community and the education it provides. As a Voluntary Aided School, the Board of Governors is the Admission Authority and is responsible for taking decisions on applications for admissions. They are responsible for determining and administering the policy relating to admission of pupils to the school. They are guided in that responsibility by:

- the requirement of the law.
- the advice of the Diocesan Trustees on the nature and purpose of its duties and in fulfilment of its Trust Deed and Instrument of Government.
- its duty towards the school and Catholic community it serves.
- the Catholic character of the school and its Mission Statement.

In accordance with the provisions of the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005, the Board of Governors has delegated responsibility for determining admissions to its 'Admissions Panel', a sub-committee of the Board. The Headteacher is a member of the panel, however, the Headteacher has no individual role in school admissions and has no individual power to accept or refuse admissions. The Admissions Panel will consider all applications made in accordance with the criteria as set out, without reference to the race, gender, ability, disability, social background or aptitude of the child. The school does not permit admissions by selection or banding nor based on the interview of parents or financial contribution to the school.

Admission Number and Capacity

The school's admission number is calculated based on the Welsh Government formula which is directly linked to the school's capacity. The number of pupils to be admitted annually shall be determined by the admission number which shall be revised annually by the LA and the Governing Body in consultation with the Diocesan Council for Education. The admission number is currently **19**. The official capacity of the school is **134** pupils at the start of an academic year.

Application Forms

All prospective parents should express a preference in writing, filling in the St Padarn's RC Primary School application **and** the Ceredigion County Council online admissions application form. The school's application forms are provided by the school on request. They are also to be found in the school prospectus or on the school website. The Ceredigion online admissions application form can be found on the Ceredigion County Council website'. **Both forms are required to be completed.**

Deadline for receipt of Admission Applications

Admissions will take place termly in January, April and September. The closing date for receipt of applications for admissions of the following calendar year is 31st January. Applications for admission during the Year 2025 (Spring, Summer and Autumn Term intake) will be required by 31st January 2024. All applications submitted through the School and the County online forms will be considered together, by the Admissions Panel, following the deadline. In the event of oversubscription, the criteria shown below are applied.

Early and Late Applications

Priority will not be given to applications based on the date order in which they were received. Applications submitted after the closing date will be considered late applications and a reason must be given for the late submission.

Admissions at Other Times

Admissions to school outside the normal cycle e.g. for those moving into the county or transferring schools, will be considered in the same way as those applying for entry at the usual time.

Deferred Entry

Parents may apply for a school place for a child who is not of compulsory school age (5 years) and the Board of Governors, at the request of the parent, **may** agree to the child deferring entry until he/she is of compulsory school age. The effect of this is that the place is held for that child and is not available for another child.

Admission Panel Meeting

The Admissions Panel will assess applications for admission to the school, using the information provided on the School and County Application Forms at the end of March. Where the number of applications is equal to or less than the admissions number, all applications will be accepted. Where the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the Admissions Panel will apply the following oversubscription criteria and allocate places accordingly, remembering that as a Catholic School it is our obligation to provide a Catholic education for baptized Catholic children. Priority for places will be given according to the criteria and not according to the date the application was submitted.

Oversubscription Criteria

Where the number of applications exceeds the number of places available the Board of Governors will apply the following oversubscription criteria in this order of priority.

1. Baptized Catholic 'Looked After' children in the care of Ceredigion County Council.
2. 'Looked After' children who are in the care of Ceredigion County Council or provided with accommodation by them (e.g. children with foster parents).
3. Baptized Catholic children within the parish served by the school.
4. Other Baptized Catholic children.
5. Children who will have a brother or a sister at the school at the time of likely admission.
6. Baptized Children from other Christian traditions.
7. Children whose parents seek a Catholic education.
8. Children for whom the Local Authority have specifically asked for a place at the school.

All Christian applicants will be required to produce baptismal certificates. Failure to provide evidence of Catholic Baptism will affect the criterion under which a child is considered.

Offers / Waiting List

Parents will be informed in writing by the school of the outcome of their admission application in April. Where the application is unsuccessful, the reason(s) will be stated clearly in the letter, and information on how to appeal the decision.

Applicants who are not accepted will be placed on the school's waiting list. Applicants will remain on the waiting list until 31st August in the school year in which they apply. Please be aware that the position of a child on a waiting list may change as applications may be received that have a higher priority as per the school's admissions oversubscription criteria. In the event that places become available, the applicants on the waiting list will be reviewed against the oversubscription criteria and offers made to fill available places.

Appeals

If parents are unsuccessful in obtaining a place for their child at the school, then they will be notified in writing of the reason(s) why a place has not been secured and of their right of an independent appeal. Any appeal against non-admission to the school must be made in writing within fourteen days (ten working days) of the date of notification that an application for a place was unsuccessful. The letter of appeal should be addressed to The Chair of Governors, c/o St Padarn's RCP School, Llanbadarn Road, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 1EZ.

Notes

The definition of a brother or sister is:

- a brother or sister sharing the same parents
- a half-brother or half-sister, where two children share one common parent
- a step-brother or step-sister
- adopted or fostered children

N.B. The children must be living permanently in the same household

- When there is one remaining place using the oversubscription criteria and twins, triplets or other multiple births are the next to be considered, the family will be offered the one remaining place and the other multiple birth siblings will be admitted even though the admission number will be exceeded.
- If the School is named in a statement of Special Educational Needs, the Board of Governors has a duty to admit the child to the school.
- Overseas pupils shall be admitted to the school where appropriate provision can reasonably be made to meet their needs.
- Our catchment area is wide as St Padarn's is the only Catholic Primary School in Ceredigion. However, in the event of a tie, a place will be offered to the pupil who lives nearest to the school. All distances will be measured by the shortest walking distance between the nearest school gate and the point where the pupil's dwelling meets the public highway. The home address of a pupil is considered the permanent residence of a child. The address must be the child's only or main residence for most of the school week. Documentary evidence may be required.
- Compelling Medical or Compelling Social Grounds - Written recommendations from a medical practitioner, a social worker or similar professional must be provided giving detailed reasons for the pupil's admission to the school to be considered under criterion 8.
- Admissions to St Padarn's Playgroup does not secure an admission to St Padarn's RC Primary School. The Playgroup is an independent body and although many of the children do eventually attend the school, there is no guarantee of a place.

GDPR Statement

For all successful applications, the data contained in the application form will be stored on the school/county management information system and used for purposes outlined in the 'fair processes order'. Every effort is made to secure the accuracy and security of personal data held by the school. Under the Data Protection Act, individuals have the right of access to personal information held about them, and also the right for any errors to be corrected.

SCHOOL ARRANGEMENTS

What about school terms?

The school year runs from 1st September of one year to 31st August the following year and consists of three terms. Dates for the commencement and ending of the school terms vary from year to year but broadly they are:

Autumn Term	September to December
Spring Term	January to March/April (depending on when Easter falls)
Summer Term	April to July

Each term is divided into two with a week's half-term holiday. These usually occur in October/November, February and May/June.

The 2024/25 School Year

<i>Term</i>	<i>Begin</i>	<i>Half Term</i>		<i>End</i>
		<i>Begin</i>	<i>End</i>	
Autumn 2024	Monday 2 nd September 2024	Monday 28 th October 2024	Friday 1 st November 2024	Friday 20 th December 2024
Spring 2025	Monday 6 th January 2025	Monday 24 th February 2025	Friday 28 th February 2025	Friday 11 th April 2025
Summer 2025	Monday 28 th April 2025	Monday 26 th May 2025	Friday 30 th May 2025	Monday 21 st July 2025

The above dates may change.

1. **Monday 2nd September 2024, Tuesday 3rd September 2024** and **Monday 21st July 2025** will be designated non-pupil days for all Maintained Schools. Schools also have another 3 non-pupil days during the year, which they will notify parents directly.
2. All schools will be closed **Monday 5th May 2025** for the May Day Bank Holiday.

Further information on the school year can be found at www.ceredigion.gov.uk

Records

Are records kept on my child?

Yes. All schools, along with the Local Authority keep records on every child at school. These will include personal information such as addresses, names of parents, family doctor, place of contact should the need arise. Schools also keep records of pupils' achievements in each area of the curriculum. You will receive a report at the end of each school year giving you information on your child's general development and his/her progress in each subject.

Information the school will need

What information will the school need from me?

You may be asked for evidence of your child's date of birth such as a birth certificate or medical card. The school will also need to know who has parental responsibility for the child. This is to ensure that proper authority is given should the school need to have parents' permission at any time e.g. in an emergency. The school also has a legal responsibility to make sure that persons with parental rights are provided with school reports and are given the opportunity to take part in the child's education.

The use made of this personal information

The **Welsh Government** uses the information collected to do research, primarily to inform educational policy changes and funding. The research is done in a way that ensures individual pupils cannot be identified. Examples of the sort of statistics produced can be viewed at <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research>

The **LA** also uses the personal information collected to do research. It uses the results of the research to make decisions on policy and the funding of schools, to calculate the performance of schools and help them to set targets. The research is done in a way that ensures individual pupils cannot be identified.

The **School** uses the information it collects to administer the education it provides to pupils. For example;

- the provision of educational services to individuals;
- monitoring and reporting on pupils' educational progress;
- the provision of welfare, pastoral care and health services;
- the giving of support and guidance to pupils, their parents and legal guardians;
- the organisation of educational events and trips;
- planning and management of the school.

Organisations who may share personal information

Information held by the School, LA and the Welsh Government on pupils, their parents or legal guardians may be shared with other organisations when the law allows, for example with:

- other education and training bodies, including schools, when pupils are applying for courses, training, school transfers or seeking guidance on opportunities;
- bodies doing research for the Welsh Government, LA and Schools, so long as steps are taken to keep the information secure;
- central government, local government and education consortia for the planning and provision of educational services;
- social services and other health and welfare organisations where there is a need to share information to protect and support individual pupils;
- various regulatory bodies, such as ombudsmen and inspection authorities, where the law requires that information be passed on so that they can do their work.

Your Data Protection rights

You have the right to:

- Obtain access to the personal data that Ceredigion County Council is processing about you;
- Have any inaccurate or incomplete information rectified (corrected);
- Withdraw your consent to processing, where this is the only basis for the processing;
- Make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the independent body in the UK which protects information rights.

In some circumstances, you may have the right to:

- Object to the processing of your personal information;
- The erasure of your personal data;
- Restrict the processing of your personal data;
- Data portability.

Contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office along with further guidance on Data Protection legislation can be found on the [ICO website](#).

Holidays during term time

Can I take my child on holiday during term time?

The LA actively discourages holidays in term time in that they are damaging to the pupil's continuity of learning. Parents do not have an automatic right for time off school for family holidays and they should not expect that schools will normally agree to this. Headteachers do have at their disposal the discretion to grant permission and parents have to apply for permission in advance. However schools will only agree to absence for a family holiday if they believe there are special circumstances which warrant it. Schools will only agree to absence of more than 10 school days in a school year if they believe there are exceptional circumstances.

Charges for education

Will I have to pay for my child's education?

No. All state schools are free for all children. The school will supply free of charge equipment needed including books, papers, pens and pencils.

You may be asked occasionally to make a voluntary contribution towards some school activities that take place during school hours.

The objectives of charging provisions in the Education Reform Act 1988 (as incorporated in subsequent Education Acts) came into force from 1st April, 1989, are:

- to maintain the right of free school education;
- to establish that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching time should be available to all pupils regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost;
- to emphasise that there is no statutory requirement to charge for any form of education or related activity, but to give LAs and schools the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours;
- to confirm the right of LAs and schools to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school, or in support of any activity organised by the school, whether during or outside school hours.

The circumstances where charging is permitted can be divided into four categories though in each category there are exceptions where charging is not allowed. The categories are:

- i) Individual Instrumental Music Tuition: The Education Act 1993 (as amended by succeeding Acts) permits charging for Instrumental Music Tuition in particular circumstances. (This must be provided free where it forms part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination);
- ii) Board and Lodging;
- iii) Education outside School Hours (Optional Extras);
- iv) Recovery of Examination Fees: Where a pupil is entered for an examination for which he or she has not been prepared by the school e.g. has received private tuition, or where pupil re-sits an examination for which no additional preparation has been given since the examination, the examination entry fee can be passed on to parents.

If a pupil fails to fulfil the examination requirements of a public examination (prescribed or otherwise) without good reason (as defined by whichever body paid the fee), the LA or Governing Body may recover from the parents any fees paid.

The Education Reform Act 1988 (as amended in succeeding Acts) requires LAs and Governing Bodies to draw up their own policies in respect of charges and remission arrangements. The charging policies determined by the Governing Body should not be less favourable than the policy of the LA. Should further information be required the Headteacher or the Chief Education Officer can provide a copy of the policy document.

School governing bodies

Since 1st September 1999 each school has had to have its own governing body which comprises of members of the local community, parents, teachers and representatives of the Local Authority. Governing Bodies of Church Schools (Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled) are also represented by the church authority.

In recent years, a succession of Education Acts has greatly increased the roles and responsibilities of Governing Bodies and also the accountability for their actions. The day to day running of a school is still the responsibility of the Headteacher but governing bodies have general oversight of the schools, in particular to matters pertaining to the curriculum, discipline, finance and staffing.

In order to assist governors in carrying out their duties, the Authority provides extensive support and a comprehensive training programme on all aspects of governors' responsibilities.

Further information regarding governing bodies can be obtained from the Chief Education Officer or on the County's website www.ceredigion.gov.uk

How are schools organised

What are the expected ages for each school year?

	<i>Description</i>		<i>Age of the majority of pupils at end of school year</i>
Primary	Nursery	Part-time	3
		Full-time	4
	Reception	Infant	5
	Y1	Infant	6
	Y2	Infant	7
	Y3	Junior	8
	Y4	Junior	9
	Y5	Junior	10
	Y6	Junior	11
	Secondary	Y7	Secondary
Y8		Secondary	13
Y9		Secondary	14
Y10		Secondary	15
Y11		Secondary	16
Y12		Secondary – 6th form	17
Y13		Secondary – 6th form	18

Y - Year

It must be noted that some children may be taught in classes with children of a different age group. Headteachers can answer queries with reference to this.

Primary Education

In Ceredigion, there are 36 primary schools providing for children from 4-11 years old.

11 of these primary schools have specific nursery classes connected to them providing for children from 3-4 years old. The letter 'N' on the list of schools denotes schools which have nursery classes. The 3-16 and 3-19 schools also have nursery classes.

(The Local Authority, however, funds a number of non-maintained providers, e.g. Cylch Meithrin, Playgroups and Day Nurseries, to provide part-time education on their behalf. A full list of these providers can be found on the Family Information Service website – [Gwybodaeth Gofal Plant Cymru - Child Care Information Wales](#))

Approximately 25% of the Authority's primary schools have 50 pupils or less on the register. In the majority of schools, the Welsh language is the main medium of the life and work of the school.

What are the school year groups within the County's primary schools?

Following the Curriculum for Wales system the various age groups are denoted according to specific years - Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and so on up to Year 6.

After celebrating their 11th birthday, all pupils should transfer to the secondary sector. Please note that education is seamless in 3 to 16 and 3 to 19 schools.

What will my child be taught at Primary and Secondary School?

All pupils who are of compulsory school age and are in schools maintained by the Local Authority or providing Education on its behalf, follow the Curriculum for Wales or the National Curriculum.

Following the arrival of a Curriculum for Wales which became statutory in primary schools in Wales in September 2022, there are changes to what is taught.

When will Curriculum for Wales be adopted by Welsh schools?

This is when the new curriculum will be taught:

- September 2022 – Up to year 6 and some from year 7
- September 2023 – Year 7 and 8

The curriculum is then introduced year by year until it includes year 11 by 2026.

Following the adoption of a Curriculum for Wales

Your school will help your child to be:

- an ambitious, capable learner, who is ready to learn throughout their life
- an enterprising, creative contributor, who is ready to play a full part in life and work
- a principled, informed citizen, who is ready to play a role in Wales and the world, and
- a healthy, confident individual, who is ready to live a full life as a valuable member of society

These are called the 'four purposes' of the curriculum.

Secondary Education

What is my child taught in Secondary School?

All pupils of compulsory school age who are in maintained schools follow the Curriculum for Wales.

In relation to the local curriculum or local curricula for students aged 16 to 18 for a local authority area, the local authority must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the maximum number of courses study are included in a local curriculum. The local curriculum for students 16 to 18 will include a minimum of 30 learning courses at level 3 and offer at least 5 general courses and 5 vocational courses. For students 14 to 16 each local curriculum should offer 25 courses, 3 of which are vocational.

If you have any questions about the education provision of any of the four secondary schools, the 3-16 school or the two 3-19 schools within Ceredigion, please contact the Headteacher of the appropriate school.

Curriculum Reform in Wales

The Welsh education system is currently undergoing a significant reform process.

For more information regarding the details of the reforms, please follow the links below:

[Education is changing | GOV.WALES](#)

[A new curriculum in Wales: easy read - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

Tests and Exams

The Local Authority will comply with the requirements of statute. All examinations for which pupils are prepared in school time must be approved by the Schools Examination and Assessment Council. The Local Authority will enter pupils for such examinations after appropriate consultation with parents, and in accordance with the school's recommendation. The timetable for the majority of these external examinations is arranged by the WJEC (Welsh Joint Education Committee).

Statement on Public Examinations

The Local Authority would support the Governing Body's policy in securing that each registered pupil at the School is entered, at such time as they consider appropriate, for each prescribed public examination for which he/she is being prepared at the School at the time in question in each syllabus for that examination for which he/she is being so prepared.

The Governing Body shall not be required to secure that a pupil is entered for any examination, or for any examination in any syllabus for that examination, if either:

- a) the Governing Body consider that there are educational reasons in the case of that particular pupil for not entering him/her for that examination or (as the case may be) for not entering him/her for that examination in that syllabus; or
- b) the parent of the pupil requests in writing that the pupil should not be entered for that examination or (as the case may be) for that examination in that syllabus.

Neither is the Governing Body required to secure that a pupil is entered for any examination in any syllabus for that examination if the Governing Body have secured that pupil's entry for another prescribed public examination in a corresponding syllabus.

Further information may be obtained from the school.

Religion

What about religion at school?

All religious education in the Local Authority's county and controlled schools is in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus which is required by law. Although Religious Education must be non-denominational, teaching about denominational differences is allowed and religious education must be provided for all pupils. Each school must hold a daily act of collective worship. The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) has prepared advice and guidance to schools on this.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education and may do so having informed the Governing Body in writing.

Complaints about the Curriculum

What should I do if I have a complaint to make about the Curriculum and related matters?

If you have any concerns you should in the first instance discuss them with the Headteacher. However should you wish to make the complaint formal, the Local Authority has procedures in place a copy of which is available at the school or at the Schools Service. Where appropriate those who make a formal complaint may make representations before an Appeals Panel. (Please contact the respective school or the Schools Service for further information).

Language of Learning

Does every child have to learn Welsh and English?

For schools in Ceredigion the teaching of Welsh and English, either as a first or second language, is one of the **essential Curriculum for Wales requirements which reflects the Curriculum for Wales from September 2022.**

Special provision may be made for the following groups:

- i) pupils who have moved into the area recently - for whom extra tuition in the Welsh language will be provided at nearby language centres for pupils in the primary sector.
- ii) pupils who have received an official assessment to be taught mainly through their first language is essential.

What is the County's policy on the teaching of Welsh and English in its primary schools?

Ceredigion Local Authority has a firm policy on the teaching of Welsh and English in its schools. The Local Authority's aim is to educate pupils so that they are thoroughly bilingual by the time they leave the primary school. In this way pupils will find that they are able to participate fully in the bilingual community of which they are a part. In order to support your child's development in the Welsh language, we urge you to consider how practical it would be for your child to have opportunities outside the classroom. This can be done in several ways:

- Encourage your child to take part in social activities through the medium of Welsh, under the auspices of the Urdd, the Young Farmers' Clubs or other organisations;
- Support your child to practise the reading of Welsh books;
- Help your child to discover the Welsh media – television, radio and internet;
- If you cannot speak Welsh, you can try learning the language alongside your child. The lessons are fun and learning the Welsh language can open doors socially and in the world of work. We have also established 'Welsh for the Family' classes, lessons which have been specially tailored for parents in terms of time and content.

Certain areas of the county have distinctive cultural and linguistic characteristics which need to be taken into consideration when evolving an effective language policy for Ceredigion as a whole.

We follow the Welsh Government's document on setting linguistic categories for schools - [Please click here for further information](#)

What are the principles governing the teaching of Welsh and English in the County's secondary schools?

In order to continue to successfully develop bilingual skills it is expected in general that pupils that have studied Welsh as a first language at primary school will continue to do so at secondary school. Pupils that have studied Welsh as a second language can transfer, under certain circumstances, to study Welsh as a first language.

Secondary Schools meet the requirements of the National Curriculum by providing the teaching of Welsh as a subject to the age of 16 as well as a range of subjects through the medium of Welsh or bilingually.

Details regarding the policies of each school are to be found in the individual prospectuses and the county's Schools' Welsh Language Strategy is on the Council's website.

In order to continue to successfully develop bilingual skills, schools are generally expected to ensure that pathways are available for all learners to learn Welsh and English in order to enable them to gain the confidence to use both languages in everyday life. Providing opportunities to use the Welsh language in the classroom and beyond will support learners to use the Welsh language confidently.

We follow the Welsh Government's document on setting linguistic categories for schools - [Please click here for further information](#)

ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

What provision can a child with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) expect in Ceredigion?

There are a variety of support systems available for children with SEN/ALN in both the primary and secondary sectors.

- i) The majority of children receive appropriate support in their local mainstream school. Depending on the severity of need this can range from differentiation of tasks by the teacher and receiving intervention in groups to access support from a teaching assistant.
- ii) **Specialist Resource Centres.** Several centres cater for children with more severe and/or complex learning difficulties and are staffed by specially qualified and experienced teaching and support staff. There are also three centres that cater for children who have a range of emotional, social, behavioural and mental health needs.
- iii) For a very few children with severe and complex needs, consideration may be given to out-of-county placement.

The Local Authority's **Educational Psychology Service** works to support the development and learning of children and young people through the use of psychology, by working with individuals and groups of children and young people, teachers, families and other agencies.

The Local Authority's **ALN Advisory Team** work with school staff to provide advice and support with meeting the needs of pupils across the range of ALN. This includes supporting pupils with hearing and/or visual difficulties.

The Local Authority's **Support and Prevention Service** is made up of multi-disciplined teams, with the overall aim of providing child and youth-led approaches to enable children and young people to be empowered, to achieve, to develop personally, emotionally, socially and be the best that they can be. The team provides transition, emotional wellbeing and nurture support to primary/secondary pupils via mentoring and outreach. The Local Authority's **Extended Support Service** also provides advice and support to the parents of pre-school and school children with disabilities.

How are the needs of pupils with ALN identified, assessed and provided for?

It is important to identify the needs of children with ALN at the earliest possible opportunity.

Pre-school children who may have ALN are usually referred to the Local Authority via the NHS Health Boards, the Extended Support Service, the MM/PPA Referral Scheme or Social Services Department although the referral might come from the parents themselves. The child's needs may be assessed by the Educational

Psychology Service and/or other agencies and, where necessary, appropriate provision made after full discussion with the parents.

A child already in school would have his/her learning needs identified by the teaching staff through close observation and recording or by a professional involved with the child.

Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (ALN ET 2018)

The system for supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disability in Wales has changed. Transformation of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) is underway. The act is a flexible and responsive system that meets the needs of children with special educational needs or disabilities providing a fully inclusive education system for Welsh learners.

The Act ensures that:

- needs are identified early, addressed quickly and all learners are supported to reach their potential;
- our professionals are skilled and confident in identifying needs and deploying strategies to help learners overcome their barriers to learning;
- the learner is at the centre of everything we do and that they and their parents and carers are equal partners in their learning (Individual Centred Approach).

The ALN system is in place and will be gradually introduced between September 2021 and August 2025. This means that the new ALN system and the SEN system run side by side for different cohorts of learners during the period of Transforming ALN.

For matters in relation to the SEN system, the SEN Code of Practice for Wales provides practical advice for local authorities, maintained schools, early years settings and others who undertake their statutory duties to identify, assess and make provision for the children's special educational needs.

The general principles are that:

- Provision should be made for every child with special educational needs;
- the special educational needs of children will normally be met in mainstream schools;
- the views of the child should be sought and taken into account;
- parents have a vital role to play in supporting their child's education;
- children with special educational needs should have access to a broad, balanced and relevant education.

For matters relating to the new ALN system, a new **Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021** has been produced by the Welsh Government and will eventually replace the current SEN Code of Practice. The new ALN Code is the statutory guidance to which all Local Authorities, schools and settings must have regard.

What if I need support and advice regarding the ALN provision for my child?

In the first instance you should contact the headteacher and/or Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) at your child's school. If your concerns are not addressed at this level, the LA have an ALN Pupil and Family Support Co-ordinator who is able to provide information and advice with matters relating to additional learning needs. In addition, the LA will then make arrangements for a SNAP (Special Needs Advisory Project) Parent Partnership Service and a Dispute Resolution Service.

Your right to appeal to the Education Tribunal for Wales is not affected by entering into the above services.

What if my child with special needs has to travel to a school other than the local school?

When the LA names a school in a child's Individual Development Plan (IDP)/statement, and it's different to the nearest school to where you live, the LA is responsible for providing transport. It is open to the LA to name the school preferred by the child's parents, so long as the parents meet the transport costs.

Where can I obtain further information on ALN?

There is more information available via Ceredigion County Council's website. Click on the 'Schools and Education' button and then on the 'Additional Learning Needs (ALN)' and/or 'Special Educational Needs (SEN)' buttons.

Any further information can be obtained from the **Chief Education Officer, Canolfan Rheidol, Rhodfa Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3UE.**

Other Provisions

If my child is admitted to hospital what education facilities are available there?

Education facilities are made available in hospitals where children are admitted for treatment and may be patients for more than a few days. The hospital education service maintains close contacts with the child's usual school to ensure there is continuity of education.

Is there any occasion when home tuition is provided by the Local Authority?

Home tuition is provided for some children, such as those who are at home recovering after a stay in hospital, or who have medical problems and are temporarily unable to attend school.

If home tuition is felt to be necessary, a request will be sent to the Chief Education Officer by the child's headteacher or the Education Inclusion Officers (EIO) for the area.

INCLUSION SERVICES

Education Inclusion Officers

What is the role of the Education Inclusion Officer (EIOs)?

Ceredigion is served by a team of EIOs who provide a link between the school, the Schools Service, the families of pupils and the children/young persons.

They have quite a different role to play from teachers and their aim is to ensure that children are helped in getting full benefit from their education. Most of their work comes from schools but you can speak to an EIO any time you wish to have advice about:

- Your child's education/school attendance
- Changing schools
- Employment of children (that is when your child has a job)
- Performing (that is when your child is taking part in films, plays, pantomime, etc. during school hours)
- Pre-school admissions
- Your child's illness
- Other support services

EIOs also do court work for the Local Authority. Once registered in a state school a parent commits her/himself to the law regarding school attendance and therefore if they fail to ensure good attendance the EIO may well take court action at the Magistrates court, which could result in a fine being imposed to a maximum of £2,500.

EIOs are also responsible for the administration and issuing of penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school (once a request is received from school).

EIOs are also responsible for applying at the Family Proceedings Court for Education Supervision Orders.

EIOs also undertake the monitoring of the educational progress of Looked After Children that are under the care of the local authority.

Safeguarding Children

All schools within Ceredigion adhere to the 'WALES SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES 2019', the 'Keeping Learners Safe 2020' guidance document and the 'Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014'. All schools in the County have a range of policies relating to protection including the Child Protection Policy and an Anti-Bullying Policy which are audited annually. Staff employed at schools have a duty in safeguarding and promoting children's welfare and must report all concerns if a child or young person is experiencing or at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm to the School's Designated Child Protection Officer. All school staff receive training on matters pertaining to safeguarding and protection of children. The school's Child Protection Officer receives additional training that enables them to make informed decisions with regard to matters brought to their attention. In addition all schools adhere to the 'WALES SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES 2019' when an allegation is made against a person who has contact with pupils through their work. Prior to making a safeguarding referral they may seek advice either from the LA's Named Officer for Child Protection or from the Duty Officer at Ceredigion Social Services Department.

Effective sharing and exchange of relevant information between professionals is essential in order to safeguard children. Whenever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties, but the public interest in child protection always overrides the public interest in maintaining confidentiality or obtaining consent from families. A child's safety is the paramount consideration in weighing these interests.

SERVICES TO PUPILS

School Meals and Milk

Are meals available in all schools?

Yes. Your child may buy dinner at the school. However, if your child has any medical dietary requirements you should discuss the matter with the headteacher so that the child is served appropriate meals. A letter will be required from either the pupil's doctor or dietician. Children may wish to bring a packed lunch from home. If so they will be allowed to eat it in school and will be supervised.

All school meals are made daily, using natural ingredients and traditional cooking methods. Wherever possible we endeavour to source our ingredients locally.

The Local Authority fully support the Welsh Government's plan for improving food and drink provided in schools in Wales in conjunction with the Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standard and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013. These Regulations are based on the previous Appetite for Life guidelines and form part of the wider Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2009 ('Measure').

The Benefits of a School Meal

- Your child can benefit from healthy nutritious meals, saving you time not to have to make a packed lunch.
- Children benefit from sitting down and eating together at a table and are encouraged to try new foods.
- Your child will develop healthy eating habits at an early age which hopefully will continue into later life.
- Your child will receive a 1/3 of their daily nutritional requirements by having a school meal.
- Meals are balanced and healthy and there is variety from one day to the next.
- We cater for vegetarians and all special diets whilst considering religious and medical nutritional requirements.
- Your child can join in with special themed meals that link in with subjects being taught in class and also national initiatives.

School meals are excellent value for money and provide a healthy and nutritious two course meal and drink.

Allergen Information

From 13 December 2014, the EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation (EU FIC) comes into force. The EU law has listed 14 allergens that need to be identified if they are used as ingredients in a dish. This means that from 13th of December 2014, information will be available at your Child's school kitchen for every item on the menu that contains any of the 14 allergens as ingredients.

The 14 Major Allergens are - **Celery, Cereals containing Gluten, Crustaceans, Eggs, Fish, Lupin, Milk, Molluscs, Mustard, Nuts, Peanuts, Sesame Seeds, Soya, Sulphur Dioxide.**

How to pay for your child's lunch

From September 2023, **all primary aged pupils** attending on a full-time basis in schools in Ceredigion are entitled to free meals as part of the roll out of the Universal Free School Meals scheme, which is funded through the Welsh Government.

In the secondary sector, payment for school meals is to be made using a secure website and you will be able to pay online using your credit/debit card. Payments should be made weekly in advance. Once your child has started school, you will receive an activation e-mail to create your account.

Free School Meals (FSM)

Free school meals are available to eligible pupils who attend schools, on a full-time basis, which are under the jurisdiction of Ceredigion Education Authority. This includes 6th form pupils

A pupil may be able to get free meals if their parent or guardian (that is, the person who has care of the child) gets any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- from 1 April 2019, Universal Credit - provided your household has an annualised net earned income¹ of no more than £7,400 (as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods)

¹ Net earned income is defined as household income after taxes and deductions. It does not include income from Universal Credit or other benefits.

If your children receive Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance in their own right, they could also be able to receive free school meals.

You can apply on-line on the Ceredigion website or, alternatively, you can contact the Local Authority on 01545 570 881 in order to complete an application over the telephone or visit one of our [Customer Service Centres](#).

Initial and ongoing checks to confirm your eligibility will be made using your National Insurance Number and Date of Birth, these should be completed automatically once your claim is processed and approved.

Where checks are impossible or inconclusive we will ask you to provide documentary proof.

Changes in Circumstances

If your circumstances change then you will need to inform the Local Authority immediately. In instances where claimants fail to notify the Authority of changes that affect their children's entitlement to free school meals, the Authority reserves the right to take suitable action. Please note that not all changes will result in any changes to receipt of Free School Meals due to Transitional Protection.

What is "Transitional Protection"?

On 1st April 2019, the Welsh Government introduced new rules for claiming free school meals. Because of this, a relatively small number of children and young people could have lost their eligibility for free school meals. "Transitional Protection" was introduced to ensure that these children and young people could continue to receive free school meals for a limited period of time.

Transitional Protection can be summarised as follows:

- Any child or young person who was eligible for free school meals on 1st April 2019, when the new rules were introduced, will have their free school meals protected until 31st December 2023², even if their circumstances change and they no longer meet the eligibility criteria.

² This is the point by which the Department for Work and Pensions expects Universal Credit to be fully rolled out, and is based on the most up-to-date expectations at the time of writing.

- Any child or young person who becomes eligible for free school meals between 1st April 2019, when the new rules were introduced, and 31st December 2023, will have their free school meals protected until 31st December 2023, even if their circumstances change and they no longer meet the eligibility criteria.
- Any child or young person who is eligible for free school meals on 31st December 2023 will continue to have their free school meals protected until the end of their current school phase (i.e. until they finish in the phase they are in on 31st December 2023, either primary education or secondary education). This applies even if their circumstances change and they no longer meet the eligibility criteria.
- Transitional protection will not be extended to claimants who are not on Universal Credit or legacy benefits, and are therefore unaffected by the change in free school meals eligibility criteria.

For further information regarding the changes made by Welsh Government to Free School Meals please see the following link: <https://gov.wales/free-school-meals-frequently-asked-questions>

Do pupils have free milk in school?

The LA provides milk for pupils through the European Union funded milk subsidy scheme for Foundation Learning Phase pupils (Years 1 and 2), and for pupils under the age of 5 through the Welsh Government nursery milk scheme. Children attending the County's special needs units also have free milk.

Free school breakfasts

Free school breakfast is available at some primary schools within the County and some schools have 'before-school' clubs. Ask your school for further details.

School Essentials Grant

Can I apply for a school uniform grant?

Yes. This has now been re-named as **School Essentials**. If your child is in Reception, or any other school year up to Year 11, in September 2023 and is eligible for Free School Meals, you may be entitled to a grant, funded by Welsh Government. All Looked After Children from Reception up to Year 11 are also eligible for the grant.

Applications should be made via the following link:

<https://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/resident/schools-education/school-essentials/>

If an application is successful, a BACS transfer will then be issued in due course. Applications for academic year 2023/24 will close on 30th June 2024.

Pupils starting Reception in January or April 2024 will be able to apply for this grant in September 2024.

Families are only entitled to claim once per child, per school year.

Can I apply for a maintenance grant?

An Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is an incentive allowance paid to eligible young people who stay on at school or college after school leaving age, attend regularly and achieve learning goals.

The Welsh Government recognises that some young people from low income households need extra support and encouragement to continue in education after school leaving age in order to make the best of their learning and development opportunities.

For more information contact your secondary school or search for 'EMA' in the website

www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

Music Service

Taking part in music and other cultural activities can have a significant positive impact on a young person's development. The County's Music Service provide a range of musical experiences including instrumental lessons and access to music instruments. In addition, pupils have opportunities to participate as a member of Ensembles, Orchestras and Choirs on a County and National level.

Further information about the Service is available from your school or by contacting the Music Service directly on gwasanaeth.cerdd@ceredigion.gov.uk

My child has been invited to represent the County at national level. Is there any support that I can apply for?

The Schools Service will consider applications from pupils who are invited to attend National/International courses for music. Pupils that are invited should contact either the Peripatetic Music teacher or email gwasanaeth.cerdd@ceredigion.gov.uk to request an application form. The application form must be completed by the applicant and authorised by the course leader/tutor after completion of the course. The grant is a contribution towards the cost of the course and is available to pupils currently attending a school within Ceredigion. Some of the courses eligible for consideration are with the National Youth Brass Band, National Youth Choirs, National Youth Jazz, National Youth Wind Orchestra of Wales and National Youth Theatre of Wales.

School Counselling Service

The School Counselling Service is a professional, confidential service available to pupils in secondary schools and year 6 in Ceredigion. The service offers young people a regular space to talk and think about things that are important to them. The service operates in line with British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP) Ethical Framework and emerging Welsh Assembly Government School-based Counselling Services in Wales Strategy. The counselling service provides support for children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural concerns, supporting them in fulfilling their potential. The service consists of professionally qualified counsellors, supervisors and trainers with many years of experience of working with children and young people.

The counselling service is tailored to the individual requirements of children and young people. It provides:

- one to one counselling for young people
- staff training upon request
- consultancy
- links and liaison with other appropriate agencies
- group work after liaison with other agencies
- a service which should be promoted as support and should have no stigma attached to it
- access to one to one counselling sessions in school will be by self-referral by young people of Secondary School age. Referrals can also be made by school staff, other professionals working with young people and parents/guardians with the young person's consent.

All secondary schools in Ceredigion operate their School Based Counselling service in accordance with the Secondary School Based Counselling Policy for Counselling for Ceredigion.

HOME TO SCHOOL/COLLEGE TRANSPORT

Is every child provided with free school transport?

No. The Local Authority provides free school transport for children of statutory school age on the following basis:

- i) Primary age pupils who live over two miles from the nearest appropriate primary school
- ii) Secondary age pupils who live over three miles from the nearest appropriate secondary school.

There are a number of discretionary circumstances where transport may be provided.

Statements on Home to School/College Transport

1. PUPILS

The obligation on the LA to provide free transport to facilitate attendance of pupils at school is provided for in Section 509 of the Education Act 1996 and The Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.

- a) Transport will be provided free of charge for pupils of primary and secondary school age travelling over the statutory walking distance to/from the main entrance of their nearest suitable school.

A pupil applying for assistance must be a Ceredigion resident. If he/she is attending the nearest suitable school and the distance between home and school by the shortest pedestrian route is equal to or greater than the distances indicated below, they will normally be provided with free transport.

Primary Aged Pupils (from 5 years of age) – 2 miles or more from the school.

Secondary Aged Pupils – 3 miles or more from the school.

Distance is measured by the shortest walking route between home and school. (From the nearest council maintained road to the property, to the main school entrance).

- b) Assistance may also be provided for pupils in certain circumstances on the grounds of:
- capacity
 - closure of school / re-organisation of school(s)
 - safety
 - medical
 - statement of educational needs
 - a change of residence in a final examination year
 - continuation of an advanced course of study not being available at the designated school
 - religious beliefs (within an 8 miles radius of the school)
 - post 16 students

2. STUDENTS OF FURTHER EDUCATION

Assistance for individuals aged 16 to 19 attending College will be provided by the most economic basis similar to pupils aged 16+ attending Secondary Schools. Please contact the Corporate Passenger Transport Unit for further information.

3. GENERAL

- i) To help ensure that the vehicle loadings remain within the legislative requirements each pupil is issued with their own 'travel ticket' indicating the vehicle to which they have been allocated. Whilst there is some lee-way given at the beginning of the Autumn Term, generally pupils who are not able to display the ticket will not be carried by the contractor. It is important therefore that if a parent thinks his/her child qualifies for "free transport" that the appropriate application form is submitted to the Corporate Passenger Transport Unit **no later than 21 December 2023**.
- ii) The majority of pupils entitled to assistance will be conveyed by vehicles specifically contracted to the LA however use may also be made of public passenger transport or a fixed rate mileage allowance may be made for parents/pupils making use of their own vehicles.
- iii) Booklets are available from the Corporate Passenger Transport Unit offering advice and guidance for pupils/students and parents on what they can do in order that the journey to and from school/college may be undertaken safely.
- iv) Where contract or public passenger vehicles are used then it is not always possible to arrange the routes of vehicles to pass close to the homes of all pupils. Parents may therefore be required to make their own arrangements for their children to get to and from the nearest 'pick-up' point of the vehicle. Every effort is made to keep this distance as short as possible and it should not exceed 1.5 miles. **IN THESE INSTANCES THE ASSISTANCE OF PARENTS IN ESCORTING PUPILS SAFELY TO AND FROM VEHICLES IS SOUGHT.**
- v) Parents are requested to note that they may appeal against a decision to refuse to provide free transport. Such an appeal should be submitted with any supporting evidence to the Chief Education Officer within 28 days of being notified of the original decision.

The Corporate Passenger Transport Unit may be contacted on 01545 57 0881

or e-mail technical.services@ceredigion.gov.uk

CHILD CARE OFFER FOR WALES

The Welsh Government recognises that affordable, available, and accessible childcare enables parents to work, supporting its drive to increase economic growth, tackle poverty and reduce inequalities.

The Childcare Offer is open to any family living in Wales as long as they meet the eligibility criteria.

If you are a working parent, or in education or training, and your child is aged 3 or 4 years old you may be eligible for a combination of 30 hours per week of Childcare and Early Years Education for up to 48 weeks of the year. The number of childcare hours will depend on the number of Early Years Education hours you are receiving.

For further information, to check your eligibility and to apply please visit <https://www.gov.wales/childcare-offer-for-wales-campaign>

Or you can contact Clic Ceredigion – Ceredigion County Council by telephone on 01545 570 881 or you may call the Childcare Offer for Wales helpline on 03000 628 628.

THE CAREERS SERVICE

Careers Wales aims to help young people make those difficult decisions about their future. It has up-to-date expert knowledge of education, training and employment and usually pupils are seen by Careers Advisers in school from Year 9 onwards, to help them plan their future by:-

- discussing what subjects to study and the significance of their choice;
- providing support in making career decisions;
- assisting them to formulate a careers action plan;
- giving information about the labour market, jobs, careers, further education, higher education and the many training courses available;
- informing them about job vacancies, training opportunities and college courses, entry requirements and applications;
- providing specialist help for those with disabilities and promoting equality of opportunity, irrespective of circumstances.

Careers Wales seeks to ensure that parents and guardians are aware of all the services on offer and actively encourages parental involvement throughout the careers guidance process. To secure parental involvement, Careers Wales offers a flexible service which is responsive to parents' needs in terms of time, place and context and includes individual discussions with parents at schools, careers centres or at parents evenings and careers events.

Get information, resources and tips to help your child make career decisions and find out more about the support we offer as your child goes from education to employment on the parent pages of our website - [Careers Wales | Careers Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)

Careers Advisers may be contacted through the school or at Careers Wales:-

[Tel:- 0800 028 4844.](tel:08000284844)

Webchat: www.careerswales.gov.wales

E-mail: post@careerswales.gov.wales e-mail your query or question and we will answer within two working days.

THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERVICE

The Local Authority is committed to lifelong learning. The service offers opportunities for everybody in the area to improve their living standards through learning new skills and gaining access to our culture and way of life. The activities available have been aimed to meet the needs of young people (through statutory and voluntary sectors) and the adult sector.

For adults, classes are held during the day and in the evenings in several centres across the County. The classes include Welsh for Adults / Welsh for the Family as well as bilingual courses in several areas. Further information can be obtained from the County Council's website: www.ceredigion.gov.uk and at www.dysgubro.org.uk

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The County Council's Culture Department works closely with schools and communities in Ceredigion providing opportunities for children and young people to enjoy and learn more about the unique culture and heritage of the county and beyond, and to take part in a variety of cultural activities.

CERED, Ceredigion's Welsh Language Initiative organises an annual programme of activity to support and encourage individuals, organisations, groups and communities in their use of the Welsh language. The programme includes educational and fun activities for families, children and young people, adults, Welsh learners and communities including story telling sessions, drama club, music workshops, quizzes, nature walks, computer workshops etc.

Theatr Felinfach offers a variety of creative activities for all ages: singing sessions, dance and stories for babies and small children and their parents, dance clubs, drama clubs, a performance school and youth theatre activities – all the activities operate an open-door policy and promote Welsh and bilingualism in a way that is fun, creative and social.

Ceredigion Museum offers opportunities for children to learn more about the county's history, culture and heritage. School visits to the Museum in Aberystwyth enable children to take part in workshops and enjoy the wide variety of exhibits. The Museum also lends themed Handling Collection boxes to schools full of original artefacts and information for teachers to use in class.

Schools also benefit from educational theatrical performances by professional touring companies such as Arad Goch Theatre Company and "In Character".