

Where to get help

In Wigan, the School Places Team at Children and Young People's Services deals with admissions to schools. We will be pleased to help if you have any questions or need extra information.

You can contact us as follows.

Address: School Places Team
Children and Young People's Services
Progress House
Westwood Park Drive
Wigan
WN3 4HH

Phone: 01942 486039 or 01942 486038 or 01942 486037

E-mail: schoolplaces@wigan.gov.uk

There is also information on our website at www.wigan.gov.uk.

Other useful phone numbers

School transport	01942 486139 or 01942 486140
Special educational needs	01942 486132
Free school meals	01942 828609
SureStart team (early years)	01942 486050
General education enquiries	01942 486123

Other local education authorities

Bolton Children's Services	01204 332137
Lancashire Children's Services	01772 531813
Salford Children's Services	0161 778 0415
St Helens Children and Young People's Services	01744 671030
Trafford Education Department	0161 912 5007
Warrington Children's Services Directorate	01925 442951

Applying online

It's a good idea to apply online for your child's place at primary school because:

- it is quick and secure;
- we will confirm we have received your application;
- you can change your application at any time up until the closing date for applications (29 January 2010);
- there are clear, simple instructions to guide you through making your application; and
- the service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the application period – from December 2009 to 29 January 2010.

What will I need to apply online?

You will need:

- a computer with access to the internet; and
- an e-mail account.

I don't have a computer at home. How can I apply online?

If you don't have access to the internet at home, you can apply online at:

- an internet cafe; or
- a library (we recommend you book a computer beforehand).

If you need any help or guidance on using the online service, please contact us:

- by phone on 01942 486039 (lines are open from 8:45am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday); or
- by sending an e-mail to schoolplaces@wigan.gov.uk.

Use this space to write down your username and password, which you will receive when you register online.

Username: Password:

Applying for a place at primary school

On the next few pages, we have set out when each stage of the application process will take place and what you need to do.

December 2009

You will receive an application pack.

The primary school where you have registered an interest will send you:

- a copy of this booklet;
- the Wigan Council primary school application form;
- an envelope so you can send your application back to us; and
- information about how to apply online.

December 2009 to 29 January 2010

Decide which schools you want to apply for in order of priority.

Please read this booklet carefully because it:

- explains how we decide which school to offer your child; and
- gives information to help you decide if you are likely to get a place at a particular school.

You can get school prospectuses (information about the school) from the schools. You can visit schools' websites on www.wiganschoolsonline.net.

How to apply for a primary school place

You must apply by filling in the **Wigan Council primary school application form** or **by applying online**. The application form and the online service allow you to name three schools in order of preference. You will only be considered for the schools you name as a preference.

You might have filled in a form at a school when you told them you were interested in sending your child there, but this is not an application. It will not count when we decide who to give places to.

Preferences for voluntary-aided (church) schools and supplementary information forms

If any of your preferred schools is a voluntary-aided (church) school, we strongly advise you to fill in the school's own supplementary information form as well as the Wigan Council primary school application form. If you do not fill in the school's own supplementary information form, the school will not have all the information they

need to consider your application against their faith criteria and your child may be refused a place.

You can get a copy of the supplementary information form:

- from the school;
- by calling the School Places Team on 01942 486037; or
- by downloading one from our website.

If you name a voluntary-aided (church) school as a preference and you do not fill in the school's supplementary information form, the school will not have all the information they need to consider your application and your child may be refused a place.

Returning your Wigan Council primary school application form and supplementary information forms

You can hand in your form at any Wigan primary school in the envelope provided. You should make sure the following documents are inside your envelope before sealing it.

Your filled-in and signed Wigan Council primary school application form.

Any voluntary-aided (church) supplementary information forms.

Proof of your address, which should be a recent utility (gas, water or electricity) bill, a council tax bill, your driving licence, or a benefit letter which shows that you live at the named address on the closing date for applications (29 January 2010).

You will receive a receipt for your application. You will need to keep the receipt safe until you get a letter telling you that your child has a place at a school.

Applying online

You will receive an e-mail letting you know your application has been received. The e-mail will also show your preferences. You will need to keep it safe until you get a letter telling you that your child has a place at a school.

Please return any supplementary information forms and proof of your address in the envelope provided to any Wigan Primary School or by post to Wigan Council, School Places Team, CYPS, Progress House, Westwood Park Drive, Wigan WN3 4HH.

29 January 2010

The closing date for applications.

February to April

Your application will be processed.

30 April 2010

We will write to tell you the school we are offering your child.

Your letter will include a reply slip which you need to return to the school by 17 May 2010 to accept the place offered. If you do not return the slip by this date the place may be withdrawn and offered to another child.

Applying for a place at junior school

Some schools are for infant (reception, year 1 and year 2) children only and you will need to apply for a place at junior school.

If you have a child in year 2 at infant school, you will get an admission to primary school booklet and a Wigan Council Junior school application form in December 2009.

You should follow the same application process as described above and hand in your envelope at your child's infant school by the **closing date of 29 January 2010**.

If any of your preferred schools is a voluntary-aided (church) school, we strongly advise you to fill in the school's supplementary information form as well as the Wigan Council primary school application form.

You must return any supplementary forms with your Wigan Council junior school application form in the envelope provided by 29 January 2010. If you put a voluntary-aided (church) school as a preference and you do not fill in the school's supplementary information form, the school will not have all the information they need to consider your application and your child may be refused a place.

We will follow the same process for deciding on places as we do for applications to reception class. See 'Important information about how we decide which school to offer your child' on page 7.

Late applications

It is important that you return your application form or apply online **before the closing date on 29 January 2010**.

If your application is late, we will only look at it after we have dealt with all the

applications we receive on time. **This means that your child is less likely to get a place at the school you want.**

If you apply late, we cannot guarantee that we will write to you by 30 April 2010. However, we will write to you as soon as we can after that.

If you have not been able to apply for a school place by the closing date or even after school places have been offered, please contact The School Places Team, who will be able to help.

Children going to nursery classes

If your child goes to a nursery class attached to a school:

- **they do not have an automatic right to a place in a reception class at that school;**
- and
- **you must send in your application form or apply online by the closing date of 29 January 2010.**

If there are more applications than places, we will use the admission criteria to decide who we give a place to.

The admission criteria for schools are different from those for nurseries.

Your child's home address

Many schools use children's addresses when deciding who to offer places to.

You must give the correct permanent home address. This is where the child and parent, or the person who has care of the child or parental responsibility, normally live.

If you are separated and your child spends time at each parent's address, the address we use for admission to school is that of the main carer. We use the address of the parent who gets the Child Benefit for this.

We may carry out checks to confirm that addresses are genuine. We may ask to see two types of evidence of your permanent address at the closing date for applications. This may include:

- proof of where you are registered for council tax;
- your current driving licence; or
- a recent utility (gas, electricity or water) bill.

Any evidence you provide must show that the parent or main carer lives at this address at the closing date for applications.

If your address changes temporarily (for example, if you go to live with a relative), you cannot use this temporary address.

When considering your child's application, we use the permanent home address we have for you at the closing date for applications.

If you move house after the closing date for applications (but before we send allocation letters to parents) you must tell the School Places Team in writing. We cannot use this address to consider your application from but will make sure we write to you at the correct address.

False information

If you give any false information to get a school place (for example, if you give the incorrect permanent address at the closing date for applications), we have the right to withdraw the offer and your child may lose their place.

Important information about how we decide which school to offer your child

We will consider the following things when deciding which school to offer your child a place.

- The three schools you name on the application form.
- The admission number for the schools.
- The admission criteria for the schools.
- The priority you have given schools on your application.

When we consider on-time applications, we will only use correct information on your application form at the closing date for applications.

Giving preferences for school places

By law, we must use the equal-preference system when deciding on school places. This system makes sure that, if you don't get your first-preference school, you still have a fair chance of being offered a place at your second- or third-preference school. This is why we advise you give three preferences. When you are deciding on your school preferences, you need to be realistic about your child's chances of getting a place. The information in this booklet will help you to do this. If you need more advice, please contact the School Places Team on 01942 486037.

Admission number

Every school has an admission number. This is the number of places in a school year group. The admission numbers for all Wigan primary schools are given with the information on each school in pages 25 to 155 in this booklet.

Admission criteria

When there are more applications than places for a school, we say the school is 'oversubscribed'.

If we receive more applications than the admission number, we use a fixed set of rules to decide which children we offer a place. These rules are called the 'admission criteria'.

The admission criteria for all Wigan primary schools are given in pages 25 to 155 in this booklet.

You will see that the criteria are numbered. Children in category one will have first priority for places, children in category two will be considered next and so on through the criteria until there are no places left.

Tie breaker

When we use the admission criteria, more children might fall into a particular category than the number of places left. If this happens, we use the 'tie breaker' to decide who is given a place.

At community and voluntary-controlled schools we will give places to the children who live nearest to the school. We measure this distance:

- in a straight line; and
- using a Geographical Information System (GIS) which is based on Ordnance Survey maps.

We will measure from your child's home address to a central point on the school site. If you want more information about the point we measure to at community or voluntary-controlled schools, please contact the School Places Team.

If we offer the last place available at a school to one of twins (or triplets, and so on), our policy is to admit the other twin or triplets too. But it is not possible to do this if it would mean class sizes go above the legal limit. If this happens, we will offer the place that is available and you can decide which child will take up the place. At the same time, we will tell you which other schools could take all the children.

Occasionally, the distance from home to school is the same for more than one child (for example, if more than one child lives in the same block of flats). In these cases, we will use a system to randomly pick who will be offered a place. If you want more information on this policy, please contact the School Places Team on 01942 486037.

The tie breakers for voluntary-aided schools are given with the admission criteria for each school on pages 37 to 155 of this booklet.

The 'equal-preference' system and the priority order of schools on your application

By law we must use the 'equal-preference' system when considering your application for a school place.

We offer places by doing the following.

- First, we rank all first-, second- and third-preference applications by using the school's admission criteria only. This process means that some second- and third-preference applications will be ranked higher than some first-preference applications.
- We use schools' admission numbers to find out how many children can be offered a place at each school.
- We then offer places to all children whose first preference can be met, and remove their second- and third preferences from the list.
- We repeat this process for second preferences and then third preferences.

This process means that if you miss out on your first-preference school, you still have a fair chance of being offered a place at your second- or third-preference schools.

Children in public care (looked-after children)

If you are responsible for a child in public care, please let us know on your application.

Brothers and sisters

The admission criteria for community and voluntary-controlled schools mean that children who have brothers or sisters at the school when they start are put in category two.

We will include:

- half-brothers and half-sisters;
- stepbrothers and stepsisters; and
- foster brothers and foster sisters who live at the same address as part of the same family unit.

You should remember that some voluntary-aided primary schools may have different requirements than Wigan Council. You should check each school's admission arrangements for details.

Voluntary-aided (church) schools

The governing bodies of voluntary-aided schools decide who will be offered a place if there are more applications than places. You can find the admission criteria for these schools on pages 38 to 155. If you want more information about each school's admission policy, such as waiting lists, the right to appeal or admissions part-way through the year, you can get details by contacting the school direct.

The admission criteria for voluntary-aided primary schools usually take account of church membership, church attendance or both. They ask for information about this on their supplementary information form.

If you want a place at a voluntary-aided school, we strongly advise you to:

- get the school's supplementary information form; and
- return this to the local authority with your Wigan Council primary school application form by the closing date of 29 January 2010.

We strongly advise you to fill in the school's supplementary information form as well as the Wigan Council primary school application form for each voluntary-aided school you name, whether it is your first-, second- or third-preference.

If your child goes to a voluntary-aided school nursery, they are not guaranteed a place at the primary school. You should read the admission criteria carefully.

Children with a statement of special educational needs

Children with a statement of special educational needs that names a school will be offered a place without using the admission criteria. This applies to all types of school, whether they are community, voluntary-controlled or voluntary-aided.

Waiting lists for community and voluntary-controlled schools

Places may become available at a school after the offer date of 30 April 2010. All admission authorities must run a waiting list until the end of the autumn term 2010.

For community and voluntary-controlled schools, we will:

- put all children who we refuse a place at one of their preferences on the waiting list for the school;
- keep the list in priority order, **decided by the admission criteria for the school only;**
- offer any places that become available to the next child on the waiting list; and
- operate the waiting list until the end of the autumn term 2010.

Important information about the waiting list

We cannot take into account the length of time a child's name has been on the waiting list, only the admission criteria for the school. This means that your child's position on the list may change if another parent asks to be put on the list and their child has higher priority in the admissions criteria.

If you tell us, after the closing date for applications, that your address has changed and you provide documents to prove this, we will take it into account for the purposes of the waiting list.

Waiting lists for voluntary-aided (church) schools

Each voluntary-aided school has details of their waiting list policy in their admission arrangements. The governing body of the school will be responsible for the waiting list. If you are refused a place at a voluntary-aided school, you should contact the school to confirm that your child's name is on the waiting list.

Important questions answered

When will my child start primary school?

In Wigan, if your child will turn 5 between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011, they will start primary school in the reception class at the start of the new school year in September 2010.

Can I delay my child's entry to primary school?

Legally, your child does not have to start school until the admission date after their 5th birthday. The admission dates set by the Government are:

- 31 August;
- 31 December; and
- 31 March.

If you do not want your child to start school until they legally have to:

- we can only hold the place given on 30 April 2010 until the start of the summer term in April 2011; and
- you must tell the school before the end of September 2010 if you want to do this.

If you want your child to start at a later date, we cannot guarantee that there will be a place at the school you want.

Who will deal with my application?

Wigan Council co-ordinates admissions to all primary schools. In Wigan this is done by the School Places Team.

We decide which children will be offered places at community and voluntary-controlled primary schools. These schools are listed on pages 25 to 35 in this booklet.

The governing body of the school decides which children will be offered places at voluntary-aided (church) primary schools. These schools are listed on pages 36 to 155 in this booklet.

Do I have to put three school preferences on my application?

You should give three preferences. If you do not:

- it does not increase your chance of gaining a place at your first-preference school; and

- we do not know which other schools you are interested in. If we cannot offer your first-preference school, we could only offer the nearest school to your child's home with a spare place. You may miss out on a place at another school which you prefer.

In the same way, repeating the name of one school three times on your application does not improve your chances of a place.

Can I change my mind after I have sent my application?

Changing your mind up to the closing date

If you change your mind about the names or order of schools you have put on the application form, you must write to the School Places Team before the closing date (29 January 2010) to give them the details.

If you apply online, you can change your preferences at any time up to the closing date by amending your application. You must follow the instructions given on the website to make sure your preferences have been changed.

Changing your mind after the closing date (29 January 2010)

If, after the closing date, you change your mind about your schools preferences or the order of your school preferences, you must write to the School Places Team. However, we will treat this as a late application (see page 5) and it may reduce your chances of getting a place at the school you want.

What happens if you cannot offer a place at any of the schools I have asked for?

If your child lives in Wigan, we will offer a place at the nearest Wigan school to your home address with a spare place. This will be the nearest community, voluntary-controlled or voluntary-aided school.

If your child does not live in Wigan, the local authority in their area will offer them a place. (This is the authority that charges council tax for the child's home address).

You are assessing my child for a statement of special educational needs. Or, my child has a statement of special educational needs. How do I apply for a place at primary school?

You should register an interest at the mainstream primary school you would like your child to go to. You will receive an application form and you should apply in the usual way.

It is important you return the form or apply online **by the closing date of 29 January 2010.**

You should still apply even if your child is being considered for a place at a special school. This is so that you have a better chance of getting a place at the mainstream school you prefer if your child does not need a specialist place.

Before your child starts school, your Early Years Inclusion Worker will discuss your child's education with you. If your child needs a specialist place, we will tell you about the possibilities and discuss it fully with you and the professionals who know your child best before we make any decisions.

Why do you give information about admissions to each school last year?

We give details of how we offered places last year to help explain how the available places were decided on. You may want to use this information as a guide to whether you are likely to get a place at one of your preferred schools. The information is only a guide because the number of applications for a school is different each year.

Can I apply for a place at a school in a different local authority?

You can apply for schools in any local authority. Other local authorities produce their own admission booklets with details of their schools and will be pleased to send you a copy. There is a list of Wigan's neighbouring local authorities, with contact phone numbers, on page 1 of this booklet.

If your child lives in Wigan and you want to apply for a place at a school in another local authority's area, you need to:

- contact the school you want (or the school's local authority) for details of how to apply and check the closing date;
- fill in their application form; and
- return the application form to them by their closing date.

Not all local authorities have the same closing date for applications to primary school. You should check with the local authority or the school you want.

I do not live in Wigan. Can I apply for a place at a Wigan school for my child?

Anyone can apply for a place in a Wigan school. However, you should look at the admission criteria to see if you have a reasonable chance of gaining a place.

If you want a place at a Wigan primary school, you need to:

- apply online at www.wigan.gov.uk; or
- fill in the Wigan Council primary school application form and return it in the envelope to any Wigan primary school or the Wigan School Places Team by the closing date (29 January 2010).

If any of your preferences is for a Wigan voluntary-aided (church) school, we strongly advise you to get a copy of the supplementary information form and return it with your Wigan Council primary school application form to the Wigan School Places Team by 29 January 2010.

Admission appeals

You can appeal to an independent appeal panel if Wigan Council or the school governing body refuse a place at any school you have applied for.

If we refuse your child a place at a school, we will write to tell you:

- why we refused your application;
- how to appeal;
- the time limit for sending your appeal (you will have at least 14 days from the date of the letter);
- where to send the appeal; and
- who to contact if you need any help.

Sometimes, places become available at a school before the admission appeals have been heard. If this happens, we will offer places to the next child on the waiting list. If you appeal, it does not affect your child's place on the waiting list.

Before you decide if you want to appeal, you will probably want to think about:

- the school's published admissions criteria for admitting pupils;
- your reasons for wanting your child to go to the school;
- your child's view on which school he or she should go to; and
- how strong a case you have.

You may also want to visit the school which your child has been offered.

The appeal hearing

Before the hearing

We will tell you the date, time and place of the hearing 10 school days before it is due to take place.

Seven days before the hearing, the local authority or the school will send you a document called the 'Statement of case'. This sets out the reasons why your child was not offered a place. The appeal panel will also get a copy of this.

The panel also receives all the documents you have sent in to support your child's appeal. If you have any more information or supporting documents that you want the

panel to consider, you should let the clerk know about them beforehand. This will help the panel to run smoothly and avoid delays. We would appreciate it if you could provide eight copies of any extra paperwork.

The appeal panel

The panel will have three or five people on it. They are completely independent of us and the school you are appealing for.

At the appeal hearing

We strongly advise you to go to the appeal hearing if you can. You will not usually need legal representation but you do have the right to bring a legal adviser or a friend along for support.

There will be a Wigan Council or school representative at the hearing to give their reasons for refusing your child a place and you can ask them questions about this. You will be able to put your case for your child to the panel. You will probably want to refer back to your original reasons for applying for that school.

If you cannot go to the appeal hearing, the panel will consider all the information you have sent in writing, in your absence.

At the end of the hearing, the clerk should be able to tell you when you can expect to receive the panel's decision.

You will receive the panel's decision by letter.

Admission authorities must keep to the decisions of admissions appeals panels. The decisions can only be overturned by the courts.

Appeals for infant classes (reception, year 1 and year 2) - the '30 children in a class' rule.

The law says that we cannot teach infant children in classes of more than 30. If there were more than 30 children, the local authority would have to take 'special measures'. This means we would have to:

- build another classroom;
- employ another teacher; or
- do both.

When we refuse your child a place because we would have to take special measures, you can only win an appeal if:

- the admission arrangements did not stick to the law and your child would have been offered a place if they did;

- the appeal panel decides that our decision not to offer a place was unreasonable in your circumstances (an unreasonable decision is one that no sensible authority acting properly would make); or
- we made a mistake or did not follow the right procedure when we decided on places at the school and we would have given your child a place if we had done things correctly.

After the hearing

The parents or guardians of children who were unsuccessful in their admission appeal may want to consider the following options.

1 Complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman

The Local Government Ombudsman can investigate written complaints about bad administration by an admission appeal panel. This is not a right to appeal and has to relate to issues such as failing to follow correct procedures or failing to act independently and fairly, and does not relate to the person making the complaint who thinks the decision is wrong.

You can contact the Ombudsman at:

Local Government Ombudsman
Beverley House
17 Shipton Road
York
YO30 5FZ.

2 Complaints to the Secretary of State

The Secretary of State cannot review or overturn decisions of individual appeals panels but can consider:

- whether the local authority set up the appeal panel correctly, with the correct number and properly appointed types of panel members; and
- whether the admission authority or governing body has acted reasonably in running the appeal meeting and handling the decision-making process.

You can contact the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families at:

Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
Westminster
London
SW1P 2BT.

3 Judicial review

You can ask for a judicial review if you think that the decision wasn't right or was 'unreasonable'. An 'unreasonable' decision is one that no sensible authority acting properly would make. You will usually have to contact a solicitor.

Further appeals

We will normally only allow parents to have one appeal to a particular school in any school year.

We will only consider an application for the same school in the same school year in very exceptional situations, such as a significant, material change in your or your child's circumstances. A material change is something major, like a change of address from a different area. The fact that a pupil is distressed at not being offered a place at the school they wanted is not a significant and material change in circumstances.

Information about schools

Open days

Wigan schools will hold open days for potential parents and pupils. You can contact each school for details.

School prospectus

The governors of each school publish a prospectus which contains information about the school such as policies, results and curriculum. You can get a free prospectus from each school. Some school prospectuses can be downloaded from the school's website. The website address is shown on the page for each school.

Ofsted reports

Schools are regularly inspected by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). You can get copies of Ofsted reports from schools or read them on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

School achievement and attainment tables

Yearly school achievement and attainment tables are available online at www.dcf.gov.uk/performance/tables. There may also be information about examination results in each school's prospectus.

Independent advice

The Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

Website: www.ace-ed.org.uk

Phone: Freephone 0808 800 5793

Choice Advice Service

The Government has provided funding for local authorities to develop an independent Choice Advice Service in their area. In Wigan, this covers primary-school and secondary-school applications as well as any queries from parents who want to change schools outside the normal admissions process.

You should be able to find the information you need to choose your school preferences and apply before the closing date. If you need advice or information you should contact the School Places Team on 01942 486037.

You may need extra help to apply. The Choice Advice Service is there to help you if you struggle to apply on time, or have difficulty understanding the information

If you need to speak to the Choice Advice Service, please ring 01942 486016.

General information

School meals

School meals are available in all primary schools at the moment.

At all schools there are places where pupils can eat food they have brought from home.

Children whose parents receive the following support payments are entitled to free school meals.

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, as long as they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have a yearly income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) that as of April 2009 is no more than £16,040, at April 2009
- Pension Credit (guarantee credit)

For more details, or for an application form, contact:

Benefits Section
Council Tax Offices
Moore Street East
Wigan
WN1 3XN.

Phone: 01942 828609

E-mail: benefits@wigan.gov.uk

Website:

<http://www.wigan.gov.uk/Services/AdviceBenefitsEmergencies/Benefits/FreeSchoolMeals.htm>

We do not provide milk for any pupils in Wigan schools.

School uniform

Pupils must wear school uniform at all primary schools in Wigan. You can get details from the individual schools.

Bus services

Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE) manages school bus services, and they charge children a concessionary fee of 80 pence for each journey.

For details of school routes and other bus services, you can use our website (www.wigan.gov.uk) which has links to other sites. You can also get leaflets from Wigan and Leigh bus stations. For more information, phone GMPTE on 0161 228 7811 or use GMPTE's website at www.gmpTE.gov.uk.

Travelling expenses

We will provide a free bus pass for every primary-school pupil who has to travel more than two miles to school. We will measure this by the shortest walking route. We will not refund travelling expenses if your child goes to a school more than two miles away if there is a school nearer with a place available, unless you have applied for the school because of your religion or belief.

We will provide a free bus pass for a primary-school pupil who is eligible for free school meals or whose parents or guardians get the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, and if the child goes to either of the following.

- Any one of the three nearest suitable schools, if the distance the child has to travel is between two and six miles.
- The nearest school they have chosen because of their religion or belief, if this is between two and 15 miles away.

How we will measure the distances

We will measure:

- the two-mile limit along the nearest and shortest suitable walking route; and
- the six-mile limit and 15-mile limit along road routes.

You can get claim forms from school or the School Transport Team.

If you have any questions, please contact the School Transport Team on 01942 486116 or 01942 486140.

If you want to check if we would pay travelling expenses before you apply for a school, please contact the School Transport Team.

Sustainable school travel

The school run adds around 20% more cars to early-morning traffic, which means more congestion. For many parents, children and young people, the journey to school or college is ideally suited for walking, cycling and using buses and trains.

Our 'Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy' encourages children and young people in the borough to change their behaviour and attitudes towards school travel. Section 508A of the Education Act means all local authorities are responsible for promoting the use of sustainable (environmentally-friendly) travel and transport for children and young people of sixth-form age and below. This covers not only those children and young people who live in Wigan borough, but also those who live outside the area and travel into Wigan for education and training.

The Local Transport Plan recognises the benefits for the environment, as well as the benefits for children's health and well-being by encouraging walking and cycling. It also aims to tackle congestion around schools and make it easier for children and young people to get to school.

School travel map

Our first step to providing sustainable school travel was setting up our school travel interactive service (see www.wigan.gov.uk/schooltravel). This service provides information for every school and college in the borough to help them choose different types of transport.

Every school in the borough has already received a map with details of options for travelling to school, so that children and parents can decide how they will travel. The map includes locations for the following.

- All schools
- School crossing patrols
- Pedestrian crossings
- Bus stops
- School bus routes
- Cycle routes (you can also find information about where cycle lockers and other cycling facilities are at schools)

We are always developing and improving the information we provide and, in time, we hope to include whether the school has:

- a travel plan;
- a 20mph (miles per hour) zone;
- routes away from the main road which are easy to access;
- safer alternatives to busy roads;
- a 'Safer Routes to School' scheme; and
- a 'walking bus' scheme (where children walk to school in a supervised group).

You can help in a lot of ways, most importantly by thinking about how your child gets to school, but also by asking your school whether they have developed, and if they are putting into practice, their school travel plan. If your school already has a travel

plan, you could help to set up a junior road-safety team or a school travel council. This would be made up of children from the school, who can take responsibility for the plan and come up with their own ideas to encourage and promote sustainable travel and work towards achieving the travel plan's targets.

You could also get involved in a walking-to-school or cycling-to-school scheme, by supervising groups of children to walk or cycle together.

We want to make sure that a new kind of school travel can develop so that, together, we can make the school journey safer and healthier for everyone.

For more information on your travel options, please contact Emma Barton on 01942 404396.

Transferring to another primary school

If you want to change your child's school you should think about it very carefully. It is normally better for your child to stay at the same school as changing schools can disrupt their education. If your child is having problems, a change of school is not always the answer. You should speak to your child's head teacher about such matters before you apply for a different school.

If you are thinking of moving house, which would mean that your child would have to change school, there may not be places available at the school you want. The School Places Team will be able to tell you which schools are full or have places. Some schools are full in all or most year groups and we cannot guarantee there will be a place available in the area you want to move to.

If you want to apply for a place at a Wigan community or voluntary-controlled school, you should contact the School Places Team for an application form, or download one from the Wigan Council website (www.wigan.gov.uk). If you want a place at a voluntary-aided school, you should fill in the school's own application form. You can get this from the school.

You will receive a written response to your application. All schools have a limit for each year group. If we cannot offer you a place at the school you want and you live in Wigan, we will offer you a place at another school. You may want to keep your child at their current school. You can appeal if we refuse you a place at a school. For more information on appeals, see page 15. There are no waiting lists for transfers during a school year.

From 1 September 2010

On 1 September 2010 the local authority in your area is responsible for co-ordinating all applications for transfer during a school year. If you want to apply for a place at any school in the UK for your child, you should contact the School Places Team on 01942 486040.

Fair access protocol

We sometimes receive requests for places and are not able to offer a place at a school within a reasonable distance of where a child lives. In these cases, the Director of Children and Young People's Services will use our fair access protocol to provide a place at a community, voluntary-controlled or voluntary-aided (church) school, even if the year group is full.

Children who qualify for a place using our fair access protocol must be given priority over children on a waiting list who already attend a school.