

SCHOOL PROVISION - An OVERVIEW:

Children under the age of 5 can attend nursery school, or receive other child care services which provide a range of daytime activities. You may have to pay for this service, which can sometimes be quite expensive. To search for childcare in your area visit www.surestart.gov.uk or call 0870 000 228.

If your child is aged between 5 and 16, he or she must attend school or be educated at home. State education is free.

State schools are divided up into primary (ages 5-11) and secondary (11-18).

There are different types of school, and some are Church of England or Roman Catholic. But there are Islamic schools too. There is a primary school in many villages, and a secondary school in most towns. Most schools are run by the Education Department of the County Council. A list of schools will be available from them. The school year starts in September, and usually has 3 terms one from September to Christmas (in December), one from Christmas to Easter (in March or April) and one from Easter to July. There is a 6 week break in the summer, and 2 weeks of holiday at both Christmas and Easter is normal.

PUNISHMENT:

Corporal punishment was abolished in state schools in 1986. Children can be 'excluded' from schools if they misbehave. Parents can also be punished by fines, and even imprisonment, if their children do not go to school.

CATCHMENT AREAS:

Children are usually placed in the school within the 'catchment area' (the area where you live). It is a good idea to choose where you live with this in mind and check that the schools in the catchment area are what you want for your child. You can visit local schools and talk to neighbours who have children in those schools.

Some schools are 'oversubscribed' (i.e. too popular) so there is no guarantee that your child will have access to your first choice school.

SCHOOL MEALS:

All schools provide meals in the middle of the day. Children whose parents are on Income Support can have free meals. Ask the school office for an application form. Please support the school in its aim to get your children to eat healthy meals!

TRANSPORT to SCHOOL:

Free transport to school is usually provided if the nearest school is more than 2 miles away from home for children younger than 8 years or 3 miles away from home for child over 8. Normally children are given a free bus pass.

SCHOOL UNIFORMS and EQUIPMENT:

In some schools pupils have to wear a school uniform. Sometimes special equipment is also required. If you cannot afford this then ask the school for help with the cost. Usually there is a special fund to help.