If you are considering changing your child’s school, there are things you need to think about before making your final decision. This leaflet will help to identify those areas and will give you guidance on the transfer process.

If you have concerns about your child’s progress or there are problems at your child’s school, you should, as a first step, discuss your concerns with the Headteacher (or Head of Year in secondary school) of the present school. It is usually better for your child if you can resolve the issues with the Headteacher/Head of Year before considering a change of school. In many cases issues that lead parents to consider transfer are best resolved without a change of school. In some instances the issues are not a sound basis for making a substantial change in the life of a child.

Changing schools is a very important step and needs to be carefully thought through and planned in good time. It can be unsettling for your child and can affect the progress your child is making at school.

From the schools point of view it disturbs class organisation in both schools concerned and can cause budgetary and staffing problems.

Request to change schools should be a last resort and considered only when all other options for resolving problems have been explored.
What do I need to consider?

**Reasons** - Have you fully explored the reasons why you are considering a transfer? Will a change of school resolve those issues or will they remain even if your child attends a different school?

**Local School** - There are advantages in your child attending the school serving your local community. By attending the local school, your child’s circle of school friends will also be their out-of-school friends. The school will have links with the local community and use your local neighbourhood as a teaching resource, which helps to promote social development and awareness. Support for your local school also helps protect local services and strengthens the case for future investment in your area. Attendance at your local school also provides better opportunities of environmentally friendly journeys to school.

**Transport** - School transport is only provided to pupils of statutory school age to your catchment or nearest suitable maintained school if you live over the statutory walking distance, according to the Authority’s school transport policy. If your child transfers to a school outside your catchment area and it is not your nearest suitable maintained school, you, as parents, will be responsible for transporting your child to and from school and any costs incurred.

**Friendships** - Children have particular groups of friends and may lose contact with them if they change schools. If your child finds it difficult to make new friends, entering a new school may be a very daunting experience.

**Your child’s feelings** - have you talked to your child about how they feel about changing schools? In some instances, parents may feel it is in the best interest of the child to change, but the child may be happy in the school and not want to move.

**Curriculum** - Secondary schools may follow a different curriculum, use different examination boards or offer different option choices which could cause your child difficulties. Transferring your child during GCSE years, ie in Years 10 and 11, is generally unadvisable, you must speak to the school and the Pupil Support Officer in the first instance.

**Effect on family** - Would the transfer affect others such as brothers and sisters?
If, after considering everything carefully, you still feel that you would like your child to change schools, the process is as follows:

1. Arrange a meeting with the Headteacher of your child’s current school (or Head of Year in secondary school) to discuss any issues you may have and why you feel that a transfer is necessary. The transfer application cannot proceed until this has happened.

2. Allow reasonable time for the school to resolve the issues. During this time, your child should remain attending the school. The Headteacher/Head of Year may ask the Pupil Support Officer to contact you. A home visit may be made where appropriate.

3. If, following this, you still feel that a transfer is necessary as the problem remains unresolved, complete an Application For Transfer Between Schools form (TR1).

   This form is available from the Pembrokeshire County Council website www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/education, via the school or contact the Contact Centre (01437 764551) who can send you a hard copy of the form (01437 764551).

4. Complete the form in full and return it to the Admissions Officer, Children & Schools, Pembrokeshire County Council, County Hall, Haverfordwest, SA61 1TP as soon as possible.
5. On receipt of the completed form, the Admissions Officer will contact the Headteacher/Head of Year of your child’s current school to discuss your application and to confirm that you have talked to the Headteacher/Head of Year about the transfer. Please note that until confirmation that you have discussed the transfer with the present Headteacher/Head of Year is received, no further action will be taken regarding your application. The Admissions Officer will also contact the relevant Pupil Support Officer and if they have not already done so, will ask them to contact you to discuss your transfer request and how they could support your child in school.

6. Once confirmation of contact with the Headteacher/Head of Year and the Pupil Support Officer has been received, the Admissions Officer will contact the school you have requested to ascertain whether they have sufficient room and resources available to accommodate your child. This will include reviewing class sizes and the number of pupils in your child’s year group.

7. The Admissions Officer will write to you to inform you whether or not the transfer can go ahead and if so the date when your child can start at the new school. Transfers will normally be at the beginning of the following term.
• Please remember that while the transfer request is being processed it is your responsibility to ensure that your child attends the present school until approval is given to start at a new one. You should make sure that before withdrawing your child from their current school you have received written approval for the transfer to another school. Your child’s name cannot be removed from the school’s register or added to another school’s register until written confirmation of the transfer has been received.

• Non-attendance will be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be referred to the Pupil Support Officer for investigation. Unauthorised absence can lead to prosecution.

• Transfers must be approved by the Admissions Authority before they can take place.
How do I find a new school?

The Admissions Officer can send you a list of schools in Pembrokeshire. The contact details for each school are shown on the list, along with the age-range and the language category of the school.

This list is also available on the Pembrokeshire County Council website www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/education

It is important that you arrange visits to the schools that you are considering transferring your child to. You should contact the Headteacher of the school to arrange this and also to obtain a copy of the school prospectus. If you have access to the Internet, you can see the school’s inspection report on the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk) or the school can give you a summary.

How long will it take?

The length of time it takes to process an application varies in each individual case. The Admissions Authority aim to process your application within 15 school days (or 28 calendar days - whichever is the sooner), but will always endeavour to complete the process as quickly as possible.

Transfers will normally take place at the beginning of a term.
What can I do if the request is refused?

If you are refused a place at your requested school you may wish to apply for a different school and/or add your child’s name to the current waiting list. If your child is of statutory school age (Over 5) you also have the right to appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. Further information will be included in the refusal letter from the Admissions Officer. In the meantime your child must attend their current school or alternative educational provision until the decision is made. There is no right of appeal for children under statutory school age.

Further advice and information

If you require any further advice or information contact the Admissions Officer on 01437 764551 or by email to: admissions@pembrokeshire.gov.uk or write to: Admissions Officer, Children & Schools, County Hall, Haverfordwest, SA61 1TP

You will also find more information on the Pembrokeshire County Council website www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/education

Inclusion Service

All schools in Pembrokeshire are served by one of a team of Pupil Support Officers who provide a link between the Cluster of Schools, the Education Service and the pupil’s family. Their main task is to encourage regular attendance at school. They are able to offer assistance and give advice about other support services when there is an identified problem restricting a pupil’s access to education, or in relation to social and welfare issues. The service can provide information booklets to parents regarding school attendance issues and parental responsibilities to ensure regular school attendance according to the law. The Inclusion Service can be accessed via the school or contact the System Leader for Behaviour & Attendance, County Hall, Haverfordwest, SA61 1TP Tel: 01437 764551.