

## Advice for parents relocating to the Island

### Introduction

This leaflet assists parents who are relocating to live in the Isle of Man by answering commonly asked questions about the education system. If you have additional queries, please ring +44 1624 685820 and speak to our administrative or schools teams and we will be pleased to assist you. Alternatively, email your query to [admin@doe.gov.im](mailto:admin@doe.gov.im) or visit our website, <http://www.gov.im/education>

### Is there a state-run pre-school system in the Isle of Man?

No. All nurseries and pre-schools are run by private operators. However, you will be eligible for £350 in pre-school credit from the Isle of Man Government in the academic year your child reaches his/her fourth birthday, with a further £800 if you are on certain benefits. Please visit <http://cf.gov.im/categories/education,-training-and-careers/pre-school/> for more information and to fill in an online application form to obtain this credit if you are eligible this year.

### Is the school year the same as in the UK?

Broadly. The academic year starts in early September and runs until late July and there are holidays at Christmas and Easter and half term breaks in the autumn and spring terms. In the summer term, schools close the week the TT races are held. This holiday differs from the UK's summer term break and, as a result, students can expect to sit external exams.

### At what age will my child start school?

Your child will start school in the academic year in which he/she turns five.

### How many schools are there in the Isle of Man?

There are 34 primary schools, including one that teaches in Manx, and five secondary schools. In some areas, children attend an infants' school and move, at seven, to a junior school. However, in the majority of areas, children attend the same primary school from five to 11.

## **How are school places allocated?**

Primary and secondary schools in the Island have catchment areas and children are expected to attend the school in whose catchment they live. Requests for out of catchment places are usually only granted where there are sound educational reasons. Applications must be made in writing on the relevant form and the decision will take into account schools' capacities as well as individual circumstances. Full details can be viewed at <http://www.gov.im/education/provision/admission.xml> If you are uncertain which catchment area you'll be living in, please contact us and we will assist you.

## **What is the enrolment procedure?**

Contact the administrator at the school your child will attend. There are links to all schools' websites on the DEC's website.

## **I am taking schooling into account when deciding where to live. Which are the best schools?**

All our schools have significant strengths but all are distinctive and we would recommend you arrange with headteachers to visit schools to see which would best suit the needs of your child.

## **I am renting a property temporarily but plan to live in another catchment area once a property becomes available. Can I enrol my child in the catchment area I'll be moving to?**

Your child would normally be expected to attend school in the catchment area in which you now live. Once you move, your child can stay on at this school or move to the school in the new catchment area. If you are in the process of purchasing or leasing a property and can present evidence of this, to the satisfaction of the Department, along with an out of catchment area application form, this may be taken into consideration by the Department.

## **Can my child attend Reception class part time?**

Your child is required to attend school full-time when they turn five. Requests to attend part-time prior to turning five should be made directly to your child's school.

## **How does the curriculum differ from that in the UK?**

The curriculum content is largely drawn from the English national curriculum, but also draws in the Island's unique geographical, cultural and historic features. Schools have the freedom to deliver lessons in an imaginative way. The Island's Essentials for Learning approach encourages the development of the well-rounded child by teaching through the 'six Rs' – readiness, relationships that are positive, resourcefulness, resilience, remembering skills and reflectiveness. To find out more about the curriculum, visit <https://www2.sch.im/groups/essentialsforlearningparentsinformation/>

## **How are children tested?**

Our schools use continuous teacher assessment from Reception class through to Key Stage 3 and the information gathered from this process is used formatively to decide what children need to learn next to improve their performance. You will receive frequent updates on the progress your child is making and receive formal reports on teachers' assessments at the end of each Key Stage. Teachers are provided with a framework against which they make assessments and the Department quality assures teacher assessment through external moderation visits and the work of its Education Improvement Service.

## **When will my child take SATs?**

Your child will not take SATs at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 or 3. Instead, ongoing teacher assessment informs children parents and teachers of children's current performance and generates next steps in learning.

## **How does the standard of education in the Isle of Man compare with that in the UK?**

Recent investment in education has seen new junior and secondary schools being built and impressive new facilities created at several other schools. Visitors to our schools comment on the high standards of pupil behaviour and on the wide variety of extra-curricular opportunities open to pupils. The Island has a profile way beyond that which would be expected, given its size, in sport, while the arts and music are other areas of excellence in schools and via the Music Service's orchestras, bands and choirs. The Island has also attracted global praise for its innovative use of ICT in the classroom.

## **How are schools inspected?**

Standards at Island schools are monitored by a cyclical School Self Review and Evaluation (SSRE), a system by which schools consider how well they are performing under five headings and a senior officer from the DEC and an external validator attend and accord with, or revise, these gradings. The system encourages schools to keep improving.

## **Do schools offer before and after-school care?**

Some schools and privately run childcare providers registered with the Department of Social Care offer breakfast clubs and after-school care. Please contact your child's school directly for more details.

## **Will the Isle of Man Department of Education and Children continue my child's support as outlined in the statement of Special Educational Needs?**

The DEC does not operate the UK statement process, but there are similarities with regards to identifying special needs and providing appropriate support. As such, SEN staff will consider, in consultation with appropriate partner agencies, the support identified in the UK statement and discuss options with you.

## **Do you have special schools or specific resource provisions?**

The Island has a comprehensive range of specialist educational provision and services, including 15 Special Units (10 attached to primary schools and 5 attached to secondary schools), a dedicated sensory team (visual and hearing support), an Educational Psychology Service, a Pre-School Assessment Centre and the Education Support Service (supporting children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties). The Department of Education and Children works closely with partner agencies (eg, speech and language, Child and Adolescent Mental Health and occupational therapy) to ensure children and young people have access to appropriate services and resources.

## **Who should I contact to arrange and coordinate the provision and transition?**

For enquiries regarding a child moving to the Isle of Man with Special Educational Needs, contact Sue Marriott, SEN Adviser. Tel: +44 1624 686067. Email: [s.marriott@doe.sch.im](mailto:s.marriott@doe.sch.im)

## **My child doesn't speak English as a first language. What assistance will be available for us?**

We operate an inclusive policy and children with all languages and from all cultures are welcomed and valued in our schools. A team of staff work with schools to give highly individual support to pupils with English as an additional language and their teachers.

## **Will my child have the opportunity to learn Manx?**

Children have the chance to learn Manx Gaelic at primary schools and the language can be studied further at secondary school to A level standard. Bunscoill Ghaelgagh in St John's follows the normal primary curriculum but teaches through the medium of Manx. The school is open to all regardless of catchment area. For further information contact – Manx in primary schools: Rob Teare at: [r.teare@ug.sch.im](mailto:r.teare@ug.sch.im) +44 7624 225326; Bunscoill Ghaelgagh: Headteacher, Julie Matthews [headteacher@bunscoill.sch.im](mailto:headteacher@bunscoill.sch.im) +44 1624 803330; general information: Adrian Cain [greinneyder@mhf.org.im](mailto:greinneyder@mhf.org.im) or +44 7624 451098 or visit [www.learnmanx.com](http://www.learnmanx.com)

## **How do you assist pupils to make the transition between primary and secondary school?**

Primary and secondary schools work together in a number of ways to support the move of pupils from Year 6 into Year 7. Year 6 pupils all have the opportunity to spend time enjoying lessons and activities in secondary school prior to transfer, so they are familiar with key staff and their new surroundings, meaning the move to the bigger school is much less daunting for them.

## **How does exam attainment compare with the UK's?**

The Island's pass rate at GCSE and A level usually compares favourably with that of the UK. However, it should be noted that that the overall 'national' pass rate includes all students who have taken exams – including those in the Island.

### **What further and higher education opportunities are available locally?**

The Isle of Man College of Further and Higher Education, which incorporates the former Isle of Man International Business School, offers academic, vocational, leisure and recreational courses, including a dozen subjects at degree level, through its partner the University of Chester. Please visit its website [www.iomcollege.ac.im/](http://www.iomcollege.ac.im/)

### **Are Isle of Man students eligible to attend universities in the UK and further afield?**

Students are not disadvantaged in any way by being resident in the Isle of Man. Those staying on into sixth form at the five secondary schools generally study between three and five subjects at A level to gain the necessary entry qualifications and apply for places through UCAS, just as UK students do. The vast majority of students from the Island get into their first or second choice universities and those who go through the clearing system are usually successful in obtaining places.

### **Is funding available for students attending higher education courses?**

The Isle of Man Government meets the tuition fees of all students taking three-year degree courses in the UK and beyond, provided they have been resident in the Island for four years prior to applying. The Department seeks a contribution of £5,000 a year from students taking longer (four-year+) degree courses or studying for postgraduate qualifications, but continues to meet the rest of the fees, up to a maximum of £9,000. An Isle of Man Bank loan scheme assists students to meet this contribution. Around a third of students who enter higher education also qualify for means-tested maintenance grants to help them pay for accommodation etc.

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