

## **Can I choose which secondary school I would like my child to attend?**

Parents of children with SEN have the same rights as other parents to inform the LA (Local Authority) which school they wish to apply to for a place for their child. Most schools have a catchment area, a limited number of places, and some have their own admission criteria. Parents cannot actually choose a school for their child but they can express a preference for a school.

### **Applying for a school place**

Both Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council produce booklets listing their schools and explaining their admission policies and procedures in detail. In the autumn term of your child's last year in primary school you will be given details of how to apply for the school you prefer. You can complete the application form or apply online, but must do so before the closing date specified in the letter.

Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City now have a co-ordinated admissions policy which means that you apply to the Local Authority in which you live regardless of the school you wish your child to attend. Your Local Authority will then process your application and relay the decision to you if you have nominated a school outside of the area. You may list up to 4 preferences. It is advisable to include your reasons for nominating each school and to provide any professional or special evidence at the time of application.

If your preferences include Voluntary Aided, Foundation or Academy schools, you may also need to complete a 'supplementary form'. This will be available from the school and could form a vital part of your application

During the summer term 2010, while your child is still in Year 5, it's a good idea to begin investigating which school you feel would be suitable. Admission booklets with lists of schools can be requested from the relevant school admissions team (see contact details on page 6) or may be available on the Local Authority websites.

### **Which school?**

All schools have equal access to support for special educational needs, e.g. support staff, specialist services and resources. However all schools are individual and vary in the way they organise and manage support for pupils with special needs. The design of the buildings and grounds can also be important in deciding whether a school is suitable for a particular child; for example some schools have already been adapted to be more suitable for children with significant mobility difficulties.



As well as thinking about how a school organises its learning support you may also wish to consider other aspects such as how the school involves parents, general atmosphere, achievements, standards of behaviour, and uniform.

Moving from primary to secondary school is an exciting and sometimes challenging step for most children. Children will usually have their own view about where they would like to attend. It is important that they feel that their opinions are listened to along with everyone else; for example, staying with their friendship groups may be important to some children but not to all.

## Talking it over



It's important to keep an open mind and consider several possibilities before making a decision. Talk to the staff at your child's present school and other involved professionals who know your child before you make up your mind. You can do this informally when your child is in the summer term of Year 5 but discussion about transfer to secondary school will be on the agenda at the first Individual Education Plan (IEP) review meeting in Year 6. If your child has a statement of his or her special educational needs then this discussion may take place at the Annual Review meeting in Yr5 which can be brought forward if necessary. You will be invited to the IEP or Annual Review meeting to give your own views and listen to professionals' views.

At the meeting you will be able to discuss the schools you have considered. Following the meeting you should be able to make a final choice of which school to apply to for a place for your child.

If your child has a statement of their special educational needs it is important to mention this on the application form and give a short description of your child's needs.

Most parents naturally feel some anxieties about the move to secondary. However most children settle down and enjoy secondary school without too many problems.

## Who else can help?

The admissions process can sometimes seem a little daunting! However, you may find it helpful to speak to the Parent Partnership Service or a Choice Adviser, both of whom offer impartial advice, information and support relating to transfer from primary to secondary school.

### Support from the Parent Partnership Service

You can phone the Parent Partnership office on 0115 948 2888 to talk to a member of staff about any educational concerns you may have, including issues around transfer to secondary school.

The Parent Partnership Service runs information events every year aimed at parents of children with special educational needs who are about to transfer from primary to secondary school. Contact us at this address :

Clarendon Chambers  
32 Clarendon Street  
Nottingham  
NG1 5LN

Tel/fax/Minicom: 0115 948 2888

E-mail: [enquiries@ppsnotts.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ppsnotts.org.uk)  
[www.ppsnotts.org.uk](http://www.ppsnotts.org.uk)

**Choice Advice**

### Nottinghamshire Choice Advice

☎ 0115 8533283

Email: [choiceadvice@ppsnotts.org.uk](mailto:choiceadvice@ppsnotts.org.uk)

### Nottingham City Choice Advice:

☎ 0800 458 4114

You may also find it helpful to speak to a Choice Adviser, who can give you specific advice and information about the school admissions process, application forms and supporting material.

A Choice Adviser can help families and those with caring responsibilities to make a realistic preference for their child. Failure to express a preference or apply on time may mean that you are offered a school that you are not happy with.



# Transport



## Pupils with Special Transport Needs

Although your child may have a special educational need, it does not automatically mean they will have a special transport need. Special transport needs are assessed on the ability of a child to walk to and from school, accompanied by a parent or carer where necessary.

A special transport need may arise where the child:

- is unable to walk or cannot walk without help
- lives within walking distance of the school but cannot walk safely to and from school, even if accompanied
- cannot use public transport without help

If your child is assessed as having a special transport need, the local authority (LA) will provide free travel assistance or pay you a mileage allowance to get your child to the catchment area school. Transport assistance is not usually provided for children who attend a school other than their catchment area school, unless it has been designated by the LA as the most appropriate school for the child.

If your child has a special transport need, arrangements will be made that are appropriate to the needs of your child and will usually be one of the following: bus, minibus, taxi, ambulance or mileage allowance. The LA may ask you to accompany your child on the transport to and from school if they are travelling alone. Alternatively the LA may provide an escort to travel on the transport depending on the age and needs of the children on board. Transport will only be provided from the home address to school and return at the appropriate school times. Any alternative transport (ie. to and from child care) is the responsibility of the parent or carer.

For further information call the Parent Partnership Service on 0115 948 2888

If you think your child has a special transport need, please contact the appropriate Special Educational Needs team

☎ (0115) 977 4341 if you live in the County

☎ 0115 915 0752 if you live in the City.



## What happens next?

Once it is clear which school you would prefer for your child you will be involved in more detailed planning for the transfer. The process will usually follow the outline given below.

### **PRIMARY SCHOOL PROCESS**

#### **Summer Yr 5**

- Get information on secondary schools
- Visit secondary schools
- Talk to SENCO/IES (City) / ISS (County)
- Use IEP review to discuss Yr7 provision
- Identify the need for low/high level transition planning
- Receive the primary to secondary transfer pack from PPS via school if child is at School Action Plus or Statemented

#### **Autumn Yr6**

- Receive application form for secondary placement and return or apply online by October 31<sup>st</sup> 2010.
- Can apply for cross border school - apply to the LA in which you live
- Get supporting evidence if needed
- IEP review - incorporate transition planning targets (could be multi-agency review)
- Statemented children have early Annual Review (before Feb)
- Additional funding or support may be available for pupils at transition e.g. City schools can ask for transition worker involvement for ASD child

## **Spring Yr6**

- Find out which school you have been allocated (the letter will be sent out on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2011)
- Start appeal process for desired school if necessary
- For pupils with a statement, LA will amend the statement to name the new (secondary) school, plus any other amendments identified at annual review)
- IEP review - look at transition plan. SENCO from receiving school can be invited to review

End of spring term/beginning of summer term, SENCO from receiving school may apply for additional funding/support for transition period and during Y7

## **Summer Yr6**

- IEP review/transition plan review
- Child - visits to secondary with whole class, extra visits if needed e.g. TA (Teaching Assistant) may support your child in practising travelling on the bus to their new school; your child may make a booklet containing photos of staff and important places in the new school etc
- Parents attend secondary school open evening
- Parents and receiving SENCO meet to discuss provision
- Transport is agreed upon - details of specialist transport may not be provided until near end of summer holidays
- City ASD pupils - transition worker can get involved and stay involved over the summer holidays

Key points to remember about the transfer process:

- It is essential that there is good communication between all parties.
- Your child has a point of view that should be taken into account.
- Transfer information needs to be accurate, provided early and regularly updated.

### **Appeal process**

If you are unsuccessful in gaining a place for your child at the school you prefer you will be given details in writing of how to make an appeal. You can also speak to a Choice Adviser for help and support. The appeal process around school placement for children with statements of special educational needs is to the SEN Tribunal.

### **Once they have started at secondary school**

Some children will settle down quickly at their new school while others will take longer to adjust to new surroundings. The first term will be a period of pupils and staff getting to know each other and solving any problems as they arise. At some point in the first term the school will arrange an IEP meeting and invite you to attend. You will be able to share information about how your child has responded to the transfer and to pick up any remaining concerns that either you or the school may have. This meeting will be an opportunity for school and parents to work together and lay the foundation for a positive partnership for the benefit of your child.

Further information and admissions booklets are available from:-

#### **Nottingham City**

Admission and Exclusion Team

The Sandfield Centre

Sandfield Road

Lenton

Nottingham NG7 1QH

☎ 0115 915 0763



**Nottinghamshire County Council**  
**Parent & Pupil Services**  
Children and Young People's Services  
Meadow House  
Littleworth  
Mansfield  
Notts NG18 2TA  
☎ 01623 433433

### **Parent Partnership Service**

If you would like to talk to one of our helpline advisers about issues around special educational needs, please contact us at:

Clarendon Chambers  
32 Clarendon Street  
Nottingham  
NG1 5LN

Tel/fax/Minicom: 0115 948 2888  
E-mail: [enquiries@ppsnotts.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ppsnotts.org.uk)

You may also find it helpful to visit our website: [www.ppsnotts.org.uk](http://www.ppsnotts.org.uk)

### **Nottinghamshire Choice Advice**

☎ 0115 8533283

Email: [choiceadvice@ppsnotts.org.uk](mailto:choiceadvice@ppsnotts.org.uk)

**City Choice Advice: 0800 458 4114**



Parent  
Partnership  
Service



Nottinghamshire  
County Council



**Nottingham**  
**City Council**



# Checklist for visiting secondary schools



Listed below are some examples of the questions you might want to ask when you are considering which school you would prefer for your child.

Some of the questions can be answered by looking carefully through the written information you have about a school e.g. - school brochure, SEN policy, behaviour policy, recent OFSTED report. Others might be answered through discussion with school staff on a visit to the school. Not all the questions will be appropriate for your child. There is also some space to add your own.

How will the present school plan for a successful transfer to secondary for my child?	
What will the new school do to make sure that all staff know about my child's individual needs?	
Does the new school have experience of helping children with similar needs to my child?	
What opportunities do staff have for training on SEN issues?	
How is support organised for children with special needs? Is support usually provided in class?	
How does the school celebrate the success of pupils with special needs?	

<p>How does the school make sure that children with special needs are included in after school activities, trips, sports and residential opportunities?</p>	
<p>What would the school do to ensure my child would have full access to the curriculum?</p>	
<p>Every school has an anti-bullying policy. Can I see the anti-bullying policy?</p>	
<p>How would other pupils be helped to understand my child's individual needs?</p>	
<p>How does the school celebrate different cultures?</p>	
<p>What should I do if I have concerns about my child?</p>	
<p>Does the school offer any extra support to parents of children with SEN?</p>	
<p>Are all areas of the school accessible to my child? If not, could adaptations be made or would other arrangements be necessary?</p>	
<p>How do specialist SEN staff liaise with class or year tutors about individual children?</p>	

Does the school have a positive behaviour reward system?	
How often would I be involved in Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings?	
How does the school communicate with parents? Telephone/e-mail/letters etc	
What support can be put in place for the unstructured times - play times/lunch times etc	
How much time should I expect my child to spend on homework?	