

# Primary to secondary transfer

Moving from primary to secondary school is an exciting and sometimes challenging step for most children. Children usually have their own view about which school they would like to attend. It is important they feel that their opinions are listened to along with everyone else; for example, staying with current friendship groups may be important to some children but not to all. Parents can feel some anxieties about the move to secondary, but most children settle down and enjoy secondary school without too many problems.

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

All parents, including those of children with SEND, have the right to inform the LA (Local Authority) which secondary schools they would like to apply to. This is called 'expressing a preference for a school' and is done by completing an application. In some cases you may do this online, over the phone or you may obtain a form.

During the summer term, while your child is still in Year 5, it's a good idea to begin considering which school you feel would be suitable. You are advised to check out the admission arrangements for the schools you are interested in. If there are more applications than places available, schools will allocate places in order of their published admission arrangements. For example, some schools may allocate places to children who live within their catchment area, whilst others will allocate places to those that attend a list of linked primary or junior schools. The admission arrangements may vary from school to school but it is important that you check that your child meets one of the higher criterion for admission where possible.

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

In the autumn term of your child's last year in primary school you will be given details of how to apply for a secondary school place. (This application process is only for mainstream schools; you cannot apply for a place at a special school this way.) You can apply online or complete and post an application form, but must do so before the closing date specified (this will be towards the end of October).

It is vital that you apply on time. Requests must be submitted by the end of October when you child is in Yr6. Please make your enquiries and submit your request to the LA in which you live by the closing date. If you do not, this can have a significant impact on your application and you may not be offered a place in the first round of allocations. It is also a good idea to use all 4 of your possible school choices.

Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council provide information about their schools, the admission policies and procedures in detail; these are available online (see <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/learning/schools/admissions/> and <http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/schooladmissions> ).

Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City have a co-ordinated admissions policy. This means that you apply to the Local Authority (LA) in which you live regardless of the school you wish your child to attend. Your LA will then process your application and pass it on to the other LA if you have nominated a school outside of their area. You should list up to 4 preferences, and

include your reasons for your preferred school along with 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' available from the school.

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) it is important to mention this on the application form and give a short description of your child's needs.

### **Which school?**

All schools, including academies, provide support for pupils with special educational needs, and can access Local Authority specialist services and resources. However, schools are individual and vary in the way they organise and manage this support. The design of the buildings and grounds can also be important in deciding whether a school is suitable for a particular child eg. some schools have already been adapted to be more suitable for children with significant mobility difficulties. You may wish to consider other aspects such as how the school involves parents, general atmosphere, achievements, standards of behaviour, and uniform. It can also be useful to look at recent Ofsted reports, available online.

You can find out how each school supports children with special educational needs by looking at the School Information Report; this should be on the school's website or you can view it via the LA's Local Offer.

For Nottingham City Local Offer :

<http://fis.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/kb5/nottingham/fsd/localoffer.page?familychannel=8>

For Nottinghamshire Local Offer :

<http://nottinghamshire.sendlocaloffer.org.uk>

## **Talking it over**



It's important to keep an open mind and consider several possibilities before making a decision. Talk to 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 Year 5 but discussion about transfer to secondary school should certainly be on the agenda at the first review meeting in Year 6. If your child has a statement of his/her special educational needs or an EHCP then this discussion may take place at the Annual Review meeting in Yr5, which can be brought forward if necessary. You will be able to give your own views and listen to professionals' views at any of these meetings, and discuss the schools you have considered.

### **Who else can help?**

The admissions process can sometimes seem a little daunting! You may find it helpful to speak to Ask Us Nottinghamshire (details below), for impartial advice, information and support relating to transfer from primary to secondary school for children with special educational needs.

## 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. Appeals around school placement for children with education, health and care plans are made to the SEND Tribunal.



# 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 be 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 by parent/carers
- cannot use public transport without help

If your child is assessed as having a special transport need, the LA will provide free travel assistance or may pay you a mileage allowance to get your child to the nearest (catchment) school, or the school designated by the LA as the most appropriate school for the child.

Special transport arrangements 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, or may provide an escort to travel on the transport depending on the age and needs of the children on board. Transport is normally provided from the home address to school and back at the appropriate school times, but it may be possible to discuss a different arrangement if there is a particular need.

For further information call Ask Us Nottinghamshire on 0115 8041740

If you think your child has a special transport need, please contact the appropriate Transport team to ask about special transport arrangements from home to school.

**☎ 0300 500 8080 if you live in the County**

**☎ 0115 876 4300 if you live in the City.**

## PLANNING THE TRANSITION

### Summer Yr 5

- Get information on secondary schools and visit schools
- Talk to SENCO/IES (City) / SFSS (County)
- Use review meeting to discuss Yr7 provision
- Identify the transition planning required

### Autumn Yr6

- Receive application form for secondary placement and return or apply online by closing date (end of October).
- Can apply for cross border school - apply to the LA in which you live
- Get supporting evidence if needed
- Incorporate transition planning targets into review meeting (could be multi-agency review)
- Children with EHCP will have an early Annual Review (before mid 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

- Allocation of school places (March). You will receive an email if you applied online or a letter if you applied by post.
- Start appeal process for desired school if necessary
- Pupils with a statement will have it amended to name the new (secondary) school, plus any other amendments identified at annual review.
- Look at transition plan at review meeting. SENCO from receiving school can be invited.
- Additional funding to support transition may be applied for (SENCO from receiving school)

### Summer Yr6

- Review meeting/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 may 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

## **Making a successful application for a secondary school place**

- Ensure your application is made by the deadline (end October).
- Include any supporting letters from professionals with your application
- Always list 4 schools in order of preference in your application. The schools do not get to know where they come on your list and each will be asked to provide a place for your child based initially on the distance between your home and school. It may be that more than one school offers a place. You will then be offered a place at the school highest on your list of preferences.

## **Remember!!**

- **Maintain good communication between all parties.**
- **Your child has a point of view that should be taken into account.**

## **Once your child has started at secondary school**

Some children 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. During the first term there will be a parents' evening for parents of Year 7 children and review meetings for parents of children with more significant needs. You will be able to share information about how your child has responded to the transfer and pick up any concerns that you or the school may have.

Further information and admissions booklets are available from:-

### **Nottingham City : School Admission and Exclusion Team**

☎ 0115 8415568

<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/schooladmissions>

### **Nottinghamshire County Council :**

☎ 01623 433499

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/learning/schools/admissions/>

## **Support from Ask Us Nottinghamshire**

You can contact Ask Us Nottinghamshire to talk to a member of staff about any concerns you may have, including issues around transfer to secondary school.

Tel : 0800 1217772

E-mail: [askus@futuresforyou.com](mailto:askus@futuresforyou.com)

Website : [www.ppsnotts.org.uk](http://www.ppsnotts.org.uk)

# Checklist for visiting secondary schools



Listed below are some examples of questions you might want to ask when you are considering your child's move to secondary school.

Some 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, and you may like to add questions of your own too.

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?

How does the school celebrate different cultures?

How does the school make sure that children with special needs are included in after school activities, trips, sports and residential opportunities?

How much time should I expect my child to spend on homework?

Does the school offer any extra support to parents of children with SEND?

Every school has an anti-bullying policy. Can I see the anti-bullying policy?

How would other pupils be helped to understand my child's individual needs?

What would the school do to ensure my child would have full access to the curriculum?

Are all areas of the school accessible to my child? If not, could adaptations be made or would other arrangements be necessary?

What should I do if I have concerns about my child?

How does the school communicate with parents? Telephone/e-mail/letters etc

How do specialist SEN staff liaise with class or year tutors about individual children?

How often would I be involved in review meetings?

Does the school have a positive behaviour reward system?

What support can be put in place for unstructured times - play times/lunch times etc?



**Nottingham**  
**City Council**



Information, advice and support  
for children and young people with  
a disability or special educational  
needs and their parents/carers



Information, advice and support  
for children and young people with  
a disability or special educational  
needs and their parents/carers