



# Why change schools?

## An information leaflet for parents and carers

### **Will a move really be in my child's best interests?**

In the case of house moves or exclusions, a move of schools may be unavoidable. If you wish to transfer your child to another school this will need careful consideration.

### **What will be the effect on my child's education?**

It is vital that parents/carers consider the effect on their child if they are thinking of changing schools. While schools will try to help children settle into a new school environment quickly, it does take time for children to adjust and some reduction in the level of their academic performance can be expected.

Although all schools teach the Core National Curriculum, subjects are not always taught at the same time or the same way in every school therefore by changing schools may mean that your child may have to repeat or miss elements within the curriculum (and consequently have to catch-up in their own time).

### **Will the same subjects be available?**

The last two years of secondary school, children are usually studying their GCSE subjects. This is an extremely important time, and it is generally considered that changing schools at this stage should be avoided, if possible, because it may have an effect on your child's GCSE results. In some schools the preparation begins in the last three years of secondary school and subjects available in one school may not be available in another.

### **Will the same options be available for my child?**

An added difficulty is that children at this stage choose to study some subjects and not others, e.g. History but not Geography or Business Studies but not Art. Most secondary schools agree choices with children and parents towards the end of Year 9. In some schools this is towards the end of Year 8.

### **Will my child be able to take the same examinations?**

Examination requirements differ from school to school and schools do not use the same examination boards. Problems may arise in subjects involving course work that must be sent to examination boards by set dates. Children who have not completed essential course work may be unable to complete the examination.

Should your child be at risk of permanent exclusion, the transfer request may be considered through the LA's fair access protocol managed move scheme.

If your child has an attendance record of less than 65% for 6 months or more, and there are no genuine reasons for the absences (medical reasons etc.) they may be requested to complete a 3 week probationary period before agreement on a formal transfer is made.

### **Will my child make new friends?**

Friendships formed in or out of school can be very important to young people. Changing school because a child's friend changes school may be unwise as each child has their own needs.

Changing to a school where a child will have to make new friends can be a very isolating and daunting experience and may have an impact on their performance.

### **Will my child have a fresh start or just face old problems?**

Sometimes a change of school can enable children, who are suffering from an unwanted reputation or a clash of personalities in their local school or community, to start again. However, this does not always happen – especially if old habits or ways of behaving or dealing with problems do not change.

Sometimes the difficulties can transfer too, particularly if the previous school has not been given time to resolve the situation.

### **Can present difficulties be resolved?**

Sometimes a change is considered because there has been a disagreement between the parents or child and the school. There are very few differences that cannot be resolved if an issue is discussed openly and reasonably between a school and parent.

Parents are encouraged to settle any differences with schools and only move their children to another school as a last resort.

### **Is there a best time for my child to change school?**

If you must change school, it is generally better for a change of school to take place at the end of a term or at the end of a school year to minimise the disruption to the child's education.

### **What is my role as a parent/carer?**

Although parents/carers do not have the right to choose a school they do have a right to express a preference for more than one school. The school and the Local Authority (as the admissions authority) have a duty to comply with the preference if places are available in the year group.

If after fully considering the information in this leaflet, parents still wish to change school, they must:

- 1) notify the child's current school of the intention to change school; and
- 2) contact us to request an application form.

After notifying their child's current school the parent must notify us at the address below.

### **Primary Age Children**

The parent/carer will be given a T1 application form if the only reason for requesting a transfer is because the parent/carer and child(ren) are moving home. We will require form T1 to be completed for each child. If the transfer is not due to a house move, application form T3 should be requested from the school places & admissions team. This form must be completed (including the declaration) and forwarded to the Head Teacher of the child's current school who will then complete and forward the form to us.

### **Secondary Age Children**

The parent/carer will be given application form T2 if their child is requesting a transfer for a home move or a transfer for any other reason.

The T2 form must be completed (including the declaration) and forwarded to the Head Teacher of the child's current school who will then complete and forward the form to us.

**Parents/carers are legally required to ensure that their children maintains school attendance and therefore children should remain at their current school until a decision is made about the parental request for a change of school. If you do not ensure your child attends school and the absences are not authorised, you could be guilty of an offence and prosecuted for this offence.**

For further information and advice please contact:

The School Places and Admissions Team,  
Green Lane,  
Spennymoor,  
County Durham.  
DL16 6JQ.

Telephone: 03000 265896 or email [schooladmissions@durham.gov.uk](mailto:schooladmissions@durham.gov.uk) and mark the email primary or secondary school transfer.