

## Your Rights and Responsibilities

### 1 Independent and unbiased advice

There is a Choice Adviser available to help you understand the admissions system and enable you to make informed and realistic choices of which secondary schools to apply for in the best interest of your child. Advice and support can also be given on admission appeals. You can contact the Choice Adviser on 01642 526603 or e-mail [choiceadvice@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:choiceadvice@stockton.gov.uk)

### 2 Preference

You have the right to say which school you would prefer your child to go to. The local authority (LA) will endeavour to give you one of your preferences as far as possible without overfilling the school. You will be asked to consider putting down 3 preferences on the online application, in the order of which school you would prefer first. All preferences will be treated equally.

If you want your child to go to the admission zone school, you need to put that school as one of your preferences (whether 1, 2 or 3). You can find out your admission zone by going onto the Stockton-on-Tees website:

[www.stockton.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/schooladmissions) or by ringing school admissions. If you do not want your child to go to the admission zone school, you can ask for them to go to another school,

either within Stockton-on-Tees or in another authority.

### 3 Application

You have to apply for a place for your child at secondary school, you can no longer assume they will automatically be allocated a place, especially if you live in an area where the local school is very popular.

### 4 Right to appeal

The LA has a legal duty to provide a school place for your child. If you are not happy with the place which has been allocated for your child, whatever the reason, you can appeal.

The LA will give you information about how to appeal in the letter you receive from them telling you which school place has been allocated for your child.



## Handy hints for parents

- Apply online and you will receive your allocation by email on the 1st March.
- Get yourself organised. Don't leave it until the last minute.
- Make sure you meet the deadlines for application or appeal. If your application is late it will be considered after all the applications received on time.
- Consider how your child will get to school safely, if you have opted for a school some distance away from your home.
- Don't put the same school down 3 times - it will not guarantee a place at the school.
- Discuss any areas of concern with the preferred school or with us.
- You can appeal for any school you have been refused a place at (both community and voluntary-aided (church) schools).
- Try and keep a copy of all correspondence.

Stockton-on-Tees  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Choosing a Secondary School

Issue 10

How do I get my child a place in a Secondary School in Stockton-on-Tees?

If your child was born between 1st September 2000 and 31 August 2001 your child will be due to start Secondary School in September 2012

**Apply online** for your school place at  
[www.stockton.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/schooladmissions)

**Site available from 12 September - 31 October 2011**

Applying online is:

- Quick and Easy - apply 24 hours a day 7 days a week
- Safe and Secure
- Avoids the risk of losing the application or it getting lost in the post
- Allows you to make changes at anytime up until the closing date
- Provides confirmation upon receipt of your application
- Allocation emailed on 1st March. Letter will be posted 2nd class

**Where can I access the website to apply?**

At home, work, school or at any Stockton Library



## Collecting Information

### 1 Local authority booklets

We publish a Primary and Secondary admissions booklet each year which will give you information on:

- lists of all schools in the area;
- the numbers of pupils admitted to the schools;
- the admission arrangements;
- information about free school meals, transport and other things you might want to know.
- You can look at a copy on-line [www.stockton.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/schooladmissions) or copies are available in schools, libraries or from the LA by ringing 01642 526605 or e-mail: [schooladmissions@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:schooladmissions@stockton.gov.uk)

### 2 School prospectuses

These booklets will give the schools' aims and values, and the organisation and details of the curriculum.

Voluntary-aided schools, who deal with their own admissions, will also have a copy of their admissions policy within the prospectus.

A copy of the Governors' Annual General Report may also be included but if not, you can ask for a copy. You can get a copy of the school prospectus by contacting the individual schools or checking their website if they have one.

### 3 Achievement and Attainment table (formerly known as Performance Tables)

Tables are published each year which give information on numbers of pupils, exam results and school attendance records, plus any measures of improvement of individual schools.

The tables are also ranked based on exam results. These tables emphasise only grades - these should not be the only measure you take into account (for example, there may have been a change in head teacher or senior members of

staff since the tables were published, which can make a difference). You can get copies of these tables by visiting the Department for Education (DFE) website: [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

### 4 Websites

If you can get access to a computer you could look at websites for more information.

The Department for Education (DfE) has information on School and College Achievement tables and bullying: [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) will give information on individual school inspections: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

We have our own website and individual schools have information on this site as well as their own websites.

Our website address is [www.stockton.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/schooladmissions)

### 5 School Open Days/Evenings

It is most important that you visit schools and talk to staff and pupils so that you can form your own opinion about the schools' principles and the standard of the pupils' work before you make any decision.

Most schools have open days or evenings in the Autumn term. You can find out dates, as well as other information, from websites, local libraries or the schools themselves. They will also be published in the Secondary School Admissions booklet.

### 6 Choice adviser

The choice adviser will be able to help you gather information you can ring on 01642 526603 or e-mail: [choiceadvice@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:choiceadvice@stockton.gov.uk) Alternatively you could make an appointment to meet with the Choice Adviser in school or will make a visit to your home if that is preferred.

## Applying

### 1 Coordination of School Admissions

The LA is now responsible for co-ordinating admissions for people who live in their area. The LA is the authority you pay your Council Tax to and will be referred to as your 'home' authority. This means that we will work with our neighbouring authorities and the voluntary-aided (VA) schools within the borough to make sure all parents are made an offer of one school place on 1 March, which is a nationally agreed date.



### 2 How?

We, as your home admissions authority, will provide you with information at the beginning of September the year before your child is due to start secondary school.

You will need to apply online. Information will be given to you about how to do this when you receive your secondary letter.

If you apply for a VA school or a school in other LA's your application will be forwarded to them after the closing date and they will allocate places according to their own admission criteria (conditions). They will then let the LA have this information so that parents can be informed on the same day. It is important that you fill in the online application and return it by the date given, or you may miss out on your preferred school and your child may be the last in the queue.

### 3 Admissions criteria

You should check the admissions criteria (conditions) published by us or the voluntary-aided (VA) admission authority, for the schools you are interested in, so that you can see which one your child is more likely to gain a place in.

By law, admissions authorities must publish the criteria in order of importance as to how places will be allocated. This is agreed by consulting with schools, governors, parents and Members

of the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees Council as well as the diocese and other admissions authorities in the surrounding areas, the previous year.

The Stockton-on-Tees admission policy is published each year and is included in the secondary booklet for the appropriate year of entry to secondary school.

You can find all the admission policies and the booklet on the Stockton-on-Tees website: [www.stockton.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/schooladmissions) or by contacting the admissions section on 01642 526605

### 4 When?

In early September, your child will receive a letter from the LA - through their primary school.

You will be given six weeks to complete the online application stating your preferred school. The closing date will be clearly marked in your letter.

Make sure you complete an online form before the given deadline.

Your 'home' authority will inform you which place has been allocated for your child. If you apply online you will receive an email on the 1st March. Letters will be sent out on 1 March by second-class post - this is a nationally agreed date.

If you have been refused a place at your preferred school, you can either accept the alternative offered or appeal.

