

## Equal Preference System – Community and Voluntary Aided Schools

All Community and Voluntary Aided Secondary Schools in Gateshead operate an Equal Preference System when allocating places.

### **How does this affect me?**

How you rank a school on your application form does not initially matter when the school apply their admission criteria to your application. The priority your child is placed in under the schools admission criteria is the most important factor when deciding whether a place is available at a school when applications are considered.

**However, the Local Authority (LA) must look at the ranking a school has been given on the application form** when we determine the single offer of a school place for each child. If we become aware, during the co-ordination process that a child is eligible for an offer at more than one school ranked on the application form then we must determine the single offer of a place to each child resident in Gateshead. We decide this by offering a place at the school for which the child is eligible for an offer that was ranked highest on the application form, therefore the ranking you give each school on your application form is considered by the LA and is important if your child becomes eligible for more than one offer.

Sometimes there are not enough places at one school to satisfy every parent that applies for a place, this is what is meant when a school is "oversubscribed". **We cannot guarantee that you will gain a place for your child at one of your preferred schools** as this will depend on the admission criteria of the school and how it applies to your child and the number of applications that are received for each school.

If you live in Gateshead and we cannot offer your child a place at any of your preferred schools, then we will allocate a place at your

community catchment school if it still has places available. If there are no places available at this school, we will then offer the next nearest community school in Gateshead with places available, measured as the crow flies from the main entrance of the school to your home address.

The Equal Preference System does not mean that you stand a better chance of gaining a place at a school simply by naming it as a preference nor does it mean that all three of your preferred schools ranked on your application form will stand an equal chance of success. Voluntary aided and community schools have different admission criteria that must be applied to each application to determine the priority for admission and decide if they can offer your child a place at the school.

**You need to know that places are not automatically kept back for children within their normal Community Catchment School, nor do we keep places back for late applicants who have brothers or sisters in the school.**

Due to parental preference, the number of applications received for a particular school can vary significantly from year to year. To help you we have given below details of the schools that were oversubscribed in Gateshead for admission in September 2009 after co-ordination took place:

### **Community Schools**

Lord Lawson of Beamish Community School, Ryton Comprehensive School and Whickham School.

### **Voluntary Aided Schools**

Cardinal Hume Catholic School and St Thomas More Catholic School.