

## Section 1

### **Secondary Schools Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements – September 2010**

We co-ordinate our admissions to Secondary Schools in Gateshead with our neighbouring LA's. We will check the applications we receive in Gateshead against those submitted to our neighbouring LA's to ensure only one application form for each child has been submitted. Our neighbouring LA's and their contact details are given below:

Durham	0191 383 4576
South Tyneside	0191 424 7705
Newcastle	0191 277 7428
Sunderland	0191 561 1447
Northumberland	01670 534 162

We co-ordinate the single offer of a place for all children resident in Gateshead. We can only offer one school place for each child. For example, if a child is eligible to be offered places at more than one school which was ranked on the application form, whether this is for schools in or outside of Gateshead, then, if you live in Gateshead, as your home LA we will ensure only one offer for the highest ranked school for which you are eligible for an offer is made. Parents must think carefully about the schools they apply to and how they rank them on their application form.

The co-ordination procedures will not remove the possibility of a minority of parents receiving the offer of a place at a school they did not choose. This is partly due to the oversubscription of places at some particular schools chosen by parents, demand for which can vary significantly from year to year.

#### **Children Living in Gateshead**

If your child lives in Gateshead you can apply on line from 11 September 2009 at **[www.gateshead.gov.uk](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk)**. On-line applications must be submitted by **Friday 23 October 2009**. Alternatively you can complete the paper application form at the back of this booklet.

If your child attends a Gateshead Primary School your application may be returned to the Head Teacher of the school by **23 October 2009**, you must request a receipt from the school.

Alternatively you can return your form to The School Organisation and Admissions Team at the address given at the front of this booklet. A receipt will then be sent to you through the post. You must ensure you obtain a receipt for your application form.

#### **Children Living Outside Gateshead**

If your child lives outside Gateshead and you wish to apply for a place at a Gateshead Secondary School you must obtain an application form from your home LA and return it to them by their closing date. However, it is important that you read the information contained in this booklet in order to fully understand the admission criteria for the Gateshead school you apply to.

#### **Important Points to Note**

- Gateshead operates an Equal Preference System for admission to Secondary School. Please refer to page 8 for further information on the Equal Preference System.
- All schools you apply to must be ranked on your application form, these may be for any community or voluntary aided school in Gateshead or for schools in our neighbouring LA's. Preferences for schools which are not Gateshead community schools i.e. Cardinal Hume Catholic School, St Thomas More Catholic School or schools outside Gateshead will be forwarded by us to the relevant school or LA so they can consider your application.
- You must think carefully about the admission criteria for each school you apply to and the likelihood of success. For example, voluntary aided schools have different admission criteria to community schools, this will affect how individual Schools and Admission Authorities initially consider your application.

- Our offer day is 1 March 2010. Your offer letter will come from your home LA. Gateshead residents who apply on-line will be notified on the morning of 1 March 2010 via e-mail.
- If you only name one school on your application form it does not increase your chances of gaining a place at this school, also, repeating the name of a school on your application form does not improve your chance of gaining a place there. It simply means that if you are not offered a place at the school you want we will not know which other Schools may have interested you.
- Generally speaking in assessing your chances of obtaining a place at a community school in Gateshead if you fall into category 3 or 4 of the admission criteria you may have a reduced chance of success.
- You should request a receipt when you return your application form to your child's current school or the Local Authority. Parents that apply online are automatically emailed a receipt.
- We do not keep places back for late applicants who live in the catchment area of the school or who apply late but also have another older child or children attending the preferred school.

## Late Applications

If you return your form after 23 October 2009 you will severely reduce your chances of gaining a place at your chosen schools. We may, for late applications received after 23 October 2009 but before 18 January 2010 for exceptional reasons, be able to consider your application. For example, you may have just moved into the area. In such circumstances proof of ownership or tenancy of your address will be required. Each late application, including those who move house, will be decided on its own merits. You need to be aware that if we agree to consider a late application for exceptional reasons this does not in itself mean that we can offer your child a place. It simply means that your application will be considered in accordance with the admission criteria along with all others

which were received on time. Change of preferences received after the 23 October 2009, must be submitted in writing and will be considered as late applications.

**Late applications received after 18 January 2010 will not be processed until after 1 March 2010**, however an offer will be made for your community catchment school in Gateshead or if this is not available at 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.

Allegations from late applicants stating that their application form has been lost in the post or lost by the school or the LA will not be considered without proof of receipt from the parent.

**Did you know that most parents who were refused a place last year were as a result of applying late. We do not keep places back for late applicants who live in the catchment area of the school or who apply late but also have another older child or children attending the preferred school.**

## Waiting Lists 26 March 2010

We will maintain waiting lists for all oversubscribed community and voluntary aided schools in Gateshead from 26 March 2010. If you are refused a place at a Gateshead school you can write to the LA and request that your child's name be placed on the waiting list for that school. The allocation of places from the waiting list will commence on 26 March 2010 and places will be allocated on a weekly basis thereafter providing vacancies arise. Waiting lists are maintained according to the admission criteria of the school without reference to the preference ranking given on the application form.

Parents can contact the LA to find out their child's position on a waiting list, however this must be treated with some caution as individual positions may change on a regular basis due to additions or deletions of children on the list.

### **Appeals**

Any parent that has been refused a school place has the right to appeal against the decision to an independent appeal panel. You must contact the School Admissions Team following receipt of your refusal letter and request an appeal form. Appeals are generally heard in May/June 2009. Further information on the appeals process is available in Section 5 of this booklet.

### **Community and Voluntary Aided School**

#### **Admission Policies**

Gateshead LA is responsible for determining the admission policy and admission arrangements for community schools in Gateshead.

Gateshead's community school admission policy is set out on page 9 of this booklet. Voluntary aided schools in Gateshead are required to act in accordance with their own admission policies. The admission policies for Cardinal Hume Catholic School and St Thomas More Catholic School are set out on pages 12 and 15 of this booklet.

#### **Open Days/Evenings at Gateshead Secondary Schools are as follows:**

Heworth Grange Comprehensive School  
Tuesday 29 September 2009

Hookergate School  
Thursday 1 October 2009

Joseph Swan School  
Tuesday 29 September 2009

Kingsmeadow  
Community Comprehensive School  
Tuesday 6 October 2009

Lord Lawson of Beamish Community School  
Thursday 8 October 2009

Ryton Comprehensive School  
Thursday 8 October 2009

Thomas Hepburn Community School  
Wednesday 16 September 2009

Whickham School  
Wednesday 7 October 2009

Cardinal Hume Catholic School  
Wednesday 23 September 2009 for children attending non feeder schools.  
Thursday 24 September 2009 for children attending feeder schools

If you require further information or would like to arrange a visit to St Thomas More Catholic School please contact the Head Teachers office on 0191 499 5016 before 23 October 2009.

Head Teachers will invite parents to visit their school on the above evenings or during the day depending on the school's own arrangements. These proposed dates are correct at the time of print, however if you wish to attend the open day/evening you are advised to check with the school to ensure the dates above have not changed before your visit.

## Section 2

### **Admissions to Community Secondary Schools in Gateshead September 2010**

#### **How Places are Allocated**

We allocate places in Gateshead using an Equal Preference System. If there are not enough places available in a community school to meet all parental requests ranked on the application form. Priority will be given according to the schools admission criteria set out within the admission policy on page 9.

The secondary school's catchment area is the combined catchment areas of its linked Primary and Junior Schools. The list of linked Community Primary and Junior Schools can be found on page 4. **We do not operate any feeder arrangements to Gateshead's Secondary Schools.**

If you are unsure which catchment area you live in you please contact The School Organisation and Admissions Team on 0191 433 2775, 433 2757 or 433 2756 before you submit your application.

#### **Looked After Children**

A "Looked After Child" is a child who is in care of a Local Authority, and as deemed under Section 22 of the Children Act 1989. Children in Public Care "Looked After Children" have top priority in our community school admission policy for September 2010. This means that when places become available during the school year they can be offered to these children over others on the waiting list, this is to ensure that they are quickly placed in an appropriate school.

#### **Address**

When we decide whether a child lives within a catchment area for a Gateshead School only the address of the parent/legal guardian will be taken into account. Addresses of childminders or other relatives or friends who may help look after your child must not be used on the

application form. We reserve the right to seek proof of address and to withdraw an offer of a place in the event of an inaccurate address being given on the application form. Please note we cannot accept your residence at a temporary address, unless exceptional circumstances apply, for example you are moving into the area or have been housed in emergency accommodation by the Local Authority. However, there may also be other exceptional circumstances that we may consider based on the evidence provided.

Parents of children who reside at two different addresses due to parental responsibility, are advised to seek advice about the completion of their application form before its submission from The School Organisation and Admissions Team on 0191 433 2757, 433 2775 or 433 2756.

If you change your address after submitting your application form, then you must write to us immediately to let us know. You may be asked to provide evidence of your change of address.

#### **Sibling Links**

We consider the sibling link to apply when an older brother/sister or step brother/sister who shares the same parent/guardian and lives at the same address as the child applying and will be attending the preferred school at the time of admission. In addition the older sibling must have been at the school from the start of year 11.

#### **Special Circumstances – Social/Medical Grounds**

The LA can consider individual applications involving social or medical needs. These applications must be supported in writing by relevant professional agencies. Please send your application and supporting information to The School Organisation and Admissions Team, Gateshead Council, Learning and Children, Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HH by 23 October 2009.

You must provide written documentation from a professional for example a GP, Hospital Consultant, Social Worker etc; such evidence should be wholly persuasive. Such evidence must explain why the child's needs require placement at the particular school chosen and what difficulties would be caused if the child had to attend an alternative school.

Usually common childhood ailments such as asthma, giving a child's nervousness at starting school or difficulties with child minding arrangements would not be sufficient to allocate a place. Appropriate examples may involve late applications from children looked after by the Council, for example undergoing placement for fostering or adoption and where school issues exist or for children for whom there are exceptional medical factors directly related to the school placement. However, these examples are not exhaustive. You should be aware however that the provision of such information does not necessarily in itself guarantee the offer of a place at your desired school.

If your child has special educational needs which you feel are important in relation to your application you should not assume that Primary or Junior School staff will automatically inform us about this information. It is your responsibility to provide relevant documentation from professionals that you feel is particularly relevant and you must explain why it is important to consider and what difficulties would be caused if the child had to attend an alternative school.

### **Special Educational Needs**

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Need which names a particular school in the statement are required to be admitted to that named school. However, if the school named in the statement is different to your chosen first preference school shown on your application form then your application will be dealt with in the same way as all other applicants according to the admission criteria set out in the admission policy.

If your child has special educational needs but not a statement, your application for a school place will be considered on the basis of the school's published admission criteria. All schools in Gateshead can provide for pupils with special educational needs.

### **Reserving Places**

We cannot hold back or reserve places in our Secondary Schools in the expectation of further applications from families moving into the area.

### **Exceptions to the Duty to Offer a School Place**

If there are more places available than applicants the Admissions Authority must accept all the applications except in the circumstances described below.

### **Twice Excluded Pupils**

Unless a child has been permanently excluded on two or more occasions, applications for places must be considered on the same basis as all other applications and in line with the School Admissions Code. In the case of twice excluded children, the admission authority (the LA in the case of community and voluntary controlled schools and the governing body in the case of voluntary aided and foundation schools) is not under a duty to comply with the preference of parents. However this does not affect a child's right to education.

### **Transport to School – New Arrangements**

Gateshead Council is currently preparing a borough-wide strategy to improve accessibility to schools, promote sustainable travel and increase the numbers of children travelling to school by sustainable means. The travel and transport needs of pupils will be analysed in order to identify barriers to walking, cycling and use of public transport for the school journey, so that measures may be identified to help overcome them.

It is intended that this strategy will provide an important source of information for parents on travel options when they are considering their preferences for particular schools.

If you would like further details on school travel and transport policies please contact:  
Gateshead Council School Travel Plans on  
0191 4333161 or 4333109 or e-mail  
**schooltravelplans@gateshead.gov.uk**

We provide free travel for:

- Any pupil in years 7 to 11 at a secondary school who lives more than three miles from the nearest appropriate school (base upon the shortest available route). This travel will be by whatever means we consider most suitable. We will not normally provide any help if you choose to send your child to a school outside your catchment area.
- In addition from September 2008 Special arrangements are being introduced for pupils who are in receipt of free school meals or whose household qualify for the maximum level of working tax credit on the date their school place is allocated.

1. These pupils are entitled to free travel to one of their three nearest qualifying schools where they live more than two miles but no more than six miles from that school
2. Where a parent has expressed a preference for a school, and that preference is based on the parent's religion or belief then a pupil will be eligible for free travel to their nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief where they live more than two miles, but not more than fifteen miles from that school

**NB.** Qualification for free travel in future years is dependent on continued eligibility for free school meals or maximum working tax credit.

**NB.** Qualification for free travel in future years on continued eligibility for free school meals or is dependant on continued maximum level of working tax credit.

For more information contact the Student Support Services team telephone  
0191 433 2741.

You can find more information about transport to school from the following:  
NEXUS provide School bus services in consultation with us, the LA, they are intended mainly for school children and therefore run on school days only. You can contact the Bus Service section at Nexus on 0191203 3303 to find out about the services on offer. Alternatively you can call into the Nexus travel shops that are open 6 days a week to check times and pick up information.

Why not visit **www.nexus.org.uk** the journey planner will find you the right bus or metro service, and you can access the timetable or just the details of the journeys at school times. Visit Travelline a national service that provides impartial planning information.

**For the Councils full school transport policies please refer to section 9 of this booklet.**

## Section 3

### **Admission to Voluntary Aided Secondary Schools – September 2010**

#### **Voluntary Aided Schools**

Governing Bodies of Roman Catholic and Church of England voluntary aided schools determine their own admissions using their own admission policies. The admission policies for Cardinal Hume Catholic School and St Thomas More Catholic School can be found on pages 12 and 15. Gateshead LA do not decide the eligibility of applicants for admission to Cardinal Hume Catholic School or St Thomas More Catholic School as this is decided by the Governing Bodies of each school. However, the Governors of each school are required under the co-ordinated admission arrangements to use Gateshead's application form to collect the details of applicants applying to their school for September 2010.

You can only submit one application form, which may contain a mixture of preferences for Voluntary aided and community schools in Gateshead or for those in our neighbouring authorities.

We will notify all parents who live in Gateshead about the allocation of places on 1 March 2010. If you live outside Gateshead your home LA will notify you about the outcome of your application to any schools in Gateshead on **1 March 2010**.

If Cardinal Hume Catholic School or St Thomas More Catholic School receive more applications than the number of places available, then the Governors of the school will ask you, after the closing date for applications, to provide further evidence that the Governors will require to consider your application in accordance with their admission criteria. You must submit all the evidence requested by the school, by the

timescale they indicate. If you do not provide the evidence required, you may run the risk of your application being placed in a much lower priority for admission than your child should actually be, this may reduce your chances of receiving an offer of a place at the school you applied for.

As with all community schools Cardinal Hume Catholic School and St Thomas More Catholic School operate an Equal Preference System. This means that it will not be relevant to the Governors of this school how parents ranked their school on the application form, as they will apply their admission criteria equally to everyone who applied on time irrespective of whether it was a first, second or third preference on the application form. This does not mean that you stand a better chance of gaining a place at this particular school simply by naming it as a preference nor does it mean that all three of your preferred schools on your application form will stand an equal chance of success. All schools have different admission criteria that must be applied to each applicant to determine the priority for admission of each child and decide if your child is eligible for a place at their school. Further information on the Equal Preference System can be found on page 8.

Gateshead LA will continue to co-ordinate admissions to voluntary aided schools up to 6 September 2010. If you are subsequently refused a place, on 1 March 2010 at a Gateshead Voluntary aided School you may ask to be placed on the waiting list for the school in question. To do this you must write to The School Organisation and Admissions Team at the Civic Centre and request to be placed on the waiting list.

**Further Information**

Additional information about Roman Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle can be obtained from:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle  
St.Vincent's Diocesan Offices  
St Cuthbert's House  
West Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE15 7PY  
Tel: 0191 228 0111

**Sixth Forms**

Information relating to the admission criteria to Voluntary aided School sixth forms is available from the respective Voluntary aided School.

Both Cardinal Hume Catholic School and St Thomas More Catholic School have sixth forms.

A parents guide to the benefits and opportunities of higher education for your child is available on the Internet at **[www.aimhigher.gov.uk](http://www.aimhigher.gov.uk)**

## Section 4

### **Admission Statistics**

#### **Admission Statistics for September 2008 and September 2009**

Gateshead LA receives applications each year for admission to Gateshead community schools from parents who have also applied to Emmanuel College and to other Independent/Private Schools outside Gateshead who are their own admission authority. Such parents subsequently decide to withdraw their applications to Gateshead schools following an offer and acceptance of a place at Emmanuel College or other Independent Schools. This impacts on the number of parents who first apply to secondary schools in Gateshead and other LA's but whom subsequently decide to withdraw their applications.

In this section we have given information on the number of applications considered by the allocation date for 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 and we have also highlighted the number of applications that were initially received by the respective closing dates.

#### **Other Sources of Information**

Annual school performance tables and Ofsted school inspection reports are available from the Department for Children, Schools and Families website at **[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)** and **[www.dfes.gov.uk/performance/tables](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/performance/tables)**

**Admissions for September 2008 & September 2009 - Admission Criteria Breakdown**

Community School	Year	Admission Number	First Preference Applications Received by the Closing Date	Second Preference Applications Received by the Closing Date	Third Preference Applications Received by the Closing Date	Total Offers Made on Allocation Date	Category 1 Offers Made	Category 2 Offers Made	Category 3 Offers Made	Category 4 Offers Made
<b>Heworth Grange Comprehensive School</b>	2009	240	211	85	52	214	0	126	29	59
	2008	240	255	89	56	240	1	164	36	39
<b>Hookergate School</b>	2009	160	66	27	33	93	0	86	2	5
	2008	190	69	19	30	75	0	72	1	2
<b>Joseph Swan School</b>	2009	230	215	151	116	221	0	102	36	83
	2008	230	175	141	81	226	0	112	36	78
<b>Kingsmeadow Comprehensive School</b>	2009	180	106	85	56	111	0	92	7	12
	2008	180	148	92	53	141	3	117	14	7
<b>Lord Lawson of Beamish School</b>	2009	254	256	106	74	254	0	128	44	82
	2008	254	300	89	51	254	1	149	30	74
<b>Ryton Comprehensive School</b>	2009	215	213	104	41	215	2	176	17	20
	2008	215	204	100	47	210	2	161	16	31
<b>Thomas Hepburn Community School</b>	2009	185	119	137	48	142	1	114	12	15
	2008	215	119	128	45	181	0	163	2	16
<b>Whickham School</b>	2009	266	302	184	120	266	2	163	23	78
	2008	266	330	185	84	266	0	191	31	44

Please note that parental choice means demand for places can rise or fall based on the requests from other parents who apply in your child's year. This can influence the allocation of places from particular criteria in any given year. These statistics are a guide to the pattern of allocations in the last 2 years.

**Appeal Data – September 2008 & 2009  
Community Secondary Schools**

Community Secondary School	Year	Admission Number	Offers Made by Allocation Date	First Preference Applicants Following Miscellaneous Withdrawals	Appeals Heard	Number of Successful Appeals
Heworth Grange Comprehensive School	2009	240	214	202	0	0
	2008	240	240	245	0	0
Hookergate School	2009	160	93	65	0	0
	2008	190	75	69	0	0
Joseph Swan School	2009	230	221	195	0	0
	2008	230	226	166	0	0
Kingsmeadow Comprehensive School	2009	180	111	98	0	0
	2008	180	141	132	0	0
Lord Lawson of Beamish Community School	2009	254	254	239	0	0
	2008	254	254	269	17	17
Ryton Comprehensive School	2009	215	215	211	0	0
	2008	215	210	203	0	0
Thomas Hepburn Community School	2009	185	142	112	0	0
	2008	240	181	115	0	0
Whickham School	2009	266	266	249	0	0
	2008	266	266	282	3	0

**Voluntary Aided Secondary Schools**

Voluntary Aided Secondary School	Year	Admission Number	Offers Made	First Preference Applicants Following Miscellaneous Withdrawals	Appeals Heard	Number of Successful Appeals
Cardinal Hume Catholic School	2009	190	190	241	12	12
	2008	190	190	276	29	11
St Thomas More Catholic School	2009	235	235	317	21	5
	2008	235	235	220	3	3

**Admissions to Voluntary Aided Schools for September 2008 & September 2009 - Admission Criteria Breakdown**

**Cardinal Hume Catholic School**

Year	Admission Number	Total Offers Made	Number of Equal Pref. Applications - (First, Second, Third) Rec'd	Statement Offers Made	Priority A Offers Made	Priority B Offers Made	Priority C Offers Made	Priority D Offers Made	Priority E Offers Made	Priority F Offers Made	Priority G Offers Made	Priority H Offers Made	Priority J Offers Made
2009	190	190	451	4	0	159	2	10	0	15	0	0	0

Year	Admission Number	Total Offers Made	Number of Equal Pref. Applications - (First, Second, Third) Rec'd	Priority D Offers Made	Statement Offers Made	Priority A Offers Made	Priority B Offers Made	Priority C Offers Made	Priority E Offers Made	Priority F Offers Made	Priority G Offers Made
2008	190	190	431	1	7	164	0	18	0	0	0

Please note that parental choice means demand for places can rise or fall based on the requests from other parents who apply in your child's year. This can influence the allocation of places from particular criteria in any given year. These statistics are a guide to the pattern of allocations in the last 2 years.

**St Thomas More Catholic School**

Year	Admission Number	Total Offers Made	Number of Equal Pref. Applications - (First, Second, Third) Rec'd	Statement Offers Made	Priority 1 Offers Made	Priority 2 Offers Made	Priority 3 Offers Made	Priority 4 Offers Made	Priority 5 Offers Made	Priority 6 Offers Made	Priority 7 Offers Made	Priority 8 Offers Made	Priority 9 Offers Made	Priority 10 Offers Made	Priority 11 Offers Made	Priority 12 Offers Made
2009	235	235	514	2	0	157	15	3	35	6	12	5	0	0	0	0

Year	Admission Number	Total Offers Made	First Preference Applications (first preference system used)	Statement Offers Made	Priority 1 Offers Made	Priority 2 Offers Made	Priority 3 Offers Made	Priority 4 Offers Made	Priority 5 Offers Made	Priority 6 Offers Made	Priority 7 Offers Made	Priority 8 Offers Made	Priority 9 Offers Made	Priority 10.1 Offers Made	Priority 10.2 Offers Made
2008	235	235	388	3	1	87	35	3	26	11	8	22	1	3	5

## Section 5

### **General Admission and Appeal Information**

Admissions to Secondary School in advance of the normal Year of entry. In exceptional cases, a school may advise that a pupil in Primary School has demonstrated high academic ability and may be considered to be exceptionally able. In such circumstances the pupil may be accelerated to Secondary School or whilst attending Primary School may be accelerated to another year group above that normally relevant for the child's age. In these rare cases, a pupil would be considered if the following circumstances applied:

1. The child is sufficiently robust emotionally, and socially mature so that entry to an older year group early or move to secondary school would be applicable without any traumatic effect being encountered. In this situation the pupil would be sufficiently capable of coping with the move without support from their already established friendship networks.
2. The child's high academic ability will not be confined to a giftedness in one or two curricular areas but rather the child will have demonstrated exceptional ability in most of the curriculum areas and has done for a considerable period of time.

In such circumstances the ability of the child will normally have been noted by the teacher or Head Teacher of the Primary School. In addition the ability of the child may have been noted by an Educational Psychologist who has been involved with assessment for this purpose.

In normal circumstances the school may recommend that a parent may consider whether they would wish to pursue the option of early entry to Secondary School. Where a child has been recommended, the parent has the right to apply for a place in a school of their preference. However, if the child is refused a place at a school of their preference the LA will liaise with parents in order to offer an alternative school where there are places available. Parents would

still have the right of appeal against any decision to refuse a place at the desired school.

The timescale for transfer into the first year of entry to Secondary School for accelerated pupils will be at the same time as Year 6 transfers and through the normal admission process for year 6 pupils as described in the Community Secondary School Admission Policy.

### **Admission Policy to Sixth Form in Community Schools**

Applications for year 12 and transfer from year 11.

Six Community Secondary Schools in Gateshead provide courses of study for post sixteen (sixth form) students. Sixth forms vary in size from approximately 60 to 360 students. The majority of sixth form students transfer from year 11 in their current school, but all schools have places available for external students.

The entry requirements for sixth form are largely dependent on the course of study that the student wishes to access. They are the same for internal and external students.

In general, students wishing to access Advanced Level courses must possess a minimum of 4 GCSE passes at grade C. To access Intermediate Level courses, some GCSE passes at grade D/E and/or appropriate Level 1 qualification(s) are required. There are no specific qualifications required for entry to foundation level courses. Details of specific entry requirements and courses available may be obtained from individual schools. All schools publish information about their post 16 provision.

Applicants refused admission to a sixth form are entitled to appeal to an independent appeals panel.

### **Community Secondary Schools with sixth forms are as follows:**

Heworth Grange Comprehensive School, Hookergate School, Joseph Swan School, Lord Lawson of Beamish Community School, Ryton Comprehensive School, Whickham School.

**Roman Catholic Secondary Schools with sixth forms are as follows:**

Cardinal Hume Catholic School, St Thomas More Catholic School.

A Parents Guide to the benefits and opportunities of higher education for your child is available on the Internet at **[www.aimhigher.gov.uk](http://www.aimhigher.gov.uk)**

**Casual Admissions**

Casual Admissions are those that occur outside the normal admission round for the admission of children to Secondary School. Often casual admission requests occur due to families moving to a new address. Year groups in some schools maybe full and therefore may not have places available when you move house or decide to transfer your child from one school to another. Unfortunately the local authority and schools that are their own admission authorities cannot hold places back for parents who decide in the future to move into the catchment area or parish of their preferred school.

We apply the same admission policy for casual admissions as for the normal admission round. Admission to Gateshead schools is dependent on the availability of places in the appropriate year group at the time of application.

If you want to arrange a transfer between Secondary Schools maintained by us, this includes Community Voluntary aided schools, you will need to complete an application form (transfer form) for this purpose.

You can approach the chosen Secondary School direct to see if it is suitable. However you must complete a transfer form which is available from Pupil and Parent Services Tel: 0191 433 8584, 433 8587 or 433 8589. The form asks parents to indicate their preferred schools and the school they are proposing to leave. We usually expect you to have discussed your plans for a school transfer with the Head Teacher of your child's current school. If necessary we may also make contact with other agencies and professional colleagues involved with your child's education

as we will want to make sure that there is a place available in the school you want your child to go to, and that they can provide suitable provision for your child.

In most cases we advise parents of the outcome of their application within three school weeks. If there is a place available then the admission date will be determined by the receiving Head Teacher and we will write to you to let you know this. Please note that applications lodged in the last 2 weeks of the school term may not necessarily be resolved in time for the start of a new term. In a minority of cases the admission process may take longer due to the circumstances of the case and the need to seek appropriate educational provision or support for the child in question.

It is unwise to withdraw a child from one school before admission to another has been agreed. It is expected therefore that your child will continue to attend their current school during the application process.

If we refuse you a place at your preferred school we will let you know where there are places available at alternative schools and we will also offer you the right of appeal. Community schools appeal forms are available from Pupil and Parent Services on 0191 433 8584, 433 8587 or 433 8589. A completed appeal form should be returned to Legal and Corporate Services at the Civic Centre, who will acknowledge receipt. Your appeal will be heard within 30 school days following the date of receipt. Vacant places sometimes arise before the date of the appeal hearing. Where this happens, the school will allocate vacant places to pupils on the waiting list using the admission criteria. Appeal forms in respect of applications to Voluntary aided Secondary Schools are available directly from the respective school.

Where year groups in Schools are oversubscribed then each school will maintain a waiting list for the relevant year group and any future vacancies may be allocated using the

school waiting list. To have your child's name placed on the waiting list you must write to the Head Teacher of your chosen school directly and ask for your child to be placed on the waiting list for the appropriate year group. School staff will inform you directly if a place becomes available to which your child is entitled. If, after your initial enquiries to the school, you are offered a place by school staff and you have not already done so, then you must complete a transfer form even though you have been told a place is available.

If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs you should contact staff within Pupil and Parent Services on telephone number 0191 433 8580 who will advise you with regard to the admission process for your child's admission to a new school.

If your child requires language support we will discuss this with officers from the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service.

The Council is considering proposals for coordinated transfers which will be introduced from September 2010. Details of the scheme will be available from Pupil and Parent Services on telephone number 0191 433 8591.

### **Pupils with Challenging Behaviour**

It is normally unacceptable for schools to refuse to admit a child on the basis of their behaviour elsewhere. If a pupil, once admitted, is found to be seriously disruptive then the school may consider disciplinary action, including exclusion procedures. A child with challenging behaviour may also be disabled as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and require reasonable adjustments to be made for them in the school or require particular support for any special educational needs.

Exceptionally, outside the normal year of entry, and where an application is made outside arrangements covered by an In-Year Fair Access Protocol, admission authorities may decide to refuse to admit a child with challenging behaviour even though there are places available, on the grounds that admission would

prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources. This will normally only be appropriate where a school has a particularly high concentration of pupils with challenging behaviour, or previously excluded children and one or more of the following exceptional circumstances exist, namely that the school:

- requires special measures or has recently come out of them (within the last two years);
- has been identified by Ofsted as having serious weaknesses or requiring significant improvement and therefore given "Notice to improve";
- is subject to a formal warning notice by the Local Authority;
- Is a Fresh Start School or Academy open for less than 2 years;
- Is a Secondary School where less than 20% of children are achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\* - C including English and Mathematics.

### **Fair Access Protocol**

Fair Access Protocols exist to ensure that access to education is secured for children who have no school place and where a placement in a mainstream school or alternative provision is appropriate and ensures that all schools admit their fair share of students with challenging behaviour. Our approach reflects a commitment by all schools to work in partnership with each other and the local authority in the interests of securing the best outcomes for young people. Further information on the council's Fair Access Protocols are available from Pupil and Parent Services telephone 0191 4338591.

### **Appealing against Admission Decisions**

If your child is refused a place at any school for which you have expressed a preference, you have the right to appeal against this decision. This applies whether the school is a Community school or Voluntary aided (Church) School. Information about the appeals procedure for Voluntary Aided (Church) Schools is available directly from the school in question.

### **Appeals for Community Schools**

The letter informing you that a place cannot be offered to your child will advise you how to appeal if you wish to do so. If you decide to appeal you should return the completed appeal form to Legal and Corporate Services, Democratic Services, Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HH. An acknowledgement will be sent to you giving a telephone number in case of queries.

Please note for co-ordinated admissions, the LA is required where possible to arrange and conduct all admission appeal hearings for September 2010 before the end of the current academic year (i.e. by July 2010). Accordingly, the LA requests that all parents wishing to have an appeal, return their appeal forms duly completed on or before the **26 March 2010**. If parents submit appeal forms after this date it may result in appeal hearing dates having to be rearranged at short notice, with possible inconvenience to other parents and appeal panel members.

Before deciding whether to appeal, you will probably want to think about the admission policy for admitting pupils, your reasons for wanting your child to attend the school, and how strong a case you have. You may also want to consider visiting the school where you have been offered a place or alternative schools that still have places available. The LA will also be able to advise further on the availability of places at other schools by contacting the help lines given within this booklet.

If you decide to appeal, your appeal will be heard by a panel, which is independent of the school and the LA.

You can express a preference for more than one school in order of priority. You may want to attend an appeal for more than one school. The outcome of one does not prevent you from attending the other.

You will be informed of the date and place of the hearing. You should be given at least 14 days notice. Seven days before the hearing, you will be sent copies of the Statement of Case that will be put before the Appeal Panel in support of the LA's decision not to offer your child a place.

You are advised to attend the appeal hearing, where you will be given the opportunity to put your case forward and to ask questions. You can take a friend if you wish. If it is impossible for you to attend, the case made by you in writing will be considered in your absence. In making your case, you will probably want to refer back to your original reasons for choosing the school. If you want the panel to take any additional information into account, you should, if possible, submit any supporting documents with your appeal form or provide these to the clerk in good time for the members of the panel and LA to be able to consider them properly. There will be a representative from the LA and the school at the hearing to explain to the panel why it was not possible to offer your child a place.

At the end of the hearing, the clerk should be able to give you an idea of how soon you can expect to receive the panel's written decision.

#### **This decision is binding on all parties.**

You can apply once for admission of your child to a particular school for any given academic year. The LA will only determine a second application for any given academic year where it accepts there has been a significant and material change in your circumstances relevant to the question of admission.

## Section 6

### Exclusion of Pupils from School

Exclusion from school is viewed as a very serious step. For this reason, in general, only the Head Teacher can exclude a pupil. A Head Teacher will only make a decision to exclude a child as a response to the following:

- In response to serious breaches of the schools behaviour policy and
- If allowing a child to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the child or others in the school.

Exclusions can be Permanent, for a fixed period (up to 45 days per school year) or for the lunchtime period.

The Head Teacher's letter informing you about the exclusion will tell you the reasons for the decision, how many days the exclusion is for and the date and time when your child can return to school. The Head Teacher will provide you with other information in your letter together with contact names and telephone numbers outside of the school, where, if required, more advice and guidance can be sought.

You have the right to talk to the school if your child is excluded for any reason (including lunchtimes or if a public examination is due to be missed).

- If your child is excluded for 5 or less days or less than 10 lunch times in a term you can write to the school's Governing Body if you do not agree with the exclusion.
- If your child is excluded for more than 5 school days, or more than 10 lunchtimes in a term, you have the right to ask for a meeting of the Governing Body to be arranged. You can attend this meeting with a friend or advisor, or you can write to the Governing Body with your views, which will be considered at the meeting.

- Where a school gives a fixed exclusion for more than five school days, the school has a duty to arrange suitable full time educational provision from and including the sixth school day of the exclusion. Following a permanent exclusion it is the responsibility of the local authority to provide suitable full time educational provision from and including the sixth school day.
- During the initial period of up to five school days exclusion, parents of the excluded pupil must ensure that they are not present in a public place during normal school hours without reasonable justification. Parents failure to comply with this requirement is an offence and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice of £50.

#### **The Governing Body should meet between 6th and 50th school day following the notice of exclusion from the Head Teacher.**

- If your child's exclusion is more than 15 school days, more than 30 lunchtimes in a term, or permanent, a meeting of the Governing Body will be arranged and you will be invited to attend this meeting.

#### **The Governing Body should meet between 6th and 15th school day following the notice of exclusion from the Head Teacher.**

In the case of a Permanent exclusion the above procedures will be followed but you also have the right to appeal against the decision to an Independent Appeal Panel. Should the discipline committee decide to uphold the Head Teacher's decision to permanently exclude your child then information about how to appeal will be included in the letter sent to you from the Clerk to the School Discipline Committee. It is important, if you decide to appeal, to lodge your appeal within 15 school days of the date of the Discipline Committee decision or your right to appeal will lapse. Once the exclusion process has been completed, if your child is not reinstated by the Independent Appeal Panel, then your child's name will be removed from the school

roll. Officers from the Behaviour Support Service will then contact you to make the necessary arrangements for your child's future education.

Further guidance and information for parents about exclusion from school can be obtained from the Council's Exclusion Officer who can be contacted at Dryden Professional Development Centre telephone number 0191 433 8591 or via the Council's website.

**What happens at the Governing Body Meeting to consider the use of Exclusion?**

If your child is already back in school when the meeting is held, you can still say that you disagree with the exclusion and give your reasons. The Governing Body will consider all information and make a decision.

If your child is still excluded when the meeting is held, the Governing Body will consider all information and will make a decision on the exclusion. If they decide that your child is to return to the school before the exclusion is completed, the necessary arrangements will be made.

**In either case you will be informed of the decision by letter within one school day of the meeting.**

**What happens if the Governing Body upholds a Permanent Exclusion?**

If a permanent exclusion is upheld you have a right to make an appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. This information will be included in the letter sent to you by the Governing Body. You can do this by writing to the clerk of the Independent Appeal Panel. It is important that you do this within 15 school days of the Governing Body Meeting or you will lose your right to appeal. Once the exclusion process has been completed and your child's name has been removed from their school roll, officers from Gateshead Council will make the necessary arrangements for your child's education.

## Section 7

### **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

We recognise that some children need special educational help that cannot be provided in Primary and Secondary Schools. For this reason we currently maintain six special schools and ten mainstream support bases for children who have special educational needs. If you would like more details of the facilities at these schools please phone Pupil and Parent Services on telephone number 0191 433 8582. All enquiries are dealt with in complete privacy and confidence.

### **A Graduated Approach**

Children can have different kinds or levels of SEN and learn in different ways so a step-by-step or graduated approach is taken by the school to help with your child's difficulties. Your child may need help for a short time or for the whole time they are at school depending on their difficulties.

The school must tell you that they are giving your child extra help because of their difficulties and keep you informed of their progress.

### **Step 1 – School Action**

Your child will be given extra help by staff at school, for example, they may work in a small group or be given work that is different from the other children in their class.

### **Step 2 – School Action Plus**

If your child does not make progress at School Action, the school will seek advice from outside professionals, for example, a specialist teacher or educational psychologist.

### **Step 3 – Formal Statutory Assessment**

If your child is still not making enough progress at School Action Plus and the school cannot provide the help that your child needs, the Local Education Authority may decide to carry out a formal statutory assessment.

Most assessments happen as a result of several professionals being involved but under the Education Act 1996 you can also ask us to assess your child's educational needs. When we receive a request to assess a child we will decide within 6 weeks whether to go ahead and assess your child's needs. We must then carry out an assessment unless we think the request is unreasonable.

If we do decide to go ahead, we will ask for advice (written reports) from you, your child's school, any outside professional who have been involved with your child, the local health authority and social services.

When we have completed our assessment, we will decide whether to go ahead and make a statement of special educational needs. This statement gives you a summary of your child's special educational needs and the facilities we suggest to meet those needs.

At first we will send you a proposed statement with copies of the professional advice we have received. We will also contact you to ask which school you would like your child to attend and let you know which school the LEA thinks could meet your child's needs. This could be at your child's current school, a mainstream support base or in exceptional circumstances a special school.

If you are happy with the statement we will finalise it naming an appropriate school for your child.

If you disagree with any of the proposed statement, you have 15 days to send your comments to us or to arrange a meeting with one of our officers. If after this, you still disagree with the assessment, you have another 15 days to arrange meetings with the professionals who have provided the written advice. Following this procedure, we may decide to complete the statement in its original form or change it.

We try to work with parents to come to an agreement about assessments but there are times when parents do not agree with our decision not to assess the child or with the contents of a statement. If this happens, you have the right to appeal to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal.

### **Finding a school for your Child**

Sometimes we cannot offer your child a place at a suitable school in Gateshead. When this happens, we do all we can to find a suitable place in a school maintained by another authority or an independent organisation. We will make arrangements for you and your child to visit the school before you make a final decision.

### **Parent Partnership Service**

Parent Partnership Service is run by Barnardo's on behalf of Gateshead Council. It offers a free support and information service for parents/carers of children with special educational needs. You can contact the Parent Partnership Service on 0191 478 4667.

### **Absence from School for Medical Reasons**

If your child is ill or has had an accident, they may be at home or in hospital for some time. There is a teaching unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which aims to provide some continuity of education during a hospital stay. If your child is at home, home tuition may be suitable.

## Section 8

### Special Needs Pupils

#### Policy for Home to School Transport to School for Children with Additional Needs

##### Introduction

This policy statement supports the Council's vision for children and young people as set out in Towards 2010: "Children and young people who develop to their full potential and have the life skills and opportunities to play an active part in society". This includes promoting easy access to the Council's services.

The policy statement is in addition to the LA's General Policy for Transport to School. It applies to:

- children normally resident in Gateshead
- all children of statutory school age and to pre-school children
- all young people who remain in school after their 16th birthday, up to the school year in which they become 19.

A separate policy exists for students attending further education colleges.

**NB.** The Council is currently considering proposed changes to the transport policy which if introduced will alter the arrangements for all post 16 young people.

##### Policy Statement

It is the duty of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school, to be responsible for their safety on the journey between home and school and to meet any travel costs. It is the responsibility of every parent/carer to help their child to develop the skills and confidence for independent and safe travel to and from school. Most school pupils do not require any help from the Local Authority (LA).

The LA provides help with home to school transport in cases where we consider it necessary to help a child or young person to attend school.

Some school pupils will be entitled to help simply because they live more than the "statutory walking distance" from their nearest suitable school – in these cases the LA's General Policy for Transport to School applies.

In a small number of cases, school pupils need help because they have additional needs. These may include school pupils:

- with special educational needs (with or without statements)
- with a physical disability (temporary or permanent)
- with a medical/psychological condition (temporary or permanent)
- with other special needs, including family circumstances

In assessing whether a school pupil needs LA help with home to school transport, the LA takes account of the following factors:

- the statutory walking distance from home to school
- the nature of the route
- the age of the child
- whether the child is capable of independent travel
- the child's special educational needs (if any)
- the child's physical disabilities (if any)
- the child's medical condition
- the child and family's religious denomination
- the family circumstances
- any other factors the LA considers relevant

The assessment will be carried out following the receipt of a request from the parent/carer, which can be made at any time during the school year. The parent/carer will apply for help using a form supplied by the LA. The LA will consider such additional information about the child as it considers necessary to make an assessment, including the advice of:

- the child's school
- LA educational psychologist or other specialist staff
- the child's GP, consultant or other health staff
- any social worker involved with the child or family

- any other agency providing support for the child or family
- the local transport authority
- any other person/agency suggested by the parent/carer

Where the LA does not already have such information, it is the responsibility of the parent to obtain such advice and submit it to the LA with their application.

The LA will normally process applications within 10 working days, subject to the necessary information and advice from other agencies being available. We will inform applicants if we are unable to meet this target.

If the LA agrees to provide help, the LA may review the provision at any time, but changes to the provision will normally take effect at the start of a new school year (1 September). There will always be a review of provision when a child:

- moves from primary to secondary education
- completes secondary education
- changes school
- moves house
- has a change in their physical/medical or other condition.

It is the duty of the parent to inform the LA of any change in the child's or the family's circumstances. The provision may also be reviewed/removed if the parent or child refuses to co-operate with reasonable requests from the LA or transport provider.

If the LA does not agree to provide help, the parent/carer will be informed by letter and advised that they may appeal against that decision, provided they do so in writing within 15 working days.

The parent/carer should submit in writing the reasons for the appeal and their case in full to Pupil and Parent Services at Dryden PDC marked for the attention of the Director of Learning and Schools, together with any other supporting information. There is no entitlement to a hearing in person. The Director will normally consider appeals within 10 working days of receipt and

will give her/his decision in writing. If an application/appeal is unsuccessful, a parent may only apply for a further assessment after twelve months has elapsed, or if there is a significant change in circumstances in the meantime.

If the LA agrees to provide help with home to school transport, this shall be free of charge and by whatever means the LA considers appropriate, including:

- taxi, bus or ambulance service contracted by the LA
- a permit to travel on public transport
- escort provided by the LA
- meeting the costs of a parent/carer who makes their own transport or escort arrangements.

### Other Provisions

Transport for a child with special educational needs will not normally be recorded in their statement, but will be considered separately in accordance with this policy.

Where a child is temporarily attending provision other than their usual school, their need for assistance will be assessed in the same way as described above.

Where a child is temporarily residing at a different address (including respite care), their provision will only be maintained if this can be achieved at no additional cost.

Where the parent/carer has chosen to send their child to a school other than the nearest suitable school, the LA will only provide help with transport if the cost of the provision is no greater than that required to attend the nearest suitable school.

We do not pay travelling expenses for pupils attending schools that we do not maintain. We may provide help with transport or travel expenses outside of our normal scheme in special cases.

If we give a child a free travel permit and they need a replacement permit, we will charge you £4.00. Further Information can be found on the Gateshead Council website at:

**[www.gateshead.gov.uk](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk)**

## Section 9

### School Transport

We only provide free home to school transport in certain circumstances

#### Primary

We provide free travel for

- Any primary school pupil who lives more than **two** miles from the nearest suitable school (based on the shortest available route). This travel will be by whatever means we consider most suitable. We will not provide any help if you choose to send your child to a school outside your catchment area.

#### Secondary

We provide free travel for

- Any pupil in years 7 to 11 at a secondary school who lives more than **three** miles from the nearest suitable school (based upon the shortest available route). This travel will be by whatever means we consider most suitable. We will not normally provide any help if you choose to send your child to a school outside your catchment area.
- Any pupil who is in receipt of free school meals or whose household qualify for the **maximum** level of working tax credit on the 1 March 2010 subject to:
  1. These pupils are entitled to free travel to one of their three nearest qualifying schools where they live more than two miles but not more than six miles from that school
  2. Where a parent has expressed a preference for a school, and that preference is based on the parent's religion or belief then a pupil will be eligible for free travel to their nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief where they live more than two miles, but not more than fifteen miles from that school.

Please note qualification for free travel in future years is dependent on continued eligibility for free school meals or maximum working tax credit.

#### Notes

We may provide help with transport or travel expenses outside of our normal scheme in special cases.

If we give a child a free travel permit and they need a replacement permit, we will charge you £4.00.

### NEXUS

NEXUS also provides the following help with school / college travel:

If your child is under 16:

#### UNDER 16 CARD

- With an under 16 card, children aged 5 to 15 on the 31 August before the start of the current academic year can travel at the concessionary child fare on public transport in Tyne & Wear until 7.00pm Monday to Friday. You will pay the operators commercial fare at all other times.
- Children aged 5 – 15 years old must have an under 16 card to take advantage of concessionary fares.

If your child is 16 – 19:

#### STUDENT IDENTITY CARD – TEEN TRAVEL

- Lives in the Tyne & Wear area and normally pays an adult fare;
- They can apply to NEXUS for a student identity card. This will allow them to purchase a weekly or four weekly travel permit at a 25% discount (Teen Travel).

## Section 10

### General Information

#### School Meals

School meals are available for all children but they are only free if you are receiving Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance (income based). You can get an application form for free school meals from the Welfare Benefits Section of our Finance and ICT Department (extension 3651) on the ground floor of the Civic Centre or from any local Housing Office. If you would like more information about free school meals, please ring Gateshead Council on 433 3725 or 433 3726.

School meals at Thomas Hepburn, Heworth Grange, Cardinal Hume, Kingsmeadow, Ryton, Whickham and Hookergate secondary schools are provided by Gateshead Council's award winning in-house service.

A cash cafeteria offers pupils a choice of a set two-course meal or a selection of items from the tariff. A two-course set meal in secondary schools is £1.80 from April 2009 and prices are reviewed each year in April. The printed tariff is available from the servery showing the price of individual items, and can also be seen on our website.

Many Secondary Schools are "cashless" at the point of sale. The cashless system reduces queuing times and protects the identity of pupils receiving free school meals.

Our fully trained catering staff encourage pupils to choose well from a variety of tasty, popular foods. Most of the menu is homemade and meals are cooked fresh on site every day. Non-meat choices are available every day.

Gateshead's menu complies with the National Nutritional Standards for school lunches. Many of the foods we use have been reduced in fat, sugar and salt and many of our ingredients are locally sourced.

Please contact your Head Teacher if your child requires a special diet for medical or ethnic reasons. The unit-catering manager will require a letter from your child's doctor, consultant or dietician in order to provide a diet suitable for your child's needs.

If you require further information about school meals or the cashless system, please ring Gateshead Council's school catering manager on 0191 433 5513, or contact the unit catering manager at the school. Alternatively, there is a free phone Helpline, Tel: 0800 169 2780 or our website [www.gateshead.gov.uk](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk)

For information about the catering services at Joseph Swan, St Thomas More and Lord Lawson of Beamish secondary schools please contact the Head Teacher.

#### School Clothing/uniform

Most schools operate a school uniform code however schools must not act as sole suppliers of school uniform. Details of the uniform are usually contained in the school's prospectus that can be obtained from the school. We do not have any general arrangements for providing help with buying school uniform or PE kit and Gateshead Council does not provide a uniform grant. However, some schools provide their own help and support for parents in particular for those children who are eligible for free school meals or are entitled to the maximum level of working tax credit. Parents wishing to ask about such assistance should contact the Head Teacher, at the school.

Class I Kids is an innovative social enterprise based in Blaydon, Gateshead offering affordable new and recycled school uniform throughout the year.

As parents of 5 children, Directors Mary Fleming and Tracey Patterson recognised the strain that

meeting the costs of schooling places on the family, as well as the stigma experienced by children for not wearing the correct uniform. From this Class I Kids was created to offer affordable school wear to meet every family budget.

Recycled items are collected from schools, depersonalised, refurbished and laundered before sale, cutting cost and protecting the environment.

Class I Kids offers generic school wear including trousers, shirts, skirts etc in a range of colours and sizes as well as logo'd items for some schools.

Contact Mary and Tracey on 07708 531734 or 07521 317026 or call into the shop at:  
5 Park Avenue Blaydon, NE21 5HH.  
Shop opening times 9.30am – 2.30pm Monday to Friday or 10.00am – 1.00pm Saturday.

### **Education Maintenance Allowance**

If your child is aged 16 to 19 and in full-time education at a school sixth form or college, they may be entitled to some financial support in the form of an Education Maintenance Allowance.

The National EMA Scheme which commenced in September 2004 is based on household income. For information about the National schemes, please contact the following help lines:

Local Partners Help Line	0800 0562811
Young Persons Help Line	08081 016219
Website	<b><a href="http://www.ema.dfes.gov.uk">www.ema.dfes.gov.uk</a></b>

### **School Crossing Patrols**

We do not have to provide a school crossing patrol service, but we see it as an important contribution to the safety of children in Gateshead.

However, from time to time, for reasons beyond our control, a school crossing patrol may not be available to help your children. As children may have difficulty crossing roads on their own, please remember that your child's safety is your responsibility at all times.

## Section 11

### **Complaints Procedures – General and Curriculum**

#### **General Complaints**

Most concerns that parents have can and should be discussed with the relevant school.

Depending upon the nature of your concern, either the class teacher, Head of Year, or Head Teacher will be more than willing to discuss any concerns to try and resolve any problems informally. However, it is recommended that parents/carers make an appointment to speak to the relevant member of staff.

Our aim in partnership with schools is to provide the best possible service, however, if you have any comments, good or bad, please let us know.

- If your complaint is about the school curriculum please follow the separate procedure below.
- If your complaint is about your child's school, you should discuss your concerns with the Head Teacher. All schools should have a procedure for dealing with complaints and most problems can be resolved in this way.
- However, should you still be dissatisfied with the response from the Head Teacher you should write to the Chair of the schools Governing Body, care of the school, outlining what concerns you feel have not been addressed by the Head Teacher. The Chair of Governors will then acknowledge your letter and outline what steps they will take to investigate your concerns and the timescale for this.
- If you are still unhappy with the response and feel unable to resolve your concerns with the school you can write to Pupil and Parent Services outlining your complaint and the steps taken to try and resolve it with the school. We will acknowledge your letter and an officer will investigate the matter and respond to you within 20 days.

Please contact Pupil and Parent Services at Dryden Professional Development Centre, Evistones Road, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE9 5UR or telephone 0191 433 8584 or 433 8589 if you require information about our general complaints procedure or for any further advice.

#### **School Curriculum Complaints**

##### **Introduction**

Every school has to give parents and guardians the opportunity to raise concerns about curriculum-related matters with the child's teacher or Head Teacher. We expect all schools to encourage this kind of discussion whenever there is cause for concern. This can avoid further worries for both parents and children. Most concerns can be dealt with in this way.

Parents may use the complaints procedure if they believe that either the Local Authority or the Governing Body are failing:

- to provide the National Curriculum in the school or for a particular child;
- to follow the law on charging for school activities;
- to offer only approved qualifications or syllabuses;
- to provide religious education and daily collective worship;
- to provide the information that they have to provide;
- to carry out any other statutory duty relating to the curriculum; or
- are acting unreasonably in any of the above cases.

### **Formal Complaints**

If you discuss your concerns with your child's teacher or Head Teacher but are not satisfied, you can take the matter to the school's Governing Body. Please ask your child's Head Teacher for the name and address of the Clerk to the school's Governing Body. You must then put your complaint in writing and explain:

- what your complaint is about;
- the name of your child; and
- the school, class or group your child is in.

### **Action by the Clerk to the Governing Body**

Once the Clerk has received your written complaint, they will acknowledge it within 7 days. They will pass the complaint to the Governing Body or a Committee of the Governing Body, who will consider it.

You will be able to appear at a hearing to present your complaint. The Clerk will write to you with details of the time and place for the hearing and will invite you to bring a friend and, if necessary, an interpreter.

### **Action once the Governing Body has been involved**

The Governing Body may not give you a decision at the time of the hearing. If this is the case then their Clerk will write to you with the decision and any details within 10 days of the hearing. Their letter will also tell you how you can take the matter further if you are still not satisfied.

### **Complaints to our Appeal Panel**

Your complaint may come to a panel of our elected members if:

- You are not satisfied with the result of your appeal to the school's Governing Body; or
- Your complaint relates to something that is our responsibility only.

To complain to our appeal panel you must put your complaint in writing giving the same details that you gave to the Governing Body and send your letter to Pupil and Parent Services at Dryden Professional Development Centre, Evistones Road, Low Fell, Gateshead, NE9 5UR.

We will acknowledge your letter within 7 days and your complaint will be passed on to the appeals panel. We will let you know the time and place of the hearing. Again, you can bring a friend and interpreter to the hearing with you.

Once the panel has considered your complaint, we will write to you explaining the action we will take.

### **Action once our Council's Appeal Panel has been Involved**

If you are not satisfied with the result of your appeal to the panel, you can take your complaint to the Secretary of State at the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

## Section 12

### **Charging for School Activities**

Under the Education Act 1996 the Council and each school's governing body must draw up and review policies for charging arrangements. The 1996 Act aims to:

- Maintain your child's right to free education;
- Make sure that activities offered completely or mainly during normal teaching time are available to all pupils, whether or not their parents can or want to help meet the costs;
- Emphasise that there is no legal requirement to charge for any form of education or related activity, but to give LA's and governing bodies the power to charge for optional activities they provide completely or mainly out of school hours; and
- Confirm the right of LA's and governing bodies to ask for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school, or to support any activity organised, in or outside, school hours.

We have agreed on the policies set out below and have informed school governing bodies of the LA policy to assist school's to draw up their own charging policy. The policies determined by individual governing bodies may differ from the generic Council policy but there is a statutory duty on all governing bodies in accordance with the 1996 education act and all policies must adhere to legal requirements. Please contact the school's head teacher for details of the school's policies.

#### **Education During School Hours**

Education must be free of charge if it takes place completely or mainly during school hours. If the number of places available for a particular activity is limited, the school must decide which pupils should be given the chance to take part. This should not have anything to do with parents wanting or being able to contribute to the cost.

Schools must not charge for materials, books, instruments or other equipment, but they can invite parents to provide or pay for materials for practical lessons. Schools should only make a charge if parents have said in advance that they want to keep the finished product.

If an organisation other than the LA or the school's governing body arranges an activity during school hours and parents ask the school to allow their child time off to join in the activity, the other organisation may charge the parents. The governing body and head teacher must consider whether allowing the child time off is justified. They must also remember that a pupil must not normally be off school for more than two weeks in any one academic year.

#### **Education Outside School Hours**

Schools must not charge for activities they provide completely or mainly outside school hours if they have arranged these activities to meet the requirements of:

- public exams;
- the National Curriculum; or
- statutory duties relating to religious education.

In these cases the school can charge parents only for the cost of board and lodgings on residential visits.

For other activities schools can charge for 'optional extras'.

#### **Board and Lodging**

Your child's school should pay the first £56.00 a year for your child's board and lodging on GCSE field trips, which are an essential part of the course.

#### **Music Tuition and Musical Instruments**

'The Gateshead Schools' Music Service provides a free allocation of weekly time to each school dependent on the number of students on roll.

In addition musical instruments are supplied free of charge. Several schools augment this free allocation of time by buying extra time from the Music Service and making a charge to parents. This is agreed by each school's Governing Body.

Normally pupils in receipt of free school meals or higher level working tax credit are not charged for tuition.

The Saturday Academy offers tuition in most instruments and the voice. It meets on Saturday's during term time at the Dryden Centre, Evistones Road, Gateshead, NE9 5UR. Adults as well as children are welcome to enrol. The fee for a session is £7.50.

It is possible for pupils to obtain instruments through the Assisted Instrument Purchase Scheme. This will give substantial discounts, as VAT is not charged and an educational discount also applies. Further details are available from the Schools Music Service, telephone 0191 4338690 or 4338685 or email: **[johntreherne@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:johntreherne@gateshead.gov.uk)**

### **Public Exams**

We actively encourage pupils to enter for public exams. You will not have to pay fees for GCSEs, GCE 'A' and 'A/S' levels and other relevant public exams such as RSA, City and Guilds and GNVQs.

Your child's school will pay the fees if your child is entered for these exams on the head teacher's advice. However, if your child has been entered for an exam and does not take it without a good reason, we will ask you to repay the exam fee.

### **School Admissions**

Schools must not accept or turn away pupils based on whether parents are willing or able to make financial contributions to school activities. They must ensure that their general policies and procedures do not put parents off from applying to the school because of the level of charges that they have discretion to impose.