

From: NYCC Children and Young People's Service

To: Parents / Carers of Woodfield CP School

Preference exercise for Alternative Schools

During recent discussion with school governors we discussed how the Council could undertake a managed and co-ordinated preference exercise to assist parents/carers with consideration of alternative schools. We confirmed the Council view that, ideally, the preference exercise approach for provisional school transfers should not be undertaken until the end of the consultation period, but agreed that is not appropriate in these particular circumstances.

We know that school staff and governors have received feedback from a number of parents/carers with general concerns about current uncertainty, and specifically that they would like further information and support about school admissions as soon possible in this coming period.

Having reflected on this, the Council officers and the School have agreed that subject to the NYCC Executive Member agreeing (on 24 May) to start the consultation process then the preference exercise should be brought forward. There are three main reasons for this:-

- To support all parents/carers
- To ensure fairness for all
- To reduce the period of uncertainty

The confirmed dates for the admissions preference exercise are therefore as follows:-

- Thursday 26 May - preference exercise commences
- By Thursday 16 June - parents/carers confirm their preferred school(s)
- Thursday 16 June to Friday 1 July – the Council contacts schools for discussion
- By Friday 8 July – the Council aims to confirm allocated places – it is unlikely that decisions will be made before this date

There will be opportunity for parents /carers to speak to an Admissions Officer on Thursday 26 May.

This will be based on pre-booked individual appointments for a meeting at the School.

Please contact the School Office from tomorrow onwards to make your appointment.

Alternative arrangements for either for a phone call or a video call via MS Teams can be made if required.

Through this exercise parents/carers will be asked to apply for the preferred school(s) (at least two preferences are strongly recommended) that they would like their child to transfer to in the event of school closure, which would mean starting at a new school in January 2023. Alternatively, parents/carers may, as is your right, wish to apply for a school transfer for September 2022, but there is no requirement to do so.

Once the full picture of all preferences is known, the Council will liaise with the schools regarding potential allocations, and seek to meet the highest stated preferences wherever possible.

Please note that in these particular circumstances, related to a potential school closure, the Council will suspend adherence to normal response times on mid-year applications to achieve the fairest approach for all.

The overall intention is to ensure fairness around the school transfer process in the event that a decision is ultimately taken to close the School. It would allow us to apply consideration of admissions criteria to each request and avoid first come first served. Applying this co-ordinated preference exercise approach will achieve that, and provide parents/carers with the support that has been requested.

Applications for transfer must be made via the NYCC application process at [Changing schools and in year applications | North Yorkshire County Council](#).

Catchment areas and transport

The consultation, if approved, will ask for your views on the future catchment arrangements that would apply in the event of closure. Options for this would include:

- The whole of the current Woodfield School catchment area to become part of the catchment area for Grove Road Primary School
- The whole of the current Woodfield School catchment area to become part of the catchment area for Bilton Grange Primary School
- Some form of shared or split arrangement involving both Grove Road and Bilton Grange schools.

Under the NYCC home to school transport policy free transport is provided to the catchment school, or nearest school to the home address, subject to qualifying distance:

- two miles for children under eight years of age;
- three miles for children aged over eight; or
- where the route to the catchment or nearest school is not safe to walk accompanied by a responsible adult.

Low income

Children from low income families are eligible for free home to school transport including;

Children aged eight, but under the age of 11 who are attending their catchment or nearest school and the distance to that school is more than two miles.

A low income family is where children are entitled to free school meals or whose parent/carer are in receipt of the maximum level of working tax credit.

The policy can be found here [School transport for reception to year 11 children | North Yorkshire County Council](#)

Given the distance to alternative local schools it is considered unlikely that entitlement to school transport would be an issue for the majority, but each case will be checked.