

16 September 2021 Communication

From: NYCC Children and Young People's Service

To: Parents / Carers of Baldersby St James Primary School

Following the announcement of the listening period on the closure of the School we would like to provide you with some further information on the Local Authority's (LA) role in the process, which is essentially three-fold in this coming period.

1) Confirming the formal response of NYCC to the proposal.

As you will be aware, NYCC is not the decision maker in this process but we are required to provide our formal response during the listening period. To that end a report, including data on local school place sufficiency for both now and future, is to be considered by NYCC Executive on 12 October. The report will be published on the NYCC website one week in advance of the meeting [Browse meetings - Executive | North Yorkshire County Council](#)

2) Considering the future catchment area arrangements

The Executive report will also consider how to treat the Baldersby St James catchment area for admissions and transport purposes from 1 September 2022. Following initial discussions, we are minded to propose that:

- The northern part of the Baldersby St James catchment area (Baldersby Civil Parish) including Baldersby village should become part of the catchment area for Carlton Miniott Primary Academy
- The southern part of the Baldersby St James catchment area (Rainton with Newby Civil Parish) including Rainton village should become part of the catchment area for both Dishforth CE Primary School and Topcliffe CE Academy.
- The maps issued alongside this communication show the expected proposal.

The LA is the admissions authority for Dishforth School, but Carlton Miniott and Topcliffe schools are their own admission authorities under Elevate MAT. This means there are different processes required to change the catchment areas for the three schools and these will be explained in the Executive report.

3) Assisting parents/carers with consideration of alternative schools

The guidance on closing an Academy talks of the LA undertaking a 'preference exercise' for parents. The LA view is this approach is appropriate but preferably should not be undertaken before the final decision on closure is taken after the listening period. This supports the view taken by Hope Sentamu Learning Trust that provision in School is secure for the current academic year and they would encourage pupils to remain at the School until July 2022 (while noting the particular considerations around new starters in the Reception year group). The report to Executive will therefore propose that the LA will lead a preference exercise on this basis as soon as the final decision is announced:

- Day 1 – preference exercise commences (potential 'Surgery' event at School)
- By day 14 – parents/carers confirm their preferred school(s) for September 2022
- Day 15 to day 27 – LA contact schools
- By day 28 – LA confirm allocated places for Sep 2022

The overall intention of the LA is to ensure fairness around the school transfer process, applying consideration of admissions criteria to each request and seeking to avoid a first come first served approach. Applying a co-ordinated preference exercise approach will achieve that.

We do however recognise that some parents may wish to secure a school transfer sooner than September 2022. The LA will therefore keep the position under review, and it may be there is a need to commence the preference exercise sooner than outlined here. If so that would be communicated to parents and carers via the usual school channels.

In any event, and at any time, applications for transfer must be made via the NYCC application process at [Changing schools and in year applications | North Yorkshire County Council](#). Please note that in these particular circumstances related to a school closure the LA will suspend adherence to normal response times on mid-year applications to achieve the fairest approach for all.

You may also wish to familiarise yourself with the NYCC Home to School Transport policy [School transport for reception to year 11 children | North Yorkshire County Council](#). Catchment arrangements play an important part in determining eligibility for transport assistance. It is therefore important that parents who live in the existing Baldersby St James area, and who may wish to access school transport from September 2022, are aware of the outcome of the Executive meeting prior to determining their future school preference.

Below we have provided some key information about the three most local schools. We are aware that several current Baldersby School pupils reside in the catchment areas of schools other than Baldersby. Should you require information about another school not listed below then please visit [Get Information about Schools - GOV.UK \(get-information-schools.service.gov.uk\)](#), or make direct contact with that school in the first instance. Should you have difficulty obtaining the required information please email schoolorganisation@northyorks.gov.uk including 'Baldersby' in the title.

Local School Information (correct as at 13 September 2021)

Carlton Miniott Primary Academy (Elevate MAT)

Published Admission Number = 30

Rec	30
Y1	24
Y2	26
Y3	30
Y4	32
Y5	32
Y6	30
TOTAL	204

7 single age group classes

First point of contact Caroline Maher in the school office. Tel 01845 522088

Topcliffe CE Academy (Elevate MAT)

Published Admission Number = 15

Rec	13
Y1	18
Y2	17
Y3	15
Y4	18
Y5	12
Y6	19
TOTAL	112

4 classes (not including Nursery)

Reception / Year 1 – 21 pupils

Year 1 / Year 2 - 26 pupils

Year 3 / 4 - 33 pupils

Year 5 / 6 - 31 pupils

First point of contact Nicky Hartley in the school office. Tel 01845 577412

Dishforth CE Primary School

Published Admission Number = 15

Rec	11
Y1	10
Y2	13
Y3	17
Y4	6
Y5	18
Y6	14
TOTAL	89

4 classes (including Nursery)

Early Years Foundation Stage – 14 pupils (including Nursery)

Year 1 / Year 2 – 23 pupils

Year 3 / Year 4 – 23 pupils

Year 5 / Year 6 – 32 pupils

First point of contact Julie McBride in the school office. Tel. 01845 577206

24 September 2021
Joint Communication

From: NYCC Children and Young People's Service & Hope Sentamu Learning Trust

To: Parents / Carers of Baldersby St James Primary School

We write as a follow-up to the Local Authority's (LA) communication dated 16 September, which included information on how the LA intended to assist parents/carers with consideration of alternative schools.

The document stated the LA view that the preference exercise approach for school transfers should ideally not be undertaken before the final ratification on closure is made following the listening period, but that this would be kept under review.

Over the past week we have seen some parent/carers, as is their right, submitting school transfer applications to the LA. The number of applications to date is small but represents a significant percentage of the pupils in School. Hope Sentamu Learning Trust have also received feedback from some parents/carers about their general concerns, and specifically that they would like further information and support about school admissions in this coming period.

Having reflected on this, the LA and Trust have agreed that 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:-

- Wednesday 6th October - preference exercise commences
- By Wednesday 20th October - parents/carers confirm their preferred school(s)
- Wednesday 20th October to Thursday 4th November - LA contact schools
- By Friday 5th November - LA confirm allocated places

There will be opportunity for parents /carers to speak to an LA Admissions Officer between 3.15pm and 5.30 pm on Wednesday 6th October. This will be based on pre-booked appointments, and the School Office will issue further information in due course.

Through this exercise parents/carers will be asked to apply for their preferred school(s) (at least two preferences are strongly recommended) together with their required date of transfer, be that September 2022 or earlier. Once the full picture of all preferences is known the LA will liaise with the schools regarding potential allocations, and seek to meet the highest stated preferences wherever possible.

It is unlikely that any decisions will be made, including on applications already received, before the end of the preference exercise. This is certainly the case for requested transfers to the three nearest schools, Carlton Miniott, Dishforth CE and Topcliffe. The exceptions to this, where quicker decisions could potentially be possible, would be if a requested school is significantly undersubscribed or for a Reception age group application.

The overall intention here is to ensure fairness around the school transfer process, applying consideration of admissions criteria to each request and seeking to avoid a first come first served approach. Applying this co-ordinated preference exercise approach will achieve that and provide parents/carers with the requested support at this time.

The Trust continue to invite parent/carers to individual family meetings at the School to hear feedback on the transition plan for the proposed closure and also answer any specific questions relating to the proposed closure. Appointments can be arranged via the school office.