

Mount Education Support Centre,
Mount Avenue,
Penkhull,
Stoke -on -Trent,
Staffordshire.
ST4 7JU
Tel: 01782 234867
E-mail: info@choice-adviser-stoke.co.uk
www.choice-adviser-stoke.co.uk



STOKE-ON-TRENT
CHOICE ADVISER

Autumn Issue 2011 Secondary School Admissions Newsletter

Are you a parent of a Year 6 child? If the answer is 'yes' then this newsletter will be of benefit to you.

From September you will receive a booklet about applying for Secondary School for your child. This will be given to you via the Primary school that your child attends. At this point you may not know what schools to put down on your preferences, but it is important that you read through the booklet and also complete your application by the 31st October. You can apply by telephone, or on-line. You apply for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire schools in the same way.

In order for you to be able to make a decision, it is advisable that you visit the different schools, so that you know what they offer. There is a list of open evenings in this newsletter.

It is also useful to read the Ofsted reports on the schools you are interested in, to see what the school is doing well and what areas need improving.

There will be changes in Secondary Education within Stoke-on-Trent in the next few years, it is therefore important that you research about how the 'Building Schools for the Future' (BSF) funding will affect the school you wish to apply for. For example, is it changing to an Academy? Is the school having a rebuild? Is it changing location? All these are important questions which you need to consider when making your preferred school choice.

Best Wishes

Heather Weston

Stoke-on-Trent Choice Advisor

Top tips to consider when choosing a school

1. See what specialism the Secondary School has. Does your child like that subject?
2. Visit the school on their Open Evening/Open Day to get a clear idea of what the school offers, what the staff are like, and what future changes may happen.
3. Prepare some questions you want answered before you go on the visit. Some questions are available on the Choice Adviser Website (www.choice-adviser-stoke.co.uk)
4. Think about how far the school is from your home? How would your child get there?
5. Look at the Admissions Criteria for the schools you wish to apply for. Where does your child come on the criteria? Was the school over subscribed the previous year?
6. What does your child think of the school? Are some of their friends attending?
7. Find out how the BSF funding will affect the school.

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Closing date for
Secondary School
applications:
31st October

Building Schools for the Future

Within Stoke-on-Trent there are many changes that will be occurring due to the 'Building Schools for the Future' funding. Over the next few years there will be refurbishment and rebuilds of some of the City's Secondary Schools. All proposals have been agreed and will be going ahead.

It is advisable that you check on how the changes will impact on the schools that you are applying for. The City Council have a website which has all the information about what changes will be occurring, this can be found on stoke.gov.uk. You may also find information the schools website.

To find out about the most up-to-date information about the schools make sure you attend the open evenings. It is here where they will be able to answer any of your questions.

Academies:

- **Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy**, formerly *Blurton High School and Enterprise College*.
- **The Co-operative Academy at Brownhills**, formerly known as *Brownhills Maths and Computing College*.
- **Ormiston Horizon Academy**, formerly known as *James Brindley Science College*.
- **Discovery Academy**, formerly known as *Mitchell High School and Edensor Technology College*.
- **St Peter's Academy**, formerly known as *St Peter's High School and Berryhill High School*.

Foundation / Trust Schools:

- **Birches Head High School**
- **Haywood Engineering College**
- **Holden Lane High School and Specialist Sports College**
- **Trentham High School**
- **Sandon Business and Enterprise College**

What is an Foundation school?

Foundation schools receive their money through the Local Authority (LA) and must have LA representatives on their governing body, as well as representatives of their foundation. They are responsible for their own admissions and employ their own staff. If the foundation is a religious one, the school can refuse admission to pupils who do not meet their published religious admission criteria and may give religious worship and education in line with their particular faith. (Foundation schools are mostly former grant-maintained schools). Foundation/trust schools in Stoke-on-Trent will be part of the 'Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme', to ensure every child is allocated a place in Secondary school.

What is an Academy?

Academies are publicly funded independent secondary schools with a specialism in a particular area of the curriculum. They have sponsorship from the private or voluntary sector or from a religious faith group. They can select up to 10% of pupils on the basis of an aptitude for their specialism.

Academies can benefit from greater freedoms including:

- freedom from Local Authority control
- ability to set their own pay and conditions for staff
- freedom from following the National Curriculum
- ability to change the lengths of terms and school days.

Parents' Notice Board

Secondary School Open Evenings and Open Days

| School | Date | Times |
|--|---|---|
| Holden Lane High School | Thursday 13th October | 6.30pm |
| Sandon Business and Enterprise College | Thursday 6th October | 7pm |
| Thistley Hough High School, Media and Visual Arts College | Thursday 29th September | 6pm |
| Haywood Engineering College | Wednesday 5th October | 8.45-9.45am 11.20-12.20pm 2-2.50pm 7pm |
| Birches Head High School | Wednesday 28th September | 6.30-8.30pm |
| Trentham High School | Monday– Wednesday 3rd-5th October Wednesday 5th October | 9am, 10am, 11.30am 6pm |
| St Joseph's College | Wednesday 14th September | 7pm |
| St Margaret Ward Catholic School and Arts College | Wednesday 21st September | 7pm |
| St Thomas More Catholic College | Wednesday 28th September | 7pm |
| Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy (Previously Blurton High School) | Thursday 22nd September | 6.30pm |
| The Co-operative Academy at Brownhills (Previously Brownhills High School) | Thursday 6th October | 10.30am-12noon 1.30-3pm 7pm |
| The Discovery Academy (Previously Edensor High School and Mitchell High) | Thursday 29th September | TBC |
| Ormiston Horizon Academy (previously James Brindley High School) | Tuesday 4th October | 6-9pm |
| St Peter's Academy (Previously St Peter's High School and Berryhill High School) | Saturday 1st October (Bucknall Site, Arbourfield Drive) 27th-29th September (Tours by appointment only– contact school) | 9.30am-12noon 10am-12noon 4pm-6pm |

School Workshops/Information Events

During September the Choice Advisory Service will be going to the following schools around Stoke-on-Trent. This will provide parents with the guidance that they need in order to make a preferred school choice. The sessions will cover what the admissions process is, what to do over the next few months and also what options you have if you do not get your preferred school choice. The sessions will take place at:

- Greenways Primary, 13th September, starts 6pm.
- Etruscan Primary, 14th September, starts 9am.
- Clarice Cliff, 19th September, starts 5pm.

If your child attends one of these schools, then please feel free to attend. If your school is not listed then you can call the Choice Advisory Service direct and speak to someone for advice. (Telephone number is 234867)



Useful Contacts

[The Choice Advisory Service](#)

The Choice Advisory Website is useful to parents who are choosing a secondary school. If you need any further information then you will find the following website useful:

www.choice-adviser-stoke.co.uk

It has information on:

- Secondary Schools
- Admissions stats
- Useful links
- Information Leaflets about transition
- Printable versions of questions to take to school visits.
- Information about Appealing for a school place if you are unsuccessful in getting your preferred school.

[Admissions and Family Services](#)

For information about Admissions to Secondary School, you can contact:

01782 236867 or 236885

[Parent Partnership](#)

This service offers support to parents that have a child with SEN, and may be experiencing difficulties at school.

01782 234701

[Family Information Services \(FIS\)](#)

For general enquiries, information on your parental rights and signposting to other Services, you can contact:

0800 015 1120

[The Advisory Centre for Education](#)

They provide an independent service which offers advice to parents/carers of children in state-funded schools who are experiencing difficulties such as bullying, SEN, admissions to, and exclusions from, school. Their website is:

www.ace-ed.org.uk/

0808 800 5793

(Monday to Thursday 10am-4pm)

[Direct.gov Website](#)

If you are unsure of which school is the closest to you the following website is useful. It will work out the distances* to schools in the area by using your postcode:

<http://schoolsfinder.direct.gov.uk/>

*these distances may differ from the ones used by the Local Authority.