

St Cyprian's Greek Orthodox Primary Academy

September 2015

YEAR 6
TRANSFER TO
SECONDARY
SCHOOL 2016

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

This guidance paper has been prepared by the Headteacher of St Cyprian's Greek Orthodox Primary Academy. It is produced to support parents with the process of secondary transfer for September 2016. The format is based on a Q & A approach with the most frequently asked questions over the past years.

PAN LONDON APPROACH

With effect from September 2005 there has been a new Pan London and Surrey co-ordinated approach to secondary admissions. This involves the completion of a common application form called the Common Transfer Form (CTF) which is available from your Local Authority (LA) website. e.g. Croydon, Lambeth, Sutton etc.

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When do I apply?

The application process really commences at the beginning of the Autumn Term 2015. The information evenings organised by each secondary school are listed in the Secondary Transfer Booklet which will be available online in early September 2015. These are usually held in the evenings and are very busy occasions. They offer parents the opportunity to see the school before applying.

It is essential that parents visit the secondary schools on these evenings. We advise that you visit all the schools you might be interested in.

We advise that you talk to your son/daughter about their feelings etc. They may hold a different view from you. It is important that you agree on the first choice school before submitting your application form.

How do I apply?

You are required to complete the Common Transfer Form (CTF) available online on your LA website. The deadline for applications is 31st October 2015. It is important for parents to be aware that applications received after this date will be treated as late and will not be dealt with until after the on-time applications have been processed. You are advised to submit applications online so that the LA receives it by Friday 23rd October 2015.

Please check through the admissions procedures for the schools you have chosen. For many schools you will be asked to complete a supplementary form. This form must be returned directly to the school by the date stated. This is often by the October half term.

What should I include and attach to my application form?

- The Common Transfer Form (CTF) must be completed as required – preferably on-line. If you do not appear on the Electoral Register for this address, you should provide an explanation for this.
 - When completing the Supplementary Form for an individual Academy, Catholic or Church Schools please complete the sections as requested. Give as full answers as you can and be honest. This is an opportunity to explain your individual situations and to state why you wish your child to attend this school. Governors are all seeking to be sympathetic but need the information. They must make judgements but are trying not to be judgemental!
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*Will an application to a selective school affect my application to a Church school?
Possibly!*

Most Catholic or Church based schools are excellent establishments and are usually heavily oversubscribed. Admission into Year 7 is based on the published admission criteria which prioritises for Catholic schools, commitment to Catholic education, wider parish involvement and the Catholic faith; the criteria are similar for Church of England schools.

At a Catholic School (the Governors) usually operate a points scoring system on a variety of admission criteria and will offer their available places to the highest scoring families (e.g. first 150) until all the places are filled. Points are gained under a number of generic headings e.g.:

1. Sacramental Adherence
2. Mass Attendance
3. Wider Parish Involvement

Under the arrangements you must prioritise on the Common Transfer Form your applications to a maintained school (including grammar schools) across all London Boroughs and in Surrey. You must include on your Common Transfer Form all schools that you are interested in.

What role does the Parish Priest's reference play?

The Parish Priest's reference is one of the most important parts of the application process. The Parish Priest is invited to state the level of your commitment to the practice of the your Faith and within your parish. This is usually done by the secondary school writing to the Parish Priest requesting a written statement during the latter part of the Autumn Term.

Most Parish Priests have structures in place to discuss secondary transfer with parents and some arrange individual appointments with parents to ensure that they have all the relevant and accurate information. Others have in place systems to confirm Mass attendance.

The secondary schools, through oversubscription, have the difficult task of allocating (and ranking) places based on their published admission criteria. A major part of this is the level of commitment to Church education and practice, or likewise commitment to Church attendance and the wider life of the parish. . It is only the Parish Priest or Vicar that can establish this and comment upon it.

It is therefore very important that you speak to your parish priest. He should know who you are and can support your application. You will identify a priest known to you who would normally be your Parish Priest of the parish you attend regularly not necessarily the parish in which you reside.

What should I do if I have 'issues' about the practice of my faith?

As stated above a major part of the application process involves the full support of your Parish Priest. Some families will have circumstances that will need explanation in the priest's reference and in your completed Supplementary Form returned to the secondary school. It is important that these areas are discussed fully with your Parish Priest in good time, in advance of autumn 2011 and before he is asked to complete his reference.

There may well be certain circumstances, relating to practice of your faith, that will place your application at a lower level than others in the application process and it is important that you discuss it with your Parish Priest or your child's Headteacher. This will be done in confidence and you will receive a realistic position regarding your application. This will help you in deciding the choices for your child. It is important to note that Governing Bodies of secondary schools want to be sympathetic to individual circumstances. It does not necessarily follow that you will **not** be offered a place just because you are dealing with 'an issue'.

Applying to Academies

There are now a variety of academies that you can apply to – for this school many families are interested in Harris Crystal Palace and Harris South Norwood. These schools both operate very clear admission criteria which are published in your Transfer booklet. There are supplementary forms required for both these schools, and you will need to make sure that your forms are sent back to the school by the date stated.

Applying to Private Fee Paying Schools

In addition to the state sector, there are many private, fee paying schools which you may wish to consider. These schools may hold entrance examinations, and have their own set of admission criterias.

Applying to Grammar Schools

There are also a number of Grammar schools in the locality. These will require a strict entrance exam, and have their own admission criteria in addition. For some schools, you will hear whether your child has passed the entrance exam BEFORE you have to list the school on your Common Transfer Form.

Request for school references

Many schools write to this school and ask for a reference form on your child to be completed by school staff. These are used by the schools to aid their admission process. The reference forms are completed and sent back to the school. A copy of the request is kept on your child's file, but a copy of the reference is not. St Cyprian's Greek Orthodox Primary Academy is under no duty to complete these reference requests, however, we do so and parents should be aware that the information contained is accurate and confidential to the requesting school.

Request for supporting letters

Many, many parents request supporting letters for their child if they feel that their reason for choosing the school may require additional clarification. You may request a letter from the head teacher and this will be considered. Remember, we want all children and parents to be happy with their school destination once March comes around.

What happens to my application after it is received?

When will I know if a place has been granted?

Your Common Transfer Form will be received by the LA – either in hard copy or through on-line application.

If you are applying for a Catholic or Church School the Governing Body (the admissions authority) will consider your application based on your Supplementary Form and the Priest's Reference. With the Academies, there is a ranking system based either on distance from the school, or on child's score in an

aptitude test with random selection from each of nine ability bands. For Grammar schools, even if your child has passed the test, there will be a strict admission criteria which will be applied. For Fee paying schools, following the test, there may be (but NOT always) a request made for a reference from the school, and possibly an interview prior to a decision being made.

When a decision has been made either by the Governors or by the Admissions committee, they will forward to the respective LA their ranked list of likely offers. The clearing house will match the offer list against the preference order. Hopefully, if you have stated a first preference you will receive it. In practice, your child will be offered a place at their highest ranked school where you meet the criteria.

It is important to ensure an offer at a Catholic school that your first three choices are Catholic schools.

What can I do if I am refused a place?

Governing Bodies must consider applications against their published Admissions criteria. There are, however, usually more applications to Catholic, church schools, academies and grammar schools than there are places. If you are unsuccessful with your first preference choice the clearing house will match your further preferences until one of the schools offers a place.

PLACES TO ALL SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS LONDON AND SURREY WILL BE DISPATCHED EARLY IN MARCH 2016.

If you are refused a place you have the right to appeal against the decision. This will require you to proceed through the appeal process which takes a great deal of time. If this happens to you come and speak to us and we will do our best to help you. Please remember that you cannot appeal simply because you did not get a place and you do not like the school you have been given; if appealing, successfully, you will need to demonstrate that the school's admission authority have not applied (used) their admission criteria accurately and fairly. There is no point after the offer date providing additional information which supports your application, as this should have been provided at the time of application.

If you do not get your first choice school, you will be able to find out where you are on the ranking list, and you may be able to request to remain on the waiting list.

This can be extremely stressful and worrying time for you, as parents, and for your child. Remember, we are here to help; however, we do not have any control over the admissions into secondary school. We can support, guide and advise you through all steps of the process, and hope that you will be pleased with the school offer you receive. Every year, we get parents who do not follow our advice and this always results in upset. Please, please listen to what we say, you may not believe us, but it will alleviate upset at a later date.

OUR BEST ADVICE TO YOU now is

- ✿ *Visit lots of schools in good time.*
 - ✿ *Talk about your preferences early as a family.*
 - ✿ *Be really clear on your Common Transfer Form that your 1st named school is actually your 1st preference school.*
 - ✿ *Read the Admissions Policy for each school you are applying to.*
 - ✿ *Be honest with yourself about whether you REALLY meet the admissions criteria for the school*
 - ✿ *Fill in your supplementary form carefully, making sure you answer all the questions as fully as possible and remember to keep a copy.*
 - ✿ *Visit your Parish Priest to discuss their supporting letter.*
 - ✿ *Do not apply to one school only and run the risk of having the LA decide where your child goes to school (if you do not name enough schools or do not meet the criteria for those you have named the LA has no choice but to offer you a place).*
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Details of school dates for Open Evenings can be found in the LA booklet or through direct contact with the school.