

**PREFERENCES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES**  
**SEPTEMBER 2009**

---

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the pattern of parental preferences for secondary places for the 2009/10 school year.

**Summary**

2. At their meeting on 14 September 2009, Members asked for further information on the pattern of parental preferences for Darlington secondary schools. This report shows the number of first, second and third preferences parents made and also gives an indication of the number of places offered at schools where no parental preference was recorded.

**Recommendation(s)**

3. It is recommended that Members note the report for information

**Murray Rose,**  
**Director of Children's Services**

**Background Papers**

Information for Parents Handbook

George McQueen : Extension 2847

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues arising from this report.
Health and Well Being	There are no issues arising from this report.
Sustainability	There are no issues arising from this report.
Diversity	The pattern of parental preference demonstrates a diversity of choice across the Borough's secondary provision.
Wards Affected	All wards in Darlington
Groups Affected	Young people of secondary school age
Budget and Policy Framework	There are no issues arising from this report.
Efficiency	There are no issues arising from this report.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Offering a range of secondary school provision to families in Darlington is consistent with the Aspiring Darlington theme: providing people with the information, advice and guidance needed to make appropriate life choices around learning and personal development.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

4. Each year, when children are in Year 6 at Primary School, their parents are requested to express a preference for the secondary school they wish their child to attend. The Authority publishes an *Information for Parents Handbook* containing details of all the secondary schools in Darlington and the address and contact details for neighbouring Authorities, in case parents wish to receive details of secondary schools maintained by Stockton, North Yorkshire or Durham.
5. The Council operates a coordinated admissions scheme. Parents receive an application form which they detach from the *Information for Parents Handbook* the form allows them to express three preferences for a secondary place and to record the reasons why they have made that preference. Darlington parents use the Darlington form even if they wish to request places at schools maintained by a neighbouring Authority, or if they wish to request places at a Voluntary Aided School, a Trust School or an Academy.
6. The Admissions Team, with the help of appropriate computer software, match parental preferences to the spaces available in schools. The Admissions programme sorts all applications for all schools into a rank order for admission. Allocations are made according to the published criteria for each school. Parents are allocated a place for their child at their highest ranked preference where space is available. If it is not possible to meet a parent's preference for any of the schools they have indicated, a place will be allocated at the nearest suitable school where places are available. All parents receive an offer of one school place only. Offers are posted on 1 March. All Authorities in England & Wales use this date.
7. The table in Appendix 1 shows the number of preferences expressed for each secondary school in Darlington. The table also shows the number of places offered to parents where no expression of preference had been made.

8. Every year, when compiling the guide for parents on Admissions, information is provided on the number of requests made for a school and the number of places offered. This helps to inform parents before they record a preference and, when read in conjunction with the oversubscription criteria, gives an indication of how successful an application will be.