

## Welcome back!

To the new term and to the second edition of our newsletter which keeps you up to date with what's happening in Schools Access Services.



*The teams at Capital Court*

This issue is packed with information from the School Admissions, School Transport, Escort and CSET teams and the work that they will be undertaking this term.

However, much of

what we will be focusing on this term has been shaped through what happened last term to try and continuously improve the services we offer.

**School Admissions** is currently reviewing awareness-raising strategies to make sure parents and carers are aware of the need to apply for school places. A number of families this year missed out on a place at their preferred school after making their application late as we are unable to hold back places for this kind of situation. We are now considering a radio advertising campaign, along with further press coverage and printed information. Please help us by making sure parents at your school are aware of the need to formally apply for school places. More information is available from the School Admissions Team.

**School Transport** and **Escorts** are gearing up for their busiest period during September, with new pupils travelling on school transport routes and new escort arrangements being made and bedding down. The ongoing programme of route reviews continues which will make sure school and college transport is provided in the most cost-effective way possible.

**CSET** has recently entered in to a pilot with

the **Integrated Assessment Team (IAT)**. The casework managers and officers for Exeter, East and Mid Devon have formally joined with the IAT covering the same area to form the **Integrated Children's Services Assessment Team (ICSAT)**. This pilot falls under the Integrated Working strand of the Stepping Stones programme and will inform how integrated assessment is rolled out across the whole county in the future. The pilot will provide a single door for accepting and managing referrals using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), and this approach will be evaluated internally and through parents and carers to make sure Integrated Assessment in Devon delivers better outcomes for children, young people and their families.

This new academic year promises to be challenging and exciting for Access Services. We look forward to working with you to make these key services even better.

**Lisa Boon**  
**Schools Access Services**



### Contacts

#### CSET

Tel 01392 383913

Email [CSETmail@devon.gov.uk](mailto:CSETmail@devon.gov.uk)

#### Admissions

Tel MyDevon 0845 155 1019

Email [admissions@devon.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@devon.gov.uk)

#### Transport

Tel MyDevon 0845 155 1019

# Applying for school places 2010/2011

## apply online – apply on time

It's that time of year again when parents and carers are invited to apply for their child's school place for the next academic year. We have recently sent letters to parents and carers of the new Year 6 cohort telling them that they can apply for their school place from 1 September 2009 and giving them a unique identifying number (UID) to use when they apply online. We plan to write to parents and carers of all children born between 1 September 2004 and 31 August 2005 shortly with details of the primary application process.

We are actively promoting online application at [www.devon.gov.uk/admissionsonline](http://www.devon.gov.uk/admissionsonline). Last year 81% of applicants applied online for their secondary school place and 78% applied online for their primary school place. Can we beat this in 2010?!

If parents can't access the internet, or they would rather apply by application form they should contact the education helpline on **0845 155 1019** to request a booklet. **The Next Step** and **First Step** booklets will be available to download and the common application forms will be available from the Electronic Forms section of the Just4schools website.

If you have pupils on roll that live in a different local authority area they will need to apply to their home local authority, even if one or more of the schools they wish to apply for are in Devon County.

We want to work closely throughout this admissions cycle to make sure parents and carers know how important it is to apply on time for their school place and what happens if they don't. If at any stage of the process you would like a list of who has applied (or not applied!) contact your admissions officer. It is important that we chase parents well before the closing date to give them opportunity to apply on time.

The Choice Adviser service is available to any parent who struggles with the system, or does not speak English as a first language. Contact us if you think a parent would benefit from this, or direct them to the Choice Advice Service 24 hour answer phone **01392 381296**.

The tables outline the relevant dates in the application process, including the all important closing date for applications. Applications received after the closing date will not be considered above those received on time so it is essential that applications are received before the published closing dates if parents are to stand the best chance of a place at their preferred school.

## Secondary school application process important dates

<b>1 September 2009</b>	Application window opens
<b>16 October 2009</b>	Closing date for all applications
<b>15 February 2010</b>	We will tell schools which applicants have been offered places
<b>1 March 2010</b>	Notification letters or emails sent to parents

## Primary school application process important dates

<b>1 November 2009</b>	Application window opens
<b>15 January 2010</b>	Closing date for all applications
<b>22 March 2010</b>	We will tell schools which applicants have been offered places
<b>16 April 2010</b>	Notification letters or emails sent to parents

## Admissions

*"Help! I applied late for a Reception place."*

*"I didn't know I had to apply."*

*"Nobody told me."*

"Help, I applied late" is often the comment from parents who have just found out that they have not applied in time for a school place. Some colourful comments are also expressed to officers when parents find out that the school is full from applications which have been received on time.

Parents are always advised that they can appeal to an independent appeal panel against the decision to refuse a parental preference. However, the process set out in the **DCSF Appeal Code** is very formal.

Our sympathies lie with parents. From speaking to them the majority feel a little overwhelmed at appeal which causes anger and frustration with the whole process. The UK average is that about

one in three appeals are upheld – not a terribly good statistic from a parent's point of view and their chances become drastically reduced where a class size limit applies, for example 30 in a class for KS1.

There have been a lot of appeals this year for parents who applied late and would have been offered a place at their preferred school if their application had been received on time. Some of these cases involved schools where older siblings were on roll and refusal of a place has caused undeniable and avoidable stress in the family.

We are hoping that the number of late requests will reduce next year, but ask for your continued help in getting the message to parents that they must apply on time for a school place. You will receive posters and leaflets in the Autumn Term - please place them in a prominent position. It would also be helpful to include a note in your newsletter. Parents can get more information on how to apply from MyDevon on **0845 155 1019**.

## Free School Meals update

We have recently appointed two new permanent members of staff - welcome to Paula Prince and Catherine Marks.

The start of the new term brings some pretty radical changes in how applications for free school meals are processed. For a number of years now applicants have had to apply and attach evidence of their qualifying benefits.

We now have access to a Central Government Hub which is linked to the Benefits Office. To carry out a check on the Hub system we need parent's permission and their date of birth.

These changes mean we have carried out an overhaul of the old application form and devised a new form. We need your help in making sure that the new Free School Meal Form (BR31 Revised July 09) is completed. Any older versions

of this form will need to be taken out of circulation and recycled. The new form is available online in the forms section on the just4schools website [www.devon.gov.uk/j4s-formeducation](http://www.devon.gov.uk/j4s-formeducation)

You will all have received an update from the Free School Meals Team which includes all the relevant information about these changes and your new list of eligible pupils. It is essential that the new application form is distributed to all applicants immediately.

### Key changes are:

- evidence does not need to be sent with an application form
- an eligibility check is carried out on the DCSF Hub system
- applicants do not need to reapply; an entitlement check will be carried out at the end of the claim period by the FSM team.
- The new application form allows parents to give permission for these checks.

## New summer signings for the Admissions Team!

In what has been a very busy summer, the Admissions Team has swooped in the transfer market. The Team will be lining up in the new term with some new additions to its squad. I am sure you will join me in welcoming Stuart Pears and Robert Money to the team as admission officers (both players join the team on free transfers). Your new admissions officer will make contact at the beginning of term and introduce themselves to you if they have not done so already. I would envisage that these changes will be seamless and that by the start of the new term we will all continue to build on existing relationships so that the Team can deliver the best possible service to residents of Devon. It would be helpful if you could email your up to date figures to [schoolnor@devon.gov.uk](mailto:schoolnor@devon.gov.uk)

### Admissions Team contact list September 2009

Admissions Team [admissions@devon.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@devon.gov.uk) fax **01392 383614**

One Capital Court, Bittern Road, Sowton, Exeter EX2 7FW

Name	Job Title
Karen Howes <b>01392 383704</b> <a href="mailto:karen.howes@devon.gov.uk">karen.howes@devon.gov.uk</a>	Admissions Manager
Katie Pateman <b>01392 383023</b> <a href="mailto:katie.pateman@devon.gov.uk">katie.pateman@devon.gov.uk</a>	Senior Admissions Officer - North Devon Secondary Schools; Bideford, Braunton, Great Torrington, Ilfracombe, Park, Pilton, South Molton
Neil Keen <b>01392 386180</b> <a href="mailto:neil.keen@devon.gov.uk">neil.keen@devon.gov.uk</a>	Senior Admissions Officer – North Devon Primary Schools; Bideford, Braunton, Great Torrington, Ilfracombe, Park, Pilton, South Molton
Anwen Breading <b>01392 382927</b> <a href="mailto:anwen.breading@devon.gov.uk">anwen.breading@devon.gov.uk</a> Mon, Tues and Wed am	Admissions Officer - Holsworthy, Okehampton, Tavistock, Teignmouth and their feeder primaries
Sandra Dunstan <b>01392 383539</b> <a href="mailto:sandra.dunstan@devon.gov.uk">sandra.dunstan@devon.gov.uk</a>	Admissions Officer - Axe Valley, Colyton Grammar, Exmouth, Honiton, King's OSM, Sidmouth and their feeder primaries
Rob Money <b>01392 382056</b> <a href="mailto:robert.money@devon.gov.uk">robert.money@devon.gov.uk</a>	Admissions Officer - Clyst Vale, Isca, St. James', St. Luke's. St. Peter's, West Exe and their feeder primaries
Stuart Pears <b>01392 382055</b> <a href="mailto:stuart.pears@devon.gov.uk">stuart.pears@devon.gov.uk</a>	Admissions Officer - Coombeshead, KEVICCs, Newton Abbot College, South Dartmoor, Teign School and their feeder primaries
Rachel Quant <b>01392 383713</b> <a href="mailto:rachel.quant@devon.gov.uk">rachel.quant@devon.gov.uk</a>	Admissions Officer - Chulmleigh, Cullompton, QE, Tiverton, Uffculme and their feeder primaries
Judith Treby <b>01392 383717</b> <a href="mailto:judith.treby@devon.gov.uk">judith.treby@devon.gov.uk</a> Weds,Thur and Fri	Admissions Officer - Dartmouth, Dawlish, Ivybridge, Kingsbridge and their feeder primaries
Susan Scott <b>01392 383572</b> <a href="mailto:susan.scott@devon.gov.uk">susan.scott@devon.gov.uk</a>	PA support to Lisa Boon and Admissions Team
Catherine Marks <b>01392 382761</b> <a href="mailto:catherine.marks@devon.gov.uk">catherine.marks@devon.gov.uk</a>	Admission Assistant and Free School Meals Officer
Paula Prince <b>01392 382761</b> <a href="mailto:paula.prince@devon.gov.uk">paula.prince@devon.gov.uk</a>	Admission Assistant and Free School Meals Officer

## Escorts

**Since Capital Letter last came out, the Escort Team have continued to train contractor escorts alongside DCC employees to set a standard, aiming to ensure consistent good practice by all escorts.**

This appears to have been well received by contractors and appreciated by their escorts and fits well with the ethos of **Every Child Matters**. This will mean that all parents of children with special needs can expect a good quality of care while their children are on transport.

It will take a little time to make sure that existing contractor escorts are fully trained, but by working closely with our colleagues in **Transport Co-ordination Services (TCS)**, this should be easily achieved. All new contractor escorts are given a brief induction by TCS and then attend the initial training sessions. Every three years all escorts attend a retrain in First Aid and Manual Handling to stay compliant.

## Special Education Transport officers

As schools wind down for the holidays we enter our busy time when pupils transfer between schools, leave education, or even the DCC area. Children have to be deleted or added to the Transport system and made dormant from or allocated to routes. Where necessary, escorts have to be allocated and new information on children, manual handling and medical care plans and protocols has to be sent out to all escorts throughout the county.

Some special schools will already have been visited by a Special Education Transport officer to make sure that we have relevant pupil information. Even so, some children may still experience problems with their transport. Your help in sorting out any problems in the Autumn Term would be much appreciated.

The officers from Transport and colleagues from TCS are hoping to make annual visits to special schools to further good working relationships and to ensure all pupil information is up to date so they can be transported happily and safely.

## Are you considering a Managed Move for a pupil at risk of permanent exclusion?

When considering a Managed Move it is important to take into account how the pupil will get to and from the proposed school.

The School Transport Team recognise the advantages of a transfer to another school to prevent permanent exclusion, but there is no automatic right to school transport being provided and any decision to provide transport to an alternative school is discretionary.

Colleagues contemplating a Managed Move should contact Tony Mordaunt in the Education Transport Team at [anthony.mordaunt@devon.gov.uk](mailto:anthony.mordaunt@devon.gov.uk) with details of any proposal including:

- the name, date of birth and address of the pupil
- the home school or college
- the proposed receiving school or college(s).

Reasonable transport costs will normally be met by the Education Transport budget provided consultation takes place with the transport section before any move is agreed. If a Managed Move is agreed and the School Transport Team has not been consulted transport will not be funded by the Education Transport budget.

# SEN Statement Annual Reviews

CSET

**The annual review of an SEN statement must be carried out within 12 months of the Statement being issued or the previous review.**

At present, we ask Learning Communities to send in their reports of annual reviews meetings by the end of a specified term - although we appreciate that secondary schools send in their reviews throughout the year. We will be writing to Learning Communities in September to let you know when your reviews for the 2009/10 academic year are due.

We are looking at ways to improve the annual review form so that it becomes a more useful tool for parents. It is possible that, as part of this work, we will ask schools to follow a different pattern when submitting reports of review meetings. We will make sure that we let you know about any changes to the current arrangements in plenty of time.

Please make sure that you are using the latest version of the annual review report. All CSET forms can be downloaded from [www.devon.gov.uk/cset](http://www.devon.gov.uk/cset)

If you are asking for extra funding, you need to attach a completed Information for Inclusive Education Panel form to the review report, clearly detailing how the pupil's needs have changed and how the additional support would be used.

Reports due in Autumn Term	Reports due in Spring Term	Reports due in Summer Term	Reports due over the whole year
Axe Valley	All Exeter Schools	Bideford (secondary)	Home Educated
Braunton	Bideford (primaries)	Clyst Vale	Independent Schools
Dawlish	Chulmleigh	Dartmouth	Link Education
Okehampton	Crediton	Honiton (secondary)	OLA schools
Ottery	Culm Valley	Ilfracombe	PRUs
Sidmouth	Exmouth	Kingsbridge	Special Schools
South Molton	Holsworthy	Park, Barnstaple	
	Honiton (primaries)	Pilton, Barnstaple	
	Ivybridge	South Dartmoor	
	Newton Abbot	Tiverton	
	Tavistock	Totnes	
	Teign Valley	Uffculme	
	Teignmouth		
	Torrington		

## Post-16 Exceptional Arrangements Support

Exceptional Arrangements Support allocations for pupils in NCYs 11, 12 and 13 automatically cease on 31 August so you need to tell us about pupils who are planning to stay on at your school for a further year.

As post-16 courses can be more flexible, we do not necessarily maintain the same support allocation that a pupil has had in previous years. This is considered on the basis of:

- the programme of study - including whether it is full or part-time and the ratio of taught and study periods
- your reasons why support is needed at post-16.

We know it's not always easy to know which pupils will be returning in September, but it would be helpful if you could let us have the information as early as possible in the preceding summer term so that we can look at the level of support.

If you have not already let us know about a post-16 pupil who has returned to school this September, you need to let us know by 30 September 2009 otherwise any allocation agreed will not be backdated to the start of the academic year.

If a pupil drops a subject or changes course during the year, the level of support will need to be reconsidered.

## Farewell to two much-loved members of CSET staff

We say goodbye this September to two long-standing members of CSET who between them have over 50 years of service with Devon County Council! Over the years **Paula Major, Casework Officer** and **Pauline Bailey, Casework Manager** have seen many procedures change in special education but have dealt with any challenges with their characteristic good humour and professionalism.

Paula began working for Devon in February 1979 initially as a secretary at Walter Daw First School and then as a secretary/TA at St Sidwell's Combined before joining CSET in 1989. Pauline has been with Devon since October 1988 and previously worked for the Youth and Community and Student Grant teams.

Many of you may have dealt with Paula and Pauline as they have covered schools in several different areas of Devon. They have contributed

significantly to the service in terms of providing good advice and information to schools and parents as well as supporting colleagues and the Team as a whole. We wish them both a happy and enjoyable retirement.

