

North Bedfordshire Frequently Asked Questions

These frequently asked questions have been produced in partnership by Bedford Borough Council, Sharnbrook Academy Federation, Eileen Wade Lower School, Sharnbrook John Gibbard Lower School, Thurleigh Lower School, Kymbrook Lower School and Riseley Lower School.

Q. Have I still got my school place for year 5 in September 2016?

A. All year 4 parents can be reassured that the school place they have been allocated through the admissions process is secure.

Q. My child is not a year 4 pupil but is currently in reception/year 1/year 2/year 3 how will they be affected?

A. All lower schools convert to primary schools in September 2017 so your child will continue into the primary school at their current lower school and then enter secondary education in September 2019.

Q. Will the children be expected to change uniform three times over this time period?

A. No. Parents will not incur unexpected uniform costs. It is ok to continue with the same uniforms in year 6 as were worn in year 5. If replacements are needed then charges would be as normal.

Q. Will the term dates be different?

A. No. Riseley Primary School have agreed to synchronise term dates with SAF.

Q. Once my child is in Year 6 at Riseley Primary School, will they be offered a place at Sharnbrook Secondary school for Year 7?

A. Yes. All parents will be able to choose which secondary school they would like their child to attend. Parents will apply through the normal admissions procedure making their preferences. Locally they would be able to choose Sharnbrook Secondary or Lincroft Secondary School. **There would be places for all the Riseley Primary children at Sharnbrook, if this was their preference.**

Q. How will the children be taught in Year 6?

A. Qualified staff will be in place to teach Year 6 in 2017. Riseley Primary School will work with staff to ensure continuation of subjects and ensure as little disruption as possible. The school is committed to continuing the high quality educational experience in Riseley, particularly in English and Maths.

Q. What if my child is already at Margaret Beaufort Middle school or Harrold Priory Middle School?

A. Pupils who are in years 6, 7 and 8 in academic year 16/17 will all move up to Sharnbrook Secondary School in September 2017.

Q. Would Riseley Primary School continue to teach art subjects like drama, music and the performing arts?

A. Yes. Riseley Lower School has a long tradition in promoting the Arts. The school received the Arts Council award in 2015. The school was also chosen to show a dramatisation at The National Gallery in London in 2014. Every year the School performs in the Sharnbrook Creative Arts festival and there will be many arts based after school clubs.

Q. Will our children continue to have additional sporting opportunities such as rugby, hockey, football, cross-country, etc?

A. Yes they will. Riseley Lower School has a reputation for high quality sporting provision. We have been awarded the School Games Gold Kitemark in successive years – an award achieved by just a handful of lower schools in the Borough. We have reached County Finals in several sports in recent years – significant achievements for a relatively small school. Riseley Lower School provides extensive extra-curricular activities, led by many specialist

instructors and we would seek to develop these further, alongside continued competitive opportunities.

Q. What are the plans to continue the Gifted and Talented programmes that have previously been offered by MBMS?

A. A clear and accessible Gifted and Talented Policy will ensure that those pupils are helped to develop in the best possible way.

Q. Riseley is a Church school and as a Year 4 parent I did not request a place at a Church school.

A. Riseley Lower School does have a Christian ethos which is based on values and strong morals. This is very similar to the ethos of most schools. By law, all schools in the country are required to teach RE and to hold broadly Christian assemblies but parents have the right to withdraw their children from them if they so wish.

As with all schools other religions are studied within the curriculum, to provide all children with an understanding and appreciation of others.

Q. What are the plans for the development of the school?

A. There will be a brand new Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 block built on the Margaret Beaufort site and this will open in September 2017. There will also be remodelling works in the building during the summer of 2017 in readiness for opening. This will be the beginning of a brand new school on the site which will be built as soon as funds are confirmed. This is expected to be within the next 5 years. Disruption will be kept to an absolute minimum.

Q. What are the plans for parking?

A. Appropriate parking provision will be made at all schools.

Q. What if I have been offered a place at a middle school for year 5 in September 2016 but have now changed my mind?

A. Should you wish to make a change then you should contact the School Admissions Service to request a change of preference. You can do this in writing or by email toadmissions@bedford.gov.uk. If you need further advice please contact the School Admissions Helpline (01234) 718120. More information is available on the Council's website www.bedford.gov.uk/admissions

Q. Will we be offered free transport to our choice of school?

A. Free transport to school is decided on your home address rather than the school attended. You are entitled to free transport to your catchment or nearest school. If you prefer that your child attends a school which is not your catchment or nearest school then this is absolutely fine and you have the right to parent choice, providing spaces are available. However you may not be eligible for transport. If you are not eligible for transport and there is a route with spaces available then you can pay for a 'privilege pass' which would enable your child to secure a space on that bus. If there is not a bus route or you are out of the Bedford Borough Council boundary then you would need to arrange your own transport arrangements. In this case sometimes groups of parents successfully achieve this as a group.

Q. I have been told I have to decide by 9th May. Is this true?

A. No, the letter from SAF said "it would be very helpful if you would make any applications to change your school preference by 9 May 2016." If required your school choice can be changed at anytime but it would be very helpful if this could be as early as possible so resources can be planned.