

# DBULLETIN

## Free Schools Update

The first Free Schools will open in September 2011. Since its launch in June 2010, the Department for Education has received over 320 proposals, a rate of more than one per day.

Following their lead are hundreds of other groups with exciting and innovative projects. If you are interested in setting up a Free School, the DfE has published information on the application procedure for those groups that wish to open Free Schools from September 2012

The DfE has expressed that it will only approve high quality applications and the approval process for those groups wishing to open Free Schools from 2012 will be far more rigorous. The DfE has confirmed the following features will form part of the new application process:

- Groups are to provide information, as set out in the 'how to apply' form. This will include questions around parental demand, the type of education the school will provide, its ethos and the capacity and capability of the groups themselves.
- The DfE has set a minimum requirement that groups must meet. Those groups will be judged against each other and scored on the strength of their proposals.
- Shortlisted applicants will be called for an interview to discuss aspects of their proposal. Interview panels will consist of Department for Education officials, financial experts, education advisers, headteachers and organisations with a track record of setting up and running schools.

### Time scales

Applicants must submit their application to the DfE between 16 May 2011 and 1 June 2011. Applications received after 17:00 on 1 June will not be considered.

The DfE will assess applicants and a due diligence process will be taken by the DfE to ensure that they are fit and proper people to run a school and have no extremist links.

The best applicants will be invited to an interview in August 2011.

Successful groups will be notified in September 2011 after which they can start preparing to open their new schools.

### Further information

The how to apply form is now available on the DfE's website and further details on the submission process will be made available by Monday 9 May 2011.

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