

CONSULTATION



Medway Council

Co-ordinated Scheme for

Secondary Admissions

Academic Year 2020/21

**Incorporating admission to Year 7
(secondary schools and academies) and
Secondary In-Year Admissions**

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Introduction / Background

Each year, the Local Authority is required to draw up, consult on and determine:

- Co-ordinated admissions arrangements (schemes) for all schools/academies/UTCs in the Local Authority area for entry at the normal time of admission (Year R for infant and primary schools, Year 3 for junior schools and Year 7 for secondary schools. Please note that Medway UTC has opted out of co-ordination, as permitted by the Department for Education.

and

- The over-subscription criteria / arrangements for entry to those schools for which the Local Authority is the admission authority (Community and Voluntary Controlled schools).

The admission arrangements for Academies, Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools will be available from each school and to view on the Medway Council website at www.medway.gov.uk/admissions.

**Section 1 –
Details of the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Secondary Admissions 2020/21**

**Secondary schools and academies - Year 7 applications are for children born
between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009.**

The Key Scheme dates are:

Key Action	Scheme Date
Publication of information (composite prospectus, Medway Test registration, etc.)	By Wednesday 22 May 2019
Registration for the Medway test opens	Monday 3 June 2019
Closing date for Medway Test registration	Monday 1 July 2019
Deadline for Medway Test Special Arrangements requests from schools	Monday 8 July 2019
Special Arrangements Panel meeting and decisions	By Friday 12 July 2019
Deadline for 'late' Medway Test registration for exceptional reasons (must be accompanied by written evidence confirming why it is late)	Friday 12 July 2019
Publication of further secondary application information (flyers, etc.)	By Monday 9 September 2019
Secondary school applications open Online applications open at 9am	Monday 9 September 2019
Medway Test Date <i>The Medway Test is for admission to Medway grammar schools only. For grammar schools in another Local Authority, children must sit that local authority's test.</i>	Tuesday 17 / Wednesday 18 September 2019 (in schools for children in Medway primary/junior schools) Saturday 21 September 2019 (in school for Medway school that opt for Saturday testing and in test centres for children not in Medway primary/junior schools)
Assessment decisions notified to parents/carers	Monday 7 October 2019
Deadline for receipt of Medway Test Review requests	Monday 14 October 2019
Deadline for primary and junior schools to submit review work to the Council	No later than 10am on Wednesday 16 October 2019
Medway Test Reviews and moderation	Thursday 17 / Friday 18 October 2018
Review decisions notified to parents/carers	By Wednesday 23 October 2019
Closing date for secondary applications (Online and Secondary Common Application Forms (SCAFs)) – National Closing Date	No later than 5pm on Thursday 31 October 2019
Deadline for 'late' school applications for exceptional reasons (must be accompanied by written evidence confirming why it is late)	No later than 5pm on Friday 15 November 2019

First Inter-LA data exchange undertaken	From Monday 25 November 2019
Indication of preference/applicant numbers made available to all Medway secondary schools	By Friday 13 December 2019
Ranking lists provided to all secondary schools (including all application detail) for prioritising against their over-subscription criteria and necessary checks, etc.	By Monday 6 January 2020
Finalised ranked list submitted to the Council by all secondary schools	No later 5pm on Friday 17 January 2020
Ranked lists submitted, checked and verified in the admissions database.	By Monday 20 January 2020
Council to run the algorithm to determine the allocation of places	By Friday 24 January 2020
Inter-LA data exchange undertaken for offers (if applicable)	Approx. 27 January to 10 February 2020
Details of pupils being offered sent to all Medway secondary schools	By Monday 24 February 2020
Offer e-mails and letters sent to parents/carers National Offer Day	Monday 2 March 2020 (1 March 2020 is a Sunday)
Schools send out welcome letters	Not before Monday 9 March 2020
Places must be accepted/refused and requests to go on a waiting list and appeals must be submitted	By Tuesday 31 March 2020
The Council re-allocates any places that have become available to those who have asked to go on the waiting lists for each school	From w/c Monday 20 April 2020 until Thursday 31 December 2020

In addition this scheme also:

- Allows for Supplementary Information Forms (SIFs) to be returned directly to schools by the closing date for applications (31 October 2019) to assist in the ranking of applicants against the schools over-subscription criteria.
- Confirms that after 20 April 2020, the Council considers applicants through the normal waiting list / In-Year procedures.
Vacant places will be re-allocated (offered), in accordance with individual school's oversubscription criteria, to children who have requested to be placed on the waiting list. Waiting lists will be held by the Council on behalf of the admissions authority for the school(s) until Thursday 31 December 2020.

The Council expects that all schools/academies/UTC's and admissions authorities engaged in the sharing of admissions data will manage personal information in accordance with GDPR requirements.

The school application process

All relevant dates for the following procedures are detailed in the 'Key Scheme Dates' table above

1.

Medway resident parents/carers can apply for their child's school place either online at www.medway.gov.uk/onlineadmissions or using a paper application form (SCAF), which can be collected from Medway Council's office at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TR.

The Council can only accept one application for each child. Only one of the above methods can be used, not both.

If more than one application is received, the parent/carer will be contacted to agree which application is to be used. Until this is agreed none of the applications for that child can be processed.

2.

Online applications, SCAFs and supporting publications will:

- (a) Allow **Medway resident parents/carers to express up to six preferences** in priority order. Preferences can be expressed for Medway and non-Medway schools (except special or independent schools).
Parents/carers must complete the application for their home Local Authority (i.e. the LA where they live)
- (b) Allow parents/carers to give reasons for each preference, including details of any siblings that attend the school at the time of application and will still be on roll at the preferred school at the time of the applicant child's admission.
- (c) Explain that parents/carers will receive the offer of one school place only and that a place will be offered at the highest ranked preference, for which their child is eligible and where there is a place available, or if a place cannot be offered at a school named on the form, a place will be offered at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy.
- (d) Specify the closing date for applications and where paper SCAFs must be returned to, in accordance with paragraph 8.

3.

The Council will make appropriate arrangements to ensure:

- (a) That the online admissions website is readily accessible to all Medway resident parents/carers who wish to apply using this method.
- (b) The paper applications are readily available to be collected from Medway Council's office at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TR.
- (c) A Digital Information Guide (composite prospectus) of all Medway secondary schools and academies along with details how the admissions process works is readily available on the Medway Council website to read/download/print and hardcopies of which will be available upon request for collection from Medway Council's Office at Gun Wharf (see above address).

4.

Only preferences expressed on a submitted online application or paper SCAF are valid applications.

5.

Supplementary Information forms (SIFs)

a school/academy can ask parents/carers, who wish to express it as a preference, to provide additional information on a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) only where the additional information is required to apply its over-subscription criteria to the application.

Where a SIF is required it must be requested direct from the school/academy or will be available via the Council's website as part of the relevant schools/academies published admission arrangements.

SIFs must be returned to the relevant school/academy by the closing date for applications.

All schools/academies that use SIFs must include the proposed form in their consultation document with other admissions authorities, including the Council, and in their published admission arrangements.

6.

Completion of a school/academy's Supplementary Information Form only does not constitute a valid application.

The school/academy must be named on the parent/carer's application through their home local authority.

7.

Applications must be submitted online or paper SCAFs returned to Medway Council by the closing date.

NB: After the closing date no changes of preference can be permitted, except in exceptional circumstances.

8.

To help the Council ensure that everyone who needs to makes an application has done so, primary/junior schools may ask parents/carers for a note of their online application reference, or – if they have concerns – may ask School Services to check whether an online application has been submitted.

No preference information will be disclosed to the primary/junior schools, as this information is between parents/carers and the Council.

9.

The Council will co-ordinate the allocation of places and works in partnership with own admission authority schools/academies to determine which applicants are to be offered a place at their school/academy.

The Council will only make the final decision about the offer or refusal of a place at a named preference where:

- (a) an applicant can be offered a place at more than one preference;
- (b) an applicant cannot be offered a place at any named preference and therefore has to be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate school to the home address.

Medway operate an 'Equal Preference' scheme. This means that all preferences are considered equally and the order of preference is between parents/carers and the Council. The Council will look to offer a place at the highest named preference for which the child is eligible and where a place is available.

The Council will allocate places in accordance with paragraph 23.

Crown Servants:

For children of crown service personnel the usual protocols will apply, but a future address will be accepted and a place sought in advance of residency as long as the application is accompanied by an official confirmation of the posting, future address and date of posting (as defined in the School Admissions Code).

The Medway Test process

All relevant dates for the following procedures are detailed in the ‘Key Scheme Dates’ table above

10.

The Medway schools that require children to sit the Medway Test are listed below:

Holcombe Grammar School	Rainham Mark Grammar School
Chatham Grammar School for Girls	Sir Joseph Williamson’s Mathematical School
Fort Pitt Grammar School	The Rochester Grammar School

In addition, The Howard School will also provide places for boys assessed as grammar and boys will be placed into the grammar stream after places have been allocated.

NB:

The Medway Test is for admission to Medway grammar schools only and the Kent Test is for admission to Kent grammar schools only.

The results of either test are not transferable between authorities, although individual schools/academies may determine to accept the test assessment from another authority as part of their published admission arrangements.

11.

Parents/carers wishing their children to sit the Medway Test are required to register with Medway Council during the registration period, as detailed above.

Each Medway primary/junior school will be asked to decide on the individual testing arrangements for their school (including the test day(s) and venue).

Medway Council will make all necessary arrangements to administer the Medway Test in accordance with the school’s decision.

Access/Special arrangements for the Medway Test

Parents/carers must discuss with the school about requesting access or special arrangements.

Requests can **only** be considered if requested by the child’s current school. Parents/carers cannot submit a request directly.

All requests will be considered by a panel of educationalists who will decide what arrangements may be awarded. **The decision of the panel is final.**

Any access/special arrangements request received after the date shown in the above Key scheme dates table may not be processed.

12.

Late registrations to sit the Medway Test will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances* (e.g. serious illness, bereavement, late move to the area, etc.). A letter explaining the reasons for the late registration must accompany any late registration request.

Late registrations for exceptional circumstances and for families who have just moved into the area will be accepted up until the deadline date of late registrations shown in the Key scheme dates table.

*The decision on whether a reason for late registration is acceptable will be at the discretion of the School Services Management Team.

13.

The Medway Test comprises of three papers. These are:

- English (extended writing task)
- Mathematics
- Verbal Reasoning

14.

Children unable to sit the Medway Test on the scheduled date(s) due to illness should provide a medical certificate to School Services and may be offered an alternative date to sit the test. There is no guarantee that an alternative will be made available.

15.

Once all three papers have been marked, the raw scores are converted by standardised scores. These standardised scores are weighted to reflect the child's age when they sat the test.

A minimum total weighted score to be assessed as grammar is set each year.

The formula used to determine the total weighted score for each child is:

Standardised Extended Writing score x 2
plus
Standardised Mathematics score x 2
plus
Standardised Verbal reasoning score

This minimum score is set at the 23rd percentile of the Medway cohort (i.e. Year 6 children attending a Medway maintained school) based on school census data.

Pupils from out of area and/or attending a Medway independent school who achieve the minimum score or above will also be assessed as grammar.

16.

Medway Test assessment decisions will be notified to **all** parents/carers who registered their child for testing on the determined date.

17.

Where a child does not achieve the minimum score required, parents/carers can ask for the assessment decision to be reconsidered at an academic review.

For each review case, samples of work from the last two terms of Year 5 (Spring Break to July) and the first term of Year 6 (September to date of review request) will be requested from the child's current school in the following areas:

- English (extended writing)
- Mathematics (problem solving)
- Science (investigation)

A series of panels will consider all review requests. The review panels are made up of senior representatives from Medway grammar schools and Medway primary/junior schools.

The review process will identify a number of children (up to 2% of the Medway cohort) who will then be assessed as grammar.

18.

If they wish to request a review, parents/carers **must** submit the request (in the manner advised along with the assessment decision) and it **must be received** by Medway Council School Services by the deadline date.

Primary/junior schools will be requested to submit review work by 10am on the published date.

19.

Review decisions will be notified to parents/carers by the published date (as shown above).

The school allocation/offer process

All relevant dates for the following procedures are detailed in the ‘Key Scheme Dates’ table above

20.

The Council will provide all Medway secondary schools/academies with an indication of the number of preferences expressed for them (these figures may not be the final preferences). Any necessary inter-LA data exchange will have been completed prior to provision of this data.

Schools/academies will only be advised the number of each preference (1st- 6th) and not any pupil specific data.

Also by this date the Council will provide Medway primary/junior schools with a full list of their pupils who have applied for Year 7 places.

21.

The Council will advise all Medway secondary schools/academies of the full details of all valid applications for their schools to enable them to undertake the relevant checks (sibling links, etc.) and to prioritise against their over-subscription criteria. **This is known as ‘the ranking list’.**

This data will not include which preference the school/academy has been named, as this is not relevant to the application of oversubscription criteria.

The Council will have already undertaken distancing for all applicants to all schools. Any issues arising from these checks must be reported to the School Services-Admissions Team **No later 5pm on Friday 17 January 2020.**

Only children who appear on the ranking list can be considered for places on the relevant offer day. No child can be added to the ranking list by the school/academy for any reason.

Ranking lists will be available to schools/academies via secure means to comply with data protection and information governance procedures.

22.

All Medway secondary schools/academies **must** submit completed ranking lists, ranked in priority order in accordance with their over-subscription criteria, to the Council by the date specified above for consideration in the allocation process.

Any school/academy that offers governors places or operates banding must clearly identify and rank eligible applicants appropriately.

Completed ranking list must be submitted securely to comply with data protection and information governance procedures.

23.

The Council will check and verify all completed ranking lists in the admissions database and run the algorithm to determine the allocation of places:

- Where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the named schools, that school will be offered
- Where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the named schools, they will be offered a place at whichever of these is the highest available preference
- Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the named schools, a place will be allocated at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy

24.

The Council will inform secondary schools/academies of the pupils who will be offered places at their school and inform primary/junior schools of the destinations of their Year 6 pupils.

By the date specified above Medway Council will have completed any data exchange with other local authorities to cover situations where a Medway resident has named a school outside Medway, or a parent living outside Medway has named a Medway school.

Offer and destination details will be sent via secure means to comply with data protection and information governance procedures.

25.

On the offer day determined above, the Council will notify details of the school/academy being offered to all **Medway resident applicants**. The offer details will include the name of the school offered, the basic reasons why any other school named was refused and will extend the right of appeal to any named school that was not offered.

Medway Council will also make available all the information regarding the next steps for parents/carers (including acceptance/refusal of the place offered, waiting list and appeal request).

Schools/academies can send out their welcome information no earlier than the date shown above. This is to ensure that parents/carers have received their formal offer from the Council ahead of receiving any information from the relevant school/academy.

The appeal and waiting list/reallocation processes

All relevant dates for the following procedures are detailed in the 'Key Scheme Dates' table above

26.

Acceptance/Refusal:

By the deadline date for acceptance/refusal of places, parents/carers must inform the school offered whether they wish to accept or refuse the place offered on offer day.

Parents/carers will be notified the process for how to do this at the time of the school offer.

Waiting Lists:

Parents/carers must submit requests to be included on a school's waiting list by this date.

Requests must be submitted to the Council and parents/carers can ask to be considered on the waiting list for any Medway school (it is not limited to those originally named on the application form).

The only exception is that a child cannot be considered on the waiting list for a Medway grammar school if they have not been assessed as grammar under the Medway Test procedures.

Parents/carers will be notified the process for how to do this at the time of the school offer.

Appeals:

Parents/carers must submit any appeal request by this date. At this stage parents/carers can only appeal for the schools that they originally named on their application form.

Parents/carers will be notified the process for how to do this at the time of the school offer.

Appeal requests must be made in writing and any appeal requests for Academies, Foundation and VA schools must be lodged with the Clerk of the Appeal Panel c/o the relevant school/academy.

27.

From the date specified in the above table and up until the final date specified, the Council will undertake the reallocation of any vacant places for all schools/academies.

Only children who have requested to be placed on the waiting list for a school/academy can be considered for vacant places at this time.

All waiting list requests will be treated equally against the schools over-subscription criteria, regardless of whether the school was originally named as a preference.

28.

Waiting Lists

Parents/carers may ask for their child's name to be kept on a waiting list should places become available for the duration of the reallocation period.

- If a school requested on the waiting list form for the first time is unable to offer a place at reallocation, the parents/carers will also have the right of appeal for that school.
- After the 'Council waiting list' has closed, parents/carers must re-apply for places under the Casual (In-Year) admission procedures
- Waiting lists will be held in accordance with the published over-subscription criteria for the school and not according to how long the child's name has been on the list.
- Any place that becomes available must be offered to the next child on the waiting list, who has the highest eligibility under the published oversubscription criteria.
- **If a place can be offered from the waiting lists, any other offer being held will be withdrawn.**

The handling of late applications

29.

As far as reasonably practicable, applications for places in the normal admissions round that are received late for a good reason will be accepted to be processed as on time, provided they are received by the Council **by Friday 15 November 2019**.

Such applications must be accompanied by a written explanation of the reasons for late submission. Only exceptional circumstances, which may include serious illness, bereavement or a late move to the area, can be considered by the School Services Management Team.

Late applications received from families that have just moved into the area must be accompanied by sufficient proof of move. This can be a copy of a signed tenancy agreement, exchange of contracts or completion documents.

The decision on whether a reason for late application is acceptable will be at the discretion of the School Services Management Team.

For situations where it is decided that the reason for late submission is not exceptional and for ALL applications received after this date, the application will be held pending until after allocation on 2 March 2020 and will be processed as part of the ongoing reallocation of vacant places as defined above.

Section 2 – Over-subscription Criteria and Published Admission Numbers for Medway secondary schools and academies.

All Medway secondary schools and academies are their own admission authority and, as such, are responsible for the consultation and determination of their own admission arrangements, oversubscription criteria and published admission numbers.

Medway Council has no responsibility in the setting of individual admission arrangements, oversubscription criteria or published admission numbers for any Medway secondary school, academy.

All Medway schools and academies must comply with the provisions of the Council published co-ordinated admission scheme.

Please note that Medway UTC have opted out of co-ordination, as permitted by the Department for Education.

Before the application of oversubscription criteria, children with an Education, Health and Care Plan which names the school will be admitted. As a result of this, the published admissions number will be reduced accordingly.

Definitions and Notes

Where a Medway secondary school or academy has not clearly defined any of its oversubscription criteria the following definition is to be used.

Looked after children/Previously looked after children:

Looked after children are children who are (i) in the care of a local authority, or (ii) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (as defined in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making the application for a school.

Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (under the terms of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, Section 46) or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order (under the terms of the Children Act 1989, Section 8 and Section 14A).

Please note that the Council will require a copy of the adoption/residence order to validate this criterion and evidence that the child was previously looked after.

Sibling:

Sibling means children who live as brother/sister in the same house and includes natural siblings, adopted siblings, foster siblings and step siblings.

Extended family, for example cousins, living in the same house do not qualify as siblings.

The sibling must be attending the named school at the time of application and at the time the younger child would start (September 2020).

Medical/health reasons:

Medical evidence from a medical practitioner (GP or Consultant) must be provided to the School Services-Admissions Team. This evidence must demonstrate a specific link between the child's medical conditions and needs and how the named school can meet these needs.

Distance:

All distances and routes calculated are for the purposes of prioritising the application for admissions only and there is no expectation that a child should use this to walk to school.

Distances and routes calculated will represent the shortest route to school from the child's home address using roads and paths that are known to the graphical information software (GIS) utilised by School Services-Admissions Team.

The start point:

- The centre point of the nearest road or footpath known to the GIS system to the seed point of the child's home (as defined by Ordnance Survey).
- This may not always be the postal address road, in circumstances where an alternative road or footpath is actually nearer to the seed point of the property.

The end point:

- This will be either a pre-defined point within the school site or the centre point of the road adjacent the school site.
- The same end point is used for all distance calculations to the school concerned.

Routes/Footpaths:

- The distance calculated is the shortest available route known to the Medway GIS (using the centre point of the streets and other available routes).
- Not all footpaths, cut-throughs, shortcuts and new roads are known to the GIS system. Where a route is not known to the GIS system an alternative route will be used.
- Where a child's home is situated on a new road the distance calculation will begin from the nearest available known road plotted in the GIS. New property developments may be subject to this.

Section 3 – Information regarding Secondary In-Year (casual) Admissions and Fair Access Protocols

In-Year (casual) Admissions:

A casual admission is either a new applicant who is moving to Medway or an existing resident attending a Medway school who wishes to transfer. Entry is to year groups 7-11 during the academic year and outside of the transfer process.

Under the provisions of the School Admissions Code (December 2014), paragraph 2.21 there is no requirement for local authorities to co-ordinate in-year admissions.

If a parent/carer wishes to apply for a school as an in-year admissions they must apply direct to the relevant school

Details of the in-year (casual) admissions processes for Medway schools and academies will be published on the Medway Council website (www.medway.gov.uk/admissions) and clicking on 'move schools'.

Places for in-year admissions must be offered in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria for the relevant school/academy and parents/carers must be advised of their right of appeal if a school named on the application cannot offer a place.

Fair Access Protocols:

Medway Council administer the locally agreed Fair Access Protocols for children who meet the relevant criteria on behalf of and in partnership with all Medway secondary schools and academies.

The Council will ensure that there is a fair distribution across all Medway schools/academies of pupils who are identified as having challenging behaviour under the agreed Fair Access Protocols.

The placing of children who fall under the Fair Access Protocols will take place at the meetings of the Fair Access Panel to ensure places are allocated as quickly as possible. The panel will decide on the school/academy to offer, based upon the circumstances of the case for the pupil and any extenuating circumstances put forward by schools/academies.

Full details of the agreed Medway Fair Access Protocols will be published on the Medway Council website (www.medway.gov.uk/admissions).
