

DETERMINED



Medway Council

**Co-ordinated Scheme for
Secondary Admissions
Academic Year 2024/25**

**Incorporating admission to Year 7 and
secondary in-year admissions**

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Table of Contents

	Page Number
Introduction / Background	2
Section 1 – Details of the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Secondary Admissions 2024/25	3
Section 2 – Over-subscription Criteria and Published Admission Numbers for Medway secondary schools and academies.	13-14
Section 3 – Information regarding Secondary In-Year Admissions and Fair Access Protocols	15

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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

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200163/apply_for_a_school_place/743/consultations_for_school_admission_arrangements .

Section 1 –
Details of the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Secondary Admissions
2024/25

Secondary schools and academies - Year 7 applications are for children born between 1 September 2012 and 31 August 2013.

The Key Scheme dates are:

Key Action	Scheme Date
Publication of information (composite prospectus, Medway Test registration, etc.)	By Wednesday 17 May 2023
Registration for the Medway Test opens	Thursday 1 June 2023
Closing date for Medway Test registration	Friday 30 June 2023
Closing date for Medway Test Special Arrangements requests from schools	Tuesday 4 July 2023
Publication of further secondary application information (flyers, etc.)	By Monday 4 September 2023
Secondary school applications open Online applications open at 9am	Monday 4 September 2023
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 12 & Wednesday 13 September 2023 (in schools for children in Medway primary/junior schools) Saturday 16 September 2023 or Sunday 17 September 2023 (In test centres for children not attending Medway primary/junior schools. One day will be allocated.)
Assessment decisions notified to parents/carers	Tuesday 3 October 2023
Deadline for receipt of Medway Test Review requests	10am Monday 9 October 2023
Deadline for primary and junior schools to submit review work to the Council	No later than 4pm on Tuesday 10 October 2023
Medway Test Reviews and moderation	Thursday 12 October 2023
Review decisions notified to parents/carers	By Friday 20 October 2023
Closing date for secondary applications (Online and Secondary Common Application Forms (SCAFs)) – National Closing Date	5pm on Tuesday 31 October 2023
Deadline for 'late' school applications for exceptional reasons to be considered 'on-time'	5pm on Friday 10 November 2023
First Inter-LA data exchange undertaken	From Monday 20 November 2023
Indication of preference/applicant numbers made available to all Medway secondary schools	By Monday 18 December 2023

Applicant details provided to secondary schools for prioritising against their over-subscription criteria	By Wednesday 3 January 2024
Finalised ranked list submitted to the Council by all secondary schools	No later 5pm on Monday 15 January 2024
Ranked lists submitted, checked and verified in the admissions database.	By Wednesday 17 January 2024
Council to run the algorithm to determine the allocation of places	By Friday 19 January 2024
Inter-LA data exchange undertaken for offers	Approx. 22 January to 7 February 2024
Details of pupils being offered sent to all Medway secondary schools	By Friday 23 February 2024
Offer e-mails and letters sent to parents/carers National Offer Day	Friday 1 March 2024
Schools send out welcome letters	Not before Monday 4 March 2024
Places must be accepted/refused and requests to go on a waiting list and appeals must be submitted	By Thursday 28 March 2024
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 22 April 2024 until Tuesday 31 December 2024

In addition, this scheme also:

- Allows for Supplementary Information Forms (SIFs) to be returned directly to schools by the closing date for applications to assist in the ranking of applicants against the school's over-subscription criteria.
- Confirms that after 22 April 2024, the Council considers applicants through the 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 31 December 2024.

The Council expects that all schools/academies/UTCs 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 for a child is received from the same parent/carer, the parent/carer will be contacted to agree which application is to be used. If an response is not received by the time applications need to be processed, Medway Council will process the most recent application.

If more than one application is received for a child from two different parent/carers, they will be contacted to determine which preferences, address and applicant should be used. Until this is agreed, no applications can be processed for that child.

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/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 SCAs returned to Medway Council by the closing date.

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 apply submits an application, primary/junior schools 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. The entry requirement for these schools is to be assessed as grammar via the Medway Test:

Holcombe Grammar School	Rainham Mark Grammar School
Chatham Grammar	Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School
Fort Pitt Grammar School	The Rochester Grammar School

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, unless individual schools/academies 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 an independent panel of educationalists who will decide what arrangements may be granted. The decision of the panel is final and there is no appeal process.

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

12.

Late registrations to sit the Medway Test cannot be accepted. Parents/carers must register within the registration window outlined on page 3.

13.

The Medway Test comprises of three papers. These are:

- Writing Test
- Mathematical Skills and Non-Verbal Reasoning Test
- Verbal Skills Test

Non-verbal reasoning assessment will also be included within the Mathematics and/or Verbal Skills paper.

14.

Children unable to sit the Medway Test on the scheduled date(s) due to illness must 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 date will be available.

15.

Once all three papers have been marked, the raw scores are converted to standardised scores based on the child's date of birth. 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 Writing Test score x 2
plus
Standardised Mathematical Skills and Non-Verbal Reasoning Test score x 2
plus
Standardised Verbal Skills Test score x1

The minimum score calculation is subject to the Regional Schools Commissioner approving Chatham Grammar, Fort Pitt Grammar School and Holcombe Grammar School becoming co-educational (mixed gender) for September 2024 entry.

If this change is approved before the test scores are provided to Medway Council, the minimum score is set at the 26th percentile of the Medway cohort (i.e. Year 6 children attending a Medway maintained school) based on school census data.

If this change is not approved before the test scores are provided to Medway Council, the minimum score will be 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 (not their school) can request for the assessment decision to be reconsidered at an academic review.

For the requested review to take place, samples of physical school workbooks 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:

- Writing (including technical skills and creativity)
- Mathematics (including problem solving and reasoning)
- Science (including investigation)
- Humanities/topic/curricular work (illustrating writing and applying learning)
- Reading (including comprehension, observational notes, reading journals, cross curricular

Review requests will be considered by review panels, which 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 based on the standard of the work presented.

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 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.

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 School Services no later than the deadline for ranking.

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 place can be offered from the waiting lists, any other offer being held will be withdrawn.
- 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 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.

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 no later than 5pm on 10 November 2023.

Such applications must be accompanied by a written explanation of the reasons for late submission. Only exceptional circumstances can be considered.

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 School Services.

For situations where it is decided that the reason for late submission is not exceptional and for all applications received after 5pm 10 November, the application will be held pending until after national offer day 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.

Waterfront UTC has 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:

A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order* including those who appear to Medway Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

*An adoption order is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders). A 'child arrangements order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

Medway Council may require a copy of the adoption order / child arrangements order / special guardianship order to validate the application of this criterion.

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 2024).

Medical/health reasons:

Medical evidence from a medical practitioner (GP or Consultant) must be provided to the school/academy at the time of application. 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.

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.

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.

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.

Section 3 – **Information regarding Secondary In-Year Admissions and Fair Access Protocols**

An in-year admission is either a new applicant who is moving to Medway or an existing resident attending a Medway school who wishes to transfer to another Medway school. 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 (September 2021), paragraph 2.23 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 admissions processes for Medway schools and academies will be published on the Medway Council website (www.medway.gov.uk/inyearadmissions) for each academic year by 31 August.

Places for in-year admissions must be offered in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria for the relevant school/academy.

Parents/carers must be advised of their right of appeal if a school named on the application cannot offer a place.

Fair Access Protocol:

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/inyearadmissions).
