Secondary Admissions 2024

Presentation for parents

School Services
Medway Council

Why are we here now?

- The admission processes for September 2024 started on 1 June 2023
- The first thing you will think about and decide is whether you want your child to sit the Medway Test in September 2023
- The aim of this presentation is to help you understand the processes and to answer any questions you may have
- We encourage you to use this presentation, the admissions information on our website (www.medway.gov.uk/admissions) and contact with schools to help you make the most informed decision about which schools to apply for
- Details of all 19 Medway secondary schools can be found in the our online admissions information guide
- The guide also provides you with details of their published admission number, oversubscription criteria and other useful information including the dates and times for their planned open sessions

Key Dates for Parents

Thurs 1 June 2023	**Online registration for the Medway Test open**	Opens at 9am
Fri 30 June 2023	**Closing date for Medway Test registration**	Closes at 4pm
Tue 4 July 2023	**Closing date for access/special arrangement requests**	Closes at 4pm
Mon 4 September 2023	**School applications open**	
Tues 12 / Wed 13 & **Sat 16 / Sun 17 September 2023**	**Medway Test Dates**	
Tue 3 October 2023	**Assessment decisions notified to parents/carers**	
Mon 9 October 2023	**Deadline for Medway Test Review requests**	
Thurs 12 October 2023	**Medway Test Reviews and moderation**	
By Fri 20 October 2023	**Review decisions notified to parents/carers**	
Tue 31 October 2023	**Closing date for secondary school applications** ***National Closing Date***	
Fri 1 March 2024	**Secondary school offers notified to parents/carers** ***National Offer Day***	
By Thurs 28 March 2024	**Places must be accepted/refused and requests to go on a waiting list and appeals must be submitted**	
w/c 22 Apr 2024 until 31 Dec 24	**The Council re-allocates any places that have become available to those who have asked to go on the waiting lists for each school**	

The Medway Test
and
other testing arrangements

Due to uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, test arrangements are subject to change, but Medway Council will endeavour to advise of any changes as soon as they become available.

The Medway Test is for Medway grammar schools only.

The Kent Test is for Kent grammar schools only.*

*Please note that Holcombe Grammar School and Chatham Grammar also consider children who have passed the Kent Test.

The Medway Test is for the following schools:

In Medway, we have 6 grammar secondary schools. These are:

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

In addition, The Howard School (boys only) can accept children who have been assessed as grammar into their grammar section, as they are a 'bi-lateral school'.

Should my child sit the Medway Test?

We would strongly recommend you discuss with your child's class teacher or Headteacher, in the first instance, whether a grammar school may be the right place for your child.

Medway operates a 'testing before preference' system.

This means that your child will sit the Medway Test and receive their assessment decision before the closing date for school applications.

This is so you can make the most informed decision possible when selecting which schools to name on your application.

Can my child sit grammar school tests in more than one area?

You can register your child for as many tests as you wish if you are considering schools in more than one local authority.

We recommend that your child only takes tests in areas where you are seriously considering the school for them to attend. We do not advise children sitting a test unnecessarily.

We advise that you contact the local authorities concerned to register for their tests.

There is no opportunity to change your Medway Test date if it clashes with another area.

When and where is the Medway Test being held?

- **Tuesday 12 / Wednesday 13 September 2023**

For children attending Medway primary/junior schools testing will take place in your child's current school.

- **Saturday 16 / Sunday 17 September 2023**

For children attending schools from outside of Medway testing will take place in in larger test centres.

The test day usually runs between 8.30am and 1.30pm.

The larger test centres will be Medway secondary schools that have agreed to be host venues for the test day.

School Services will always try to allocate all children from the same primary school to sit the test in the same test centre.

Late Arrivals

It is essential that the timetable is strictly adhered to. Once the test process has started there can be strictly no interruptions.

If your child is late for test registration you will not be allowed to sit the test.

NB: This is the only opportunity for your child to sit the Medway Test.
There is no opportunity to register for or sit the Medway Test at a later date

How do I register my child to sit the Medway Test?

Registration is open from 9am on Thursday 1 June 2023 until 5pm on Friday 30 June 2023.

You can register your child online at:

www.medway.gov.uk/onlineadmissions

or

Please contact medwaytest@medway.gov.uk or call us on 01634 331110 if you require a paper registration form. Completed paper forms must be returned to the School Services by the closing date. We do not acknowledge receipt of paper forms.

I live outside of Medway, how do I register?

If you live in another authority but wish your child to sit the Medway Test, then you can register your child in either of the ways mentioned above.

I live in Medway, but want my child to sit a grammar test in another area. What do I do?

You must contact the local authority concerned to find out how and when to register for their test.

After you have registered, we will send you an invitation nearer the time of the test confirming when and where your child is due to be tested and giving you information about the test day.

My child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Can they sit the Medway Test?

- The Medway Test is open to all children currently in Year 5 who wish to be considered for a Medway grammar school place
- You need to discuss with the SEN Team which schools you wish your child to be considered for
- If these include Medway grammar schools, then you need to ensure that your child is registered to sit the test
- Your child's assessment decision will be taken into account when being considered for schools through the SEN processes
- If you have any questions about the SEN processes, please contact the Medway SEN team on:

  seneducationteam@medway.gov.uk

I think my child may need access or special arrangements for the Test. What can I do?

- Once you have registered your child for testing, you will need to discuss this with your child's Headteacher. Your Headteacher will need to notify School Services of any access arrangements and/or request any special arrangements by completing a request form following the set out guidance published on the website.
- All requests submitted by the deadline will be considered objectively with the supporting evidence received by the Special Arrangements Panel. There is no guarantee that all or some requests will be granted.
- The provision of special/access arrangements for the Medway Test is not a statutory process and the decision made by the panel is final. There is no right of appeal and we cannot accept any additional documentation for further review.
- Parents and schools must ensure that any specialist equipment that has been granted for a child with special/access arrangements (e.g. sloping boards, colour overlays, etc.) is provided. Medway Council do not accept any responsibility for the provision of such equipment.
- There is no further opportunity to sit the test if the specialist equipment granted has not been made available to your child on test day. However, your child is still able to sit the test on test day without their equipment.

We can only accept requests from directly schools, not from parents.

Any request must be received by School Services from the school by Tuesday 4 July 2023.

Late requests cannot be considered.

What does the Medway Test consist of?

The Medway Test consists of three separate papers:

- A Writing paper
- A Mathematics & Non-Verbal Reasoning paper
- A Verbal Skills (VS) paper

These tests are specifically written for Medway and are designed to select 26 per cent of children in the year group to be assessed suitable for grammar school education.

Up to a further 2 per cent can be selected through the review process.

Sitting the Medway Test

You will be sent your Medway Test invitation by the end of August 2023.

If you registered through parent portal your invitation is sent by email only.

If you registered in any other way, you will receive your invitation by post.

Check your junk or spam folders if you have not received your invite. If you have not received your invitation by the end of August 2023, please email medwaytest@medway.gov.uk.

Your invitation will tell you where and when your child is due to sit the test. Your child must only attend the test at their allocated venue and on their allocated day.

Multiple birth (twins, triplets etc) children will sit their test on the same day, regardless if one or more sibling has been granted special arrangements.

If your child is ill on the day they are due to sit the Medway Test, you must email medwaytest@medway.gov.uk.

All parents and carers must read the test day information sheet before the test.

Permitted Items:

Your child can bring

- pens (for extended writing paper only)
- HB grade pencils
- an eraser/rubber (only for Mathematics and Non-Verbal reasoning and Verbal Skills tests)
- a pencil sharpener

Further information about what to bring will be sent with your invitation by the end of August.

Banned items are listed on the parent information sheet

If these items are found with your child they will be confiscated and your child may be disqualified from the Medway Test.
Any Smart technology and mobile phones are not allowed in the test room. They must be switched off during the test and kept outside the test room.

If your child records their answer somewhere other than where they are instructed, for example, in the question booklet or in the wrong place on the answer sheet, it will not be added to the correct place. Instructions are given on what your child should do if they make a mistake

The testing environment

Medway Council expects all children to follow good behaviour in the test environment. This is so all candidates have a calm and safe environment available.
Distracting, disruptive, aid or assisting behaviour during the test day at the test venue will not be allowed.
A child will only be given one warning for any behaviour that is distracting or disruptive during the test day.
If the behaviour continues after their warning, the invigilation team has the authority to remove children from the test day. If this behaviour occurs, it is likely the child will be asked to leave.
If this happens, you will be contacted and your child will not be allowed to complete the test.

How is the Medway test marked?

Each paper is marked based on the number of questions correct (for Mathematics and Non-Verbal Reasoning and Verbal Skills) and against specific criteria (for extended writing). These marks provide the raw scores. These scores are then standardised. This means that the scores are weighted to reflect the child's age at the time of taking the test.

Each year, a minimum score is set to determine those assessed as grammar. This score is set to select 26 per cent of the children in the year group and differs from year to year dependent on the size of the year group.

Medway Council will not know what this score will be for 2024 admissions until after all test papers have been marked and standardised.

For 2023 admissions, the minimum score required was 488
For 2022 admissions, the minimum score required was 487
For 2021 admissions, the minimum score required was 483
For 2020 admissions, the minimum score required was 490
For 2019 admissions, the minimum score required was 492
For 2018 admissions, the minimum score required was 495
For 2017 admissions, the minimum score required was 513

To calculate the total weighted score, the following calculation is used:

Writing = standardised score x 2
Mathematics and Non-Verbal Reasoning = standardised score x 2
Verbal Skills = standardised score x 1

The standardisation is copyrighted and undertaken by our test provider. Medway Council are unable to provide information about their formula for doing this.

When will I receive my child's test results?

- For **ALL** children who registered on time to sit the Medway Test, assessment decisions will be notified to parents/carers on **3 October 2023**

- Those families that registered online, and provided an e-mail address, will be sent an e-mail **after 4pm** on this day. *(Medway Council cannot guarantee exactly when emails will be received, as the time taken to deliver the email is down to the individual email providers)*
- *Please check your junk and spam folders in case you have not received your email in you inbox*

- The correspondence you receive will include details of what to do next

If I'm not satisfied with my child's result, what can I do?

- If your child has **not** been assessed as grammar following the Medway Test, and you feel that your child is of grammar ability, you can request a review of your child's academic work to be reviewed by a panel

- This is a parental decision, but we strongly advise that you discuss it with your child's Headteacher or class teacher

- Even if you do not request a review, you will still be able to appeal for a Medway grammar school, as long as you have named the school on your application

What is the Medway Test Review?

- If you submit a review request, your child's school will be asked to provide work in five areas (Writing, Math, Science, Humanities/topic/curricular and Reading work)
  The review is of academic schoolwork only

- Any comments made by parents or schools can only be considered for context. Additional paperwork/letters/assessments, etc will not be included for the panel

- A panel will review your child's submitted academic work to decide if it demonstrates your child to be of grammar ability

- Each year a number of children are found to be grammar as a result of the review process. This is up to a further 2 per cent of children in the year group

NB: A grammar review decision does not change your child's score. It only changes their assessment decision.

When will I know the review decision?

The reviews decisions will be advised to parents/carers by Friday 20 October 2023.
This is before the closing date for school applications, which is Tuesday 31 October 2023.

What happens if I miss the closing date for Medway Test registration?

- There is **no late registration for the Medway Test** and the following options are available to you:

- Name a grammar preference on your child's school application by 31 October 2023 to have the opportunity for the right of appeal.

- Apply as a casual admission applicant from January 2025 directly with the grammar school who will invite your child to sit a CATs test.

- Each grammar school has their own CATs test. If you wish to apply for more than one grammar school your child will have to sit each grammar school CATs test.

Any registration received after the closing date will not be accepted.

Are there any other testing arrangements for Medway secondary schools?

The following schools require all applicants to sit a ‘Fair Banding Test’:

- **Brompton Academy**
- **Strood Academy**
- **The Victory Academy**

What is a ‘Fair Banding Test’?

- This test is to assess a child’s level of ability. It is not a ‘pass’ or ‘fail’ test or a selection test, it is used to ensure that students from across the ability range are admitted

- If you are thinking of applying for any of these schools as one of your preferences, you need to ensure you have registered your child to sit that school’s Fair Banding test

- More details can be found on the individual school/academy’s information page in the secondary admissions information on our website or direct from the school/academy

- If you do not register you child for the relevant Fair Banding Test, they may be at a disadvantage when being considered for a place, as they will be prioritised after all other children who have sat the test (even if there are siblings in the school, etc.)

PLEASE NOTE: each school operates their own Fair Banding Test and, therefore, if you are considering more than one of these you will have to register you child with each one to sit their test.

The secondary school application and offer process

When can I apply?

- Medway residents can apply from 9am, Monday 4 September 2023
- Applications close at 5pm, Tuesday 31 October 2023

Who do I apply to?

- If you live in Medway, you apply to Medway Council
- If do not live in Medway, you must apply to your home local authority (e.g. if you live in Kent, you apply to Kent County Council).

What schools can I apply for?

- You can apply for any secondary schools you wish (apart from special schools) irrespective of where they are. The important thing is that you must apply to your home local authority.

How do I apply?

Medway residents can apply online at **www.medway.gov.uk/onlineadmissions**

Online admissions is the quickest, easiest and safest way to apply for your secondary school place. If you provide your email address when applying online you will:

- Receive confirmation your application has been received
- Receive details of the school offered on the offer day.

or

Please contact us at admissions@medway.gov.uk if you require a paper application form

How many schools can I apply for?

- **Medway residents** can name up to 6 preferences
- You do not have to name 6, but it is important to understand that the more schools you name the more chance you've got of receiving the offer of a school place for one of your preferences
- Naming only one school does not give you a greater chance of gaining a place

Is my preference order important?

- Medway operates an equal preference scheme
- The order of your preferences is between the council and you
- Schools will not be told which preference you name them at the time of application or offer. They may need a copy of the application for any subsequent appeal
- Medway will look to offer your child a place at the highest named school that can offer a place and for which you child is eligible
- No school places are offered because the school is named as first preference
- All places are offered based on the oversubscription criteria for the school.

What happens if I miss the closing date?

- Late applications will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances or for ‘good reason’ (e.g. serious illness, bereavement, late move to the area, etc.)
- A letter explaining the reasons for the late application must also be provided
- As far as reasonable practicable, late applications for ‘good reason’ will be accepted up until **no later than 5pm** on **Friday 10 November 2023**
- The decision on whether a reason for late application is acceptable will be at the discretion of the School Services Management Team.

Any late application received after the above date or not accepted by the School Services Management Team will be processed processed at re-allocation from 22 April 2024.

When will I find out my child's school offer?

Medway residents:

- Secondary school places are offered on **Friday 1 March 2024**
- Medway residents who have applied on time will be advised of their offer by Medway Council at this time
- Medway residents who apply online, and provide an e-mail address will be sent an e-mail **after 4pm on the offer day**
- Those that apply on paper will be sent a letter on this date
- The correspondence you receive will include details of what to do next.

Non-Medway residents:

- If you live outside of Medway, and apply for a Medway schools, you will receive your offer from your home local authority
- After the offer date, you will be able to obtain information on what you can do next regarding Medway schools from the Medway Council website.

How do Medway work out what priority my child has for a place at the schools I have named?

- All school places are offered in accordance with the individual school's published oversubscription criteria
- School Services work in partnership with each school to ensure that all applicants are prioritised (ranked) correctly against the published oversubscription criteria
- No school places are offered based on which preference the school is named.

How do Medway work out which school is to be offered to my child?

- Medway operates an equal preference scheme, which means that school places are not offered based on which preference you name the school
- Your application will be considered and prioritised against the named school's oversubscription criteria
- When school places are being offered, Medway Council will look to offer your child a place at the highest named school where a place can be offered and for which they are eligible
- You will only receive the offer of one school on 1 March 2024.

Will I definitely be offered a named preference?

- We cannot guarantee that we can offer a place at one of your named schools
- It will depend on how oversubscribed the schools named are and where your child is prioritised against the schools over-subscription criteria
- For 2023 admissions on 1 March 2023:
  ~ 96% of Medway children received the offer at a school named on their application
  ~ 81% received the offer of a place at their first preference school.

If my child is grammar, will I definitely be offered a grammar school?

Every effort is made to ensure that a grammar assessed child is offered a grammar school. However, this is not always possible because either:

- A non-grammar school is offered because it is a higher named preference

  Or

- There are no vacant grammar places available to be offered

What happens if you can’t offer my child at a school named on my application?

The council has a duty to ensure that a school place is offered on 1 March 2024 to every Medway child who has applied on time for a school place.

If we are not able to offer a place at one of your preferences, we will allocate place at the nearest ‘appropriate’ school to your home address that has vacancies.

‘Appropriate’ *in this process means a Medway grammar school for children assessed as grammar (under the Medway Test processes) and a Medway non-grammar school for children assessed as non-grammar.*

Do I need to accept or refuse the school place offered?

You must accept or refuse the place offered on 1 March 2024 by **Thurs 28 March 2024.**
Details of how to do this will be advised at the time of offer.

If I am not happy with the school place offered, what can I do?

Full details of the next steps you can take following the school offer made on 1 March 2024 will be available at that time.

There are various options available. These are:

- To go on the waiting list for any of the schools named on your original application*
- To request to be considered for a Medway school for the first time (via the waiting list process)
- To lodge an appeal for any of the schools named on your application but not offered. This includes Medway grammar schools, even if your child has not been assessed as grammar. Appeals are considered by an Independent Appeal Panel (not the school itself).

**Please note that you can only request to go on the waiting list for a Medway grammar school if your child has been assessed as grammar under the Medway Test procedures.*

All of this information and much more can be found in the Secondary Admissions Digital Information Guide on our website:

www.medway.gov.uk/admissions

click on the secondary admissions link

Answers to most queries you might have can be found on our website. However, if you would like to speak with us, our contact details are:

School Services
Medway Council
Gun Wharf
Dock Road
Chatham
Kent

admissions@medway.gov.uk

or

medwaytest@medway.gov.uk

01634 331110

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