

FAQ

Why test at all? Why not use school recommendations and existing evidence?

We need a way of assessing nearly 17,000 children who have registered, wherever they are at school, or even if they are not in a school. If everyone takes the same set of tests, it provides consistent, up-to-date information which can be processed quite quickly.

All Kent's grammar schools use results from the Kent Test. Some of them have published admission criteria which use aggregated test scores to prioritise candidates for admission, so the transfer process will run more smoothly if everyone has a set of test scores.

If we can't test children because of national or local lockdown in October, we will have to use a different method, but the practical difficulties mean it is something we hope to avoid.

Why delay the Kent Test?

We think that schools and their pupils will find it easier to settle back in the new school year if they are not required to deal with the Kent Test as soon as they return. Schools and test centres will have time to establish routines which respect Covid safety, and children can get used to being back in the classroom and start to catch up on work they have missed. Most of our schools have welcomed the delay.

Couldn't you test in September as usual?

Following the disruption of classroom teaching since March, we felt that an October date was in the interests of children and schools this year. With so many children taking part, we also felt delays and restrictions related to Covid-19 meant testing in early September and getting the results out in mid-October as usual would not be practicable.

Why delay only by a month? Why not test much later?

The government sets the national timetable for the secondary admissions process, so that all Local Authorities can share information to make sure that every Year 6 child can be offered a school place at the beginning of March. If Kent tests too late, this process will be put at risk, because grammar schools will not know who they can offer places to. We also want to avoid testing in colder weather.

Why can't Kent set a later closing date for applying to secondary schools, so that parents have the 11+ results before they name their preferred schools?

The government sets the 31 October closing date for the Secondary Common Application Form (SCAF) and has not given us permission to change it. Instead, we have increased the number of preferences you can name on the SCAF, which means naming schools before you have the results is less of a problem.

How will more preferences on the SCAF help?

Two more preferences will allow you to name grammar schools and other types of school without disadvantage. Every Local Authority must operate an "Equal Preference" system, and schools do not know where you have put them on your list. If the school you name first can't offer a place, it doesn't make it less likely that you will get a school lower down the list, because each school must consider everyone who has applied. If you name grammar schools at the top of your SCAF and your

child does not qualify for grammar school, your other preferences will be used. If more than one school can offer a place, the Council will use your SCAF to make sure that it offers whichever one you ranked highest, so make sure you put the schools you want in your true order of preference, and we will make you the best offer we can.

Still not sure six preferences will work? Try this experiment...

Think which four schools you might have put on the SCAF once you knew the 11+ results. Maybe all non-selective schools, or all grammar schools, or a mixture of both.

If you put those same four schools at the top of the SCAF, this year you will still have two spaces left. All your applications will be considered fairly.

Depending on where you live, and how confident you are that your child will be assessed suitable for grammar school, you could name as many as four grammar schools and still have space for two non-selective schools – or you could name two grammar schools and four non-selective schools, or three of each. Remember that the Council will use the order you put them in to make you the best offer it can.