

SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS – SEPTEMBER 2017

NEXT STEPS FOR PARENTS/CARERS

Important information on:

- **ACCEPTING/REFUSING THE SCHOOL PLACE OFFERED**
- **WAITING LISTS AND REALLOCATION**
- **SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS**

Please read this information to assist you in making your decisions about the next steps to take now that your child has been offered a secondary school place for September 2017.

Please ensure that you submit any request/response in relation to these processes in accordance with the dates/timescales shown on the actual form.

It cannot be guaranteed that any late request/response will be processed at the same time as those received on time.

If, after reading the following information, you have any questions regarding these processes please contact Medway Council Student Services-Admissions Team on the below details:

Medway Council
Student Services-Admissions Team
Gun Wharf, Dock Road
Chatham, ME4 4TR

e-mail: admissions@medway.gov.uk
Tel: 01634 3311110, Fax: 01634 331614
Admissions WebPages: www.medway.gov.uk/admissions

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ACCEPTING/REFUSING THE SCHOOL PLACE OFFERED

Do I have to complete the acceptance/refusal form?

- **Yes.**

It is vitally important that all school places offered are either accepted or refused directly with the relevant school/academy. This is so that they are completely aware of which children have accepted places and will be starting with them in Year 7.

What happens if I refuse the place offered?

- Once a place has been refused, the offer will be removed from your child's record and will then be available to be offered to another child who has requested to be considered from the waiting list.

If I refuse the place and then change my mind, can my child have the original place back?

- **No.**

Once a place has been refused it is immediately removed and your child will not have an automatic claim on it in the future.

If you do want your child considered again for the original school, then you must formally request to be considered on the waiting list for that school/academy.

What happens if I do not accept or refuse the place offered?

- If the school/academy offered does not receive an acceptance or refusal from you by the deadline, they should contact you to try and get a response. If they are unable to do so or still fail to get a response, they will advise Medway Council Student Services-Admissions Team who will attempt to contact you further.

Please note:

If no acceptance or refusal is received within a reasonable time, despite attempts by the school/academy and Medway Council Student Services-Admissions Team then the place may be withdrawn from your child and made available to be offered to another child from the waiting list.

WAITING LISTS AND REALLOCATION

Medway Council Student Services-Admissions Team holds the waiting lists on behalf of all Medway secondary schools and academies until the end of the second term in Year 7.

All waiting lists held by Medway Council will close on Sunday 31 December 2017.

Do I need to refuse the school place offered in order for my child to go on a waiting list for another school?

- **No**

You do not need to refuse the school place offered in order for your child to be placed on the waiting list for other Medway schools/academies. You can accept the place offered in order to ensure that your child has a place secured and request to go on the waiting list for other Medway schools/academies.

Please note:

If you do refuse the place offered and then change your mind, we cannot guarantee that your child will be able to have the original offer back. If there are no places available, their name can be placed on the waiting list for the original school/academy.

Refusing the place offered does **not** give you a higher priority on a waiting list and we strongly advise that you do not refuse the place that has been originally offered when requesting to go a waiting list. If a place is subsequently offered to your child from the waiting list, the original place will be released.

Will my child be considered on the waiting list based on the date I ask for them to go on it?

- **No**

Waiting lists are held in accordance with the schools oversubscription criteria, as detailed on the individual school/academy and Medway websites and in the Medway 'Admission to Secondary School' booklet.

A child's position on the waiting list is not based on when the request to join the waiting list was received.

How many waiting lists can I go on and for which schools?

- You can ask for your child to go on the waiting list for any of the Medway schools/academies you named on your application that have not offered your child a place.

You can also request for your child to be placed on the waiting list of Medway schools/academies that you did not originally name.

Your child can be considered on as many waiting lists for Medway schools/academies as you wish and the request form allows you to name the schools in your order of preference.

Please note:

Your child can only be placed on the waiting list for a grammar school/academy if they have been assessed as selective under the Medway Test procedures.

No child is automatically placed on a waiting list, other than where the school/academy advises Medway Council Student Services-Admissions Team that they have also appealed for a place. For your child to be considered on a waiting list, you must complete the 'Waiting List Request' form.

When will places start to be re-allocated (offered) from the waiting lists?

- **After 10 April 2017**, Medway Council Student Services-Admissions Team will start to re-allocate (offer) any vacant places that have become available in Medway secondary schools/academies since the initial offer day.

These places can only be re-allocated to those children on the waiting lists and in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria for the relevant school/academy.

How long will my child be on the waiting list?

- The waiting lists held by Medway Council Student Services-Admissions Team **close on 31 December 2017**.

If you still wish to pursue a place after this time, you will need to reapply as a casual admission.

Some schools/academies may choose to continue to hold a waiting list for a longer period after the initial waiting lists have closed and you will have to contact them directly to discuss this further.

What will happen if my child can be offered a place at one of the schools they are on the waiting list for?

- If a place can be offered to your child from the waiting list for one of the schools/academies you have requested, Medway Council Student Services-Admissions Team will send you a formal offer letter.

Please note:

*If this place offered is at the school/academy that you have listed as your highest preferred school, we will **automatically remove** your child's name from all other waiting lists.*

If this place offered is not at the school/academy you have listed as your highest preferred school/academy we will remove your child's name from any lower named school/academy waiting list, but they will remain on the higher named school/academy waiting lists.

What happens if I am satisfied with the school offered (even though my child is on other waiting lists) or I change my mind about my child being on a particular school/academy waiting list?

- If you are satisfied with the place offered or have changed your mind and no longer require your child's name to be held on other waiting lists, please contact Student Services in writing to remove your child from all other waiting lists.

Please note:

If your child remains on waiting lists and a place can then be offered from those waiting lists you may lose the place that has previously been offered following further re-allocation.

If my child is offered a place from a waiting list, what happens to the original school place offered?

- Up until the end of the school year (July 2017), if a place is offered from a waiting list then any other school place being held by that child is **automatically withdrawn**, even if you have previously accepted the place. That is why it is vitally important that you contact Medway Council Student Services-Admissions team if you want to remove your child from any waiting list.

After the end of the school year and until the waiting lists close (31 December 2017), Medway Council Student Services-Admissions team will contact parents/carers before any offer is made to ensure that they still wish the offer to be made or whether they are happy with the school place their child has.

SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS

This section is to provide parents/carers with general information regarding the admissions appeals process.

The School Admission Appeals Code provides more detail on how the appeal process should be administered and what parents/carers can expect from the appeal process. This can be found on the Department for Education (DfE) website (www.education.gov.uk).

Please be advised that all Medway secondary schools/academies are their own admissions authorities and therefore Medway Council is not responsible for, nor has any involvement, in the administration of the appeals process for individual Medway secondary schools/academies.

Why was my child refused a particular school?

- The Council has a duty to ensure that all Medway parent/carers receive a single offer of a school place. Wherever possible, this will be the highest named school/academy on your application that is able to offer a place.
- If we have been unable to offer a place at any of the schools/academies you named and you are Medway resident, we will have allocated a place at the nearest appropriate school/academy with a vacancy.

Please note:

In Medway the term 'appropriate school' refers to whether your child has been assessed as being of selective (grammar) ability or not.

- Your child will have been considered against the highest possible criteria applicable to them for each school/academy named on your application. The details of the oversubscription criteria for each Medway secondary school/academy can be found in the Medway 'Admission to Secondary School' booklet, on the Medway website (www.medway.gov.uk/admissions) or the individual school/academy website.
 - The Council has a duty to comply with parental preference wherever possible, unless;
 - there were more preferences for the school than there were places available. Places are offered to children in accordance with the schools oversubscription criteria, which means the children offered a place had a higher eligibility than your child when considered against the oversubscription criteria and the school was already full to its published admission number when your child's application was considered.
- Or
- If the school is a selective (grammar) school and your child was not assessed as selective under the Medway Test arrangements, then they cannot be considered for the offer of a place at allocation, as they did not meet the entry requirements for the school.
- If you wish to have further detail on the specific reasons for the refusal of a place for your child, so that you can prepare your appeal submission accordingly, please contact Student Services - Admissions Team on admissions@medway.gov.uk or 01634 331110.

Which schools or academies can I appeal for?

- You have a right of appeal to any school/academy named on your application form that has refused your child a place. **You cannot appeal for a school that was not named on your application.**

Please note:

If your child has not been assessed as selective but you wish to appeal for a place at a grammar school/academy, the school/academy must have been named on your application.

How many schools can I appeal for?

- You can lodge appeals for more than one school as long as you have named each school/academy on your application. You will need to complete a separate appeal form for each school/academy.

Each school will not know that you have appealed for another school unless you advise them. The appeals for each school are completely independent of each other.

Can I appeal for a school I did not originally name on my application?

- You can request for your child to be placed on the waiting list of any Medway school (as detailed above) and will have the right of appeal to that school if a place cannot be offered through the re-allocation processes.

Can I provide more information once I have submitted my appeal form?

- When receiving notification of the date of your appeal hearing, you should also receive a deadline date for the submission of any further evidence that was not supplied with your initial appeal request.

It will be for the appeal panel to decide whether or not to accept any information or evidence provided after the deadline date and you should be aware that it is possible that such material may not be considered or may result in your appeal hearing being adjourned.

Can someone represent or support me at the actual appeal hearing?

- If you wish you can be accompanied or represented by a friend, interpreter or signer who may speak on your behalf. You must ensure that your friend/representative does not have any conflict of interest with the Council or the school being appealed for. The majority of parent/carers choose to represent themselves.

Your child's current school can provide support (either in person or in writing) if they wish to. You can discuss this with them if you feel it would be of assistance to your appeal.

Please note:

Representatives from the school/academy being appealed for are not permitted to support individual appeals for places in their school in any way. This includes attending the appeal hearing to support parents/carers or submitting letters of support, as this would create a conflict of interests and unfairness to other appellants.

Who considers my appeal?

- Your appeal will be heard by an Independent Appeal Panel who have no connection to the school/academy or the admissions processes. It is the panel that make the decision on whether or not to uphold your appeal and grant your child a place. Their decision is binding on the school/academy and the council.

You will be invited to attend the appeal hearing and put over the case as to why you wish your child to attend the relevant school/academy. The school/academy will also be represented to provide their reasons as to why a place cannot be offered and why they cannot admit further children.

There will be a clerk present, who ensures that the correct procedure is followed throughout and keeps a full record of proceedings.

What actually happens at an appeal?

- If there are a large number of appeals for a school/academy, there is an option to hold a 'grouped appeal' to look at the specific issue of 'fullness' (i.e. The school/academy's case is that they are full and cannot admit further children)

All those appealing for a place at the school/academy are invited to attend a joint meeting. The panel will listen to the case put forward by the school/academy and the responses to questions put forward by the panel, parents/carers and their representatives. There will be no discussion at this point on individual cases at this stage.

Please note:

It is the decision of the school/academy whether or not to hold a grouped appeal, you cannot request that they undertake this.

- Appeals are not heard unless the school has admitted children up to its published admission number (or where the appeal is for a grammar school and the child is assessed as non-grammar), but an appeal panel can decide to admit further children into the school and place the school over its published admission number. The panel will also ensure that the admissions arrangements meet the legal requirements and have been correctly applied in your child's case.
- If the panel decides that all the children who are the subject of the appeals could be admitted without causing prejudice to the school, it must uphold all of the appeals (unless the appeals are for a Grammar School and your child has been assessed as non-grammar). If however the panel is satisfied that the admissions authority has proven that it would be prejudicial to admit any additional children (i.e. the school is full) the panel will then proceed to hear individual appeals on the date notified.
- At the second stage the panel hears individual cases in private with the child's parent/carer and representative (if any) present and with the clerk and presenting officer in attendance and decides if your individual grounds for admission to the school outweigh the prejudice. If there are several cases, which outweigh prejudice to the school and merit admission, but the panel determines the school could not cope with that number of successful appeals; the panel must then compare all cases and decide which of them to uphold.
- **The Panel must not make its decisions on individual appeals until all cases have been heard.**

What does first stage and second stage appeals mean?

- Where parent/carers have been refused a place on the grounds that their child's admission would "prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources" (i.e. the school is full), the independent appeal panel is required to follow a two-stage process.
- ***First Stage – the panel will examine the decision to refuse admission***
The panel must consider the following matters in relation to each child that is the subject of an appeal:
 - whether the admission arrangements (including the area's co-ordinated admission arrangements) complied with the mandatory requirements of the School Admissions Code and Part 3 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; and
 - whether the admission arrangements were correctly and impartially applied in each case.

The panel must then decide whether the admission of additional children would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.

Where the admission authority is able to satisfy the appeal panel that there would be prejudice, the panel must move to the second stage to decide whether any of the individual appellant's cases outweigh prejudice.

However, in multiple appeals where a number of children would have been offered a place in the school, and the panel considers that to admit that number would seriously prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources, the panel must proceed to the second stage.

The panel must also proceed to the second stage where:

- it finds that the admission arrangements did comply with admissions law and that they were correctly and impartially applied to the child; or
- it finds that the admission arrangements did not comply with the admissions law or were not correctly and impartially applied but that, if they had been correctly and impartially applied, the child would not have been offered a place.

Second stage – balancing the arguments

The panel must balance the prejudice to the school against the appellants' case for the child to be admitted to the school.

However, if the panel finds that there are more cases that outweigh prejudice that it considers the school can admit, it will then compare cases and uphold those with the strongest case for admission.

Is the appeal process different for grammar schools?

- Generally the answer is no, however it is important to note that there are two different types of appeals for grammar schools/academies.
 1. **Allocation appeals** – this is where your child has been assessed as grammar but has been refused a place at the school when the oversubscription criteria have been applied..
 2. **Assessment appeals** – This is where your child has not been assessed as non-grammar but you believe that they did not perform at their best in the Medway Test.

Do the appeals panel consider anything different in 'assessment appeals'?

- This will depend on whether your child has undergone the Medway Test review process.
- Where the child **has not undergone** the Medway Test review process, the panel must only uphold the appeal if it is satisfied:
 - (i) that there is evidence to demonstrate that the child is of the required academic standards, for example, school reports giving Year 5/6 SATs results or a letter of support from the child's current or previous school clearly indicating why the child is considered to be of grammar ability; and
 - (ii) where applicable, that the parent/carer's case outweighs the school/academy's case that admission of additional children would cause prejudice
- Where a local review process **has been** followed, the panel must only consider whether each child's review was carried out in a fair, consistent and objective way and if there is evidence that this is not the case, the panel must follow the process set out as above.
- In either case, the panel must not devise its own methods to assess suitability for a grammar school place unrelated to the evidence provided for the hearing.

Can I appeal for a place at a school/academy outside of Medway?

- If you applied for a school/academy outside of Medway and were unsuccessful you still have the right of appeal for that school/academy.
- You will need to contact the admissions team for the Local Authority where the school is located (e.g. Kent County Council) or the relevant school/academy to find out details of their appeal process.

There is usually a time limit on this and it is suggested you do this as soon as possible.

Who do I send my appeal form to?

- If you wish to appeal for the Medway schools/academies listed below, you will need to complete the appeal form available at www.medway.gov.uk/admissions and return it to:

The Clerk to the Appeal Panel c/o the school

| School/Academy Name | Address |
|--|---|
| Chatham Grammar School for Girls 01634 851262 | Rainham Road, Chatham, ME5 7EH |
| Fort Pitt Grammar School 01634 842359 | Fort Pitt Hill, Chatham, ME4 6TJ |
| Greenacre Academy 01634 861593 | 157 Walderslade Road, Chatham, ME5 0LP |
| Holcombe Grammar School 01634 830083 | Holcombe, Maidstone Road, Chatham, ME4 6JB |
| The Howard School 01634 388765 | Derwent Way, Rainham, Gillingham, ME8 0BX |
| The Hundred of Hoo Academy 01634 251443 | Main Road, Hoo, Rochester, ME3 9HH |
| Rainham Mark Grammar School 01634 364151 | Pump Lane, Gillingham, ME8 7AJ |
| Rainham School For Girls 01634 362746 | Derwent Way, Rainham, Gillingham, ME8 0BX |
| The Robert Napier School 01634 851157 | Third Avenue, Gillingham, ME7 2LX |
| The Rochester Grammar School 01634 843049 | Maidstone Road, Rochester, ME1 3BY |
| Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School 01634 844008 | Maidstone Road, Rochester, ME1 3EL |
| St John Fisher Catholic School 01634 335787 | 79 Maidstone Road, Chatham, ME4 6DP |
| Strood Academy 01634 717121 | Carnation Road, Strood, Rochester, ME2 2SX |
| The Thomas Aveling School 01634 844809 | Arethusa Road, Rochester, ME1 2UW |
| The Victory Academy 01634 303005 | Magpie Hall Road, Chatham, ME4 5JB |
| Walderslade Girls' School 01634 861596 | Bradfields Avenue, Walderslade, Chatham, ME5 0LE |

- For the following schools or academies you will need to contact them direct to obtain their appeal form.

Brompton Academy

Marlborough Road, Gillingham, ME7 5HT
01634 852341, admissions@bromptonacademy.org.uk