



# MOVING UP TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

SEPTEMBER 2024



# Included in this presentation

- The application and offer processes (Slides 3-15)  
(when to apply, how to apply, things to consider when applying, how the process works, National Offer Day, waiting lists and Appeals)
- The Secondary Transfer Test (Slides 16-39)  
(Timeline, test dates, what the test measures, familiarisation and practice, the testing process, how it is marked, Selection Review and Non-qualified appeals)
- More information
- How to Contact the Admissions Team

# The application and offer processes

Timelines, preferences and offers

# Key message!

Apply on time:  
by Midnight on 31  
October – the deadline



# How to apply for a school place online

- If you live in Buckinghamshire, visit [www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/admissions) between 11 September and 31 October 2023
- If you live elsewhere apply via your own LA's website
- All you need is an email address

# Applying online is easy

- You can apply on your phone, ipad or laptop
- Make a note of which email account you used and your password!
- Use an email address that you know you can access even if not in work
- You will be reminded if an application has not been submitted
- You can accept the place online
- You will see the outcome of all school preferences

# Making an application

When you apply online you can:

- List up to 6 schools
- Include grammar, upper, all-ability and out of county schools
- Put the schools in the order you prefer them

Consider:

- The order of your preferences carefully
- Including local (catchment) school(s) that you have a good chance of being offered

# Think about...

- Does your child need to sit or pass a test to be considered for a place at the school?
- Do you know where your child fits on the school's admission rules?
- Do you need to complete a supplementary form for the school? ( e.g. due to faith or because your child is eligible for FSM/PP)
- Do you live in catchment? (Check this on the Buckinghamshire Council website)



# How will your child get to school?

Transport is given to the **nearest** secondary school if:

- Over three miles away, or
- Under three miles but the route is an 'unsafe walking route'
- Check on [Find my child a school place \(buckscc.gov.uk\)](https://www.buckscc.gov.uk) to find your nearest school for transport purposes
- All secondary schools are treated equally (grammar/upper/comprehensive/free)
- Paid-for bus tickets can be purchased

# The offer process – Step 1

- Local authorities share offer information with each other
- Each school preference is treated separately
- Schools are not told where they are placed on the preference list by the parent
- All admission authorities apply their admission rules to the children with a preference for their school and sort the children into 'ranked order'
- The schools tell the ranked order to their council

# The offer process – Step 2

- Grammar school preferences will only be offered to qualified pupils (by scoring 121 or due to successful Selection Review)
- Where a child can be offered more than one school place - the higher ranked preference school is offered
- The lower preference school is declined
- The vacant place created is offered to another child
- Children who cannot be offered any of their preferences are then offered a place at the nearest school with vacant places remaining

# Offer Day – 1 March 2024

## Online applicants

- Offer emails sent 1 March
- You can log on and accept the school place online

## Postal applicants

- Offer letters emailed or posted 1 March

## All applicants

- Automatically added to waiting list for higher preferences that could not be offered but for which the child is qualified
- Can register an appeal
- You will have 14 days to accept the offer.

# After Offer Day

- You can appeal for any school you have been refused
- This includes where your preference is a grammar school and your child has not qualified
- We will automatically add your child to the waiting list for any school on your application above the school we have offered as long as it is a school they are qualified to attend

# About appeals

- Appeals are heard by a panel of three people
- Panel members are independent and unpaid volunteers who have no connection with the school or the LA
- You can put your case in person but it can also be held in your absence if you prefer
- Your appeal is likely to be held remotely via Teams

# Application summary

- Apply by Midnight on 31 October 2023
- Apply online at [www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk](http://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk) or on your home LA's website
- List schools in true preference order including grammar and upper schools if your child is sitting the test
- Consider including your catchment/local/nearest school
- Be realistic, understand the rules, use all your preferences
- Consider transport arrangements
- Visit the schools or view virtual tours
- Don't rely on the opinions of others

# The Secondary Transfer Test



# The Secondary Transfer Test

- The Secondary Transfer Test is a test to determine whether or not a child is suited to a Buckinghamshire grammar school.
- The test is produced by GL Assessment.
- Buckinghamshire Council undertakes the administration on behalf of the 13 grammar schools.
- You can find information about the test here: <https://www.thebucksgrammarschools.org/>

# Testing timeline

## What

- Familiarisation booklet
- Practice Test
- Transfer Test
- Results Released
- Application deadline
- School place offers
- Start secondary school

## When

- Early July 2023 (posted)
- 12 September 2023
- 14 September 2023
- 13 October 2023
- 31 October 2023 (midnight)
- 1 March 2024
- September 2024

# Testing schedule

- Testing will take place in September
- Children will sit the practice test two days before the Transfer Test
- If any changes are proposed to these arrangements they will be published on the TBGS website:  
<https://www.thebucksgrammarschools.org/>

# Do all children have to sit the Secondary Transfer Test?

- No, only if parents want their child to sit the test
- A grammar school will not suit every child so think carefully about whether sitting the test is going to be a positive experience for your child
- Your child's headteacher will ask you if you want your child to sit the test so they can make sensible arrangements for the testing sessions

# What does the Secondary Transfer Test measure?

## **Verbal skills**

- includes English and verbal reasoning

## **Mathematical skills**

- includes various areas of mathematics

## **Non-verbal skills**

- includes non-verbal and spatial reasoning

# Familiarisation booklet

- Will be sent to your home address in early July
- Explains what the questions, test papers and answer sheets will look like and how the answer sheets should be completed
- Includes example questions with answers
- **It will not be looked at in school**
- Optional additional free familiarisation material can be downloaded from the GL Assessment website:  
<https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/free-familiarisation>

# On the test days

- Two papers with a 15 min break between
- Each paper approximately an hour including instructions (practice shorter)
- CD/MP3 gives worked examples and test instructions
- Paper A – Verbal Skills – taken first
- Paper B – Mathematical and Non-Verbal Skills – taken second
- Practice test is not marked

# Illness/absence during the test period

- If a child is ill on either practice or Transfer Test day they can sit the test later
- Children should not sit the test when unwell (even if they want to!)
- Children will normally be expected to sit the practice test first
- If a child misses the practice test due to a test in another area then an alternative date is not offered
- You will be advised of new date(s) for the test(s) before your child sits the test



# If you think something has affected your child's performance in the Transfer Test

- Let your headteacher know on the test day and also collect evidence, for example a doctor's letter.
- Once you have the test results, talk to your child's headteacher

# Special arrangements

- Testing arrangements can be adjusted for children with SEND
- Discuss with your child's headteacher NOW
- Applications for adjustments are made via the headteacher. They must be completed as soon as possible
- Decisions about special arrangements are made by a panel of experts in SEND and primary teaching and an educational psychologist

# Coaching

- Primary schools that undertake testing on behalf of the grammar schools are asked not to tutor or coach the children in their school prior to the test over and above enabling the children to follow the national curriculum relevant for their age.
- The Secondary Transfer Test is designed to enable all children to demonstrate their academic potential without the need for excessive preparation.

# Marking and standardisation

- The completed answer sheets are machine marked (scanned)
- One mark is given for each correct answer
- Marks are not deducted for incorrect answers
- Each pupil will have three raw scores
  - **verbal skills**
  - **mathematical skills**
  - **non-verbal skills**
- Each score is age standardised and weighted to produce the Secondary Transfer Test Score (STTS)

# Weighting

Each score is weighted as follows:

- Verbal – 50% of the STTS (Secondary Transfer Test Score)
- Mathematical – 25% of the STTS
- Non-verbal – 25% of the STTS
- The qualifying score is a minimum score of 121
- Scores range between 60 and 170 approximately

# Results publication - 13 October (1)

- We need to ensure we have a current email address for your child's results email to be sent to.
- If your child attends a Buckinghamshire state school and takes the test, we will write to you and send you a code and the location on our website for you to complete a short form to provide your email.
- When you fill in the online form, and provide your email address the code ensures we match your email to your child's results record.
- **Results will be sent to parents by email on 13 October.**

# Results publication - 13 October (2)

- If you do not provide an email address by the deadline then your child's results email will be sent to your child's primary school instead
- The primary school will forward that email to the email address they hold for you by the end of Monday 16 October (the next working day)  
OR
- You can collect a printed copy of the email from the school from the school office on Monday 16 October

# Results publication - 13 October (3)

- If your child attends a Partner school or has sat the test at a grammar school test centre, then we will send the result **to the email you used to register for the test on 13 October.**

All candidates:

- Contents are confidential to parent and child.
- 37% of children scored 121 or more in the 2023 entry test.



# Pupil Premium/FSM Admissions

- Most grammar schools reserve some school places for children in receipt of free school meals/the pupil premium grant.
- Some of these places are allocated to children who have not automatically qualified for a grammar school place.
- Details can be found in individual grammar school admissions policies.
- Parents need to notify the grammar school(s) if they want their child to be considered under these criteria.

# What can I do if my child does not qualify for a grammar school place?

If your child is not qualified and you think a grammar school would be appropriate you can either

- Ask for a Selection Review OR
- Just appeal

The Selection Review Panel can decide if a child is qualified.

A qualification at Selection Review is a qualification for any grammar school and they will all be considered when the allocation is made.

# Reasons for underperformance

- The grammar schools recognise that there may be circumstances that have impacted on a child's performance in the test
- At Selection Review each child's situation is considered individually
- The panel will look for evidence of both consistent educational ability and factors that may have affected a child's performance in the Transfer Test

# Selection Review Panel

- Panel sits December-January
- 3 headteachers - two grammar, one primary
- Decision included in 1 March allocation
- Decision applies to all grammar schools
- At the end of the process and following Selection Reviews, 38.28% of the review cases qualify for grammar school

# Non-qualified appeal for a grammar school place (after Selection Review)

- When a case that has been to review is considered by the Independent Appeal Panel, parents will need to show that in their child's case the Selection Review Panel decision was not 'fair consistent and objective'
- Only if they are successful, can they then put their full academic case to the Independent Appeal Panel
- If a child is qualified at appeal, the qualification is for the particular school only.
- The appeal will happen in the summer term

# Non-qualified appeal for a grammar school place (without a Selection Review)

- It is possible to go straight to appeal without having asked for a Selection Review
- Appeals are heard after 1 March
- Most schools will already be full by then
- You would have to prove academic potential AND give reasons why you believe a place should be offered above Planned Admission Number (PAN)

# More information

- ‘Moving up to Secondary School’ leaflet
- School websites
- TBGS website

<https://www.thebucksgrammarschools.org/>

- School open events dates
- See School Directory in ‘Find My Child a School Place’

<https://services.buckscc.gov.uk/school-admissions/schools>

- By end of August - more information on the council’s website

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools-index/school-admissions/>

# How to contact the Admissions Team

Web: [www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/](http://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/)

Fill in the 'Contact Us' form:

- [www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/admissions)