

Outcomes of the consultation with schools on proposed adjustments to the Kent Test and Secondary Co-ordinated Admissions scheme as a result of COVID-19 restrictions

KCC held consultations on the proposed changes to the Kent Test and Secondary Co-ordinated scheme with the following groups:

- Kent Primary and Junior schools
- Kent Independent schools who facilitate testing (Linked Independents)
- Kent Grammar schools
- Kent non-selective Secondary Schools

Due to their varying involvement in the Kent Test process, a slightly different questionnaire was sent to Primary schools than the version sent to Secondary Schools

To ensure the proposed adjustments to the Kent Test could accommodate the individual requirements of Kent Grammar schools, they were consulted first between 5 June 2020 and 9 June 2020.

The remaining school groups were then consulted between 15 June 2020 and 24 June 2020.

Summaries of the responses to these consultations can be found below:

Kent Primary and Junior Schools and Linked Independent Schools:

Consultation questionnaires were sent to 433 Kent Primary and Junior schools. KCC received 347 responses to this questionnaire. The consultation was also sent to 38 Linked Independent schools and received 13 responses. Responses can be summarised as follows:

Would you support the Council delaying the 11+ testing currently due to take place on 10th and 12th September 2020?

Kent Primary and Junior Schools

Yes – 314 (90%)

No – 33 (10%)

Linked Independents

Yes – 9 (69%)

No – 4 (31%)

A delay in testing would mean that results were not available to parents before the closing date for school applications, as presumed in the School Admissions Code. We would put measures in place (see below) to support families setting out their preferences. Are you comfortable with a delay in the release of results?

Kent Primary and Junior Schools

Yes – 324 (93%)

No – 23 (7%)

Linked Independents

Yes – 10 (77%)

No – 3 (23%)

The “Equal Preference” mechanism for allocating places already means that parents can name grammar schools on their SCAF without losing access to other schools lower down the list if their child does not qualify. To give parents more confidence that there will be no disadvantage, we would propose for this year only that the number of preferences collected on the SCAF be extended to 6 from the current 4. Would you support this change?

Kent Primary and Junior Schools

Yes – 281 (81%)

No – 66 (19%)

Linked Independents

Yes – 12 (92%)

No – 1 (8%)

To enable secondary schools to complete their ranking and the co-ordinated Admissions process to meet the national timetable, Thursday 15 October would be the probable new test date, with results returned to schools and any HT Assessment referrals completed early in November. Please use the box below to confirm the dates of your half term break if it is outside the week 26-30 October or to highlight any other timing issue.

Responses from Primary and Junior schools 132 identified that half term would take place between 19th October and 9th November. Two schools identified a potential residential trip during the proposed window. Remaining schools had no issue or made no response

Although testing can more easily be put in place for all applicants, there remains a chance that central government may be required impose new restrictions on schools if the national response to Covid-19 deteriorates. If this should occur, testing may not be possible and it may be necessary to consider a system of recommendation supported by evidence of academic achievement by each school. In your view, would this be practicable?

Kent Primary and Junior Schools

Yes – 160 (46%)

No – 187 (54%)

Linked Independents

Yes – 7 (54%)

No – 6 (46%)

If you answered YES please add below any evidence you think that could be used

Kent Primary and Junior Schools

Work Books – 62

CAT or Equivalent – 54

Teacher/Headteacher recommendations – 37

Kent Grammar Schools and non-selective Secondary schools:

Consultation questionnaires were sent to 32 Kent Grammar schools and KCC received 24 responses. The consultation was also sent to 68 non-selective Secondary schools and received 30 responses. Responses can be summarised as follows:

If the Council proposed delaying the 11+ testing currently due to take place on 10th and 12th September 2020 until later in the term, would you support that proposal in principle?

Grammar Schools

Yes – 24 (100%)

No – 0 (0%)

Non-selective Secondary schools

Yes – 7 (23%)

No – 13 (43%)

No views on 11+ Testing – 10 (33%)

A delay in testing would mean that results were not available to parents before the closing date for school applications, as presumed in the School Admissions Code. We would put measures in place (see below) to support families setting out their preferences. Are you comfortable with a delay in the release of results?

Grammar Schools

Yes – 22 (92%)

No – 2 (8%)

Non-selective Secondary schools

Yes – 6 (20%)

No – 15 (50%)

No views on 11+ Testing – 9 (30%)

The “Equal Preference” mechanism for allocating places means that parents can name grammar schools on their SCAF without losing access to schools lower down the list if their child does not qualify. To give parents more confidence that there will be no disadvantage, it has been suggested that for

this year only the number of preferences collected on the SCAF be extended to 6 from the current 4. Would you support this change?

Grammar Schools

Yes – 23 (96%)

No – 1 (4%)

Non-selective Secondary schools

Yes – 21 (70%)

No – 9 (30%)

If you have reservations about the proposal, or a point you would like to raise, you are welcome to comment briefly in the box below:

Of the concerns raised by Grammar schools, two schools suggested that an alternative to delaying the test might be for a teacher-based assessment process to be used instead. Three schools raised concerns about how the delay would impact the wider admissions process including subsequent appeals. One school queried how the delay would impact school open evenings.

Of the concerns raised by non-selective Secondary schools, ten schools raised concerns about how the delay would impact the wider admissions process including subsequent appeals, including a number who preferred to leave testing in September. One school felt that KCC had insufficient information to make a decision. One school proposed that selection was suspended for the year. One school queried how the delay would impact school open evenings. Three schools raised concerns about the selective system in general.