



# **MOVING UP TO SECONDARY SCHOOL**

**SEPTEMBER 2023 (April 2022 – with audio)**



# 2023 testing – Coronavirus update

- It is unlikely that testing will need to be delayed this year but there could be changes to testing arrangements if any Covid requirements are reinstated
- This presentation explains the usual processes which will be kept to wherever possible
- Any changes to the process due to Covid-19 requirements will be published on the TBGS website:  
<https://www.thebucksgrammarschools.org/> and if necessary we will write to parents

# Included in this presentation

- The application and offer processes (Slides 4-17)  
(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 18-37)  
(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 10 September and 31 October 2022
- 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?
- 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 2023

## 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

# 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 2022
- 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
- Consider transport arrangements
- Visit the schools (if you are permitted)
- 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

- 7 July 2022 (posted to home address)
- 13 September 2022
- 15 September 2022
- 14 October 2022
- 31 October 2022 (midnight)
- 1 March 2023
- September 2023

# Impact of Covid

- We expect the test to take place in September as planned
- However, test arrangements will need to take account of any guidance from the government should they be reintroduced
- 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

- 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**
- GL Assessment provide free familiarisation on their 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 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 should always sit the practice test first
- 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 and qualification-14 October

- Results will be sent to parents by email.
- If your child attends a Buckinghamshire state school and takes the test, we will write to you and send you a code. You will then need to log into an online form and provide your email address – you will need to use the code we provided to do this. This ensures we have a current email address for the results email to be sent to.
- 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.
- Contents are confidential to parent and child.
- 37% of children scored 121 or more in the 2022 entry test.

# 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, 35.66% 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 (subject to social distancing requirements):  
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)