DETERMINED

Medway Council Co-ordinated Scheme for Secondary Admissions Academic Year 2027/28

Admission to Year 7 and in-year admissions

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Contact Details

School Admissions, Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TR
Telephone: 01634 331110
E-mail: admissions@medway.gov.uk

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1.0	14 August 2025	Proposed	School Admissions
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Introduction / Background

Each year, the Local Authority is required to draw up, consult on and determine:

- Co-ordinated admissions arrangements (schemes) for all schools/academies/UTCs in the Local Authority area for entry at the normal time of admission (Year R for infant and primary schools, Year 3 for junior schools and Year 7 for secondary schools. Please note that Medway UTC has opted out of co-ordination, as permitted by the Department for Education.

and

- The over-subscription criteria / arrangements for entry to those schools for which the Local Authority is the admission authority (Community and Voluntary Controlled schools).

The admission arrangements for Academies, Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools will be available from each school and to view on the Medway Council website.

Section 1 – Secondary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme 2027/28

For children born between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2016.

Key Scheme Dates

Key Action	Scheme Date
Publication of information (composite prospectus, Medway Test registration, etc.)	By Wednesday 13 May 2026
Registration for the Medway Test opens	Monday 18 May 2026
Closing date for Medway Test registration	Friday 12 June 2026
Closing date for Medway Test Special Arrangements requests from schools	Monday 22 June 2026
Publication of further secondary application information (flyers, etc.)	By Tuesday 1 September 2026
Secondary school applications open Online applications open at 9am	Tuesday 1 September 2026
Medway Test Date *The Medway Test is for admission to Medway grammar schools only.* *For grammar schools in another Local Authority, children must sit that local authority's test.*	Tuesday 15 & Wednesday 16 September 2026 (in schools for children in Medway primary/junior schools) Saturday 19 September 2026 or Sunday 20 September 2026 (In test centres for children not attending Medway primary/junior schools. One day will be allocated.)
Assessment decisions notified to parents/carers	Wednesday 14 October 2026
Closing date for secondary applications (Online and Secondary Common Application Forms (SCAFs)) – National Closing Date	5pm on Saturday 31 October 2026
First Inter-LA data exchange undertaken	From Monday 16 November 2026
Final date for acceptance of changes to details for on time applications	Monday 7 December 2026
Indication of preference/applicant numbers made available to all Medway secondary schools	By Monday 14 December 2026
Applicant details provided to secondary schools for prioritising against their over-subscription criteria	By Monday 4 January 2027
Finalised ranked list submitted to the Council by all secondary schools	No later 5pm on Friday 15 January 2027
Ranked lists submitted, checked and verified in the admissions database.	By Friday 15 January 2027
Council to run the algorithm to determine the allocation of places	By Monday 18 January 2027
Inter-LA data exchange undertaken for offers	Approx. 18 January to 25 February 2027
Details of pupils being offered sent to all Medway secondary schools	By Monday 22 February 2027

Offer e-mails and letters sent to parents/carers (national offer day)	Monday 1 March 2027
Schools send out welcome letters	Not before Tuesday 2 March 2027
Places must be accepted/refused and requests to go on a waiting list submitted	By Friday 12 March 2027
Requests for admissions appeals must be submitted	By Tuesday 13 April 2027
The Council re-allocates any places that have become available to those who have asked to go on the waiting lists for each school	From w/c Monday 19 April 2027 until Tuesday 31 August 2027

In addition this scheme also:

- Allows for Supplementary Information Forms (SIFs) to be returned directly to schools by the closing date for applications to assist in the ranking of applicants against the schools over-subscription criteria.

- Confirms that after 19 April 2027, the Council considers applicants through the waiting list procedures. Vacant places will be re-allocated (offered), in accordance with individual school's oversubscription criteria, to children who have requested to be placed on the waiting list. Waiting lists will be held by the Council on behalf of the admissions authority for the school(s) until 31 August 2027.

The Council expects that all schools/academies/UTCs and admissions authorities engaged in the sharing of admissions data will manage personal information in accordance with GDPR requirements.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Parent/carers may decide they want their child to transfer to secondary school earlier or later than usual, for instance if the child delayed entry to primary school by a year.

If parents/carers want to do this, they must seek permission to apply outside of their normal age group from their preferred secondary school. 'Normal age group' means the year group a child would have been in had they entered primary school in the September following their fourth birthday.

Parents/carers must make their request in writing. The request should provide information about the child and why the parent/carer thinks they should be admitted to secondary school a year earlier/later. Parents/carers must make their requests and seek decisions prior to the application closing date (31 October) of the year their child would usually have been transferring to secondary school if they were in their normal year group.

The admission authority must consider the request and decide in the child's best interests.

Parents/carers must submit requests to all the schools they plan to apply for, in case some schools reject the request or the preferred school accepts the request but is unable to offer a place.

If a child was born prematurely, parents/carers can explain whether this caused health problems or developmental delays, and whether, because of being born before their due date, their child would have fallen into a different age group than if they had been born at full term.

The school will decide what is best for the child by taking account of the information provided. Schools will give their decision in writing.

If a request is agreed, parent/carers can apply for admission to the year group they have requested. The application must be submitted and processed within the deadlines for the entry year. There is no guarantee a place will be offered as the application must be processed in the same way as others for the relevant year group.

If requests to all schools are refused, parents/carers must apply for secondary transfer for the year the child would have normally transferred to secondary school.

If a child has been taught outside their normal year group throughout primary school, Medway Council expects secondary schools to accept applications for the child's adoptive year group, to allow them to continue in the year group they have been taught in. This prevents the child having to repeat or skip a year of education.

The school application process

All relevant dates for the following procedures are detailed in the 'Key Scheme Dates' table above

1.
Medway resident parents/carers can apply for their child's school place either online via the parent portal or using a paper application form (SCAF), which can be collected from Medway Council's office at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TR.

The Council can only accept one application for each child. Only one of the above methods can be used, not both.

If more than one application for a child is received from the same parent/carer, the most recent application will be processed.

If more than one application is received for a child from two different parent/carers, they will be contacted to determine which preferences, address and applicant should be used. Until this is agreed, no applications can be processed for that child.

2.
Online applications, SCAFs and supporting publications will:

a) Allow Medway resident parents/carers to express up to six preferences in priority order. Preferences can be expressed for Medway and non-Medway schools (except special or independent schools).
Parents/carers must complete the application for their home Local Authority (i.e. the LA where they live)

b) Allow parents/carers to give reasons for each preference, including details of any siblings that attend the school at the time of application and will still be on roll at the preferred school at the time of the applicant child's admission.

c) Explain that parents/carers will receive the offer of one school place only and that a place will be offered at the highest ranked preference, for which their child is eligible and where there is a place available, or if a place cannot be offered at a school named on the form, a place will be offered at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy.
d) Specify the closing date for applications and where paper SCAFs must be returned to, in accordance with paragraph 8.

3.
The Council will make appropriate arrangements to ensure:

(a) That the online admissions website is readily accessible to all Medway resident parents/carers who wish to apply using this method.

(b) The paper applications are readily available to be collected from Medway Council's office at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TR.

(c) A Digital Information Guide (composite prospectus) of all Medway secondary schools and academies along with details how the admissions process works is readily available on the Medway Council website to read/print and hardcopies of which will be available upon request for collection from Medway Council's Office at Gun Wharf (see above address).

4.
Only preferences expressed on a submitted online application or paper SCAF are valid applications.

5.
Supplementary Information forms (SIFs)
A school/academy can ask parents/carers, who wish to express it as a preference, to provide additional information on a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) only where the additional information is required to apply its over-subscription criteria to the application.

Where a SIF is required it must be requested direct from the school/academy or will be available via the Council's website as part of the relevant schools/academies published admission arrangements.

SIFs must be returned to the relevant school/academy by the closing date for applications.

All schools/academies that use SIFs must include the proposed form in their consultation document with other admissions authorities, including the Council, and in their published admission arrangements.

6.
Completion of a school/academy's Supplementary Information Form only does not constitute a valid application.

The school/academy must be named on the parent/carer's application through their home local authority.

7.
Applications must be submitted online or paper SCAFs returned to Medway Council by the closing date.

If a valid application has been submitted by the national closing date, School Admissions will allow preference changes up to 7 December 2026.

8.
To help the Council ensure that everyone who needs to apply submits an application, primary/junior schools may ask School Admissions to check whether an online application has been submitted.

No preference information will be disclosed to the primary/junior schools, as this information is between parents/carers and the Council.

9.
The Council will co-ordinate the allocation of places and works in partnership with own admission authority schools/academies to determine which applicants are to be offered a place at their school/academy.

The Council will only make the final decision about the offer or refusal of a place at a named preference where:

(a) an applicant can be offered a place at more than one preference;

(b) an applicant cannot be offered a place at any named preference and therefore has to be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate school to the home address.

Medway operate an 'Equal Preference' scheme. This means that all preferences are considered equally and the order of preference is between parents/carers and the Council. The Council will look to offer a place at the highest named preference for which the child is eligible and where a place is available.

The Council will allocate places in accordance with paragraph 23.

Crown Servants:
For children of crown service personnel the usual protocols will apply, but a future address will be

accepted and a place sought in advance of residency as long as the application is accompanied by an official confirmation of the posting, future address and date of posting (as defined in the School Admissions Code).

The Medway Test process

All relevant dates for the following procedures are detailed in the 'Key Scheme Dates' table above

10.
The Medway schools that require children to sit the Medway Test are listed below. The entry requirement for these schools is to be assessed as grammar via the Medway Test:

Holcombe Grammar School	Rainham Mark Grammar School
Chatham Grammar	Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School
Fort Pitt Grammar School	The Rochester Grammar School

The Medway Test is for admission to Medway grammar schools only.

The results of the Medway Test are not transferable between authorities, unless individual schools/academies accept the test assessment from another authority as part of their published admission arrangements.

Parents/carers wishing their children to sit the Medway Test are required to register with Medway Council during the registration period.

11.
Access/Special arrangements for the Medway Test

Parents/carers must discuss requests for special arrangements with their child's current school.

Requests can only be considered if a child has registered for the test and a request is submitted by the child's current school. Parents/carers cannot submit a request directly.

All requests will be considered by a panel of educationalists who will decide which arrangements may be granted. The decision of the panel is final and there is no appeal process.

Special arrangements granted for the Medway Test are not transferable to other tests.

Any special arrangements request received after the date shown in the above key scheme dates table will not be processed.

12.
Late registrations to sit the Medway Test cannot be accepted. Parents/carers must register within the registration window outlined on page 3.

13.
The Medway Test comprises of three papers. These are:

- English Test
- Mathematics Test
- Reasoning Test

14.
Children unable to sit the Medway Test on the scheduled date(s) due to illness must provide a medical certificate to School Admissions and *may* be offered an alternative date to sit the test. There is no guarantee that an alternative date will be available.

15.
Once all three papers have been marked, the raw scores are converted to standardised scores based on the child's date of birth. These standardised scores are weighted to reflect the child's age when they sat the test.

A minimum total weighted score to be assessed as grammar is set each year.

The formula used to determine the total weighted score for each child is:

Standardised English Test score x 2
plus
Standardised Mathematics Test score x 2
plus
Standardised Reasoning Test score x1

The minimum score will be set at the 26th percentile of the Medway cohort (i.e. Year 6 children attending a Medway maintained school) based on school census data.

Pupils from out of area and/or attending a Medway independent school who achieve the minimum score or above will also be assessed as grammar.

16.
Medway Test assessment decisions will be notified to all parents/carers who registered their child for testing on the determined date.

17.
Where a child does not achieve the minimum score required, there is no academic review process. Instead, parents/carers can still name grammar and non-grammar schools on their Common Application Form. Medway Council will not be able to offer a grammar school place on national offer day for those who have not achieved the minimum score required but parents/carers will be given the right to appeal for a place at each school named on their application form which has not offered a place – including grammar schools where the child did not achieve the minimum required score.

The school allocation/offer process

All relevant dates for the following procedures are detailed in the 'Key Scheme Dates' table above

18.
The Council will provide all Medway secondary schools/academies with an indication of the number of preferences expressed for them (these figures may not be the final preferences). Any necessary inter-LA data exchange will have been completed prior to provision of this data.

Schools/academies will only be advised the number of each preference (1st- 6th) and not any pupil specific data.

Also by this date the Council will provide Medway primary/junior schools with a full list of their pupils who have applied for Year 7 places.

19.
The Council will advise all Medway secondary schools/academies of the full details of all valid applications for their schools to enable them to undertake the relevant checks (sibling links, etc.) and to prioritise against their over-subscription criteria. This is known as 'the ranking list'.

This data will not include which preference the school/academy has been named, as this is not relevant to the application of oversubscription criteria.

The Council will have already undertaken distancing for all applicants to all schools. Any issues arising from these checks must be reported to School Admissions no later than the deadline for ranking**.**

Only children who appear on the ranking list can be considered for places on the relevant offer day. No child can be added to the ranking list by the school/academy for any reason.

Ranking lists will be available to schools/academies via secure means to comply with data protection and information governance procedures.

20.
All Medway secondary schools/academies must submit completed ranking lists, ranked in priority order in accordance with their over-subscription criteria, to the Council by the date specified above for consideration in the allocation process.

Any school/academy that offers governors places or operates banding must clearly identify and rank eligible applicants appropriately.

Completed ranking list must be submitted securely to comply with data protection and information governance procedures.

21.
The Council will check and verify all completed ranking lists in the admissions database and run the algorithm to determine the allocation of places:

- Where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the named schools, that school will be offered
- Where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the named schools, they will be offered a place at whichever of these is the highest available preference
- Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the named schools, a place will be allocated at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy

22.
The Council will inform secondary schools/academies of the pupils who will be offered places at their school and inform primary/junior schools of the destinations of their Year 6 pupils.

By the date specified above Medway Council will have completed any data exchange with other local authorities to cover situations where a Medway resident has named a school outside Medway, or a parent living outside Medway has named a Medway school.

Offer and destination details will be sent via secure means to comply with data protection and information governance procedures.

23.
On the offer day determined above, the Council will notify details of the school/academy being offered to all Medway resident applicants. The offer details will include the name of the school offered, the basic reasons why any other school named was refused and will extend the right of appeal to any named school that was not offered.

Medway Council will also make available all the information regarding the next steps for parents/carers (including acceptance/refusal of the place offered, waiting list and appeal request).

Schools/academies can send out their welcome information no earlier than the date shown above. This is to ensure that parents/carers have received their formal offer from the Council

ahead of receiving any information from the relevant school/academy.

The appeal and waiting list/reallocation processes

All relevant dates for the following procedures are detailed in the 'Key Scheme Dates' table above

24.

Acceptance/Refusal:

By the deadline date for acceptance/refusal of places, parents/carers must inform the school offered whether they wish to accept or refuse the place offered on offer day.

Parents/carers will be notified the process for how to do this at the time of the school offer.

Waiting Lists:

Parents/carers must submit requests to be included on a school's waiting list by this date.

Requests must be submitted to the Council and parents/carers can ask to be considered on the waiting list for any Medway school (it is not limited to those originally named on the application form).

The only exception is that a child cannot be considered on the waiting list for a Medway grammar school if they have not been assessed as grammar under the Medway Test procedures.

Parents/carers will be notified the process for how to do this at the time of the school offer.

Appeals:

Parents/carers must submit any appeal request by this date. At this stage parents/carers can only appeal for the schools that they originally named on their application form.

Parents/carers will be notified the process for how to do this at the time of the school offer.

Appeal requests must be made in writing and any appeal requests for Academies, Foundation and VA schools must be lodged with the Clerk of the Appeal Panel c/o the relevant school/academy.

25.

From the date specified in the above table and up until the final date specified, the Council will undertake the reallocation of any vacant places for all schools/academies.

Only children who have requested to be place on the waiting list for a school/academy can be considered for vacant places at this time.

All waiting list requests will be treated equally against the schools over-subscription criteria, regardless of whether the school was originally named as a preference.

26.

Waiting Lists

Parents/carers may ask for their child's name to be kept on a waiting list should places become available for the duration of the reallocation period.

- If a place can be offered from the waiting lists, any other offer being held will be withdrawn.
- If a school requested on the waiting list form for the first time is unable to offer a place at reallocation, the parents/carers will also have the right of appeal for that school.
- After the 'Council waiting list' has closed, parents/carers must re-apply for places under the in-year admission procedures
- Waiting lists will be held in accordance with the published over-subscription criteria for the school and not according to how long the child's name has been on the list.
- Any place that becomes available must be offered to the next child on the waiting list, who has the highest eligibility under the published oversubscription criteria.

The handling of late applications

27.
All applications received after 5pm 31 October will be processed after 19 April 2027 as part of the reallocation of vacant places after national offer day.

Section 2 – Over-subscription Criteria and Published Admission Numbers

All Medway secondary schools and academies are their own admission authority and, as such, are responsible for the consultation and determination of their own admission arrangements, oversubscription criteria and published admission numbers.

Medway Council has no responsibility in the setting of individual admission arrangements, oversubscription criteria or published admission numbers for any Medway secondary school, academy.

All Medway schools and academies must comply with the provisions of the Council published co-ordinated admission scheme.

Waterfront UTC has opted out of co-ordination, as permitted by the Department for Education.

Before the application of oversubscription criteria, children with an Education, Health and Care Plan which names the school will be admitted. As a result of this, the published admissions number will be reduced accordingly.

Definitions and Notes

Where a Medway secondary school or academy has not clearly defined any of its oversubscription criteria the following definition is to be used.

Looked after children/Previously looked after children:
A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order* including those who appear to Medway Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

*An adoption order is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders). A ‘child arrangements order’ is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a ‘special guardianship order’ as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian (or special guardians).

Medway Council may require a copy of the adoption order / child arrangements order / special guardianship order to validate the application of this criterion.

Sibling:

Sibling means children who live as brother/sister in the same house and includes natural siblings, adopted siblings, foster siblings and step siblings.

Extended family, for example cousins, living in the same house do not qualify as siblings.

The sibling must be attending the named school at the time of application and at the time the younger child would start (September 2027).

Medical/health reasons:

Medical evidence from a medical practitioner (GP or Consultant) must be provided to the school/academy at the time of application. This evidence must demonstrate a specific link between the child's medical conditions and needs and how the named school can meet these needs.

Distance:

All distances and routes calculated are for the purposes of prioritising the application for admissions only and there is no expectation that a child should use this to walk to school.

Distances and routes calculated will represent the shortest route to school from the child's home address using roads and paths that are known to the graphical information software (GIS) utilised by School Admissions.

The start point:
The centre point of the nearest road or footpath known to the GIS system to the seed point of the child's home (as defined by Ordnance Survey).
This may not always be the postal address road, in circumstances where an alternative road or footpath is actually nearer to the seed point of the property.
Where a child's home is situated on a new road the distance calculation will begin from the nearest available known road plotted in the GIS. New property developments may be subject to this.

The end point:
This will be either a pre-defined point within the school site or the centre point of the road adjacent the school site.
The same end point is used for all distance calculations to the school concerned.

Routes/Footpaths:
The distance calculated is the shortest available route known to the Medway GIS (using the centre point of the streets and other available routes.
Not all footpaths, cut-throughs, shortcuts and new roads are known to the GIS system. Where a route is not known to the GIS system an alternative route will be used.

Section 3 – Secondary In-Year Admissions and Fair Access Protocol

An in-year admission is either a new applicant who is moving to Medway or an existing resident attending a Medway school who wishes to transfer to another Medway school. Entry is to year groups 7-11 during the academic year and outside of the transfer process.

Under the provisions of the School Admissions Code (September 2021), paragraph 2.23 there is no requirement for local authorities to co-ordinate in-year admissions.

If a parent/carer wishes to apply for a school as an in-year admissions they must apply direct to the relevant school

Details of the in-year admissions processes for Medway schools and academies will be published in Medway Council's in-year admissions guide for each academic year by 31 August.

Places for in-year admissions must be offered in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria for the relevant school/academy.

Parents/carers must be advised of their right of appeal if a school named on the application cannot offer a place.

Fair Access Protocol:

Medway Council administer the locally agreed Fair Access Protocols for children who meet the relevant criteria on behalf of and in partnership with all Medway secondary schools and academies.

The Council will ensure that there is a fair distribution across all Medway schools/academies of pupils who are identified as having challenging behaviour under the agreed Fair Access Protocols.

The placing of children who fall under the Fair Access Protocols will take place at the meetings of the Fair Access Panel to ensure places are allocated as quickly as possible.

The panel will decide on the school/academy to offer based upon the circumstances of the case for the pupil and any extenuating circumstances put forward by schools/academies.

Full details of the agreed Medway Fair Access Protocols will be published in Medway Council's in-year admissions guide.