



SOUTH WEST HERTS SCHOOLS CONSORTIUM

January 2025

Dear Colleague

SOUTH WEST HERTS ADMISSIONS CONSORTIUM Secondary Transfer 2026 – Testing Before Preference

Thank you for your help with the SW Herts Admissions testing process, so that potential applicants to our schools can take the admission tests. This year, registration for the tests spans a period of almost **ten weeks**, from **Tuesday 1st April to Friday 6th June 2025**. As previously, **no late registrations will be accepted**. If a parent has extenuating circumstances for failing to register for the tests, this may be cited as part of an appeal to an independent panel at a secondary transfer appeal hearing.

I would now ask for your attention to the following issues.

Requests for Intervention from Parents

As a Senior Deputy Headteacher myself, I appreciate that requests for assistance regarding matters arising from the tests from the parents of pupils at your School, are not something that can or should be disregarded. However, I would urge you to refrain from offering letters of support for parents who wish to contest part or parts of the test process. Such issues can range from how parents perceive the test day to have been conducted to how they feel their child ought to have performed. Parents with this nature of complaint are invited to contact their child's test centre, at which point a thorough investigation is conducted. Formal response is then made by the Senior Staff member with responsibility for admissions at that School. Involvement by the primary schools in these matters simply causes duplication with regard to the response required and equally places the burden of administration upon you and your staff. Any issues that parents raise with test centres are dealt with promptly and objectively; so please be assured that the Consortium considers all complaints with equal merit and sincerity.

It is sadly a sign of the times that written responses from the Consortium are regularly being disseminated across Social Media. This is concerning as any reply is intended solely for the recipient and as such, can offer misleading advice when applied to a wider audience. The Consortium Administration Team emails do bear a disclaimer with regard to publishing on Social Media and I would seek your assistance in requesting that parents heed this advice.

Evidence of Access Arrangements

Each year, the requests from parents for access arrangements are submitted later and later and, in many cases, despite clear deadlines being set, are tendered just days before the test. As you are aware, it is a complex process to review the various requirements of the test cohort and requests for access arrangements each year number almost 150, sometimes more, over just six test centres. That means that approximately 25 candidates with access arrangements are accommodated in each test centre. If just 5 of those candidates require a separate room with a dedicated invigilator, we have to ensure, in advance, that the correct levels of trained staff are available and allocated appropriately and entirely

separately of the main test day staff. Further, we have to then communicate this information to the parent and this, as I am sure you can appreciate, entails sensitive planning.

In an attempt to alleviate the time constraints placed on the Schools' test administration staff and to ensure that appropriate support can be offered to your pupils, one practical solution may be to identify those students in your current Year 5 who would normally receive access arrangements in advance of these requests. It is worth noting that requests for access arrangements received after the deadline will be automatically placed on the reserve test day for the reasons set out above.

Academic and Music Reserve Days

As you know, the seven Consortium schools agreed in 2017, to limit the alternative reserve dates for children who missed the main academic and music tests to illness or religious observance only. This decision was not made lightly but was necessary due to the substantial number of candidates who do not, in fact, attend the reserve day resulting in a large proportion of the planned resources provided being wasted.

Though PGL trips still remain an area where test clashes occur, we do our best to facilitate those affected, however, it would be helpful if you could avoid booking trips that coincide with our test calendar.

We will also be unable to accommodate children whose personal holiday commitments conflict with our academic or music test or for any other reasons than those stated above. This includes family weddings and so to avoid disappointment we would urge parents to inform family who may be contemplating September nuptials to work around the main test day.

Last year we updated our parent portal, which some parents may comment on. We have secured the services of a nationally renowned provider of examinations databases who bring high levels of expertise, compliance and support to our Consortium. We hope your parents like the new look and feel of the Consortium Parent Portal and assure you of our continuing commitment to administrative support during the application process and beyond.

Finally, please accept my thanks for your continued support throughout the testing process and we would like to refer you to the Key Testing Dates on the following page. I will write to you again immediately prior to the commencement of registration and provide you with information that you can then circulate to your Year 5 parents.

Kind regards



Chris Wilshaw
Senior Deputy Headteacher
Watford Grammar School for Girls
For and on behalf of
The South West Herts Schools Consortium

Key Testing Dates In 2025 for Secondary Transfer 2026

Date	Test
Tuesday 1 st April	Online registration for the tests opens
Friday 6 th June	Online registration closes
Friday 27 th June (around noon)	Parents informed of test venue
Saturday 6 th September	Academic test
Monday 8 th September	Music aptitude test
Wednesday 10 th September	Queens' School Sports aptitude test
Thursday 18 th September (around noon)	First Round music scores notified to parents
w/c Monday 22 nd September	Start of second round music tests
Thursday 16 th October (around noon)	Scores notified to parents
Friday 31 st October	Secondary application deadline

Sports Test times are allocated on an alphabetical basis **which cannot be changed.*

All communication with regard to the Sports test comes directly from Queens' School and your sports test time will not show on the Parent Portal

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Test Administration Team can be contacted via email only at info@swhertsschools.org.uk There is no facility to telephone.

Please do not contact enquiries@swhscregistrations.co.uk or support@swhscregistrations.co.uk as these email inboxes are no longer monitored and you will not receive a response.

We will make every effort to ensure that all email queries are answered within 48 hours during term time school hours. Please note that during peak times – such as immediately prior to and following the release of test scores – response times may be longer. We would ask you to note that email responses from the Test Administration Team are likely to be specific to your enquiry and may not be relevant to the nature of any other person or persons' enquiry. Therefore you should not copy, disclose, or distribute its content to any person or persons or publish its content on social media nor act in reliance on any such e-mail, as this is prohibited and may be unlawful. Abusive and/or anonymous emails will be deleted and will not receive a response.

We cannot respond to any queries with regard to School Admissions or School Applications. We are test facilitators only and our sole responsibility is for the test registration and administration process. Any queries regarding school places should be directed to the school or schools in which you are interested in applying. Contact information for all Consortium Schools can be found on our website here [Schools – South West Herts Schools \(swhertsschools.org.uk\)](https://www.swhertsschools.org.uk)

Persons making requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for data with regard to whole cohort test scores in previous years should note that in compliance with GDPR Regulations, no test information is retained once a test cycle has ended. We are legally obliged to delete all personal information submitted by registrants within 12 months and so any data pertaining to prior test cycles (including raw and standardised scores) is purged from our systems annually.