

Media Release
Thursday, 28 February 2019

National secondary school offer day

More than 95% of children will receive an offer from one of their four preferences after more families than ever before applied for a secondary school place in Kent.

A total of 21,473 applications were received, up 3.58% on last year's cohort, while the number of Kent applicants rose from 17,442 in 2018 to 17,959 this year, a 2.96% increase.

Yet despite these increases, the number of pupils getting a place at one of their first preference schools continues to increase.

From 4pm today (Friday, March 1) thousands of families across Kent will check their emails to find out which secondary school their children have been offered a place at for September this year. From 5pm, those who applied online will also be able to log into their accounts to view their offer. Those who submitted their applications on a paper form will receive their offers by post, which will be sent by First Class mail.

Of the applicants, 17,959 were from pupils living within Kent and over 90% of these will get one of their top two preference schools.

Roger Gough, Kent County Council's Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, said: "We are delighted that, once again, despite a record number of applications, more than 95% of families will be offered a place at one of their chosen schools and almost 80% will receive their first preference offer.

"These figures are testament to the hard work of KCC officers and Kent schools who do everything possible to ensure the county's children can access good schools. The high number of parental preferences also demonstrates that parents and guardians have confidence in their local schools, which is pleasing to see and credit should be given to excellent school staff delivering quality education."

While today will bring good news for most of the families waiting for an offer, KCC recognises that for those who did not get a place at one of their chosen schools it can be a disappointing and worrying time.

Mr Gough added: “While the vast majority of families will be celebrating today, unfortunately there will always be a number of families each year who do not receive one of the schools they named and will be allocated a school by the Local Authority. We do not underestimate the disappointment and worry felt by these 837 children and their families but I would urge them not to feel disheartened at this stage of the process.

“I would encourage families to visit the schools they have been offered, with an open mind, and meet and speak with teachers and staff before making any decision. They should also remember, this is only the first stage of the allocation process. Families have the option to appeal their offer and there is likely to be considerable movement on school waiting lists between now and September. This will particularly be the case in the Dartford area where we have a new school opening in September and this will create additional capacity in the system that was not available to the LA on offer day.

“A specialist team of KCC staff is on hand to answer any queries parents or guardians may have over the coming weeks and months so please contact them if you need any support, information or advice.

“Sadly, each year I remind parents of the need to make use of all of their preferences but we know that of the 837 pupils which the LA had to identify a school, more than 85% did not name four school options. This makes it incredibly difficult for officers to identify local schools because the law requires all named preferences to be satisfied before allocations can be made, which often leaves local schools all full.

“Finally, on a particularly positive note, well over 90% of families are now taking advantage of KCC’s online application process with 16,759 of the 17,959 Kent applicants applying through the website. This is better for the environment enabling electronic notification and reducing the amount of paper and printing for the LA.”

For further advice about the admission process please email:

kent.admissions@kent.gov.uk

For more information on how to join a waiting list and/or appeal go to:

www.kent.gov.uk/secondaryadmissions

...Ends...

Notes to journalists:

1. Parents will have until Friday, March 15 to accept or refuse their offer and return waiting list forms.
2. Parents must also lodge any appeals for their named schools by Friday, March 29 to be heard as on time.
3. KCC will reallocate places from schools waiting lists sending out a second round of offers on Wednesday, April 24.
4. From Wednesday, April 24, schools will maintain their own waiting lists and parents can apply to schools direct via the 'In Year Common Application Form' after this date to ask to be placed on the waiting list. (Note – only children assessed suitable for grammar school can be placed on a grammar school waiting list.)
5. Please see the table below for additional preference information.

Kent Pupils	2019		2018	
	No. of pupils	%	No. of pupils	%
Offered a first preference	14,201	79.07%	13,891	79.64%
Offered a second preference	2,008	11.18%	1,937	11.11%
Offered a third preference	691	3.85%	641	3.67%

Offered a fourth preference	222	1.24%	208	1.19%
Allocated by Local Authority	837	4.66%	765	4.39%
Total number of Kent pupils offered	17,959		17,442	

Year	2019	2018
Out of county applicants	3,514	3,289
Offers to out of county pupils at Kent schools	818	818

Year	2019	2018
Total numbers of pupils in the cohort	21,353	20,731