



Gravesend Grammar School – Appeals FAQs



How many people get a place through appeals each year?

Whether boys gain places through appeals is dependent on whether a panel feel there is room for the school to take them without impacting the learning of existing students. The school has a Published Admission Number (PAN) which is the maximum number of students it will accept in any one year group. Ordinarily, it reaches this number and the school is considered full. An appeal panel has the authority to direct us to take numbers beyond this if they consider this non-prejudicial. For example, we have recently been directed to take 186 which equates to 31 per class against our preference of 29. The number of successful appeals varies year on year. Panels in the past, where they have had no room to manoeuvre, have instructed us to add students to our waiting list rather than directing us to admit them, but generally speaking, there have been a small number of successes at appeals in most years in recent history.

Can anyone appeal regardless of whether the child has passed the Kent Test?

You may only appeal if you have applied to the school and subsequently been told that your application was not successful. You may then appeal this decision not to offer your son a place, regardless of whether the child has passed the test. Parents appealing for Year 7 following National Offer Day in March may only appeal if the school they are appealing to was one of the preferences on their secondary application form.

How do I evidence that my child meets the academic requirement?

If your child has passed his Kent Test, there is no requirement on you to show that he is of the required academic standard. Your job will be to convince the panel that the admission of your son will not prejudice the education of existing students. The school will argue that admitting him into an already full school will impact the learning of others. Parents will need to provide an argument that links the school with the needs – academic, pastoral, extra-curricular, geographical – of the child.

Where the child was not successful in the test, the parents will need to present an argument on two fronts. Firstly, as above, they will need to explain why their child should get a place when the year group is already full. Secondly they will need to show that the child is suited academically to a selective school. As a minimum, the panel will expect to see assessment data from KS1 onwards that shows the child to be working at a level akin to those students who were offered places automatically. Primary schools are very astute in judging a student's capacity to cope at a selective school, and written evidence from the Head Teacher/Class Teacher which categorically identifies the child as a grammar student will carry some weight at appeal. Conversely, the absence of support from the primary school may leave a large gap in the required evidence. Too frequently appellants arrive at appeal with insufficient data to support their case. The Clerk to the Panel provides information prior to appeal about the sort of evidence needed, and it is important that parents seek to provide this.

Shall I bring my child's work along?

No. The panel will not wish to see individual work.

Does my child attend the appeal?

No, the child should not attend.

What other evidence will be helpful?

The panel will look to evidence that shows that the child has a good work ethic, and that they have the independent learning skills to thrive in a fast-paced and challenging grammar curriculum. The child should be an avid reader and display literacy and numeracy ability commensurate with a child in the highest 25% of his cohort. They should be working in the top sets in their year group for both English and Maths. The panel will additionally look for evidence that shows the child to enjoy wider interests that fit the ethos of the school.

Do my child's scores in the Kent Test influence the judgement?

Very much so. Whilst there are instances where strong mitigating circumstances explain a significant underperformance in the test, in most cases appellants will attempt to show that a single score in the test is uncharacteristic of their child's true ability. Successful appellants in the past would typically have in their favour two scores above the requirement, and were able to provide compelling evidence in favour of the one weaker result.

What if specific circumstances hampered my child's performance in the test?

This is the main reason we have appeals. There will always be children whose ability to perform to their usual standard is affected by other influences such as emotional or medical issues. Panels are very experienced in determining the extent to which a child's medical or emotional concern affected their performance in the test. Some appellants have genuine traumatic circumstances that have clearly had an impact on their child's performance, but the panel will still need to see evidence that shows their performance in school typically is in keeping with the standard required of a grammar student. Where relevant, medical evidence from a recognised professional will need to be shown to the panel.

Will the panel consider my child's Special Educational Needs?

Yes, the panel will consider these. In some appeals in the past, panels have been swayed by appellants who were able to show rapid progress due to intervention following a recent diagnosis. Additionally, the appellants were able to show that the child was working at the required level. The key is to be able to show that the child, given the intervention needed, functions at a level in keeping with other students at the point they enter the school. The panel would not consider a child's capacity to cope in a grammar school in the future. They would expect that the child is suited to a fast-paced and challenging curriculum from the outset.

How do children who have been given a place through appeal cope in comparison to those automatically selected?

There is no significant trend in the data to show that appeal students are less likely to succeed. Many appeal students are determined to show they acquired a place on merit and this can mean they bring with them very healthy learning behaviour. This on its own is not enough, and it is important that students gaining places are able to cope. Students unable to meet the academic demands of a grammar school frequently become demoralised and soon realise it is not the place for them. Parents should appeal for their child only when they are sure that it is the right school. **The appeal process is there to safeguard against injustices in the automatic process and not a means to pursue a place to its ultimate conclusion.**

Can I appeal to GGS if I live out of area?

Yes, that is the entitlement. Parents should consider carefully the wider implications of sending a child to a school remote from their own community. The effect of longer journeys annexed with the impact of being remote from developing friendship groups, an inhibited capacity to take part in the extra-curricular life of the school and the financial burden of additional travel need all to be considered rationally.

Does where I live influence a decision?

Panels will consider all appeals on their individual merits, but are generally mindful of the School's Admissions Arrangements which afford priority to local students.

Who sits on the panel?

The panel consists of a chairperson and two further panelists. Each has completed statutory training, and collectively has a range of expertise and experience that facilitate informed judgements based on evidence presented. The panel is independent and must not contain members who have any current or historic connection with the school. Additionally, there is a clerk to the panel, who is not involved in decision-making. The clerk ensures that legal protocols are adhered to and provides guidance to parents and the panel before and during the process.

What happens at appeal?

Appeals last 30 minutes during which the School will present its case explaining why the student was not offered a place. The school representative will then be questioned by the panel. Parents then present their case and are themselves questioned by the panel to elaborate on the evidence presented. Both sides will have their chance to summarise before the appeal is brought to an end.

Do parents find out there and then about a place?

No, the clerk to the panel will contact the parents in writing following the completion of all other appeals.

When do appeals take place?

Appeals will be held in May, June and July. In-year appeals are heard as soon as is possible after the appeal is lodged.

Can I bring family or friends to the appeal to support me?

Yes, this is fine. A parent appealing on their own may wish to have at their side a family member or friend to provide support. There is no requirement for the accompanying adult to speak or to give evidence.