

Following guidance published by the Department of Education, the Trafford Grammar Schools CEM Consortium will be testing later than usual this year. The FAQs below outline more information and the full government guidance can be found here; https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/903437/Selection_testing_guide_2020_FINAL1.pdf

Why is the test date later this year?

Schooling has been severely disrupted for children since March. Most Year 5 children will have had little or no time at school from 20 March until September. The Trafford Grammar Schools CEM Consortium considered several options but did not consider it fair for these children to take the test at the usual time. Testing later will allow more time for children to settle back into school. Later testing will also allow schools more time to get used to the new working practices with more children on site.

When is the test date for 2020?

Testing will take place on Monday 19 October, 2020. Depending on social distancing guidelines, we may also need to test on Tuesday 20 October, 2020.

Alternative arrangements were made for this summer's GCSE and A level exams. Why are the Trafford Grammar schools not following a similar approach?

Our entrance examination is designed to assess ability rather than current academic achievement so it is not comparable with GCSEs and A levels. The alternative arrangements made for GCSEs and A levels in Summer 2020 were an extremely complex process and one supported by statistical information held nationally about individual students and schools in relation to the qualifications being assessed. These temporary arrangements have required extensive effort from secondary teachers and leaders, the implications of which have not been fully assessed. The Trafford Grammar schools would not wish to inflict a similar position on primary colleagues and also does not have the same regulatory powers as the Department for Education, Ofqual and the JCQ.

How are you going to ensure testing is safe for children?

We want testing to be as safe as possible for children, families and the staff involved. Testing will be carried out in line with government guidance current at the time of testing. This is likely to include measures concerning social distancing and additional cleaning practices. This may mean fewer children are tested in each session so that desks can be further apart. Students must ensure they have all the necessary equipment themselves as it is unlikely they will be able to borrow equipment from the school. Similarly, we will be managing drop off and pick up times very carefully; escorts to the centres will be limited to one parent/carer and there will be no area for parents to congregate or gather outside the school. Further details about social distancing measures and procedures will be sent to parents/carers as we approach the test date.

My child has been preparing for testing in September. Isn't it unfair that they now have to wait longer until they are tested?

We do not support excess preparation for the entrance examination. We provide familiarisation materials in the Summer term and all children have the opportunity to access this material from the school website.

Are the tests going to be changed?

No, the format of the format of the test will be the same as in previous years. The length of the test papers will be the same as previously.

How will the test be fair given the experience of learning children have experienced since March has been so variable?

The CEM entrance examination assesses ability rather than current achievement. All children will have experienced some disruption to their education. How much learning they will have been able to do will vary and some disadvantaged children may have been particularly badly affected. This is the key reason why we want to test later this year as this will allow all children to settle back into schooling and back into learning.

Will we receive test results before the CAF deadline of 31 October?

This is very unlikely. We acknowledge that late testing will mean that parents/carers may need to make choices about secondary schools for their children without knowing whether their children will necessarily meet the academic standards required for selective schools. We advise therefore, that if you have registered to sit the entrance examination, you complete the CAF (Common Application Form) with your preference of grammar school. You will also need to use your final preference to allocate a local non-selective school. This will improve your chances of your child being allocated a preferred school if they do not demonstrate sufficiently high academic ability in the assessment process for a grammar school.

What if my child is ill or isolating on the day of the test?

Candidates who are unwell/self-isolating will not be permitted to attend the test on the 19th October. As with our usual procedures, you will need to contact your test centre directly. They will provide advice on the next steps and how your child can sit the test at a later date.