

Guidelines for requesting reasonable adjustments for children taking the Buckinghamshire Secondary Transfer Test

as agreed with the test provider, GL Assessment Ltd, by The Buckinghamshire Grammar Schools (TBGS)

Important notes for all headteachers

- As the Secondary Transfer Test is not compulsory, you should discuss with parents whether a grammar school would be suitable for the child and whether they should therefore take the Secondary Transfer Test.
- If you go on to apply for adjustments for a child, the information you provide on the online form is essential as it enables the Panel to build an accurate picture of the child's day-to-day needs and functioning. Without this information, the Panel will not be able to fully consider the application and adjustments are likely to be refused.
- Professional reports should be included where available. Where a report has not been obtained, or is historic, please supplement with relevant in-school test scores (such as reading and spelling age etc) if possible.
- Given that the Secondary Transfer Test is a multiple-choice assessment, not all adjustments requested linked to normal ways of working may be appropriate, e.g. extra time usually needed for writing answers.
- Buckinghamshire LA and Partner schools can access the application form on SchoolsWeb, out of county Headteachers should request the form by [contacting us](#).
- When granted, many reasonable adjustments will require children to be tested separately from their classmates. This may also mean a different time or date for testing. Please ensure that the parent is aware of this before making an application.
- **The Panel is unlikely to agree to an adjustment that does not already form part of a child's normal way of working unless there has been a very recent diagnosis.**

DEADLINE

The latest deadline for applications is **7 June 2024**. This gives time for the Panel to consider the application and make a decision in time for testing to take place in September. Any requests received after the deadline will not be considered unless there are exceptional reasons for not being able to meet the deadline (out of area candidates registering between the 7 and 14 June 2024 will be considered as meeting the deadline).

Where a timely application for adjustments has not been made and it is brought to the attention of the Admissions and Transport Team that the child may have a condition that could impact other children taking the test, the child will not be tested in a group setting until further information has been considered. This also applies where an invitation to testing has already been sent. It may be necessary for the child to be tested separately on a different date or at a different location.

Out of county Headteachers only - If you indicate on the form that you will be able to test the child at your school if the child's adjustments are agreed, we will send their test papers to you in early September. You can then administer the test either on the main test dates (10th and 12th September) or as soon as possible/convenient after. Once testing is complete, you will need to return all the test materials to us using a pre-paid envelope. Being tested at their own school is preferable for all children and your support in doing this is greatly appreciated.

Possible adjustments available for the Secondary Transfer Test

Adjustments available for the Secondary Transfer Test may not match what is available for other tests and examinations, including other 11+ tests.

Adjustment	What can be done	Expected evidence	Appropriate for	Other considerations
Extra time	10% or 25% (maximum) extra time may be agreed for one or more sections of the test. Extra time may be offered for individual sections or for all, depending on need. It is unlikely that extra time would be permitted on the non-verbal section. New for 2025 entry – test administration for extra time will now be carried out via audio as for standard time testing. CDs/audio files for children granted 10 and 25% extra time will be supplied for testing.	Reading ability and speed should be provided. Standard scores will be considered in conjunction with other information about the child. The panel would expect to see scores skewed towards the low/very low range e.g. around 60-70, to consider the maximum amount of extra time. Scores clustered around the low average range (around 85) normally indicate 10% extra time being awarded.	Children with significant physical, motor or vision difficulties. Children with severe dyspraxia or dyslexia.	If agreed with other adjustments, the child would likely need to be tested separately and may need to be tested on a date later than the main test dates.

Adjustment	What can be done	Expected evidence	Appropriate for	Other considerations
Separate invigilation *	Child is tested separately, in a quiet environment, that reflects the child's usual way of working in tests.	Clear evidence of need. Always offered with other specific adjustments –breaks, use of a prompter, scribe or reader, for example.	*Children offered other adjustments that would potentially disturb the rest of the testing cohort. Children with attention difficulties. Children with particularly high levels of anxiety. Children with a verbal or physical tic. Children with a formal diagnosis of misophonia.	If agreed, the child may need to be tested on a date later than the main test dates.
Break(s) during the test **	Supervised breaks during the test achieved by pausing the audio file between sections or providing verbal invigilation. Frequency to be determined by the SENDco based on the child's normal way of working. During breaks, the child must not have access to the question booklet or answer sheet. The child should be accompanied if they leave the test room.	Evidence to confirm child regularly needs breaks during class tests.	Children with physical, motor or vision difficulties that cause fatigue. Children with conditions which impair concentration. Children with social, mental health and emotional needs. Children with Type 1 diabetes. **	If agreed, the child would need to be tested separately and may need to be tested on a date later than the main test dates.
Prompter	The role of a prompter is to keep the pupil on task, e.g. they may tap on the desk (or the pupil's arm) or say the pupil's name or remind the pupil to focus on the question they are working on. Prompters may not read the questions or help the pupil answer them.	Evidence to confirm regular use of a prompter in the classroom.	Children with severe attention difficulties or Obsessive Compulsive Disorder where a child may keep reviewing a question and not move on.	If agreed, the child would need to be tested separately and may need to be tested on a date later than the main test dates.

Adjustment	What can be done	Expected evidence	Appropriate for	Other considerations
Enlarged question booklet	<p>A standard enlargement for all question types can be provided in line with RNIB recommendations.</p> <p>This will be 14pt on 18pt leading ('leading' is the space between the lines of type). Cream paper versions can be provided. Practice Test papers are also available in this format.</p> <p>The font used is Frutiger as recommended by RNIB.</p>	Support of VI teacher.	Children with a vision impairment, dyslexia, dexterity difficulties, those who are red/green colour blind	<p>Provision of a suitable work area in which to take the test as the booklets will be B4.</p> <p>Suitable lighting.</p> <p>In all cases, where an enlarged version is used, the child should mark their answers in the test booklet and then school staff should transfer the answers to the standard over-printed answer sheet. The enlarged booklet and transcribed answer sheet should both be sent for marking. If the school is unable to transcribe answers, contact the Admissions Team for alternative arrangements to be made.</p> <p>Answer sheets should not be enlarged. Where a larger font than 14pt is generally required by a child then a VI specialist teacher needs to evaluate and advise whether the test can be sat in whole or in part or whether the child should be dis-applied from all or part of the test. (Where a child is dis-applied from part of the test see Section 4.)</p>
Scribe	A scribe is an adult (usually the child's LSA) who completes the answer sheet on the child's behalf and at their direction.	Evidence to confirm regular use of a scribe in the classroom.	Children with severe motor or vision difficulties.	Child would need to be tested separately and may be tested on a different date to the main test dates. Child may alternatively require enlarged test materials – see above.
Adjustment	What can be done	Expected evidence	Appropriate for	Other considerations

Reader	A reader is an adult who can read the test instructions to a child. They can also read out test questions <u>apart from</u> in the comprehension section of the English part of the test where both the text and the questions should be read by the child only.	Evidence to confirm regular use of a reader in the classroom.	Children with reading difficulties which might affect access to the test.	If agreed, the child would need to be tested separately and may need to be tested on a date later than the main test dates.
Coloured overlay/filter lenses	Overlays and lenses used in class can be used during the test	Confirmation of usage in class.	Children with dyslexia or those with vision impairments.	Provision of a suitable work area in which to take the test. Suitable lighting.
Verbal invigilation	All test centres are provided with transcripts of the test instructions given in the audio files. For verbal invigilation, the invigilator reads out the instructions from the transcript to the pupil. Verbal invigilation can be authorised for children with particular needs. It may also be requested where a school would find verbal invigilation preferable for a child that needs multiple breaks in the test.		This may be appropriate for pupils with a hearing impairment.	
Other	Requests for other reasonable adjustments will be considered in the light of the evidence provided.	Appropriate evidence will be necessary.		

* Where the only adjustment required is for a child to be tested separately, Buckinghamshire LA and Partner schools can facilitate this without making an application for adjustments. Please note the details on the Invigilator's Record Form.

** Where a child with Type 1 diabetes attends a Buckinghamshire LA or Partner school, they can be tested separately and have breaks to rest/check levels/eat or drink etc (during which the clock is stopped until the child is completely ready to resume) without the need for an application for adjustments to be made. Please note the details on the Invigilator's Record Form. If the child has any additional needs that might require other adjustments, an application will need to be made.

Arrangements for children with a vision impairment

Children able to access standard print or 14pt

If a child with a vision impairment is able to access normal print or font size 14pt, they will be able to completely sit both test papers. In this case extra time would be provided and they would be tested outside of the main test room. Enlarged answer sheets cannot be provide so if children use the enlarged 14pt version of the test papers they will write answers in the test booklets instead and their answers will need to be transcribed on to their answer sheet for them.

If, due to their particular vision impairment, a child is unable to access the non-verbal reasoning section of the test this will be taken into account when the child's results are standardised.

Children requiring print sizes larger than 14pt

If a child's vision impairment is such that they require an enlargement **in excess of** font size 14pt, they will be unable to access the test. Instead, the child's school placement will be considered through an enhanced Secondary Transfer Review Process. This is a multi-agency decision (involving school and educational professionals who know the child) to consider if the child should be qualified for grammar school as part of the normal secondary transfer arrangements made to enable pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to move up to the appropriate secondary school. Evidence of academic ability will need to be gathered and considered (e.g. teacher assessments). The VI support teacher will provide a report. Other nationally standardised academic evidence may be used to support the application or, if this is not available, an Educational Psychologist may be asked to undertake some standardised testing with the child. If the decision is to agree that in principle a grammar school can be named, then following the meeting, the decision should be provided in writing to the Admissions and Transport Team. At this point it is not necessary for the individual grammar school to be named. If the decision is to agree that in principle a grammar school is not appropriate to be named, then the child is not deemed qualified and a parent may request that this decision is reviewed at the Selection Review stage.

The Legal Framework, Reasonable Adjustment Duty and relevant definitions

The Legal Framework

The Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”), places a duty upon Local Authorities (“LA”), academies and schools not to discriminate against disabled people or pupils in their access to education. The relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010 replace the relevant provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 that previously applied.

Discrimination may occur by:

- A person treating a disabled pupil or prospective pupil less favourably than it treats or would treat others because of that pupil’s disability; or
- A person treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of the disabled person’s disability where the treatment in question is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim
- A person applying to a disabled person a provision, criterion or practice which it also applies to persons who do not share that disability, but which puts the disabled person at a particular disadvantage, unless that is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim
- Failing to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled pupils or prospective pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with their non-disabled peers. This is known as the ‘reasonable adjustments’ duty.

Three aspects of admissions are covered by the duty:

- In the admission arrangements and rules (and the operation of these rules);
- In the terms of any offer of a place;
- By refusing or deliberately omitting to accept an application for admission to a school by virtue of that person’s disability.

Note that the Equality Act 2010 expressly provides that a person does NOT discriminate, so far as relating to disability, only by applying a permitted form of selection. Selection for admission for a grammar school education by way of academic testing is an example of a permitted form of selection under section 28B of the Act and is therefore in accordance with the Education Act 1996 and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

However, the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils applies to a permitted form of selection. This may include making reasonable adjustments to the assessment process.

The duty on schools (and in the matter of the Secondary Transfer Testing process only, the LA on behalf of The Buckinghamshire Grammar Schools (TBGS)) to make reasonable adjustments is anticipatory.

The Reasonable Adjustment Duty

The LA and schools, including academies, are required to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled pupils.

There are potentially two exceptions to this requirement - the provision of auxiliary aids and services and the removal or alteration of a physical feature.

The legislation is constructed in this way because the Children and Families Act 2014 makes provision to meet the educational and health needs of disabled children, if the disability inhibits learning; and the LA and schools are required to plan over time to increase the accessibility of schools to disabled pupils, including making changes to the physical environment of schools. They are not required to make physical adaptations that would incur unreasonable costs and would affect the provision of education for other pupils.

Dyslexia definition

For the purpose of the Buckinghamshire Secondary Transfer Test the following definition of Dyslexia (taken from the Rose Review, 2009) is used:

- Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.
- Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.
- Dyslexia occurs across a range of intellectual abilities.
- It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.
- Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor coordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.