CHATHAM & CLARENDON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Year 7 September 2027 Appeals - Information

Why do you have to appeal? You are appealing because we have NOT offered your child a place. You are not appealing against the Kent Test result which is why you cannot appeal until after you have made an application to us and received our decision NOT to offer a place.

If you put us as a preference on the Secondary Common Application Form (SCAF) you will receive our decision when you are sent the Secondary School Allocation for your child by the Local Authority on 1st March 2027. If you did not put us as a preference, you will need to make an application and receive our decision before you can appeal (please contact me for further details on when and how to apply in March 2027).

We might not have offered a place because your child has not been assessed as suitable for a grammar school or although your child has been assessed as suitable for grammar school, we do NOT have enough places available for everyone that wants to come to us. The School Allocation letter will tell you why you have not been given a place with all the schools you put as a preference.

We would like to admit any child who would like to come to us but as a grammar school we are constrained by law to only admit those who have met the academic requirements for a grammar school. At present, that is only those who have been assessed as grammar by the Kent Test, including by the Headteacher appeal process or by our own test in other years.

We can only admit up to our Published Admission Number (PAN) - this number is normally 180 although this can be increased on request from Kent County Council (KCC) due to lack of available grammar places for all selective students at time of allocation in March,

Why do you have to appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel? If we do not offer your child a place at our School, then you have the legal right to challenge our decision, however the School cannot change the decision. ONLY an Independent Appeal Panel can decide to overrule our decision and instruct us to admit your child. An Independent Appeal Panel has nothing to do with the School and normally there are 3 members of the Panel - in law at least 1 member must have worked in Education (this ensures that the Panel has some understanding of education) and at least 1 must NOT have worked in Education (this ensures that the Panel considers all aspects not just educationally). As the Panel members are independent, they are not influenced in their decision by anything other than the EVIDENCE presented for the hearing. There are strict guidelines in law which govern how an Independent Appeal Panel should be conducted etc and this can be found on the Department of Education website under School Admission Appeals. There must be a Clerk to the Panel, whose role is to make sure that the law is followed including taking notes, offering advice to the panel members, and notifying all parties of the result of the appeal within the timescales required.

What does the Panel do? Each member of the Panel, not the Clerk, will consider our evidence as to why we made the decision not to offer your child a

place AGAINST your evidence as to why you think your child should be offered a place and decide as to whether your appeal should be UPHELD (your evidence has outweighed ours) or NOT UPHELD (our evidence has outweighed yours). The Panel's decision is then made by a majority of UPHELD or NOT UPHELD. A Panel's decision is binding on all parties and can only be changed by a judicial review – however should you feel that the Panel was not conducted according to the rules you can ask for a maladministration review to be undertaken. For our School that would be through the Education Funding Agency, and you will be given the information on this process with the appeal panel decision if relevant ie. NOT UPHELD.

How do you appeal? You cannot start the actual request for an appeal until you receive the Secondary School Allocation letter for your child on 1st March 2027. You are then entitled to appeal to any School you placed as a preference on the SCAF which has not offered a place. You can appeal to as many Schools as you like, provided they were a preference, but you must appeal individually to each one. The form you need to complete should be available on the Kent County Council website and normally on the individual School website as well. You need to follow the instructions on what to do with the form for each School. I will update, on 1st March, the Admission page of our website on how and where to send the form. A decision will be taken before 1st March on how the appeals will be heard. At present a request for an appeal, with the supporting evidence must be scanned or emailed in a word document to me. I would therefore advise that you prepare your appeal, expecting to send everything electronically.
For information: **To be sure of your appeal being heard at the earliest possible time you should lodge your appeal by Tuesday 13th April 2027. However, you are entitled to appeal anytime until the end of your child's Year 7 ie August 2028.**

What happens next? Once the initial deadline, 13th April 2027, for Year 7 September 2027 appeals has passed you will receive an email acknowledgement of your appeal request from me which will outline the next steps in the process. As I am expecting the appeal hearings to be conducted as at present the next steps are likely to be:

'I will inform the administrator to the appeal panel to include you in the first appeal hearing date available, please note that this is likely to be mid May. The administrator will then be in direct contact with you approximately 10 days before the hearing date with the details of the hearing and information on how you can submit further evidence eg school report, letter of support from current school for the panel to consider. Please do not send anything else to me as I cannot guarantee that the panel will receive it in time.'

Approximately 10 days before your hearing you will then receive the email from the administrator which will include the date and time for the virtual hearing, via Microsoft teams, and provide an electronic link for you to access all the appeal papers including the school case. Read the School Case – you can then ask me for clarification as you may be able to send in additional comments. IMPORTANT - check that everything, your case, you have already emailed me previously is there. You can then 'upload' any further EVIDENCE you have collected – please note that you will only be given a few days from the date of the email to upload new EVIDENCE to enable the panel to read it all before the hearing. Check your junk mail in case your computer system has sent it there.

You will be sent the link for connecting to 'teams' for your hearing shortly before the date of your appeal hearing.

What happens at the hearing? The hearing must follow a specific process which the Chair of the Panel will explain at the start of the hearing. This is:
Introduction of those at the hearing, how the hearing will progress and how you will find out decision of the panel.
I will then be asked to 'present' the School case as to why we did not offer a place; the panel will ask me questions on the case which includes some statutory questions to ensure that our decision was made correctly and you will be offered the opportunity to also ask questions, on the case as well.
Then you will be asked to 'present' your case and the panel will ask you questions (listen carefully to what they are asking and answer as best you can as they are trying to assist your case by clarifying your EVIDENCE. They are not trying to catch you out but to ensure that they have enough information to make a decision.)
I am also offered the opportunity to ask you questions (I may or may not ask questions or clarify something if asked).

You are then asked if you have said all you wish to (at this point please take a minute to check you are happy that you have said all you wanted to say) and then I am asked to sum up (I just restate that we could not offer a place) and then you are asked, in a few words to sum up (at that point you cannot add anything new its just to give you the final word).
The hearing then ends and we both sign out. The panel then makes its decision without you, or I present.

What should you include in your appeal? When you complete the Appeal Form it asks for the reason for your appeal. You can state please see attached or use the space provided – the decision is yours. I have seen forms simply completed with bullet points or with full sentences. It is your choice however please remember that the panel members will be reading it along with all the other appeals and you are not being assessed on your writing skills they want to know your reason for appeal and understand the EVIDENCE to support your reasons as clearly as possible.
Tell the panel why the Kent Test assessment is wrong and make sure you state why you think your child should be at a grammar school.
Make sure you state if there has been any disruption to your child's schooling and/or teaching eg school is in or has been in special measures; teacher changes; illness; moving school etc.
If something has affected your child outside of school, then tell the panel. You do not need to go into detail but make sure you focus on how it affected your child either on the day of test or leading up to it.
If the scores in the Kent Test were not your child's best, you need to consider why not. Did they finish the paper? Did they have a problem with timing? Did they guess several of the answers? Did they forget to turn a page? Were they unwell? Did they panic? Understand what (if anything) went wrong on the test date, make a note of it, speak to their school eg were school aware of problem, doctor's appointment etc. If something went wrong on the day of the test make sure the school mentions it in their letter, if they are aware of what went wrong.
If your child has specific learning difficulties which may or may not have been known at the time of the test you need to explain to the panel what the difficulties are AND the impact on your child's learning and performance in tests. If possible, get the current school to test your child with and without any support they need so that the panel can understand the difference it makes.
If there are no reasons, or just a blip in performance, then the panel won't have any EVIDENCE to ignore the Kent Test assessment. They will then ONLY be able to consider the levels your child was working on, at the time of the test and afterwards eg Year 4&5 reports; letter from current school, see below, and decide based on that. If the scores in the Kent Test were your child's best, then you will need the evidence in the current school's letter to state clearly how they have improved since the test.
You can talk about what your child does which is not academic but remember the panel must have EVIDENCE of academic ability – an appeal will be successful based on the evidence of academic ability and reasons as to why the Kent Test Result was not assessed as grammar. The panel is happy to know about the 'whole' child, and this might be useful for the panel to understand how the child will cope with grammar school but if there is no academic evidence then the appeal is likely to fail!
You must also include why you think Chatham & Clarendon Grammar is the right school for your child – make sure you refer to us not another School you are appealing for and explain what it is specifically about us that is right for your child. If the panel decides that more students could go to grammar than we have places available or the panel thinks we can take, they then have to decide who will be given a place. The information you provide on why Chatham & Clarendon is best for your child may help them decide.

An example of reason for appeal in bullet point:
I am appealing for a place at Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School as:
1) Kent test result does not reflect true academic ability – my evidence is: (you can then refer to the evidence you are including eg please see copy of current School letter; copy of School Reports; copy of support from tutor etc)
2) On the day of the Kent Test – eg my child was nervous, not well (please see comment confirming this in the current School supporting letter; doctors note/appt etc), during the test this happened (please see comment confirming this etc), when I picked up my child from the test they said eg it went well, I

didn't finish it etc
3) Leading up to the Kent Test – eg CoVid disruption meant that my child did not attend school from …., home learning …., family issues etc etc
4) Why Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School – eg single sex teaching, curriculum on offer, sibling attending etc
5) Outside of school life my child enjoys/attends - eg music lesson where they have shown determination to improve especially in reading music (please see letter of support from his tutor)
Please see my supporting evidence.

EVIDENCE? You also need to email me the EVIDENCE you wish the panel to consider along with the appeal form. Details on what format this should be, will be on the website from 1st March 2027. **Please do NOT send work as the panel will not look at it. Your child's school will provide the academic evidence by stating in their letter the levels the student is attaining!**

As far as what EVIDENCE you should provide is your decision. The panel will believe what you tell them however for them to appreciate the degree of the effect on the result of the Kent Test for your child then the more detailed evidence, they can see the better eg if your child is ill on the day of the test – if the school confirm in the letter that they were not at their best then the panel can understand that this might have significantly affected performance which would address concerns over a low score. If the school does not mention it the effect is lessened.

The main academic EVIDENCE will come from your child's current school normally in a letter. The panel will want to consider the levels your child was working on, at the time of the test and afterwards eg Year 4 & 5 reports: letter from current school. **All the Schools in the area understand what they need to provide however you must ask them for a letter.**

You need to try to look at the EVIDENCE from your child's current school objectively. Make sure it gives clear and definite statements concerning your child's ability – if it says 'hopefully' achieve then the panel will probably NOT be that 'hopeful' that they will achieve that level. If the school can't be definite ask them to say what the child is working at now – at least that tells the panel something definite. See if they have any results of other tests your child has taken eg CATs – Cognitive Ability Tests some schools use these. If they don't then how do, they assess their students. Make sure you understand what the scores mean – if you do then the panel will too. You might want to refer to specific bits of their letter to emphasize your case.

For information: Our School case states we could not offer a place and our EVIDENCE is:

If the student is selective but not awarded a place as we are oversubscribed – details of how many offered place; details of why your child was not offered place; details on why we cannot offer more places.

If the student is not selective – details of the result of the Kent Test and if we are full details on why we cannot offer more places.

AND REMEMBER

The panel can only consider what you give them – they do not know the area or anything about your child or their current school. If you don't tell them then they won't know, and it may make a difference to their decision. Don't try to guess what they want to know it's YOUR appeal you need to feel that you have done your best especially if the appeal is not successful.

Panel members are not all teachers and even if they were, they may not know what the current teaching standards are. Make sure that the EVIDENCE from the current school explains in their letter what the assessment means in relation to an average child and what your child is achieving in comparison.

The individual scores your child gets in the Kent Test are important and the further away they are the stronger the EVIDENCE you will need for the panel to ignore the result and tell us we can admit them. **Children with low scores have been successful just as children with scores only a few marks away have not. It is always about the weight of the EVIDENCE not the amount. Weight of EVIDENCE does not mean the physical amount! It means how much does it support your reasons for appealing.** For example, if a child was taken out of the test room because they were upset and could not continue with test AND the School mentions the incident in its letter then clearly the child's test result will be more affected than a child who was given a tissue quickly with no mention in the letter.

What can you do now? Start making notes on what you want to include in the appeal – letter from school, clubs etc. Remember to include what you want to say – it doesn't have to be perfect. Baseline your child's current academic ability level asap ie speak to their school. Explain to your child that their performance over rest of Year 6 will be key ie they need to show that they are academically able to go to Grammar School. Appeals are unlikely to take place before middle of May so still plenty of time to improve.

Support your child over next few months. Speak to current school in February - Will they support your appeal? Ask them to write a letter for you. Be honest with yourself. Consider which is best top of High school against bottom of Grammar – but remember it depends on your child. Someone who thrives on a challenge will be better at the bottom maybe? Someone who thrives at the top might be better at the top of a High school.

After offer day, in March – accept the high school place, a successful appeal is not guaranteed so secure an alternative. Remember you can always say 'no thank you' if you win your appeal!

Make sure you send a completed appeal request form, by the deadline, individually to ALL schools you want to appeal to! Remember if you haven't got a place in a school that you put on your SCAF you can appeal to them AND you can appeal to as many schools as you have applied to. If you didn't put us on your SCAF and you want to appeal, then speak to me in March. You will have to make an application in April. An appeal is only relevant for that individual School, you may be unsuccessful at one but successful at another. If you are successful at more than one, you then choose which to accept.

Include all the EVIDENCE you have at the time with your appeal form. You may be able to send a small amount of additional evidence, eg updated letter from current school just before the appeal hearing however you MUST send the majority of your case with the appeal form. There have been examples in the last couple of years of evidence not getting to the panel in time if sent in later than the appeal form.

Whilst I am always happy to discuss your appeal, I cannot give specific advice or check what you are submitting; **remember it is the panel members who decide, not me or anyone else at the School**.

REMEMBER THE APPEAL IS YOUR APPEAL AND ONLY YOU CAN DECIDE WHAT TO INCLUDE!

Finally, please remember that this is not your only chance for your child to join our school as they can sit an admission test at the end of Year 7 for a Year 8 place in September 2028. We have several students join us in this way each year who soon settle down as if they had been with us from the beginning.

Please email me with any query on the above.

Mrs S Hurrell
Admission Registrar
Email: registrar@ccgrammarschool.co.uk