



6th October 2020

Dear Head Teacher

The Heads of the London 11+ Consortium are very aware of the anxiety this pandemic has caused for families, particularly amongst Year 6 children seeking to move to their senior school. The worries surrounding lost teaching time and 11+ preparation are understandable. I am writing to explain the measures the fourteen schools of the Consortium have taken to address those concerns and provide a fair and reassuring path onwards.

You will be aware that the London 11+ Consortium was established to combat the anxiety and stress engendered in Year 6 children by having to sit individual entrance tests for every school. By agreeing to one common assessment paper, we enabled candidates to be considered by up to fourteen schools simultaneously. The Consortium's assessment paper is bespoke and unique. It is adapted to cater for the whole ability range of our pupil profile, accessible to all but challenging the most able, and it offers a further opportunity for children to shine.

We have considered our options carefully, given the worsening national picture. Given the pressure on space, many large London schools are opting for the ISEB Common Pre-Test, a two and a half hour online assessment taken in the candidate's current school. For this year, Godolphin and Latymer will be acting independently of the Consortium, and will also be using the ISEB Common Pre-test. Dr Ramsey is writing to feeder schools and registered prospective parents to explain the change.

Most senior schools are bringing their exams forward to be held in November and December. We are conscious this might present a considerable strain on young children – and on your own school. We are particularly aware of the different school and home situations and of the varied learning experiences of our candidates during lockdown. We have therefore decided that the most fair and supportive decision is to continue with our plan to host the assessments on the published date of Friday 8th January, inviting candidates into our senior schools to sit the paper in hard copy in a Covid-secure and socially distanced manner. Hosting the assessment after the 'firebreak' of the Christmas holiday may prove helpful, and it gives the children time to rest and prepare, as they expected. Retaining our own distinct, tailored, assessment provides another 'bite of the cherry'.

Candidates may be asked to attend at a different Consortium schools from the one they indicated so that the numbers are manageable, and we therefore wish to impress on parents that no advantage is gained by sitting the assessment in a favoured school. The

results will be shared with all Consortium schools for which the child is registered. Some schools may operate two sittings on 8th January, depending on capacity. We will write with details in due course. It will be vital that parents adhere to the timings which will be given to them to avoid congestion at our school gates.

We are hopeful that, since our assessment is held so early in January, most pupils will have been largely at home with their families over Christmas and so are more likely to be 'Covid-free'. We have a supplementary day on 12th January for any candidates who are unwell on the earlier date. Our offers will be sent to you on Thursday 11th February and to parents on Friday 12th, with an acceptance date of noon on Wednesday 3rd March.

We will include in the reference request a question regarding the amount and type of support your pupils were able to receive during lockdown, and one concerning the pupil's engagement. The Consortium has always set great store by both the reference and the interview, and we value your opinion highly, continuing to look for pupils' aptitudes in problem-solving, critical thinking and creativity. Each Consortium school will publish its own arrangements for interview in due course. If conditions prevent face-to-face interviews, these will be held online if possible.

We recognise that none of this is ideal or certain, but we are glad that we are able to support children's wellbeing with these measures. Whatever transpires, we are committed to considering the whole child and not simply her ability to pass an exam. Children will have had a wide range of educational experiences in the past few months, and we want to ensure that no child is disadvantaged. Your support in providing a full and fair reference for your pupils is so appreciated. Thank you very much.

With warm good wishes



Lucy Elphinstone

Chairman of the London 11+ Consortium on behalf of:

Mrs Lindsey Hughes, Channing School
Mr Charles Fillingham, Francis Holland School Regent's Park
Dr Frances Ramsey, The Godolphin and Latymer School
Mrs Amanda Leach, More House School
Mrs Zara Hubble, Northwood College
Mr Matthew Shoults, Notting Hill and Ealing High School
Mr Richard Tillett, Queen's College
Mrs Rosalynd Kamaryc, Queen's Gate School
Mrs Sarah Raffray, St Augustine's Priory
Mrs Alice Lucas, St Helen's School
Mrs Sarah Labram, St James Senior Girls' School
Mr Mark Webster, St Margaret's School
Mrs Vicky Bingham, South Hampstead High School