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Guidance

Key stage 2 tests: varying the test timetable

Information about how headteachers, or someone with delegated authority, can reschedule the key stage 2 tests.

From: **Standards and Testing Agency**

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Introduction

Key stage 2 (KS2) tests should be administered to the whole cohort on the days specified in the statutory timetable (section 3 of the KS2 assessment and reporting arrangements). In limited circumstances, pupils may be able to take a test at a different time, or on a different day, from the rest of the cohort. In exceptional circumstances, a school may need to reschedule a test for the whole cohort to a different day.

Schools can administer a test in multiple sittings between 7am and 7pm on the scheduled date, without seeking approval from the Standards and Testing Agency (STA).

Headteachers who apply to vary the test timetable will be asked to confirm that they believe:

- the content of the tests has remained confidential
- the pupil has not been in contact with any pupils who have already taken the tests
- the pupil has not had access to the test materials, for example via the internet or social media
- the pupil is in a fit physical and mental state to take the tests, particularly in cases where the pupil is returning to school after an illness or injury

Headteachers may need to contact the pupil's parents to confirm that the confidentiality of the tests has been maintained. If the headteacher is aware of any reason why these conditions cannot be confirmed, the pupil must not take the test. Instead, they should be marked as 'Absent' (A) on the test attendance register.

Failure to follow this guidance could result in a [maladministration investigation](#).

Administering a test in multiple sittings on the scheduled day

Schools may vary the start time of a test on the scheduled day if:

- the school needs to stagger the administration to accommodate the availability of staff or facilities to maintain social distancing
- the school has a large cohort and needs to administer the test in 2 or more sittings
- there are pupils who need readers, prompters, signers, translators or scribes and there are not enough staff to support them to take the test at the same time
- a pupil is not going to be in school at the time the rest of the cohort is taking the test
- a pupil is unwell when the rest of the cohort takes the test, but is in a fit state later in the day
- a pupil arrives late in school
- arrangements need to be made to support a pupil who arrives in school with an injury that affects their ability to take the test with the rest of the cohort

Headteachers must authorise all variations to the test timetable and

should be prepared to explain their arrangements if they receive a monitoring visit from the local authority (LA).

Administering a test after the scheduled day

Schools must submit an application for a timetable variation on the [Primary Assessment Gateway](#) to seek permission to move a test up to 5 school days after the date specified in the statutory timetable.

> The application form is available from Monday 14 February to Thursday 19 May (the final date that schools can administer mathematics paper 3).
>
> Schools are encouraged to submit applications for known, authorised absences as early as possible.

We will consider an application if a pupil:

- was absent on the scheduled test day due to illness or self-isolation due to COVID-19
- has an important appointment that cannot be rearranged, for example a hospital appointment, a court appearance, national or international sports participation or a funeral
- is observing a religious or cultural festival

We will also consider applications if the school:

- is being used as a polling station for local or general elections and it is not possible to continue with test administration in another part of the school
- must deal with an unforeseeable problem, for example flooding
- has a short working day, for example is a pupil referral unit

> If a pupil is absent, the school should administer the rescheduled test as soon as is practical after the pupil returns to school.

We will not allow timetable variations for:

- unauthorised absences
- family holidays

- school activities, for example staff training events or field trips
- temporary exclusions
- a pupil who started but did not complete a test, and has left test conditions

> Under no circumstances should a test be administered before the day specified in the statutory timetable.

If you are moving a test for the whole cohort, the headteacher must ask parents to help protect the confidentiality of the tests by ensuring that pupils do not have contact with pupils from other schools who have already taken the test or have access to test content via the internet or social media.

If an individual pupil is absent on the rescheduled test date, the school can reschedule the test for that pupil again, if it is still within the timetable variation period for the affected test.

If a pupil is absent on the day of a test and does not return within 5 school days, the school must mark the pupil as 'Absent' (A) on the test attendance register.

Making an application

> If a pupil is absent on the day of a test because of illness, the school should wait until they have returned before making an application. This is to ensure the pupil is in a fit state to take the test on the day and time stated.

During test week and the timetable variation period, schools should allow up to one hour for an application to be processed. The rescheduled test must not be administered until an application has been approved.

An email will be sent to the school when the application has been reviewed. Schools should log in to the Primary Assessment Gateway to check the status of the application as they may be asked to provide more information.

Pupils taking the test with a timetable variation should be marked as 'Attended' (✔) on the test attendance register once the test has been administered. They should not be marked as 'Absent' (A) or 'Taking the

test in a future year' (F).

Please see the [guidance on returning test scripts](#) for further instructions on attendance codes and how to store, pack and send timetable variation scripts for marking.

If a timetable variation application is rejected the pupil must not take the test.

Help and support

For general enquiries about timetable variations, contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or email assessments@education.gov.uk.

For further advice about how to use timetable variations to meet a pupil's specific needs, schools can use the 'Message us – access arrangements' form.

For general enquiries about timetable variations, schools and LAs can use the 'Message us – general enquiry' form.

Message us forms can be found in the 'Available activity' section of the [Primary Assessment Gateway](#).

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