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Guidance

Key stage 2 tests: special consideration guidance

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Overview

If a pupil is affected by extremely distressing circumstances in test week, or the weeks immediately before, the school can apply for special consideration of the pupil's results. Where the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) approves an application for special consideration, an adjustment will be made to the school's performance measures. The pupil's test result is not amended.

In exceptional circumstances, STA may approve whole cohort applications. However, if the reason for an application is an incident at the school, or in the local community, only pupils who are closely involved will be eligible.

Applications must only be made for pupils who:

- were in a fit physical and mental state to take the tests
- are working at the standard of the tests
- have completed the full key stage 2 (KS2) programme of study

Evidence

Within the application form, schools are asked what documentary evidence they have to support the application. Evidence could include, but is not restricted to:

- notes recorded in the pupil's records
- a letter confirming an appointment with social services or other welfare organisation
- a hospital appointment card or dates of hospital admission
- a public record of court proceedings

Schools are not required to submit the evidence with the application form, but an application may be rejected if the school cannot confirm they have documentary evidence to support it.

Maladministration

Schools could be subject to investigations of maladministration if they do not hold documentary evidence to support their special consideration applications.

Circumstances eligible for special consideration

Special consideration may be awarded where there is evidence that any of the following situations affected the pupil's performance at the time of the test:

- reason 1—bereavement involving a family member or close friend, with whom the pupil had frequent contact, within 12 months of the tests
- reason 2—the pupil, or a close family member, is diagnosed with a terminal illness in the 6 months before the tests. Or, the diagnosis of a terminal illness was made more than 6 months ago but the family member is approaching end of life at the time of the tests

- reason 3—a traumatic incident, or significant change in the pupil’s circumstances, occurred at the time of the tests or within the previous 2 weeks
- reason 4—the pupil, or a close family member, has suffered a life-changing injury or undergone life-changing surgery in the 6 months before the tests
- reason 5—a traumatic incident occurred in the 6 months before the tests and there was a related incident at the time of the tests or within the previous 2 weeks

Circumstances not eligible for special consideration

Special consideration does not apply when the pupil:

- has experienced the bereavement of a family member, or close friend, more than 12 months before the tests, unless there are ongoing proceedings such as an inquest or court case at the time of the tests
- has experienced the bereavement of somebody with whom they did not have regular contact
- has experienced the death of a pet—schools should consider making an application for a timetable variation
- has a family member who was diagnosed with a terminal illness more than 6 months before the tests, unless they are now receiving end of life care
- has a family member who underwent surgery or suffered an injury that did not cause a significant change to the pupil’s normal way of life
- is affected by a long-term situation and there has not been a related incident or change in circumstances at the time of the tests or within the previous 2 weeks
- has a sensory or physical disability or condition that prevents them from accessing the tests, even with the use of access arrangements (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-2-tests-access-arrangements>) or modified test materials
- is affected by illness or absence that has prevented them from being taught the full KS2 programme of study, or reduced their preparation for the tests
- is working below the standard of the test and should not have taken it
- is ill on a scheduled test day and not in a fit state to take the test—in these circumstances, schools should consider making an application for a timetable variation (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/key-stage-2-tests-how-to-apply-for-a-timetable-variation>)
- has a sudden, temporary illness—in these circumstances, the school could consider allowing a rest break, administering the test later the same day or making an application for a timetable variation
- has a minor injury, the effects of which could be dealt with by the use of access arrangements
- is suffering from stress or anxiety—in these circumstances, the school should consider whether the pupil is in a fit state to take the tests and, if so, use access arrangements to support them
- has spent time excluded from school, which has prevented them from being taught the full KS2 programme of study, or reduced their preparation for the tests
- has previously been educated at home or recently arrived from a different education system and needs time to adjust to the national curriculum
- is affected by the consequences of poor behaviour, including committing a crime, or being the subject of a criminal investigation

Schools should prepare for the tests using the KS2 test administration guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-2-tests-test-administration-guidance-tag>). Special consideration does not apply where an incident affected the preparation or administration of the test, for example:

- difficulties during the school year that may have affected preparations for the tests, such as disturbances caused by building work
- any incident at the time of the tests that could be managed by the use of a timetable variation, for example damage to the school building or flood
- any failure of the school to apply for access arrangements by the relevant deadline
- any failure of the school to implement previously agreed access arrangements
- the incorrect administration of a test, such as incorrect allocation of time, or errors made by the school when modifying or photocopying test papers
- a disturbance during a test, such as a fire alarm going off or a pupil causing a disturbance

Making an application

Schools can submit applications for special consideration in the 'Available activity' section of the Primary Assessment Gateway from Thursday 14 May until Friday 22 May.

This short video demonstrates how schools can make an application.



On the application form, you must:

- confirm that the pupil has taken all test papers for the subject
- select one of the eligible reasons
- provide details of when the circumstances occurred and how they affected the pupil

- state what documentary evidence you have to support the application (you do not need to submit the evidence itself)
- provide details of the relationship to the pupil (if the circumstances involve a family member or close friend)

Security of sensitive information

Only authorised STA staff will have access to the information provided in an application. STA will respond to all applications on the Primary Assessment Gateway, which is a secure website. If STA asks for further information about an application, you must provide it in the application form. Do not respond by other means of correspondence.

Local authorities and multi-academy trusts do not have access to schools' applications.

Receiving the outcome of your application

STA will confirm the outcome of completed applications by Monday 29 June.

The Primary Assessment Gateway generates an automated email when an application is submitted and a further email when the status changes. You can check your submitted applications in the 'My Activity' tab:

- the 'In progress' section includes applications awaiting a decision from STA
- the 'Outstanding activity' section includes applications reviewed by STA, which require further information from the school
- the 'Completed activity' section includes applications that have an outcome

If STA awards special consideration, it may not apply for all subjects.

Pupils' results

Schools will receive their pupils' KS2 test results in the Primary Assessment Gateway on Tuesday 7 July. Results include the total raw score achieved for each pupil, in each subject, and the corresponding scaled score.

Where special consideration is awarded, the pupil's scaled score will not be adjusted, but there will be a '+' sign to show that special consideration has been granted.

The page will show what the pupil actually achieved in the test and will state whether they met, or did not meet, the expected standard. The outcome field will show 'AS' (achieved the expected standard) or 'NS' (not achieved the expected standard) based on the scaled score achieved by the pupil before special consideration has been applied.

School accountability

While STA does not change a pupil's scaled score, the Department for Education (DfE) will take into account the fact that special consideration has been granted when calculating primary school performance measures.

When calculating school performance measures, DfE will add 3 points to a pupil's scaled score for each subject where special consideration is granted. The adjusted scaled scores are used to calculate the school's performance measures. This will apply to both attainment and progress measures. You can find more information about how results are reported in the performance tables in the accountability technical guide (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/primary-school-accountability>), or by contacting DfE.

DfE will cap adjusted scaled scores at the maximum score available for a test. For example, if a pupil's scaled score from the test is 118 then a scaled score of 120, the maximum scaled score on the tests, will be used for calculations in the performance tables.

If a pupil does not achieve the minimum number of raw score marks needed to be awarded a scaled score, their adjusted scaled score will be set to 80 and the minimum scaled score available for the test.

Reporting to parents

As STA does not report adjusted scaled scores for pupils who received special consideration, schools should consider how best to report test results to parents at the end of the summer term.

Schools should consider how representative the test results are of the pupil's abilities, as well as the circumstances that led to the application for special consideration. They should also use their observations of the pupil's work and any in-school assessments over the academic year to report the pupil's achievements to parents.

Getting help

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