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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 (KS2) tests.

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## Introduction

KS2 tests should be administered to the whole cohort on the days specified in the statutory timetable (section 3.3 of the [KS2 assessment and reporting arrangements](#)).

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

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. Under exceptional circumstances, a school may need to reschedule a test for the whole cohort to a different day.

## Administering a test in multiple sittings on the scheduled 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). Schools should be prepared to explain the arrangements if they receive a monitoring visit from the local authority.

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
- the school has a large cohort and needs to administer the test in 2 or more sittings
- there are pupils who need scribes, readers, prompters,

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signers or translators 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

In all these circumstances, the headteacher must ensure that pupils taking tests later in the school day do not have any opportunity to access test materials or discuss test content with other pupils or staff who have been involved with earlier sittings of tests.

## **Administering a test after the scheduled day**

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

Schools are encouraged to submit applications for known, authorised absences as early as possible.

We will consider an application if a pupil:

- 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 or fire
- has been issued with a notice to close because of health and safety concerns
- has a short working day, for example is a pupil referral unit or alternative provision

We will not allow timetable variations for:

- unauthorised pupil absences
- staff absences
- family holidays
- school activities, for example staff training events or field trips
- temporary exclusions during the test period
- a pupil who started but did not complete a test, and has left test conditions

If the headteacher has not authorised the absence, the application will not be approved.

In exceptional circumstances where a test is being rescheduled 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.

## **Pupil absence on scheduled test days**

If a pupil is absent on the day of the test, headteachers must take steps to ensure the pupil does not have contact with others, for example by speaking to the pupil's parents about how they can help prevent contact with other pupils who have already taken the test, or about arrangements for entering the premises on the day the pupil returns to school.

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

If a pupil returns to school during test week or the timetable variation period following an absence, the school must ensure the pupil is supervised so there is no opportunity for the pupil to discuss test content.

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. The school should administer the rescheduled test as soon as is practical after the pupil returns to school.

In the case of pupils who live in the same household, if one pupil is absent on the day of a test but other pupils from the same household are in school (and the school intends to administer

the test to those pupils), the school should consider delaying the test for all the pupils in the household. This is to ensure the integrity, security and confidentiality of the test is maintained. The school must ensure the pupils do not have any opportunity to discuss test content with pupils who have already taken the test.

If one sibling, or pupils from the same household have taken the test, and the others have not, the school may need to work with parents to ensure that the pupils do not have any opportunity to discuss the test content if a timetable variation application is planned.

If a pupil attends an alternative provision (including pupil referral units) for some days of the week, the maintained school or academy where they are registered may have to apply for a timetable variation to enable the pupil to sit the test as soon as is practical when the pupil is back in school. Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure the integrity, security and confidentiality of the test is maintained.

In all the above circumstances, if the headteacher can guarantee that no test content has been discussed and the pupil has been supervised at all times, a timetable variation application can be submitted, selecting 'No' in answer to question 1 in the application.

## **Making an application (Monday 12 February to Thursday 23 May 2024)**

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 had any opportunity to discuss test content with 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

The final date that schools can administer a test with an approved timetable variation application is as follows:

- English grammar, punctuation and spelling papers 1 and 2 would be Monday 20 May
- English reading paper would be Tuesday 21 May

- mathematics papers 1 and 2 would be Wednesday 22 May
- mathematics paper 3 would be Thursday 23 May

If the headteacher is aware of any reason why these conditions cannot be confirmed, the application will not be approved, and the pupil must not take the test.

Headteachers must ensure that when making an application for a timetable variation, the pupil who has not taken the tests has not discussed test content with pupils who have already taken the tests.

The rescheduled test must not be administered until an application has been approved.

During test week and the timetable variation period, schools must be prepared to allow up to one hour for an application to be processed within school hours and any missed or rescheduled tests must not be administered to pupils until a school receives STA's approval.

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

An email will be sent to the school when the application has been reviewed. Schools should log in to the [PAG](#) to check the status of the application as they may be asked to provide more information.

## **Completing the attendance register**

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.

If an application is not approved, the pupil must not take the test and should be marked as 'Absent' (A) on the test attendance register.

If you have administered a test following an approved timetable variation, the test scripts and attendance register for the rest of the cohort taking that paper must not be sent for marking until the last pupil has taken the test. Do not seal the outer white script return bag until all TTV scripts for that subject are completed.

Pupils taking the test with an approved timetable variation application 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.

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

## Help and support

There is a step-by-step video tutorial on how to make a timetable variation application on STA's YouTube playlist:

[How to make a timetable variation application](#) on [STA's YouTube playlist]


For general enquiries about timetable variations, contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or email [assessments@education.gov.uk](mailto: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 which can be found on the [PAG](#).

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