

POST PRIMARY TRANSFER CONSORTIUM

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) May 2022

Q1 What is PPTC?

A The Post Primary Transfer Consortium Ltd (PPTC) is a not for profit, private limited company made up of a group of schools which normally use academic selection within their year 8 Admissions Criteria. It is not under the control of the Department of Education, the Education Authority or any public body and does not report to the Department of Education, the Education Authority or any public body. Some PPTC includes Catholic grammar schools, Non-denominational grammar schools and Integrated schools in its membership.

Q2 Does PPTC have a role in determining if there should be academic selection?

A No, PPTC has absolutely no role in determining whether there should be academic selection or whether any school should or should not use academic selection. It is the Boards of Governors of individual schools who decide if they wish to use academically selective Admissions Criteria and if they wish to join PPTC, leave PPTC or remain a member.

Q3 What is the role of PPTC?

A The role of PPTC, since it was set up in 2009, has been to provide an Entrance Assessment with standardised outcomes (results) for pupils who will be transferring from primary school and who may wish to transfer to one of the schools which uses PPTC outcomes within their admissions criteria.

Q4 Why do I need to register my child for the Entrance Assessment?

A By registering, PPTC will be able to put arrangements in place for your child to take the Entrance Assessment on **12th November 2022** in one of the PPTC Assessment Centres. Only pupils who are registered can take the Assessment.

Q5 Who should sit the Entrance Assessment?

A Pupils born between 2nd July 2011 and 1st July 2012 are eligible to take the Entrance Assessment. Applications to sit the Entrance Assessment for pupils who will be transferring to post primary education in September 2023 but who were born outside this age range can be facilitated, where, for example, the Principal of the pupil's primary school provides a written statement that in his/her professional opinion the pupil is capable of working alongside others in a selective school environment and be able to deal with the academic and social implications of early or late transfer.

Q6 My child has a Statement of Educational Needs. Does he / she need to sit the Entrance Assessment?

A No. Pupils who have a Statement of Educational Needs are exempt from the post-primary admissions process and do not need to sit the Entrance Assessment.

Q7 How much will it cost for my child to take the Entrance Assessment?

A There is no charge to parents for any part of the assessment process.

Q8 Where will my child sit the Entrance Assessment?

A Your child will take the Entrance Assessment in one of the Assessment Centres listed at the end of this document.

Q9 How will PPTC know which primary class "bubble" my child is in?

A To aid planning, in the event that additional health and safety precautions are needed, PPTC has adapted the Registration Form to gather information which will help identify the class bubble for each pupil.

Q10 What will be the format of the Entrance Assessment?

A The Entrance Assessment consists of two standardised, multiple choice, assessment papers, set and marked by GL Assessment. Pupils record their answers on a computer marked answer sheet. They have time for a snack and a toilet break between the papers. The first paper assesses English. It has 50 questions and lasts 50 minutes. The second assesses Mathematics. It has 45 questions and lasts 45 minutes. There is a short practice session before each paper. The aspects of English and Mathematics covered by the Entrance Assessment are consistent with the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Key Stage 2 curriculum. Fuller information is contained in the "**Details of the PPTC 2022-23 Entrance Assessment (including Format and Specification)**" document which forms part of the Registration Pack.

Q11 My child attends an Irish Medium primary school. Is the Entrance Assessment available in Irish?

A Yes. When completing the Registration Form parents are asked if they wish their child to take the Irish Medium Entrance Assessment. The Gaelige versions use the same format and specification as the versions in English.

Q12 Who is GL Assessment?

A GL Assessment is the leading provider of formative assessments to UK schools and is a main provider of 11+ assessments, as well as providing assessments in over 100 countries worldwide. You may be familiar with your child taking the Progress Test in English (PTE) and Progress Test in Mathematics (PTM) standardised assessments in primary school which are GL Assessment products. For over 30 years, GL Assessment has provided assessments for pupils' education, mental health and wellbeing across the UK. They have pioneered a powerful digital assessment system, which has delivered over 7 million online tests across the globe. GL Assessment works with a very large pool of experts to ensure that their assessments are rigorous, academically sound and in line with current best practice.

Q13 Will the allocation of an Assessment Centre affect the school I want my child to attend?

A No, the assessment and admission processes are entirely separate. If your child takes the Entrance Assessment in any of the Assessment Centres listed at the end of this document, you may apply for a place in any of these schools irrespective of where your child has taken the Entrance Assessment. All of the schools named on that page have agreed to accept results of pupils who take the Entrance Assessment regardless of the centre where they have taken the assessment.

Q14 Will my child have any recognition of his/her special needs, medical or dietary requirements?

A Yes. When you complete the Registration Form, please indicate that your child has particular requirements and complete the Access Arrangements claim form. This may require us to make Access Arrangements for your child and to make provision for your child's needs. It is important that you provide us with sufficient detail of your child's needs when completing the Registration Form. Please ensure that you are fully aware of the Guidance Notes available with the Registration Form with regard to requesting Access Arrangements.

Q15 Can my child receive special consideration for medical or other problems?

A Before or during the Entrance Assessment, a pupil might experience medical or other problems which may have affected his/her performance in the Entrance Assessment. These difficulties are referred to as Special Circumstances. While it will not be immediately known whether these circumstances have had a detrimental effect on a pupil's Entrance Assessment outcomes, a parent/guardian is best placed to decide on whether they should be brought to the attention of the schools to which the parent will be applying for a place for their child. As a preliminary step, parents who may be considering making a Claim for Special Circumstances should complete and submit an SCR (Special Circumstances Registration) Form to the Assessment Centre by **2:00 pm Wednesday 14th December 2022**. Depending on the actual outcomes achieved, parents can then decide whether to make a Claim for Special Circumstances when completing the Application for post-primary education. A Special Circumstances Pack will be available from any Assessment Centre after the date of the Entrance Assessment. In making a Claim parents are asking that the outcomes achieved by their child in the Entrance Assessment should be adjusted by the Board of Governors of the post-primary school to take account of the Special Circumstances.

Q16 What will happen if my child is feeling unwell, showing symptoms of Covid-19 or self-isolating or similar on 12th November 2022 and cannot sit the Entrance Assessment then?

A Firstly, in order to help keep everyone safe, a pupil should not come to the PPTC Centre on 12th November 2022 if he/she is unwell, showing symptoms of Covid-19, self-isolating or similar. A parent should inform the PPTC Centre. PPTC has set aside Saturday 10th December 2022 as the Supplementary Entrance Assessment day for pupils such as the example above, who were unable to attend on 12th November. In the event that no pupil was able to sit the Entrance Assessment on 12th November, then 10th December 2022 will become the main Assessment Day for all pupils.

Q17 Can my child take the Supplementary Entrance Assessment?

A The Supplementary Entrance Assessment is **only available** to a pupil who was registered but absent on **12th November 2022**. If your child meets this criterion you should inform the Assessment Centre as soon as possible. To request that your child be allowed to sit the Supplementary Entrance Assessment on **Saturday 10th December 2022** you **MUST** write to the ENTRANCE ASSESSMENT OFFICER at the Assessment Centre providing documentary evidence to support your request. The deadline for requests for a pupil to sit the Supplementary Entrance Assessment is **2.00 pm Monday 21st November 2022**. The Supplementary Entrance Assessment will be provided at a number of regional Assessment Centres and not necessarily the Assessment Centre initially assigned to a pupil.

Q18 What contingency does PPTC have in place in the event that the Entrance Assessment cannot take place on 12th November 2022?

- A** If it is not possible to hold the Entrance Assessment on 12th November 2022 then the contingency date for the Entrance Assessment is Saturday 10th December 2022, to avoid any potential clashes with AQE dates whilst also ensuring that the Entrance Assessment can be held before Christmas.

Q19 How and when will I receive my child's results from the Entrance Assessment?

- A** The results will be posted to you (first class) on Friday 3rd February 2023, by the Assessment Centre, to arrive on **Saturday 4th February 2023.**

Q20 How will my child's results of the Entrance Assessment be reported?

- A** You will receive the Standardised Age Score (SAS) achieved by your child in both the English and Mathematics assessment papers and the Combined Total Standardised Age Score (the sum of their English and Mathematics SAS). In addition your child will receive an overall grade, i.e. A, B1, B2, C1, C2 or D. These grades will be allocated on the basis of the Combined Total Standardised Age Score. You will also receive a Cohort Percentile, also based on the Combined Total Standardised Age Score. Percentage marks are not provided because the Entrance Assessment is a standardised test. The SAS for each paper is on a scale running from 69 to 141. The Combined Total SAS is on a scale running from 138 to 282. Cohort Percentiles range from <30 to 99+ with 50 as the mean.

Q21 What mark does my child need to obtain a grade A, B1, B2 etc.?

- A** It is not possible to indicate exactly what actual mark is necessary for an 'A' in the Entrance Assessment at this time. In order to conduct the grading process, the raw marks from the assessments are first transformed into Standardised Age Scores. These scores take into account the ages of the pupils and the difficulty of the assessment paper and are then standardised by a statistical formula onto a scale ranging from 69 to 141; the average score is 100. You may be familiar with this type of standardisation as it is used by primary schools in standardised testing for English and Mathematics. The Progress Test in Maths (PTM) and Progress Test in English (PTE) are examples of GL Assessment age standardised tests. You will also receive details of the grade boundaries along with your child's Entrance Assessment results.

Q22 Will the age of my child affect his/her final mark?

- A** An age allowance operates within the scoring of the assessment and it is one of the reasons why we will report the results as Standardised Age Scores on which the grades will be based. In calculating the Standardised Age Score, the age of the pupil is taken into account but no pupil will lose marks because of his/her age.

Q23 How can I help my child to prepare for the Entrance Assessment?

- A** You can support the work of your child's teacher in the primary school, for example by ensuring that homework is always completed to a high standard and by encouraging your child to read beyond the reading homework set by his/her teacher. PPTC schools do not request the primary schools to teach beyond the requirements of the curriculum or to distort their teaching programmes by concentrating on preparation for the Entrance Assessment. The Entrance Assessment is a standardised test; it is not intended that pupils should concentrate on completing practice papers. However, you will be able to receive sample familiarisation booklets and sample answer sheets as part of the full Registration Pack. This will enable your child to become familiar with the format and types of questions in the Entrance Assessment and with how to record his/her answers. As a standardised test, you should not expect that your child will be able to answer all of the questions in the Entrance Assessment because it is designed to assess the full ability range of pupils. It will have questions to suit all pupils within the age range being assessed. As a multiple choice test, your child does not need to write the answers. Since the possible answers are always written with the questions, your child will always be able to select an answer.

Q24 Can PPTC make practice or past papers available for 2022-23?

- A** The papers used in the Entrance Assessment are owned by GL Assessment and PPTC does not have the right to publish these papers. However, PPTC and GL worked together to produce a full Practice paper for English and a full Practice paper for Mathematics, (plus Gaeilge versions of both papers) along with Practice Answer Sheets and a Guide for Parents, to help pupils prepare. These materials do not form part of the Registration Pack but are available to download, free, on the PPTC website (www.pptcni.com).

Q25 Which schools will be the PPTC Assessment Centres for the 2021-22 Entrance Assessment?

A

PPTC Assessment Centres 2022-23

Abbey Christian Brothers' Grammar School	77A Ashgrove Road, Newry BT34 1QN	www.abbeycbs.org
Antrim Grammar School	10 Steeple Road, Antrim BT41 1AF	www.antrimgrammar.org
Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School	Ravenhill Road, Belfast BT6 0BY	www.aquinasgrammar.com
Assumption Grammar School	24 Belfast Road, Ballynahinch BT24 8EA	www.assumptiongrammar.org.uk
Campbell College, Belfast	Belmont Road, Belfast BT4 2ND	www.campbellcollege.co.uk
Christian Brothers' Grammar School	Kevlin Road, Omagh BT78 1LD	www.omaghcbs.org
Dominican College Belfast	38 Fortwilliam Park, Belfast BT15 4AQ	www.dominicancollege.org.uk
Hunterhouse College	Upper Lisburn Road, Finaghy BT10 0LE	www.hunterhousecollege.org.uk
Lagan College	44 Manse Road, Belfast BT8 6SA	www.lagancollege.com
Loreto Grammar School Omagh	James' Street, Omagh BT78 1DL	www.loretogs.com
Lumen Christi College	Bishop Street, Derry BT48 6UJ	www.lumenchristiccollege.co.uk
Mount Lourdes Grammar School	Belmore Street, Enniskillen BT74 6AB	www.mountlourdes.com
Our Lady and St Patrick's College Knock	120 Gilnahirk Road, Belfast BT5 7DL	www.knock.co.uk
Our Lady's Grammar School	Chequer Hill, Newry BT35 6DY	www.ourladysgrammar.co.uk
Rainey Endowed	79 Rainey Street, Magherafelt BT45 5DB	www.raineyendowed.com
Rathmore Grammar School	Kingsway, Finaghy, Belfast BT10 0LF	www.rathmoregrammarschool.org
Sacred Heart Grammar School	10 Ashgrove Avenue, Newry BT34 1PR	www.shsnewry.com
Slemish College	147a Larne Road, Ballymena BT42 3HA	www.slemishcollege.org.uk
St Colman's College	Violet Hill, 46 Armagh Road, Newry BT35 6PP	www.stcolmans.org.uk
St Columb's College	Buncrana Road, Derry BT48 8NH	www.stcolumbs.com
St. Dominic's High School	135-137 Falls Road, Belfast BT12 6AE	www.stdominics.org.uk
St Joseph's Grammar School	58 Castlecaulfield Rd, Donaghmore BT70 3HE	www.stjosephsdonaghmore.com
St Louis Grammar School Ballymena	Cullybackey Road, Ballymena BT43 5DW	www.stlouisgrammar.com
St Louis Grammar School Kilkeel	151 Newry Road, Kilkeel BT34 4EU	www.stlouis.org.uk
St Malachy's College	36 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 2AE	www.stmalachyscollege.com
St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School	147a Glen Road, Belfast BT11 8NR	www.stmaryscbgs.com
St Mary's Grammar School Magherafelt	3 Castledawson Road, Magherafelt BT45 6BE	www.stmarysmagherafelt.com
St Michael's College Enniskillen	Drumclay, Enniskillen BT74 6DE	www.saintmichaels.org.uk
St Patrick's Academy Dungannon	37 Killymeal Road, Dungannon BT71 6DF	www.stpatricksacademy.org.uk
St Patrick's Grammar School Downpatrick	109 Saul Street, Downpatrick BT30 6NJ	www.spgs.org.uk
Thornhill College	Culmore Road, Derry BT48 8JF	www.thornhillcollege.org.uk
Victoria College	2a Cranmore Park, Belfast BT9 6JA	www.victoriacollege.org.uk
Wallace High School	12a Clonevin Park, Lisburn BT28 3AD	www.wallacehigh.org
Wellington College Belfast	18 Carolan Road, Belfast BT7 3HE	www.wellingtoncollegebelfast.org