

**Admission Appeal Generic Defence Statement
Secondary School – Maidstone Grammar School
Admission Appeal for Year 7 in September 2024**

Published Admission Number for Year 7:	205
Number of Applications received:	486
How many places were offered on national offer day:	205

Places Offered – (Please catalog oversubscription criteria along with the numbers allocated on National offer day for each catalog. If the numbers in each individual catalog is below 5, please state <5 (so individual children cannot be identified)	Numbers
Criteria 1 (looked after and previously looked after children)	<5
Criteria 2 (pass mark of 360 or more, by FSM, siblings, distance)	98
Criteria 3 (other qualifying children, by FSM, siblings, distance)	105
Criteria 4 (outside listed parishes, by FSM, siblings, distance)	0
Total number of pupils offered a place	205

Introduction:

We have dealt with appeals to join MGS for many years. We are, therefore, aware of and sympathetic to the appellant's circumstances. We do though have a duty of care to existing students in pointing out our limited capacity to admit extra students.

The historic Published Admission Number (PAN) of 175 students for Maidstone Grammar School was superseded in 2017 by the Local Admissions Group and approved by the Local Authority and Secretary of State. This was to help tackle the insufficient grammar school places in the area. We moved from a six form entry to a seven form entry school with a PAN of 205 students from September 2017.

The School's building provision has been increased in recent years to reflect this increased PAN - to accommodate the additional forms of entry and the expanding size of the school. The School's net capacity is currently 1339. Even with these additional buildings, the school is still under provisioned for the number of students we have on roll. **The number in Years 7-11 currently is 1058 students; there are 1415 students in total, including the Sixth Form.**

We are conscious of pressure on demand for places at MGS and therefore we have looked at our capacity to see if we can accommodate a few more students. It has not been easy to juggle the timetable and rooming implications, but **we would be willing to take up to a maximum of 216 students. This would take us to absolute capacity in Year 7 with 6 classes of 31 and 1 class of 30 (to enable additional TA support in that class for a student with an EHCP).**

Any more students than 216 would have far-reaching consequences on our ability to fulfil our undertaking to Kent to be able to take in 7 forms of entry (our Published Admission Number of 205 students) in future years.

Admissions for September 2024

The admissions criteria were applied fairly, correctly and according to the School's oversubscription criteria. MGS was named as a chosen schools on the SCAF by **486** parents whose children had passed the Kent Test, demonstrating that we remain a heavily oversubscribed school. Places were offered to **205** on our behalf by the Local Authority according to the school's published admissions criteria, that is to say:

- Qualifying children with an Education Health and Care Plan **<5** – these students are placed before the oversubscription criteria is applied.
- Qualifying children who are Looked after children – **<5**
- Qualifying children from the listed parishes with a combined score of **360** or more in the Kent Test in the order of (a) Free school meals of which there were **0** (b) siblings of which there were **15** and (c) distance, of which we offered **83** places and to a distance of **8.99 miles**. Total places offered under this criterion were **98**.
- Qualifying children who passed the Kent test, regardless of score, from the listed parishes, in the order of (a) Free School Meals of which there was **1** (b) siblings of which there were **14** and (c) distance, of which we offered **90** places and to a distance of **6.6 miles**. Total places awarded under this criterion were **105**.
- Qualifying children who passed the Kent test outside listed parishes - there were none this year.

Numbers per year group in the current academic year (2023-2024) are as follows:

Year 7	217	Year 10	213	Year 13	175
Year 8	215	Year 11	216	Total	1415
Year 9	197	Year 12	182		

[At this point an individual statement will be included for each appellant].

Current Issues For MGS:

Following the 2022 completion of a first floor on the Pavilion, our net capacity is currently 1339. Therefore, we are already significantly exceeding our overall net capacity, having been taken over PAN by the Independent Appeals Panel in most years.

Capacity Factors- Science

The complex issues surrounding the use of our accommodation continue, despite a number of new buildings, and this is most significant in Science. Whilst it is easier to accommodate 30 students in our new Science laboratories, these were built in order to tackle the previous shortfall in Science accommodation once the agreed additional year groups were admitted into the school.

We currently have 15 Science laboratories at MGS. These are not multi-use rooms due to the different technical needs of each of the three Science subjects. We continue to have very limited capacity to accommodate the larger classes in our larger Science laboratories, of which we have only 7.

The remaining eight laboratories are below the DfE recommendations for size due to the age and character of the buildings.

The following is a breakdown of the capacity of our existing Science laboratories:

Room Number	Capacity
21	27
22	12
23	30
24	18
25	26
30	30
31	28
32	30
33	13
34	27
35	28
69	30
70	30
71	30
74	30

Where 30/31 students are in Science classes there is an impact on the amount and nature of practical work that students can safely complete. Any further pressure on numbers would also, to some extent, impact on the quality of teaching and learning that goes on by replacing practical work by students with more demonstrations by the teacher.

The sizing of these rooms makes timetabling very difficult and constrains the timetable. The number of students opting for Science in the Sixth Form means that we are increasingly having to use larger lower school laboratories for Sixth Form teaching. In addition, while we try to keep the use of the laboratories to 80% this has proved very difficult in recent years. In a practical environment, there are additional pressures on technical staff for both setting up and clearing away practical equipment which means that any use above 80% restricts the quality of students' learning opportunities. The occupancy of our larger Science laboratories is currently 85%. Having had class sizes over 30 students following the appeals process in recent years, we are now at saturation point and we cannot accommodate more than 30/31 students per Year 7 class this year. As it is, we have no specialist Science rooms that are technically designed to accommodate 31 students so even the largest rooms are already being stretched to their limits.

Capacity Factors- Sixth Form

It is a significant capacity concern that our Sixth Form has grown over recent years as the larger numbers of students make their way up through the school. At the same

time, it is imperative that we are able to continue to offer the breadth of subjects Post 16 that our students value and we need to ensure that we have the rooming capacity to do this. To meet the needs of the school, including the larger Sixth Form, it is imperative that our upper limit of 216 students in Year 7 is not exceeded.

Capacity Factors- General Teaching Rooms

The school includes a number of undersized classrooms across most subject areas with 42% of classrooms which are either unable to, or will struggle to accommodate 30 students. Juggling the timetable to ensure that we can fulfil what we say we can offer the students is a very difficult task. Even our newer accommodation is technically only designed for classes of 30 students so many classrooms are already overfull. Once again, any more than 216 students in the forthcoming Year 7 will make timetabling unfeasible.

Capacity Issues- Special Educational Needs

The school population (2023-2024) presently includes 30 students with Special Educational Needs as categorised under the SEND Code of Practice 2015. Of these, 3 have Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and 27 are categorised as SEN Support. A number of these students across year groups require additional 1:1 TA support in lessons, so that the overall size of their teaching groups must be restricted to allow for additional TA support. We have also been allocated a student with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) for September 2024 and so it is essential that we keep one Year 7 Learning Group at a maximum of 30 students to allow for additional TA support where required for this student and any others who require additional support due to SEN.

Other Year 7 Issues

From September 2023, Year 7 students study one Modern Foreign language and, in addition, some students are selected to study Latin. It is expected that the September 2024 cohort will have already had their languages assigned by the time the Independent Appeal Panel decisions are known. It is important that Parents / Carers are aware that students admitted by the appeal process will have no choice of modern language nor whether they study Latin. They will be allocated to a group where there is available space.

Conclusion:

We believe that we can manage to accommodate some more students (**up to a total of 11 additional students**) above our PAN of 205 and that **216 (comprising 6 classes of 31 and 1 class of 30 to allow for additional TA support in that class) would be possible for us to accommodate this year.** Whilst we are gratified that so many parents want their children to come to us, going above 216 in Year 7 would create impossible difficulties in timetabling and rooming.

We therefore ask the Panel to consider carefully the needs of our existing students and current circumstances when making their decisions.

Please be advised that each parent who lodges an appeal will have a personalised defence statement forwarded to them as part of their case papers.

Completed by: R Johnson, Deputy Headteacher

Date: March 2024