

March 2026

Information for Year 5 parents/carers

Notes from the preliminary meeting for parents/carers of children due to start secondary school in September 2027.

The Southwark information booklet will be available ONLINE in September 2026 from the Southwark website (link will be on school website later in year). All applications for secondary school are made online unless your child has an EHCP.

If you live in another borough, not Southwark, you must apply to the local authority you live in eg Lambeth.

Research, Research, Research!

Go to the secondary school open days in September and October (may be some this side of summer hols, check websites of individual schools). The Open Day listing will be available on the school website once released by Southwark.

Think about your child's interests; are they sporty, do they have an interest in technology etc.? Look at as many schools as you can, go with an open mind, think of your child, and not be influenced by other people's opinions of a school. Things change, heads change, their opinion may be out of date and based on experience with a school. Look at school results; take your child with you to the open day/evening. Try and see schools during a normal school day not just at the open events.

Look at schools that are within travelling distance and how they will travel to and from school. Think about dark winter nights and dark early mornings. Southwark, however, does have excellent transport links to other boroughs. Think of your child past 11 years old, look at what the school has to offer in GCSE subjects, A Levels, enrichment opportunities etc.

Look at schools in other boroughs, eg Lewisham, Westminster, Lambeth etc.

Make sure you meet with their admission criteria, eg Faith schools, sibling policy, distance etc. Look at the school website for all information, how do you apply, does the school have a supplementary form?

Read the Admission criteria, eg sibling policy, distance etc to find out if your child is likely to be offered a place. Check how places were offered previously.

The admission criteria differ from school to school, read it carefully. Some schools require supplementary forms, some will require your child to sit a fair banding test, and some may have priority from feeder primary schools.

St James' is a feeder to St Saviour's and St Olave's Girls school meaning girls from St James' would take priority over other schools not named, if it is your first-choice school for your daughter. Unfortunately, there are currently no boys' schools offering this.

If your child has special needs seek out the SENCO. When you visit schools talk to the SENCO and discuss provision. If your child has a statement have a look at Special schools, what are the entry requirements, do they provide travel, and do you need an EHCP to apply?

Look at OFSTED reports available at www.ofsted.gov.uk Look at Parentview on the Ofsted site. Research – look at GCSE and A Level result.

You MUST apply online for **up** to six state schools (Independent schools do not count towards the six). You use the PAN London online system, when you **apply ensure you choose schools that you would be prepared for your child to go to**. Mrs Brenta will have time available to help you with the application if you need assistance.

There are benefits to applying online – it is quick and easy to do! You can log back on and change or delete preferences right up until the closing date (31st October 2026).

In September Southwark provide information for parents that sets out the admissions process and procedures. The online brochure will also be available which explains the application process and the admissions criteria for each school. Other local authorities will also have online brochures you can download if you are looking at schools in other boroughs.

Independent Schools

Visit, check if they offer bursaries to very able children or children with a skill eg sports or music scholarships. Start looking at independent schools now as you will need to register your child at each school. They will sit entrance exams and interviews; you will have to pay to register at each independent school.

Sign up for their open days and talk to us here in school.

Kent, Bromley, Bexley, Medway, St Olaves (Orpington) selective tests

You can apply for a selective school which would mean your child sitting an eleven plus test.

These local authorities have the 11 plus, which the children sit in September. Examples of papers can be found on-line. The tests are taken in September, but you need to register from 1st June- 1st July. If you are not registered your child will not be able to sit the test.

You must pre-register for the Kent test in June 2026 and the test is tbc (Usually on a Saturday early in September) if you live outside of Kent. (See separate notes).

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-places/kent-test>