

# POST PRIMARY TRANSFER CONSORTIUM

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) June 2021

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## **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 **13<sup>th</sup> November 2021** in one of the PPTC Assessment Centres. Only pupils who are registered can take the Assessment.

## **Q5 Why has the date of Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2021 been chosen?**

**A** Parents and primary school principals made it very clear to PPTC that they did not want pupils to have to sit the Entrance Assessment in January and that “tests” should be planned to take place before Christmas. Teachers expressed a preference for a November test date and, traditionally, the Entrance Assessment has always been held in Mid-November. PPTC and AQE have always co-ordinated the dates for their Assessments to ensure that there is no clash in dates and this is happening again for 2021-22.

## **Q6 Who should sit the Entrance Assessment?**

**A** Pupils born between 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2010 and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011 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 2022 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.

## **Q7 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.

## **Q8 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.

## **Q9 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. On the Registration Form, you should indicate, in order of convenience, the three Assessment Centres which are the Please note that, for 2021-22, Assessment Centres will be working with one another to help ensure, as far as possible, that pupils from the same P7 class bubble can be in the same Assessment Centre, for health and safety reasons. This may mean that, if pupils from the same P7 class bubble have been registered at different Assessment Centres then it may be necessary to allocate some pupils to a Centre which was not the first preference.

## **Q10 How will PPTC know which primary class “bubble” my child is in?**

**A** PPTC expects that, as far as possible, parents whose children are in the same primary school class bubble will name the same PPTC school as their first preferred Assessment Centre. Additionally, the Registration Form has been adapted for 2021-22 to gather information which will help identify the class bubble for each pupil.

**Q11 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.

**Q12 What will be the format of the Entrance Assessment?**

**A** The Entrance Assessment consists of two standardised assessment papers. All the questions are multiple choice. The first paper assesses English. It has 50 questions and lasts 50 minutes. The second paper assesses Mathematics. It has 45 questions and lasts 45 minutes. There is a short practice session before each of the papers and pupils will be given time for a snack and a toilet break between the two papers. Pupils will each record their answers on a separate computer marked answer sheet. The Entrance Assessment will be marked independently by GL Assessment. 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 details are contained in the "Format and Specification of the 2021-22 PPTC Entrance Assessment" document which forms part of the Registration Pack.

**Q13 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.

**Q14 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.

**Q15 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.

**Q16 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 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021**. 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 grade/score/cohort percentile 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.

**Q17 What will happen if my child is feeling unwell, showing symptoms of Covid-19 or self-isolating or similar on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2021 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 13<sup>th</sup> November 2021 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 11<sup>th</sup> December 2021 as the Supplementary Entrance Assessment day for pupils such as the example above, who were unable to attend on 13<sup>th</sup> November. In the event that no pupil was able to sit the Entrance Assessment on 13<sup>th</sup> November, then 11<sup>th</sup> December 2021 will become the main Assessment Day for all pupils.

**Q18 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 **13<sup>th</sup> November 2021**. 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 11<sup>th</sup> December 2021** 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 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021**. 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.

**Q19 What contingency does PPTC have in place in the event that the Entrance Assessment cannot take place on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2021?**

- A** If it is not possible to hold the Entrance Assessment on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2021 then the contingency date for the Entrance Assessment is Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2021, to avoid any potential clashes with AQE dates whilst also ensuring that the Entrance Assessment can be held before Christmas.

**Q20 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 4<sup>th</sup> February 2022, by the Assessment Centre, to arrive on **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2022**.

**Q21 How will my child's results of the Entrance Assessment be reported?**

- A** As with the old CCEA Transfer Test, your child will receive an overall grade, i.e. A, B1, B2, C1, C2 or D. However, with the Entrance Assessment, you will also receive the Standardised Age Score achieved by your child in both the English and Mathematics assessment papers. The grades will be allocated on the basis of the combined total of the two Standardised Age Scores. You will also receive a Cohort Percentile, based on the combined total of the Standardised Age Scores. Percentage marks are not provided because the Entrance Assessment is a standardised test. Standardised Age Scores have a scale running from 69 to 141 with 100 as the mean. Cohort Percentiles range from <30 to 99+ with 50 as the mean.

**Q22 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.

**Q23 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.

## Q24 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.

## Q25 Can PPTC make practice or past papers available for 2021-22?

**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 are working together to produce a full Practice paper for English and a full Practice paper for Mathematics, as well as Gaelige versions of both papers, to help pupils prepare for the 2021-22 Entrance Assessment. It is planned that these papers will have the same format and specification as the actual papers and that they will be available to download, free, on the PPTC website ([www.pptcni.com](http://www.pptcni.com)) in September 2021.

## Q26 Which schools will be the PPTC Assessment Centres for the 2021-22 Entrance Assessment?

### PPTC Assessment Centres 2021-22

<b>Antrim Grammar School</b>	10 Steeple Road, Antrim BT41 1AF	<a href="http://www.antrimgrammar.org">www.antrimgrammar.org</a>
<b>Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School</b>	Ravenhill Road, Belfast BT6 0BY	<a href="http://www.aquinasgrammar.com">www.aquinasgrammar.com</a>
<b>Assumption Grammar School</b>	24 Belfast Road, Ballynahinch BT24 8EA	<a href="http://www.assumptiongrammar.org.uk">www.assumptiongrammar.org.uk</a>
<b>Campbell College, Belfast</b>	Belmont Road, Belfast BT4 2ND	<a href="http://www.campbellcollege.co.uk">www.campbellcollege.co.uk</a>
<b>Dominican College, Belfast</b>	38 Fortwilliam Park, Belfast BT15 4AQ	<a href="http://www.dominicancollege.org.uk">www.dominicancollege.org.uk</a>
<b>Hunterhouse College</b>	Upper Lisburn Road, Finaghy BT10 0LE	<a href="http://www.hunterhousecollege.org.uk">www.hunterhousecollege.org.uk</a>
<b>Loreto Grammar School, Omagh</b>	James' Street, Omagh BT78 1DL	<a href="http://www.loretogs.com">www.loretogs.com</a>
<b>Lumen Christi College</b>	Bishop Street, Derry BT48 6UJ	<a href="http://www.lumenchristiccollege.co.uk">www.lumenchristiccollege.co.uk</a>
<b>Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock</b>	120 Gilnahirk Road, Belfast BT5 7DL	<a href="http://www.knock.co.uk">www.knock.co.uk</a>
<b>Rainey Endowed</b>	79 Rainey Street, Magherafelt BT45 5DB	<a href="http://www.raineyendowed.com">www.raineyendowed.com</a>
<b>Rathmore Grammar School</b>	Kingsway, Finaghy, Belfast BT10 0LF	<a href="http://www.rathmoregrammarschool.org">www.rathmoregrammarschool.org</a>
<b>Slemish College</b>	147a Larne Road, Ballymena BT42 3HA	<a href="http://www.slemishcollege.org.uk">www.slemishcollege.org.uk</a>
<b>St. Dominic's High School</b>	135-137 Falls Road, Belfast BT12 6AE	<a href="http://www.stdominics.org.uk">www.stdominics.org.uk</a>
<b>St Joseph's Grammar School</b>	58 Castlecaulfield Road, Donaghmore BT703HE	<a href="http://www.stjosephsdonaghmore.com">www.stjosephsdonaghmore.com</a>
<b>St Louis Grammar School, Ballymena</b>	Cullybackey Road, Ballymena BT43 5DW	<a href="http://www.stlouisgrammar.com">www.stlouisgrammar.com</a>
<b>St Malachy's College</b>	36 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 2AE	<a href="http://www.stmalachyscollege.com">www.stmalachyscollege.com</a>
<b>St Mary's Grammar School, Magherafelt</b>	3 Castledawson Road, Magherafelt BT45 6BE	<a href="http://www.stmarysmagherafelt.com">www.stmarysmagherafelt.com</a>
<b>St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon</b>	37 Killymeal Road, Dungannon BT71 6DF	<a href="http://www.stpatricksacademy.org.uk">www.stpatricksacademy.org.uk</a>
<b>St Patrick's Grammar School, Downpatrick</b>	109 Saul Street, Downpatrick BT30 6NJ	<a href="http://www.spgs.org.uk">www.spgs.org.uk</a>
<b>Victoria College</b>	2a Cranmore Park, Belfast BT9 6JA	<a href="http://www.victoriacollege.org.uk">www.victoriacollege.org.uk</a>
<b>Wellington College Belfast</b>	18 Carolan Road, Belfast BT7 3HE	<a href="http://www.wellingtoncollegebelfast.org">www.wellingtoncollegebelfast.org</a>