

The 11 plus in the West Midlands: one page for parents

The grammar schools in this region share one entrance test, so a child sits it once rather than once per school. This sheet is the shape of the process. It is free to print, copy and hand out, and it asks you for nothing.

The shape of the year

WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS	WHAT A PARENT DOES
Year 4	Nothing formal at all.	Decide whether the selective route is one they want to consider, and read around it while there is no pressure.
Year 5, spring	The registration dates for the cycle are published.	Find the dates and put the closing date in a calendar with an alert a fortnight before.
Year 5, summer	The registration window opens and closes. Late registrations are not allowed.	Register online, tick the pupil premium box if it applies, and tick the boxes that share the result with schools outside their own council.
Year 6, September	The test is sat at an allocated centre.	Wait for the centre letter. Centres are allocated rather than chosen.
Year 6, October	Scores reach families, ahead of the application deadline.	Use the score to decide the preference order, then submit the council form by 31 October.
Year 6, March	One offer is made on 1 March.	Accept, or join a waiting list, or appeal, depending on the offer.

Five things that cannot be put right afterwards

- 1. The registration closing time.** Birmingham City Council states that late registrations are not allowed. A child who is not registered does not sit the test.
- 2. The pupil premium box.** It is ticked at registration or not at all. The council's own wording is that you cannot apply under pupil premium if you forget to tick this box, and nothing later in the process can add it.
- 3. The data-sharing boxes.** A result is shared with grammar schools outside the family's own council only if the relevant boxes are ticked at registration. Birmingham warns that without them a child will not be offered a place at the non-Birmingham grammar school on 1 March, even if they scored enough.
- 4. The 31 October application form.** Registering for the test is not applying for a place. The council says so in terms: applying to sit an entry test is not the same as asking for a place at the school, and the council application form still has to be completed.
- 5. Naming a school before the score arrives.** Birmingham advises parents to wait for the test result before naming a grammar school as one of their preferences. Results are sent before the 31 October deadline, which is what makes waiting possible.

What the test contains

Two papers, covering English comprehension, verbal reasoning, mathematics and non-verbal and spatial reasoning, weighted 50 per cent to English and verbal reasoning, 25 per cent to mathematics and 25 per cent to non-verbal reasoning. There is no writing section. Every question is multiple choice and answers go on a separate answer sheet. Scores are standardised for age, which the partnership says means younger children are not disadvantaged by being younger on the day. The test is provided by GL Assessment. None of the schools keep past papers, and the partnership publishes a free familiarisation guide instead, at westmidlandsgrammarschools.co.uk.

Where to read more, free and with no sign-up

West Midlands 11 plus dates and deadlines

every published date for the current cycle, each one linked to the school or council that published it, with a calendar file. This is the page to start from

<https://pathwayeleven.co.uk/11-plus-exam-dates-west-midlands/>

Which grammar schools can my child apply to

a postcode tool that lists the partnership schools in distance order with each school's catchment rules

<https://pathwayeleven.co.uk/which-grammar-schools-can-my-child-apply-to/>

Secondary transfer in the West Midlands

the whole council application year for every family in the year group, selective route or not, with a printable checklist

<https://pathwayeleven.co.uk/secondary-transfer-west-midlands/>

11 plus preparation, a guide for parents

what the test covers and how families prepare at home without a tutor

<https://pathwayeleven.co.uk/11-plus-preparation/>

Independence. Pathway Eleven is independent of the schools, the local authorities and GL Assessment, and is not endorsed by any of them. It is not connected to any council, any school or the West Midlands Grammar Schools partnership, and a school that passes this sheet on is passing on information rather than recommending a service.

Who checks it. Every guide carries the writer who wrote it and the qualified teacher who reviewed it, and the A4 sheet carries both as well. The same qualified teacher reviews the questions in our practice material before any of it is released. This sheet was written by James Ford, education writer, and reviewed by Farah Hussain, qualified teacher.

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