

Dear year 6 parents,

Please find some information below that I have received from Valley park explaining their scholarship programme that I mentioned briefly on our zoom meeting.

Valley Park

You will be aware, I am sure, that we recently held our Year 6 Open Event, which was a fusion of virtually conveyed information and physical tours. Feedback was positive and we enjoyed seeing many of your students and families. Despite the awful weather, we did see some brighter moments:



The online content of the event can be found here:

<https://www.valleypark.viat.org.uk/3558/virtual-open-event-2020>

Having spoken with many parents, there seemed to be confusion about how to fill in the KCC’s online form and about the impact of putting Valley Park as first or second choice, especially for those families wishing to gain a place with us who are interested in our Scholarship Programme. The information below sets out what the position relating to this is, along with a link to the KCC admissions guidance confirming this position. We therefore hope to alleviate any confusion that may exist among families and would be more than happy for this information to be shared with them.

Valley Park offers twenty four places every year, to those students who display a particular aptitude in the creative or performing arts. An assessment day is held, and students placed in rank order. This order is then submitted to KCC who then administer the oversubscription criteria in the usual way. Places at Valley Park are allocated to children in Local Authority Care first, then to those with a particular medical or educational need and then to those in the top twenty four ranked places on the Scholarship Programme. The full details of our oversubscriptions criteria can be found on our website at <https://www.valleypark.viat.org.uk/2494/admissions#joining>

KCC’s guidance is found at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/17930/Secondary-admissions-booklet-all-areas.pdf>

Page 13 onwards deals with this particular aspect of the allocation of places, as you know.

We have been asked many times whether parents must place Valley Park as first choice on KCC’s application form in order to get a place on the Scholarship Programme. We will never be told by KCC where a parent has placed us on their form so the preference order only affects the procedure administered by KCC. Consequently, placing us lower down the preference order would mean that KCC would first look to allocate a place at the top preference school, reducing the chances of getting a place at Valley Park, in accordance with the usual process. Exactly the same process is applied where places are being sought through the Scholarship Programme, although these places are allocated before allocating to those students who would obtain a place using the distance or sibling links criteria for example. The brief answer then is that the higher up the preference order Valley Park appears, the greater the chance of being allocated a place, as you would expect.

Example

A student ranked in the top 24 on the Scholarship Programme but putting Valley Park as their second choice school, would only get a place at Valley Park if their first choice school was not able to offer them a place.

A student ranked 25th on the Scholarship Programme but putting Valley Park as their first choice, would only be offered a place with us if one of the top twenty four ranked students did not take up their Scholarship place with us, or if they were allocated a place on one of the other over subscription criteria.

Further information about our Scholarship Programme can be found at <https://www.valleypark.viat.org.uk/2502/scholarships> . The deadline for Scholarship Applications is 2 November 2020.

Finally, now that VIAT has opened The School of Science and Technology Maidstone (SST), we are finding that students from much further afield than usual have been successful in gaining a place at Valley Park. Hopefully, this will give families who live further away more choice, as to where to secondary schools.

I hope that this information proves useful to your families but do please encourage them to contact us via manager@valleypark.viat.org.uk if they have any further questions.

I hope this information is useful, I will send out any further communications from other schools should I receive them. As ever I can be contacted via email at ehickling@aspirekent.org.uk

Kind regards,

Emma Hickling

Executive Headteacher