

**Admission Appeal Defence Statement  
Secondary School – The Norton Knatchbull School  
Admission Appeal for Year 7 in September 2022**

Published Admission Number: <b>210</b>
Number of Applications received: 347
185 places were offered on national offer day

<b>Places Offered – (Please catalog oversubscription criteria )</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
Children in Local Authority Care	<b>n/a</b>
Current Family Association	<b>n/a</b>
Health & Special Access Reasons	<b>n/a</b>
Nearness of children’s homes to school	<b>n/a</b>
Total number of pupils offered a place;	<b>n/a</b>
Rank position of last child offered a place;	<b>n/a</b>

<b>Distance of last child allocated a place (N/A if not applicable);</b> The last child allocated lives a distance of ..... miles from the school. N/A
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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.

The Norton Knatchbull School is a selective school, with a Published Admissions Number (PAN) of 210 in Years 7-11 and 165 in Years 12 and 13 respectively. The PAN was increased to 210 in September 2019 to reflect the growing population in the area and to ensure that all students who pass the Kent test and want an education at NKS can have that choice whilst maintaining our catchment area.

The current years 9 and 10 are each organised in six teaching groups, whilst the current Year 7, 8 & 11 cohorts are organised in seven teaching groups.

Our current numbers on roll, as at 21 February 2022 are as follows:

Year 7: 198  
Year 8: 215  
Year 9: 200  
Year 10: 188  
Year 11: 165  
Year 12: 159  
Year 13: 132  
**Total: 1,257**

In Year 7 & 8, students are generally taught and grouped in seven classes of around 28-30 students each. Most of the school's general classrooms, as well as science classrooms, do not accommodate more than 30 students, and many do not have the capacity to accommodate 30 students safely. This means timetabling has to be done precisely to ensure classes are in rooms of an appropriate size.

In Product Design, Art and Drama classes are limited to 20 students on Health and Safety grounds where the physical constraints of the specialist rooms and particular demands of the subjects mitigate against larger groupings.

In some classes, there may be more than one adult present, either at times or regularly, owing to individual students' needs or staff training needs. Therefore, it would be very difficult, and at times unsafe, to allow more than 30 students at most to be in a teaching group (and 20 in those subjects outlined above). Where we do have classes above 30, this puts additional constraints on our timetabling capacity as we have to re-room these large classes in order to allow for safe practice.

The implications of any year group being larger than PAN are therefore significant in terms of the physical timetabling of classes and their staffing. It would mean additional groups need to be created; diverting from our existing timetable and staffing structure which has been designed and modeled to accommodate our PAN. We simply do not have the resources to accommodate this – in terms of appropriate classroom space and teachers to put in front of them.

The new classrooms constructed at the front of the school reflect our increasing PAN. The funding for this was secured in 2018 when we were working with the Local Authority to increase our PAN to reflect the changing demographic in Ashford and the local area. This is reflected in the Y7 and Y8 figures detailed above. The new classrooms were planned to enable us to accommodate the additional students as per the increase in our PAN to 210. In short, they will be fully utilised within our existing PAN and increasing numbers.

All classrooms are utilised to maximum capacity for the entire week. We don't have any 'built in' lockers, meaning many lockers are situated in classrooms, further diminishing the available space for desks and seats. The admission of additional students would have practical implications. In ICT lessons, students would have to share PCs; in Science there would be fewer practical lessons – with the teacher having to demonstrate more and/or the students having to share. This would be a particular disadvantage to students preparing for new GCSEs in the Sciences and the practical subjects where there is an increased practical content. In short, practical opportunities would be decreased. In more traditional class-based subjects it would mean three students sharing a desk space for two. Alongside this there would be decreased teacher/student contact ratio.

In and around the site – in corridors, on pathways and in social spaces – there are numerous 'pinch points' near staircases and classroom entrances, making circulation difficult at lesson changeover, and in eating areas at break and lunchtime. Careful management is needed to avoid Health and Safety issues in these circumstances. Safe,

speedy and efficient evacuation in the event of an emergency is also a consideration and this becomes more problematic the more overcrowded the school becomes.

Teaching staff are contractually required to do duty at break times and many staff volunteer (with overtime) to supervise the lunch break. There is no contractual obligation for staff to supervise class changeover but all employees have a general obligation to support Health & Safety and here too careful management is required to ensure appropriate behaviour.

The overcrowding outlined above, in conjunction with the major reforms of curriculum and assessment methods – in particular the increase in practical demands in new GCSE and A Level specifications, means that the admittance of further students will be harmful in several ways to the education of existing pupils.

The admission of additional students leads to increased class sizes, stress and potential health and safety and behavioural problems, diminishes the time teachers can give to individual pupils, increases teacher workload (assessment and monitoring of work), results in greater sharing of equipment especially in practical classes, and reduces the flexibility of the school to accommodate pupils with SEN in smaller groups.

As a selective school, we can only admit students who have passed the Kent Test and who have been allocated to us via the KCC admissions process; or who have been deemed selective by an Independent Appeals Panel.

I ask the panel in coming to its conclusion to bear in mind:

- The existing pressures on our existing provision and the consequences for its management, existing pupils and staff
- Impending future financial constraints
- Above all that there is a limit to the number of pupils who can be admitted without the considerable danger of undermining the very qualities which make this school so attractive. We have reached the limit as to how far the school can continue to cope with the consequences of significant over-subscription and the problems of managing it.
- Admission of another pupil would be prejudicial to the education the school is able to offer.

The Governing Body strongly urges the Appeal Panel to consider very carefully before asking the school to exceed its PAN.

Completed by: Mr. Ben Greene, Headteacher \_Date: