

Information about applying for Year 5 entry to an opportunity class in

2017

Thinking of applying for Year 5 entry to an opportunity class in 2017?

You must apply online at
www.schools.nsw.edu.au/ocplacement



Key dates

Tuesday 26 April 2016

Application website opens

Friday 13 May 2016

Application website closes
Late applications will not be accepted

Wednesday 13 July 2016

Test authority letter by mail and email

Wednesday 27 July 2016

Opportunity Class Placement Test

Mid-October 2016

Placement outcome information

**Please read this booklet carefully
before applying.**

There is more information at:
www.schools.nsw.edu.au/ocplacement

The opportunity class placement process for Year 5 entry is administered by the High Performing Students Unit.

Contact details

High Performing Students Unit

NSW Department of Education

Email: ssu@det.nsw.edu.au **Telephone:** 1300 880 367 **Fax:** 02 9266 8435

Postal address: Locked Bag 53, DARLINGHURST NSW 1300

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com.au/Opportunityclassplacement>

'Parent' is defined under the *Education Act 1990* as 'a guardian or other person having custody or care of a child'.

A list of the primary schools with opportunity classes is shown on page 2 of this document.

Public schools with Year 5 opportunity classes in 2017

You may choose up to two opportunity classes in order of preference.

OC code	School	OC code	School	OC code	School
ACP	ARMIDALE CITY Faulkner St, Armidale	ERM	ERMINGTON Winbourne St, West Ryde	POR	PORT MACQUARIE Grant St, Port Macquarie
ALX	ALEXANDRIA PARK + Park Rd, Alexandria	GEO	GEORGES HALL Pennington Ave, Georges Hall	QUA	QUAKERS HILL Medlow Dr, Quakers Hill
ALS	ALSTONVILLE Main St, Alstonville	GOO	GOONELLABAH Ballina Rd, Goonellabah	QUE	QUEANBEYAN SOUTH Cameron Rd, Queanbeyan
ART	ARTARMON McMillan Rd, Artarmon	GSF	GOSFORD Faunce St West, West Gosford	RIC	RICHMOND Windsor St, Richmond
ASH	ASHFIELD Liverpool Rd, Ashfield	GOU	GOULBURN WEST Combermere St, Goulburn	RUT	RUTHERFORD Weblands St, Rutherford
BGH	BALGOWLAH HEIGHTS Lewis St, Balgowlah	GRE	GREENACRE Waterloo Rd, Greenacre	RDE	RYDE Pope St, Ryde
BLM	BALMAIN Eaton St, Balmain	GRY	GREYSTANES Merrylands Rd, Greystanes	SMI	SMITHFIELD O'Connell St, Smithfield
BHW	BATHURST WEST Suttor St, Bathurst	HAR	HARRINGTON STREET Harrington St, Cabramatta	SOL	SOLDIERS POINT Cromarty Rd, Soldiers Point
BEE	BEECROFT Beecroft Rd, Beecroft	HOL	HOLSWORTHY Infantry Pde, Holsworthy	GTS	SOUTH GRAFTON Vere St, South Grafton
BIR	BIRABAN Beckley St, Toronto	HUR	HURSTVILLE Forest Rd, Hurstville	STA	ST ANDREWS Ballantrae Dr, St Andrews
BTS	BLACKTOWN SOUTH Flushcombe Rd, Blacktown	ILL	ILLAROO ROAD Illaroo Rd, Nowra	STJ	ST JOHNS PARK Sandringham St, St Johns Park
BSC	BLAXCELL STREET Blaxcell St, Granville	IBR	IRONBARK RIDGE Ironbark Ridge Rd, Rouse Hill	STU	STURT White Ave, Wagga Wagga
BXE	BLAXLAND EAST Old Bathurst Road, East Blaxland	JEW	JEWELLS Lepton Pde, Jewells	SUM	SUMMER HILL Moonbie St, Summer Hill
BRA	BRADBURY Jacaranda Ave, Bradbury	KIN	KINGSWOOD Second Ave, Kingswood	SUT	SUTHERLAND Eton St, Sutherland
CAM	CAMDEN SOUTH Old Hume Hwy, Camden	LEU	LEUMEAH Burrendong Rd, Leumeah	TAH	TAHMOOR Bronzewing St, Tahmoor
CBN	CARINGBAH NORTH Cawarra Rd, Caringbah	LIT	LITHGOW Mort St, Lithgow	TAM	TAMWORTH Napier St, Tamworth
CAS	CASULA De Meyrick Ave, Casula	MAR	MARYLAND John T Bell Dr, Maryland, Newcastle	TAS	TAMWORTH SOUTH Petra Ave, Tamworth
CES	CESSNOCK WEST Cnr Campbell Street and Wollombi Rd, Cessnock	MAT	MATTHEW PEARCE Astoria Park Rd, Baulkham Hills	TIG	TIGHES HILL Elizabeth St, Tighes Hill
CHW	CHATSWOOD Centennial Ave, Chatswood	MON	MONA VALE Waratah St, Mona Vale	TOO	TOORMINA Cavanba Rd, Toormina
COL	COLYTON Nelson St, Mount Druitt	MOR	MOREE Albert St, Moree	WAI	WAITARA Edgeworth David Ave, Wairoa
COO	COONABARABRAN Newell Hwy, Coonabarabran	NEU	NEUTRAL BAY Ben Boyd Rd, Neutral Bay	WEN	WENTWORTH FALLS Falls Rd, Wentworth Falls
CUD	CUDGEGONG VALLEY Madeira Rd, Mudgee	NEW	NEWBRIDGE HEIGHTS Lewin & Magree Cres, Chipping Norton	WIL	WILKINS Park Rd, Marrickville
DUB	DUBBO WEST East St, Dubbo	NLS	NEW LAMBTON SOUTH St James Rd, New Lambton	WOL	WOLLONGONG Church St, Wollongong
DUR	DURAL Old Northern Rd, Dural	NOR	NORTH ROCKS North Rocks Rd, North Rocks	WOO	WOOLLAHRA Forth St, Woollahra
EAR	EARLWOOD Homer St, Earlwood	PIC	PICNIC POINT Thomas St, Picnic Point	WYO	WYONG Cutler Dr, Wyong

+ Places are reserved for Aboriginal# students.

What are opportunity classes?

Opportunity classes cater for highly achieving Year 5 and Year 6 academically gifted students who may otherwise be without classmates at their own academic and social level. These classes help gifted and talented students to learn by grouping them with other gifted and talented students, teaching them in specialised ways and providing educational materials at the appropriate level.

Parents normally apply when the students are in Year 4. Students who are placed then attend the opportunity class full time in Years 5 and 6 at the primary school with an opportunity class. It is a two-year placement program. In the majority of cases, students who accept a place in an opportunity class will leave their current school to attend the school with an opportunity class. There is no provision to apply for Year 6 placement only.

For further information in other languages see:

http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/languagesupport/documents/selective_oc/shs_oc_facts.php

For an Aboriginal perspective of selective high schools and opportunity classes refer to:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/aboriginal-ss-oc/index.htm>

What are the stages of the placement process?

1	Parents read the application information	From 26 April 2016
2	Parents register, receive a password, complete and submit the application online	From 26 April to 13 May 2016
3	Any special test provisions are organised	May to July 2016
4	Principals provide school assessment scores	From 17 May to 3 June 2016
5	Parents are sent <i>Test authority</i> letter by mail and email	By 13 July 2016
6	Students sit the Opportunity Class Placement Test for Year 5 entry in 2017	On 27 July 2016
7	Last day to change school choices	By 5 August 2016
8	Any illness/misadventure claims are submitted	By 12 August 2016
9	School selection committees meet	In September 2016
10	Parents receive placement outcome information	In Mid-October 2016
11	Any appeals are submitted to principals	By 21 October 2016
12	Parents accept or decline offers	From Mid-October 2016
13	Students who have accepted offers are withdrawn from reserve lists	At 5 pm Friday 27 January 2017
14	Parents of successful students receive <i>Authority to attend</i> letters to take to the school on the first day of term in 2017	Mid-January 2017

Cut this out and place on your fridge as a reminder.

How do I apply?

Parents apply **online** from the Unit's[^] website at the following link: www.schools.nsw.edu.au/ocplacement. Read the instructions carefully. You will **register** to receive a password and then log in to **complete the application** and **submit** it. Once you have successfully submitted your application, you will receive an email with a copy of your application containing your child's student number. You must quote this number whenever you make enquiries about your application.

If you find you have made a mistake after you have submitted your application, email the Unit to change any information. Do **not** apply twice for the same student, as the selection committees can consider only one application for each student.

Some email providers such as Gmail will not accept emails with attachments sent from the Unit. If this happens we have to send all information by mail. To avoid this problem add ssu@det.nsw.edu.au to your email contacts list and check your spam or junk folders regularly.

Applying without internet access

If you have no internet access at home you may need to go to a public library where internet access is free and complete the following steps:

- set up a web-based email to use for the application, such as Yahoo, Hotmail or similar
- use that email account to register at: www.schools.nsw.edu.au/ocplacement
- wait to receive an email with a password and a link
- copy and paste the password to log in
- complete the application and, in the Contact information section, click '**Mail only**' for all future correspondence
- submit the application
- check your new email account for the confirmation email and print the file showing all your application details. Check the email spam/junk folder as well as the inbox.

The Unit will then send all communication to your postal address. If you have a disability that prevents you from using a computer, contact the Unit for assistance.

Attachments

You must send copies of the following supporting documents to the Unit if any of these apply to your child:

- information about a disability, medical condition or behavioural disorder such as serious vision impairment, diabetes or autism. If you believe your child needs special test provisions, you will need to provide diagnostic evidence. Further information about this can be found at: http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/oc_testinfo.php
- copy of court orders if they relate to this child's education
- explanation of why the child is older or younger than the usual age range, or not in Year 4 in 2016

[^] In this document, 'Unit' refers to the High Performing Students Unit.

- For interstate/overseas students, full WISC IV IQ report and standardised Reading and mathematics test results are required as part of a *Report of academic merit*.

If your child has an individual IQ report you may also provide it as further evidence of academic merit.

Use the cover sheet you were emailed with your application confirmation when sending attachments to the Unit.

Do not send school reports or certificates or other test results unless asked to do so.

Who can apply?

Students enrolled in government and non-government primary schools can apply.

School year and age

Students are normally in Year 4 at the time of application and are born after 31 December 2005 and before 31 July 2007. These students are aged between 9 years and 5 months and 11 years at the time they start Year 5.

If you apply when your child is out of the age range or in another school year, selection committees will examine the reasons for this. They may ask for more information or for an interview with your child. Selection committees can decide not to accept students who are older and may consider that students doing the test for the second time have gained an unfair advantage from their previous experience with the test.

Selection committees look carefully at younger students in Year 4 to determine whether there are special requirements that the school can provide. The school principal may need to interview much younger students in Year 4.

Students seeking acceleration from Year 3 to Year 5 in 2017 must gain a score which places them in the top half of the cohort of students offered placement in their school of choice.

Brothers and sisters

Parents of students who are offered a place in an opportunity class cannot assume that younger or older siblings can also enrol as an out-of-area enrolment at that school.

Residency status

You must be living in NSW at the beginning of the school year of entry.

Your child must be a citizen of Australia or New Zealand or a permanent resident of Australia to enrol in an opportunity class. If your child is not yet a permanent resident, you can apply and your child can sit the test if you expect permanent residency will be granted before mid-October when initial offers are made. You will not be offered a place in an opportunity class unless permanent residency has been granted.

Overseas or interstate applicants

You can apply while you are temporarily overseas or interstate. If possible, your child should return to NSW to sit the test. If your child cannot sit the test you must send to the Unit a *Report of academic merit* which includes a full scale WISC IV IQ report. See http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/oc_interstateoverseas.php

You must apply online by the due date but if the IQ test results are not available at the time you can send the *Report of academic merit* to the Unit before the test date of **Wednesday 27 July 2016**.

If you are living outside NSW temporarily and your child was in Year 4 in NSW and has school assessment scores, the illness/misadventure process could apply to you. Find out more at http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/oc_illness.php

How should I choose an opportunity class?

You can apply for up to two primary schools with opportunity classes. Think about your choices carefully. List only the schools you would like your child to attend and in your preferred order. Offers are made on the basis of your order of choice. If your child qualifies for both schools, he or she will get an offer only to your first choice of school.

Make sure that the schools you choose are suitable for your child and that travel time is reasonable. Check the map on the Unit's website for the location of the primary schools with opportunity classes. The selection committees do not consider distances, travelling times and transport options between the student's home and chosen school.

Be aware that Maryland PS is in the Newcastle area, not in Merrylands.

Change of school choice

You can change your school choices before **Friday 5 August 2016** by writing to the Unit. You cannot usually change choices after that date unless something unexpected and outside your control occurs and you can provide documentary evidence.

You cannot normally transfer between primary schools with opportunity classes.

How are students ranked for opportunity class entry?

All students are ranked and placed in order of academic merit. Academic merit is decided mainly by combining primary school assessment scores in English and mathematics and the results of the Opportunity Class Placement Test. This combination is expressed as a calculated placement score out of 300.

For interstate/overseas applicants, other information is considered such as the *Report of academic merit*.

School assessment scores

The primary school gives English and mathematics school assessment scores to show each student's achievement on the school curriculum in Year 4. The scores are scaled (moderated) according to the performance in the Opportunity Class Placement Test of the candidates from the child's primary school.

This means the school assessment scores can be compared with those of all other applicants in NSW and gives them equal weighting with the English and mathematics test scores.

If students do not have school assessment scores that can be moderated, only their test scores will be used to calculate their final score.

Government school principals provide school assessment scores to the Unit online.

If your child is at a non-government school you will need to give the principal's page to the school and ask the principal to give school assessment scores. The principal's page will be emailed to you as soon as you submit your application online. If non-government principals will not give any of their students school assessment scores, you must write an email or letter of explanation to the Unit. Selection committees will consider whether an exemption is justified.

Find out more about scores at http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/oc_markexplain.php

The Opportunity Class Placement Test

The Opportunity Class Placement Test for Year 5 entry in 2017 will be held on **Wednesday 27 July 2016** in test centres, usually at government high schools. The test is held only on this day and only in official test centres in NSW. All test materials are kept secure before, during and after the test and are not released to the public. The test measures ability rather than performance on the curriculum.

What do I need to know about the test?

By **Wednesday 13 July 2016** you will receive a *Test authority* letter that tells you where to take your child to sit the test. You will receive this information by both mail and email (if you have an email address). **Your child must bring the Test authority letter or email to the test centre to be allowed to sit the test.** You will also receive a *Test information bulletin* which explains the test and lists what your child should bring. The bulletin explains how to show the answers to the questions in the test.

If you have not received your *Test authority* letter by **Wednesday 13 July 2016** you must contact the Unit urgently.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their contact details are current throughout the placement process.

Students from the same primary school will usually attend the same test centre.

Apart from receiving an individual letter and email you will be able to see the list of test centres on the Unit's website at http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/learning/k_6assessments/oc/octestcentres.pdf

You must arrange for your child to travel to and from the test but you must not stay on the school grounds during the test unless the Unit asks you to stay for reasons of the student's health or disability.

Test components

There are two parts to the test: Parts 1 and 2. Each part consists of a mix of multiple-choice questions in English, mathematics and general ability. Answers are recorded on computer-marked answer sheets. Students are identified by test booklet numbers only. Students use black pen to show their answers. Students have half an hour to complete each part.

Important: If your child does not follow instructions and marks the answers on the question booklet instead of the answer sheet, the marks may not be counted.

Sample tests

Your child can use the sample tests on the Unit's website to practise answering the questions on the sample answer sheets. These can be found at http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/oc_sampletest.php

These samples are provided only to allow students to become familiar with the test format so results obtained may not reflect the score your child will get in the actual test. Selection committees will not make any decisions based on your child's score on sample items.

Special test provisions

If your child has a disability or condition that could affect his or her performance on the test, you can ask for special test provisions when you apply. For example, the Unit can arrange provisions such as enlarged papers, specific seating or taking medications into the test room.

While the Unit will try to assist in unforeseeable emergency situations (e.g. a broken arm just prior to the test) special test provisions for existing conditions cannot be modified or added to after **Wednesday 6 July 2016**.

Students cannot normally be given extra time or a person to write for them and cannot use computers. If you explain your child's special needs in your application, the Unit may contact you or the school to discuss special test provisions. You must provide supporting documents if you are asking for special test provisions. All students with a disability, medical condition or behavioural disorder will be given individual consideration by selection committees.

Test supervisors do not have training in first aid and administration of life-saving medication so parents need to disclose this kind of information and be prepared to wait at the test centre to administer medication if required.

What happens if something goes wrong?

If some problem such as sickness or an accident stops your child from taking the test or from doing his or her best, either in the test or at school, you can make an illness/misadventure claim using the form on the Unit's website. The claim must reach the Unit by **Friday 12 August 2016**. If your child is sick or injured, you must have a medical certificate and a completed *Independent evidence of illness* form, both of which cover the day of the test. It is generally better for the student to sit the test, if possible, and make an illness/misadventure claim afterwards.

If you believe something has occurred to prevent your child from gaining higher school assessment scores, you should provide documentary evidence if possible.

School selection committees discuss the illness/misadventure claims and decide whether or not to accept them. You cannot make an appeal later claiming illness. Further information is available at: http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/oc_illness.php

How are decisions made?

All selection committees make their placement decisions using the same selection criteria, but each school selection committee makes its decisions independently. Each committee includes the principal of the school with

an opportunity class and a district guidance officer or school counsellor. The committee can also include other Departmental staff, such as Directors, Public Schools NSW. Selection committees:

- place applicants for their school in order of their profile scores
- look at the likely impact of disability and illness/misadventure claims
- decide whether to accept students outside the usual age range or school Year
- give consideration to students who are Aboriginal or who have been educated in English for less than 48 months
- look at other evidence of academic merit, if necessary
- list students for offers and reserve places according to the number of vacancies at the school
- consider any other relevant factors brought to their attention.

How do I find out the outcome?

In mid-October you will be sent your child's placement outcome, by email if you have provided a valid email address or by mail. Your child may be:

- offered a place for one school choice and/or
- placed on a reserve list for one or both school choices
- unsuccessful for one or both choices.

If your child is made an offer to the school you selected as your first choice and also has a score high enough to be offered placement at your second choice school, that second choice school will be shown as 'not applicable'.

If you receive an offer or a place on a reserve list, you will be sent an *Outcome information bulletin* explaining what each type of outcome means and what you need to do.

In most cases you will receive your child's calculated placement score out of 300.

There is no minimum fixed score required for entry to individual schools as students are placed in rank order of their placement scores to fill the available vacancies.

The Unit sends reports to public primary schools listing the outcome for all their students who applied. Non-government school principals can request information if the non-government school provided school assessment scores.

Responding to offers

If you receive an offer you must fill out the response form that you are sent with your outcome letter or email and return it by the date shown on the form. This is usually 14 days later. If you get an offer by phone you might have less than 24 hours to decide whether or not to accept. If you do not respond by the due date the Unit may assume you do not want the offer. If you accept an offer and then change your mind and want to decline it, please write to the Unit immediately so that the place can be offered to another student.

If you will be away at the time offers are made, you can advise the Unit in writing if you wish to accept any offer in advance or if you want to change contact details.

The Unit will confirm your response to an offer within 21

days. If you have not received an acknowledgement 21 days after you sent your response, please contact the Unit.

Being on a reserve list only

If your child is on a reserve list only, you will be offered a place if his or her position on a list is reached. The Unit continues to make these offers, if vacancies occur, throughout Years 5 and 6, provided that students have not already enrolled in another opportunity class.

Further offers

If your child has been offered a place at your second choice school and is also on a reserve list for your first choice school, a further offer will be sent if his or her reserve position is reached. You must accept or decline the new offer. If you accept the further offer, the Unit will consider the original offer declined. The Unit will make an offer to your first choice school even if you declined an offer to your second choice school.

If you accept an offer and are also on a reserve list, you can remain on that reserve list until 5 pm **27 January 2017**. At that time you must give up either the reserve place or the offer. After this time, students who have accepted an offer will be removed automatically from all reserve lists.

Can I find out more about my child's scores?

You can request more information about your child's scores using the online *Request for scores* form. This will show you the scores your child gained on the Opportunity Class Placement Test and the school assessment scores. You cannot use these scores to calculate the profile score. Details of scores will not be provided over the phone. Find out more about scores at http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/oc_markexplain.php

How do I appeal?

You may appeal against the decision of the selection committee if you know something specific happened to prevent your child from gaining higher school assessment scores or test scores (but not both) which might not have been considered by the selection committee. All appeals must be supported by relevant documentary evidence.

You must use the official appeal form that will be available on the Unit's website. Complete the parent section of your form and hand the appeal to the principal of your child's school no later than **Friday 21 October 2016**. The principal will pass it on to the Unit by **Friday 28 October 2016**. Late appeals will not be accepted.

Anything that should have been dealt with or was dealt with by the selection committee at the time of the illness/misadventure process will not be considered valid grounds for appeal. Further details about grounds for appeal can be found at: http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/oc_appeals.php

Can my offer be taken away?

If the Unit cannot contact you to make an offer or find out your response after trying three times, the offer will no longer apply.

If your child does not satisfy all requirements, such as

permanent residency, or does not attend the school on the first day without a satisfactory explanation, the offer will be withdrawn. Offers or enrolments will be terminated if the placement was made on the basis of false or misleading information.

What do I need to do to enrol?

If you have accepted an offer you will receive an *Authority to attend* letter in January 2017. Your child must take this letter to the school on the first day of the school year as part of the enrolment process. You may also need to provide original documentation, such as proof of residency, and meet all other NSW Department of Education enrolment conditions. There are no extra fees for attending a school with an opportunity class. Schools may ask for materials and voluntary contributions as do other government schools.

If you need to delay your starting date beyond the first day of the school year you must discuss it with the principal of the school with an opportunity class (or with the Unit if it is in the school holidays) before enrolling your child. You cannot delay enrolment beyond **Friday 24 February 2017**.

Who can make enquiries or decisions about my child?

The Unit corresponds with the parents or carers that you list on the application. If you wish to let other people discuss your child's application with the Unit, you can list them as another concerned adult or as a special contact. If you want someone to make decisions on your behalf while you are away or uncontactable, you must email the Unit giving their details and authorising them to act on your behalf.

The Unit will provide information about an application to any parent or interested person who is legally entitled to it, regardless of requests for confidentiality. The Unit will not correspond with students or speak to them on the telephone.

Frequently asked questions

1. Must I list two schools?

You should list only those schools you are prepared to accept. You may list one or two choices. Consider your choices carefully.

2. Does the order in which I list my choices matter?

Yes. If your child qualifies for both of your choices, you will be offered a place only at the first choice school. However, if your child qualifies for only one of the two choices, you will be offered that place regardless of whether it was your first or second choice.

3. What provision is made for students from non-government schools?

The selection procedures are the same for all students. The only difference is that the Unit advises government school principals about the students from their school who have applied. Parents of students from non-government schools must ask their principals to complete the principal's page (emailed with their application confirmation) and then must ensure it is returned to the Unit. In circumstances where this is not possible you should submit a letter of explanation to the Unit.

4. How is the profile score derived if my child is the only one applying from his or her school?

A student who does not have school assessment scores, or who is the only candidate from his/her school, will be considered on test scores only.

5. Will my child be disadvantaged if the school cannot provide school assessment scores?

Over the entire candidature, about half of the profile scores are increased by the moderated school assessment scores while the other half are decreased. Where students are not provided with school assessment scores it is not possible to guess whether or not having school assessment scores would have increased their profile score. Students without school assessment scores who are considered exempt will be considered on their test scores only.

6. What can I do to prepare my child for the Opportunity Class Placement Test?

Encourage your child to use the sample tests on the Unit's website to practise answering the questions on the sample answer sheet. Students will also be given practice questions before the test begins. See sample tests at: <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/oc-sampletest.php>

The results of practice items do not mean that your child will score the same in the test. Selection committees and appeals panels will not make any decision based on your child's score on practice test items.

The Department of Education does not endorse coaching for the Opportunity Class Placement Test.

7. What happens if my child gets sick on the day of the test?

You should immediately access the *Illness/misadventure* form from the Unit's website. You should complete the form, whether or not the student attempted the test, attach a medical certificate which covers the day of the test and the *Independent evidence of illness*, and return the completed form to the Unit by **Friday 12 August 2016**. The selection committee will then consider the student's illness/misadventure claim as part of the selection process. Remember, it is generally better to attempt the test than to miss it. You will not be able to appeal on the grounds of illness after the placement outcome is known.

8. Can I change my choice of schools after submitting the application?

Parents are advised to carefully consider their choices when submitting the application. Before **Friday 5 August 2016**, when selection committee lists are created, parents can submit a change of choice without explanation. After this date it is much more difficult. Changes are subject to approval and must be accompanied by documentary evidence of the reason for the change at this stage. In some cases, changes of choice may need to be submitted as an appeal.

9. If my placement outcome information indicates that my child is unsuccessful, can his or her name be placed on a reserve list?

No. Three terms are used in the placement outcome information: 'offer', 'reserve list' and 'unsuccessful'. Selection committees decide the students who will receive offers and those who will be placed on reserve lists. These students

have higher scores than those who are unsuccessful. Students placed on a reserve list will be given a number indicating their position on the reserve list. Progress on the reserve list varies from year to year. When offers begin to be made from the reserve list, the progress of each school's reserve list is available on the website shown on the front of this document.

10. What does the Opportunity Class Placement Test tell me about my child's performance?

The Opportunity Class Placement Test measures ability, while school assessment scores show each student's achievement on the school curriculum. The test helps to identify students for entry into opportunity classes on the basis of academic merit. It is not meant to be a diagnostic test to identify the student's strengths and weaknesses in English and mathematics. The student's primary school is most appropriate to advise you on your child's performance in these areas.

11. If my child was unsuccessful for opportunity class placement, does it mean he or she will be unsuccessful for selective high school entry?

Not necessarily. The entry requirements for opportunity classes and selective high school placement can vary quite significantly. Moreover, there is scope for improvement in the ability and performance of students over the time since they applied for opportunity class placement. Conversely, not all students from opportunity classes are successful for selective high school entry. There are more than twice as many Year 7 places in selective high schools as there are Year 5 places in opportunity classes.

12. If I receive an offer to my second choice as well as being on the reserve list for my first choice, do I have to give up the offer to stay on the reserve list?

You can accept an offer to your second choice school while remaining on the reserve list for your first choice school until 5pm on **Friday 27 January 2017**. After that time no further offers will be made to students who have already accepted placement in an opportunity class.

13. What should I do if my child does not get into an opportunity class?

Opportunity classes are only one of the initiatives provided by the Department of Education to meet the needs of gifted and talented students. As there is one place for approximately every six people applying, not all students can be placed. Be supportive and explain to your child that he or she can be very successful at a comprehensive primary school.

14. What score does a student have to gain to be successful for opportunity class placement?

There is no predetermined score that a student has to achieve to receive an offer of opportunity class placement. The minimum entry score for each school with an opportunity class depends on the scores achieved by the candidates applying for that school and can vary from school to school and from year to year. The greater the demand for the school the higher the entry score is likely to be.

15. How can I find out my child's score?

Most applicants will receive their child's profile score out of 300 at the bottom of their placement outcome information in October 2016. To receive further details of your child's scores in the opportunity class placement process, after you have received your placement outcome information, please submit an online *Request for scores* form which is available from the Unit's website. The only further details available are raw school assessment and test scores. No other score details can be provided.

16. How does the reserve list work?

If the student is on a reserve list for an opportunity class the number on the placement outcome information shows the student's position on the list. The progress of the reserve list depends on whether students accept or decline an offer and whether other students receive further offers to schools of higher choice. If a student's position is reached on the reserve list, the Unit will contact parents with an offer. From early November 2016 until 27 January 2017 you can track the progress of the reserve lists on the website. The page is updated regularly.

Where can I get further information?

The Unit updates information about opportunity class placement procedures regularly on the Unit's website at www.schools.nsw.edu.au/ocplacement

The Unit's telephone system also has current information about the placement process. If you need to, contact the Unit by email ssu@det.nsw.edu.au or phone 1300 880 367 or fax (02) 9266 8435.

You will need to give the student number and other identifying information when talking about a particular student. You should use the original email address used in the application for email enquiries.

Ask your child's teacher if you want advice about whether or not your child might benefit from attending an opportunity class.

For regular updates on the placement process join Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Opportunityclassplacement>

