



YEAR 5 ENTRY TO OPPORTUNITY CLASSES IN 2010

Selective High School and Opportunity Class Placement Unit[^]

Opportunity Class Placement Application Package

Important dates

Application packages available in schools	Monday 11 May 2009
Parents* or caregivers return application forms to schools	Friday 22 May 2009
Principals return completed forms to the Unit	Friday 5 June 2009
Test centre advice letters received by parents or caregivers	Wednesday 22 July 2009
Opportunity Class Placement Test date	Wednesday 5 August 2009
Outcome letters	November 2009

Please note: An application must be made on the printed application form inside this document. Each form has a unique barcode for use when processing. Applications will not be accepted in any other printed format.

Contact details

Selective High School and Opportunity Class Placement Unit
NSW Department of Education and Training
Email: ssu@det.nsw.edu.au
Postal address: Locked Bag 6109 Milperra DC NSW 1891
Telephone: 02 9707 6262 Fax: 02 9707 6265
Website: <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/ocplacement.php>

Note:

[^] In this document, 'Unit' refers to the Selective High School and Opportunity Class Placement Unit.

* "Parent" is defined under the *Education Act 1990* to include '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.

Please detach and complete the application form inside. Please retain the outside information section for later reference.

Please record the barcode number on your application form here for future reference. Please quote this number in all correspondence and enquiries regarding this application.

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PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITH YEAR 5 OPPORTUNITY CLASSES IN 2010

The following OC codes should be referred to when completing item 15. *School Choices*, on page 5 of the application form.

OC code	School	OC code	School	OC code	School
ALX	ALEXANDRIA PARK + Park Rd, Alexandria	GSF	GOSFORD Mann St, Gosford	RIC	RICHMOND Windsor St, Richmond
ALS	ALSTONVILLE Main St, Alstonville	GOU	GOULBURN WEST Combermere St, Goulburn	RUT	RUTHERFORD Webland St, Rutherford
ART	ARTARMON McMillan Rd, Artarmon	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
BCS	BLAXCELL STREET Blaxcell St, Granville	IBR	IRONBARK RIDGE Withers & Ironbark Ridge Rds, Rouse Hill	STU	STURT White Ave, Wagga Wagga
BRA	BRADBURY Jacaranda Ave, Bradbury	JEW	JEWELLS Lepton Pde, Jewells	SUM	SUMMER HILL Moonbie St, Summer Hill
CAM	CAMDEN SOUTH Hume Highway, Camden	KIN	KINGSWOOD Second Ave, Kingswood	SUT	SUTHERLAND Eton St, Sutherland
CBN	CARINGBAH NORTH Cawarra Rd, Caringbah	LEU	LEUMEAH Burrendong Rd, Leumeah	TAH	TAHMOOR Bronzewing St, Tahmoor
CAS	CASULA De Meyrick Ave, Casula	LIT	LITHGOW Mort St, Lithgow	TAM	TAMWORTH Napier St, Tamworth
CES	CESSNOCK WEST Wollombi & Campbell Sts, Cessnock	MAR	MARYLAND John T Bell Dr, Maryland	TAS	TAMWORTH SOUTH Petra Ave, Tamworth
CHW	CHATSWOOD Pacific Highway, Chatswood	MAT	MATTHEW PEARCE Astoria Park Rd, Baulkham Hills	TAR	TAREE + Albert St, Taree
COL	COLYTON Nelson St, Mount Druitt	MON	MONA VALE Waratah St, Mona Vale	TIG	TIGHES HILL Elizabeth St, Tighes Hill
COO	COONABARABRAN John St, Coonabarabran	MOR	MOREE Albert St, Moree	TOO	TOORMINA Cavanba Rd, Toormina
CUD	CUDGEGONG VALLEY Madeira Rd, Mudgee	NEU	NEUTRAL BAY Ben Boyd Rd, Neutral Bay	WAI	WAITARA Edgeworth David Ave, Wahroonga
DUB	DUBBO WEST East St, Dubbo	NEW	NEWBRIDGE HEIGHTS Lewin & Magree Cres, Moorebank	WEN	WENTWORTH FALLS Falls Rd, Wentworth Falls
DUR	DURAL Old Northern Rd, Dural	NLS	NEW LAMBTON SOUTH St James Rd, New Lambton	WIL	WILKINS Park Rd, Marrickville
EAR	EARLWOOD Homer St, Earlwood	NOR	NORTH ROCKS North Rocks Rd, North Rocks	WOL	WOLLONGONG Church St, Wollongong
ERM	ERMINGTON Winbourne St, West Ryde	PIC	PICNIC POINT Prince & Thomas Sts, Picnic Point	WOO	WOOLLAHRA Forth St, Woollahra
GEO	GEORGES HALL Pennington Ave, Georges Hall	POR	PORT MACQUARIE Grant St, Port Macquarie	WYO	WYONG Cutler Dr, Wyong
GLE	GLENBROOK Woodville St, Glenbrook	QUA	QUAKERS HILL Medlow Dr, Quakers Hill		
GOO	GOONELLABAH Ballina Rd, Goonellabah	QUE	QUEANBEYAN SOUTH Cameron Rd, Queanbeyan		

+ Places are reserved for Aboriginal# students.

OPPORTUNITY CLASSES

Opportunity class placement provides intellectual stimulation and an educationally enriched environment for academically gifted and talented children in Years 5 and 6.

Opportunity class students are accommodated in one of the following class groupings according to the school structure: a Year 5 opportunity class; a Year 6 opportunity class; a Year 5/6 composite opportunity class; or a composite class consisting of opportunity class and non-opportunity class students.

Offers for opportunity class placement will be made on the basis of the Opportunity Class Placement Test, school assessment and other evidence of academic merit.

HOW TO APPLY

1. Read this document carefully and keep this information section for later reference.
2. Complete all relevant details on the application form and keep a photocopy.
3. Lodge the form with the principal of the student's current government or non-government primary school by Friday 22 May 2009. Schools will provide school assessment scores. They will also provide comments where relevant.
4. Ensure that the student attends the Opportunity Class Placement Test on Wednesday 5 August 2009.
5. **If by 22 July 2009 you have not received advice of the test centre the student has been allocated, you should telephone either the Unit, on the number shown on the front page of this document, or contact your child's government primary school. Test centre allocations will also be published on the website shown on the cover of this document.**
6. In November 2009 you will receive advice of the outcome of the application.

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

The application form in this document is processed using electronic scanning techniques.

To ensure your application is valid:

- use only the printed application form which has a unique barcode
- write neatly in black pen within the boxes shown on the form, using BLOCK letters
- complete all sections relevant to the application
- do **not** write 'not applicable', 'n/a', 'nil' or draw a line through any boxes on the form. If a section of the form is not relevant it must be left blank
- if an error is made while completing the form, obtain a fresh copy, as crossing out or using correction fluid or tape may cause errors in scanning. **Under no circumstances should pages from different application forms be combined**
- Write the unique barcode printed on each page of the application form on the bottom right hand corner of the front page of the application package and keep it for future reference. This number becomes your student number and should be quoted in all correspondence and contact with the Unit.

SUBMITTING THE FORM

All applicants, whether from government or non-government primary schools, are required to submit their application forms

to their current primary schools for processing and forwarding to the Selective High School and Opportunity Class Placement Unit.

All applications must be submitted on the printed form included with this document. **Photocopied versions will not be accepted.**

PROCESSING THE FORM

Parents complete all relevant sections of the form and submit it to the principal of the student's current primary school.

Principals process the form by providing school assessment scores in English and mathematics, based on the student's performance from Years 3 and 4 up to Friday 5 June 2009, providing comments if applicable, signing and stamping the form and sending it to the Unit.

Principals are invited to comment on any issues they consider relevant to the application.

SCHOOL CHOICES

All applicants seeking placement in opportunity classes in 2010 can choose to be considered for placement in up to two schools.

ORDER OF CHOICE

Ensure that you consider carefully the two schools and the order in which you put them before completing the application form.

If your child qualifies for both schools, you will be offered your first school only. If you are offered your second school, you may also be placed on a reserve list for your first school.

The selection committee does not consider distances, travelling times and transport arrangements from the student's home to the school with an opportunity class. Before listing any school, you should consider available transport, the time your child will take to reach the school and the social implications for your child.

The entry score required for each school varies from year to year depending upon the demand for the school and the scores achieved by those students who have listed the school as a choice.

The zoning rules which determined the schools parents could apply for in previous years have been abolished.

COMMUNICATION

All correspondence and telephone advice is provided to the parents named on page 2 of the application form. This parent or carer is usually the custodial parent living with the child.

No information can be provided to any person who is not listed on the application form as a parent, other concerned adult or special contact.

Under normal circumstances, as parents make all applications for placement in opportunity classes, no correspondence or telephone conversations will be conducted directly with students.

Irrespective of whether or not a parent wishes to keep application information confidential from the other parent or person responsible for the child, the Unit will provide the information wherever it has a legal obligation to do so or where the person requesting the information is entitled to access such information.

A parent not listed on page 2 (usually a parent not living with the child), who wishes to receive correspondence related to the application, must send a request in writing to the Unit so that arrangements can be made for copies of correspondence to be sent if appropriate.

EMAIL AND POST

The Unit will be sending correspondence by email wherever possible. Please do not enter your email details if you do not wish to be contacted in this way.

If you do provide your email address you must contact the Unit if you change your email address or email provider or no longer have email access. This is particularly important where parents have provided a work email address and change their place of employment. **It is the parents' responsibility to monitor the receipt of emails at critical times, such as the fortnight prior to the test and when outcome letters are due.**

If providing your email address please:

- print clearly and accurately
- use BLOCK CAPITALS unless your email address is case sensitive
- provide only one email address.

Note:All communication about the application is conducted with parents/carers. Do not supply a student's email address.

SPECIAL CONTACT

Please show on page 4 of the application form the name and telephone number of another adult the Unit may contact if the parents are unavailable.

CHANGE OF APPLICATION DETAILS

Please inform the Unit by mail or email if there is a change in details such as your child's name, postal address, email address or school. You should also inform the Unit by mail or email if you want to withdraw your application. Note: Changes of application details will not be accepted over the telephone.

COURT ORDERS

If there are court orders affecting a parent's entitlement to a child's records, please complete the relevant section on page 3 of the application form and attach documentary evidence.

CRITERIA FOR ENTRY

ACADEMIC MERIT

Students must compete academically with other candidates for opportunity class placement. Academic merit is determined mainly by the combination of the results of the Opportunity Class Placement Test in English language, mathematics and general ability together with primary school assessments of student performance in English and mathematics.

ACADEMIC RECORD

All applicants attending schools in NSW are required to have school assessment scores completed by the school principal.

Where a NSW non-government school does not provide school assessment scores the parent should attach a letter of explanation to the application form. Applications without school assessment scores or without an acceptable reason for not having school assessment scores may be ineligible for placement.

ATTACHMENTS

Other supporting information (please provide only if relevant):

- information about a disability, medical condition or behavioural disorder and their effects on the academic performance of students and special test provisions that may be required
- the results of individual IQ tests if appropriate. These must be supported with a full IQ report
- supporting information where students are outside the normal age range
- supporting information where students are in Year 3 or Year 5 in 2009.

As placement is based on academic merit, generally determined by a combination of the school assessment scores and the Opportunity Class Placement Test, you are **not required** to include any other attachment at the application stage.

Rather than sending attachments, please summarise your child's outstanding academic achievements on page 6 of the application form.

Do **NOT** send with your application:

- school-specific merit or behaviour certificates
- achievements in the performing arts or sports
- copies of the state or national tests such as NAPLAN
- certificates from statewide competitions.

Where further information is necessary the selection committee may approach the current primary school or request further information from parents.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

DISABILITY, MEDICAL CONDITION OR BEHAVIOURAL DISORDER

The selection committee will give special consideration to students with a disability, medical condition or behavioural disorder to determine whether they have been disadvantaged in their ability to demonstrate academic merit.

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

The selection committee will give special consideration to Aboriginals, Torres Strait Islanders or students with a language background other than English who have been doing most school work in English for less than four years. This consideration will determine whether they have been disadvantaged in their ability to demonstrate academic merit.

AGE AND SCHOOL YEAR

Students qualifying for Year 5 opportunity class placement in 2010 will usually be born after 31 December 1998 and before 31 July 2000 and are normally in Year 4 in 2009.

Where students have not reached Year 4 in 2009 and are seeking to accelerate to Year 5, parents and schools should comment on their social and emotional development in item 23 on page 7 of the application form. Acceleration for such students should be strongly supported by the school principal. The selection committee will contact you if further information is required. Students in this situation must satisfy the criteria outlined in the Departmental document entitled *Policy and Implementation Strategies for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students (Revised 2004)*.

Further criteria for accelerated progression are outlined in *Guidelines for Accelerated Progression*, published by the Board of Studies. This document states on page 21:

'Has the student demonstrated a comprehensive achievement well in advance of the enrolment cohort when performance is assessed against the outcomes for the current curriculum stage?' AND 'On a state-wide basis, it is probable that only one in 200 (0.5%) students would be capable of acceleration in all subjects.'

Selection committees may also consider whether or not students who took the Opportunity Class Placement Test in 2008 have gained undue advantage from their previous experience with the test.

Where applicants are already in Year 4, but were born after 31 July 2000, they are younger than the majority of the cohort. Such students may be required to attend an interview to enable the school to assess their needs. Where a parent claims a young child has been officially accelerated the principal will need to confirm this.

Applications for students already attending Year 5 at primary schools in NSW in 2009 are not normally accepted for Year 5

opportunity class entry in 2010 unless there are extenuating circumstances e.g. the student is very young. In such circumstances, the applicant should provide a detailed explanation.

Applications for students whose age or school year is outside the limits described above may not be finalised at the same time as the applications of other candidates. These applications may be placed temporarily on 'hold' to allow the selection committee to complete further enquiries.

AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP AND RESIDENCY STATUS

Candidates must be Australian citizens or holders of a visa granting permanent resident status in Australia. Information on Australian citizenship is available on the Department of Immigration and Citizenship website at: www.citizenship.gov.au. Official evidence of Australian citizenship may be obtained by the issue of a *Certificate of evidence of Australian citizenship*.

Citizens of New Zealand are eligible for opportunity class entry. Permanent residents of New Zealand, like temporary residents of Australia, are not eligible.

School principals are required to check claims of residential status and citizenship against school records.

Applicants who do not meet these residency requirements and are living in Australia may apply in the usual way and the students will be tested. However, they will not be offered a place unless they are granted permanent residency before offers are made.

Applicants who qualify for opportunity class entry on academic grounds but do not meet the residency requirements, including those who hold diplomatic visas, will be contacted in November to clarify residency status. If permanent residency has not been granted these applicants will then have the opportunity to appeal for special consideration through the appeals process.

All successful applicants will be required to show original documentation such as certificates of evidence of Australian citizenship, birth certificates or visas before enrolment can be finalised by the school. Offers or enrolments will be terminated if placement is made on the basis of false or misleading information.

RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Parents must be living in NSW by the beginning of the 2010 school year. If parents normally live in NSW but are temporarily out of the state, they should expect to return in the near future. Applications from parents who continue to live outside NSW will be considered only if there are vacancies after all suitable applicants from NSW have been placed.

ENROLMENT POLICY

The NSW Department of Education and Training has a responsibility to assess and manage any risk of harm to its staff or students. This includes assessing and managing risk posed to students or staff at a school by a student with a history of violence. Where relevant, such situations will be dealt with in accordance with the Department's enrolment policies and procedures.

Information for parents regarding enrolment is available at: <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/schoolfind/enrolment/parentsinfo.php>

TWINS AND OTHER CHILDREN

Because there is so much competition for placement in an opportunity class you should not expect that, if one of your children has been successful, the other children in your family will be placed. The placement of one twin does not guarantee the placement of another.

Please complete item 11 on the application form if a brother or sister is also applying this year.

TEST INFORMATION

The Opportunity Class Placement Test will be conducted on Wednesday 5 August 2009 in test centres usually established in government high schools. All applicants in NSW at the time are required to sit for the test, unless there are extenuating circumstances. The test is conducted **only** on this day and **only** in designated test centres.

Students who miss the test through illness or other unavoidable mishap may be considered through the illness/misadventure process detailed on page 6. Students unable to take the test because they are interstate or overseas at the time should contact the Unit to determine whether they should apply to be considered under the illness/misadventure or the interstate/overseas procedures. Further details of the interstate/overseas procedures are given on page 7.

The Opportunity Class Placement Test is developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research. It is a secure test and papers are unavailable for scrutiny before or after the test session. The test does not contain any questions used in previous tests. Students' final scores include a school-based assessment component.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT SCORES

The school assessment scores will be moderated according to the performance of the candidates from your child's primary school in the English and mathematics tests. Moderating the school assessment scores makes them comparable statewide and gives school assessment scores and test scores in English and mathematics equal weighting.

Further details about the processing of scores can be found on the Unit's website.

PAST TEST PAPERS

These publications assist applicants for Year 5 entry to opportunity classes to become more familiar with the Opportunity Class Placement Test and are available at http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/oc_sampletest.php. Items that assess English may be available after copyright permission to publish them is obtained.

In the actual Opportunity Class Placement Test there are 20 questions in English, 20 in mathematics and 30 in general ability.

The Opportunity Class Placement Test measures ability and is set to discriminate at a very high level. It is very rare for even the highest scoring candidates to score full marks on all components of the Opportunity Class Placement Test.

Opportunity Class entry does not depend entirely on a student's performance in the Opportunity Class Placement Test as school assessment scores in English and mathematics are provided by the primary schools.

It is important to note that selection committees and appeals panels will not accept students' performance in past papers as evidence of academic merit for the purposes of entry into an opportunity class in any future year.

TEST CENTRE

All candidates will be advised of their designated test centre.

Parents will be required to make appropriate transport arrangements. Parents must not remain on the school premises during the test unless special permission has been granted for student welfare reasons.

If you have not been advised by Wednesday 22 July 2009 about the test centre your child has been allocated, contact the principal of your child's government primary school or ring the Unit on the number shown on the front page of this document.

A full listing of the test centres will also be available from the website shown on the cover of this document. All candidates from the same primary school are usually sent to the same test centre.

Test answer sheets will be identified by numbers and not by name to ensure anonymity in the marking process.

If your child does not meet the criteria for entry you should not assume that your application has been approved because your child has been assigned to a test centre.

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. Each part lasts half an hour.

The Department does not endorse coaching for the Opportunity Class Placement Test as it is designed as a measure of ability. The test does not contain any questions used in previous tests. Students' final scores include a school-based component. Practice with multiple-choice questions of any sort may help students to become familiar with test technique. There will be a practice session before the test begins to ensure that students are fully prepared.

Students must be careful not to look at the work of others during the test. Students found to be cheating risk disqualification from the test.

Students will be sent test information at the same time as they are sent their test centre advice. This information will detail the Opportunity Class Placement Test procedures and list the equipment to bring. The Department of Education and Training recommends that you use this information and the past papers to make sure your child becomes familiar with the test format and knows how to record his or her answers.

SPECIAL TEST PROVISIONS

Some applicants request special test provisions for their children to take the test. This can be because of a disability, medical condition or behavioural disorder e.g. students with ADHD or Aspergers Syndrome can be seated at the front of the test centre; large print papers can be arranged for students with visual impairment and FM web transmitters can be arranged for students with hearing impairments. Parents or school principals should request special test provisions on page 6 of the application form. The Unit evaluates the request and writes to both the applicant and the student's current government primary school principal advising them of the outcome.

ILLNESS/MISADVENTURE

If a problem such as sickness or an accident stops your child from taking the test or from doing his or her best, you should download an illness/misadventure form from the Department's website or request one from the Unit. The completed form should be returned to the Unit as soon as possible but no later than Friday 21 August 2009. You should include evidence to support a misadventure claim, where possible. **You must include a medical certificate to cover the test date if your child was sick.** Generally, it is better to take the test where possible and make an illness/misadventure claim than to miss the test.

Children who miss out on the test for unavoidable reasons such as illness may be considered on their moderated school assessment scores. Where neither test marks nor moderated school assessment scores are available, applicants may be considered on

suitable alternative evidence presented.

All claims for consideration based on illness must be made at this stage. Although there is an appeals process which occurs later in the year after the outcome is known, appeals based on illness will be considered only in exceptional circumstances. Further details of the appeals process are given on page 7 of this document.

SELECTION COMMITTEES

A selection committee for each school with opportunity classes will meet to choose students using the Criteria for Entry listed on page 4 of this document. The selection committee comprises at least three people, including the school education director or nominee, the principal of the school with opportunity classes and a district guidance officer or school counsellor.

All placement decisions are made by the selection committee convened for each opportunity class.

OUTCOME OF APPLICATIONS

You will be notified in writing in November 2009 whether your child:

- a) is being offered a place and/or
- b) has been placed on a reserve list and/or
- c) has been unsuccessful for one or both choices.

Where the student is unsuccessful for both choices the letter will summarise the outcome without listing the schools.

Note that while offers can be accepted, enrolments will not be finalised until after the official 'Application to Enrol' form has been processed.

HOLD

In some cases students might not be sent an outcome letter at the same time as the rest of the candidates. These students' applications could be placed on 'hold' while the selection committee carries out further enquiries usually related to residency status, age or any extenuating circumstances.

RESPONSE TO OFFERS

If you receive an offer you must complete the response form and return it by the date shown on the response form (generally 10 to 14 days after the date of the offer). Some late offers may be made by telephone towards the end of the placement process and these generally require responses within 24 hours. It will be assumed that the offer has been declined if you do not respond by the due date.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RESPONSE

Whether you accept or decline an offer, you will be sent confirmation. You should contact the Unit if you do not receive your confirmation advice.

If you accept an offer and later change your mind, you should let the Unit know immediately so that the next eligible applicant can be offered the place.

AUTHORITY TO ATTEND

If you accept an offer of opportunity class placement, you will also be sent an *Authority to Attend* by the last week in January 2010. The student must present this advice to the school on the first day of Term 1, 2010.

To finalise enrolment at an opportunity class you must have:

1. received an *Authority to Attend* from the Selective High School and Opportunity Class Placement Unit;
2. satisfied all NSW Department of Education and Training enrolment requirements.

WITHDRAWAL OF OFFERS

All successful applicants will be required to show original documentation, such as birth certificates and relevant visas as proof of residency status, before enrolment can be finalised by the school.

Offers will be withdrawn if it is found that students do not satisfy all the requirements, such as residential status or residential address, or if students do not enrol at the school at the beginning of the 2010 school year without providing a satisfactory explanation.

Offers or enrolments may be terminated if placement is made on the basis of false or misleading information.

Any deferment must be negotiated with the Unit or with the principal of the school with opportunity classes before enrolment. You cannot defer enrolment beyond 1 March 2010.

Offers will lapse if, after several attempts, either in writing or by phone, the Unit is unable to contact the applicant to make the offer or determine the response.

HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS

If you will be away when offers are being made, you should notify the Unit of a contact address, telephone number or email address and the length of time you will be away. In some circumstances the Unit may contact the special contact person listed on the application form. If your child is on a reserve list you may accept in advance any offer that may be made while you are on holidays.

REPORTS FOR SCHOOLS

The Unit will send reports to government primary schools listing the outcome for each of their candidates. The Unit may, upon request, send reports to non-government schools listing the outcome for each of their candidates whose application forms provide school assessment scores.

ASSESSMENT SCORES AND OTHER RESULTS

Candidates will receive in their outcome letter, advice of the mark out of 300 they achieved in the opportunity class selection process, provided that they sat the Opportunity Class Placement Test and/or had moderated school assessment scores.

Further details of the marks achieved by your child will be available on request using the *Request for Scores* form available on the Internet.

Requests will be processed together at the end of December. Details of scores will not be provided over the phone.

FURTHER PLACEMENT

RESERVE LISTS

Parents whose children are on reserve lists will be offered a place for their children if their position on the reserve list is reached. Reserve lists remain active for placement throughout Years 5 and 6 provided that students have not already enrolled in another opportunity class.

You may be offered a place at your second choice school and be placed on the reserve list for your first choice school.

Students who have been offered a place and are also on a reserve list for a school of higher choice will be sent another offer if their reserve list position is reached. Such offers will be made whether or not the previous offer has been accepted or declined until the beginning of the 2010 school year. **After the beginning of the 2010 school year, no further offers will be made to people who already have accepted a place in an opportunity class. Where a student moves out of the area and wishes to be placed in another opportunity class the criteria outlined in Transfers on page 8 will apply.**

APPEALS

You can appeal against the decision of the selection committee if you feel there were special factors which may have prevented your child from gaining higher school assessment scores or test scores or if there were other factors which may not have been considered by the selection committee.

All appeals must be made on an appeal form which is available from the Department's website or from the Unit. You should complete your section of the appeal form and pass it on to the primary school principal, where applicable, no later than 14 days after the date of the outcome letter. The principal should complete the school's section and return the form to the Manager, Selective High School and Opportunity Class Placement Unit, no later than 21 days after the date on your outcome letter. Contact details for the Unit are on the cover of this application package.

You should include evidence to support your appeal, where applicable. If your appeal is based on your child's school performance, the panel will consider evidence relating only to performance in Years 3 and 4 up to Friday 5 June 2009. The opportunity class appeals panel may consult the primary school principal in some cases. You will be notified of the outcome of your appeal in December 2009.

It should be noted that appeals based on illness will be considered only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. illness diagnosed after 21 August 2009). All such appeals must be accompanied by a medical certificate.

INTERSTATE AND OVERSEAS STUDENTS

Interstate or overseas students (Australian citizens or permanent residents temporarily living interstate or overseas) who are unable to take the Opportunity Class Placement Test will be considered by the selection committee through either the interstate/overseas procedures or the illness/misadventure procedures.

To use the illness/misadventure procedure students must have attended a NSW primary school during Year 4 and must have school assessment scores which can be moderated.

To use the interstate/overseas procedure you should contact the Unit or download from the Unit's website an interstate/overseas *Report of academic merit* form and arrange, at your own expense, for individual and standardised testing of your child by a registered psychologist or other qualified practitioner. You need to complete both the interstate/overseas *Report of academic merit* form and the standard application form.

LATE APPLICATIONS

Late applications will generally not be considered except where there are extenuating circumstances.

If you have a good reason for making a late application you must include a detailed written explanation and a supporting statement from the school principal or other relevant person if possible. The selection committee will decide whether the extenuating circumstances warrant the acceptance of a late application.

Even if the selection committee accepts the reason for a child's late application, if that application is received after Monday 13 July 2009, it is unlikely that there will be sufficient time to arrange for that child to sit the Opportunity Class Placement Test.

If you apply after Monday 13 July 2009 your child will not be tested and your application will be considered only if there are exceptional circumstances such as a shortage of suitable applicants.

ENQUIRIES

Enquiries can be directed to the principal of the government school that your child is currently attending or to the Unit at the address or numbers shown on the cover of this document.

Enquiries about courses and programs offered by specific opportunity classes should be addressed to the schools concerned.

After receiving advice which gives the student number, parents will need to quote the student number or give other identifying information before officers of the Unit will discuss confidential student details on the telephone. Parents who cannot provide adequate identifying information on request will need to make written enquiries.

The opportunity class placement Internet page is updated regularly throughout the placement process. The updates show what is happening at each stage of the process. If you have a question you may find the answer on the Internet page at:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/ocplacement.php>

The Selective High School and Opportunity Class Placement Unit also employs a telephone system to assist you to keep in touch with what is happening at various stages of the process. The telephone system provides answers to commonly asked questions.

POINTS TO CONSIDER

TRANSFERS

Opportunity class placement cannot automatically be transferred. However, if your child is enrolled in an opportunity class and you are moving to another area where there is also a school with an opportunity class, you should write to the Unit requesting that your child be placed on the reserve list for the opportunity class at the school in the new area. As schools with opportunity classes can have different entry scores, it may be possible in some cases for students who were offered placement in an opportunity class at one school to be unsuccessful at another school and vice versa. Irrespective of the student's place on the order of merit list, a vacancy must occur before any offers can be made and both principals must approve. Students placed on one reserve list will need to relinquish their place on a reserve list before being placed on another reserve list.

CHANGE OF CHOICE

Before 14 August 2009

If you wish to change your choice of schools before 14 August 2009 you should notify the Unit in writing of your request. This is the date when information is prepared for selection committees.

After 14 August 2009

Changes of choice cannot be accepted after this date as they cannot be processed in time for selection committees to be presented with the relevant information.

If you have clearly demonstrable extenuating circumstances, such as the purchase of a new residence in a suburb or town very far from the previous residence, you may request a change of choice accompanied by a full explanation and supporting documents. The request for a change of choice will be subject to approval by selection committees.

Approval will not be given for a change of choice on the grounds that the student did not qualify for the original choices.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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

The same selection procedures apply to students from government and non-government schools. Principals of non-government primary schools have been asked to accept your application, add school assessment scores and comments if relevant and send it to the Unit.

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

The Opportunity Class Placement Test consists of 70 multiple-choice questions written expressly for 2009.

Past test papers are available on the website shown on the front of this document. Students will be given practice questions before the test begins. If you want to give your child additional help, practice with the past papers or with any other type of multiple-choice questions will increase familiarity with the format and techniques.

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

No. Three key words or phrases are used in outcome letters: 'offer', 'reserve list' and 'unsuccessful'. Selection committees decide the children who will receive offers and those who will be placed on the reserve (waiting) list. Children on the reserve list have higher scores than those who are unsuccessful.

4. Do children from opportunity classes automatically get into selective high schools when they reach Year 7?

There is no automatic entry into selective high schools. Students from opportunity classes must compete with all other eligible candidates for entry to selective high schools.

The entry requirements for opportunity class placement and selective high school placement can vary significantly. There are more places in selective high schools than there are in opportunity classes. Moreover, there is scope for improvement in the performance of students over the two years between application for opportunity class and selective high school placement.

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

The Opportunity Class Placement Test is designed to help identify students for entry into opportunity classes on the basis of academic merit. It is not meant to identify the student's strengths and weaknesses in English language or mathematics. The student's primary school is in a far better position to advise you on your child's performance in these areas.

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

There is no pre-determined score that a student has to achieve to be successful for opportunity class placement. The minimum entry score for each school with an opportunity class depends on the score 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.