

TORMEAD

2 October 2020

Dear Parent,

Over the last few weeks, we have been looking again at our entrance test arrangements in the light of the increased risk of disruption and the possibility of new COVID restrictions. As this term has progressed, we have grown concerned that our plans for a January test date may not be feasible or indeed the safest course of action for our candidates, given the developing national picture.

From the outset, we want to acknowledge the disruption that the lockdown has caused to all those children sitting 11+ tests this year, and our priority, in thinking about how to proceed, remains governed by the principle of making the process as fair and equitable as possible for all candidates.

In light of these considerations, we have taken the decision that 11+ applicants this year, will sit the [ISEB Common Pre-tests](#), a widely respected online test that is used to assess primary and prep school children, making the move to academically selective secondary schools. A growing proportion of leading independent schools in our area and in London have made the same choice in the last week and one of the positive features of this test, is that it is only completed once, and the results can be accessed by any senior school that candidate has been registered with. This list of schools that use the Pre-tests can be seen [here](#).

Candidates may sit the tests, online, in their own schools, any time before the **11th December** and we will be offering two dates (the **28th November and the 11th December**) when children can sit the Pre-tests at Tormead. We have spaced these dates deliberately, in case any child is unable to attend one date, due to self-isolating. This sadly means that we will not be hosting the Activity day on the 28th November. Our deadline for registration remains the **31st October**. We would not recommend that children sit the exam in their schools until the 23rd November at the earliest.

In order for us to get the most complete sense of each individual this year, we then plan to invite each candidate for interview in January (dates tbc), as well as seek references from every child's primary or prep school in November. Invitations for interview will be sent to families before Christmas. Should we be in the position that interviews cannot take place, then we will base our offers on the results from the Pre-test alone.

No special preparation is required for the Pre-tests and they assess the English and Mathematics content covered in the National Curriculum up to the end of Year 5 as well as verbal and non-verbal reasoning. The ISEB English and Maths tests are a shorter and simplified version of our own entrance exam which, we believe, will help to mitigate the impact of disruption children will have faced in their learning, during Year 5, as well as the fact that they will be completing the tests a few weeks earlier than planned. The Pre-tests, importantly, measure potential as well as achievement.

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We understand that this change is a significant one, from our typical entrance test processes. In the current climate however, it feels like the right and fair decision, to ensure that candidates can sit some sort of assessment, as safely as possible, in these increasingly uncertain times. Our Registrar will be available via email registrar@tormeadschool.org.uk and phone 01483 796040 should you have any questions. We will also be updating our website with this new information and have written to the Heads of your daughter's schools this afternoon.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Boyd'.

David Boyd

Head