

INFORMATION SHEET – OPTING-OUT OF SCHOOL TESTING

Are you or your child concerned about SAT's? There is no obligation to take those tests and you can ask the school to withdraw your child from those tests based on the following official guidance.

Official advice to heads re in-school testing

School head teachers currently have a duty of care for children and a duty to work in dialogue with parents. The annual instructions sent out by the Standards and Testing Agency to heads, known as the [Assessment and Reporting Arrangements](#), state that certain children should not take the tests including *“pupils who are experiencing, or have recently experienced, severe emotional problems”* (page 18).

The instructions also say *“As part of the decision-making process, headteachers should discuss the pupil's circumstances and needs with their parents and teachers”* (page 17).

Anne Milton, Minister of State for Education, stated that *“Children attending school are not legally required to sit the national key stage tests, although most children in state-funded schools and some independent schools do take them.”*

Consequences of not taking tests

Parents therefore have *no statutory obligation* to present their children for tests. However, a lack of test results doesn't mean that a child's achievement at primary school is unrecognised. The school will still submit results from teachers' assessments which are usually more sensitive and rounded evaluations based on students work during the year. It is important because parents may worry that their child will be placed in a low set in secondary school if they fail to take the SATs. In practice, many secondary schools appear no longer to trust SATs because results can be skewed by the excessive pressure and preparation imposed by some schools. As a result, when schools divide Year 7 pupils into sets for a particular subject, they typically do so on the basis of their own assessments of students' abilities.