Meopham School

A Guide to Secondary School Applications

Introduction

At Meopham School, we know what an exciting time it is when families start planning for their child's transition to secondary school. We also know that these **big decisions and changes can be a little daunting**. That's why we've put together this guide: to support our local families - regardless of where you may be considering for next year - with some **helpful, impartial advice** for parents and children on how to navigate the application process, and how to prepare for life at secondary school. We want to help make this process smooth and successful for each and every one of you.

To Year 6 students I say this: wherever you end up going next year, I promise that you are at the **start of an exciting and special journey**. Secondary school isn't just somewhere you'll learn new lessons or take exams; you'll discover your passions, you'll forge lasting friendships that may last a lifetime and you'll grow into the amazing young adults that everyone knows you're capable of becoming.

At Meopham School we are motivated by our **TRUE values** of Tenacity, Respect, Unity and Excellence, and it is these values that have inspired us to make this guide. Whatever your plans or wherever you decide to go, as members of our local community, we feel we have a duty to support you at this important time, and we hope you find this guide useful.

Selecting a secondary school for your child is a very important decision and one that you should rightly take a lot of time and thought to consider. The best thing you can do is get out and see schools for yourselves.

We warmly welcome you to come and see our school in action through our **Open Evening** on **Thursday 25th September**, and our **Open Morning Tours**; which run from **Monday 29th September to Thursday 16th October.**

This guide is designed to help parents navigate the complex application process, providing hints, tips and reminders, whilst also showcasing a little bit about our school.

We hope you find it useful.

Ethan Roberts, Headteacher.

How do I choose?

Choosing the right secondary school for your child is one of the most **significant decisions** you'll make as a parent. It's about much more than just academic results; it's about finding an environment where your child will **thrive personally, discover their passions, develop their unique talents, and feel truly supported** every step of the way.

Open events are absolutely invaluable for getting a true feel for a school's atmosphere and ethos. Our best advice? **Attend multiple events** for every school you're considering – don't just visit one! This direct experience offers the most authentic insight.

While you're there, **observe everything:**

- **Watch the Interactions:** How do staff engage with students and each other?
- **Talk to Current Students:** They are your best resource!
- **Chat with Teachers and Leadership:** This is your chance to ask about the curriculum, teaching approaches, and the school's approach to pastoral care – ensuring your child's well-being is a priority.
- **Explore the Facilities:** Are classrooms bright, well-maintained, and designed for learning? Are there specialist rooms for science, art, design technology, and computing? Is the library well-stocked and inviting? Don't forget to check for pleasant, safe outdoor spaces and up-to-date technology to support digital learning.

Even if your child is years away from this stage, **consider a school's Sixth Form provision**. It's a strong indicator of the school's commitment to continuous education and offers a potential seamless transition for your child's future. Ask about A-Level or equivalent results, the breadth of subjects on offer to cater to diverse interests and career paths, and how students are supported in making these crucial choices.

A school's reputation can be a helpful starting point, but it should never be the only factor in your decision. Remember, opinions are subjective, so look for consistent themes rather than isolated stories. Most importantly, cross-reference everything with official data like Ofsted reports and examination outcomes for a comprehensive and well-rounded view.

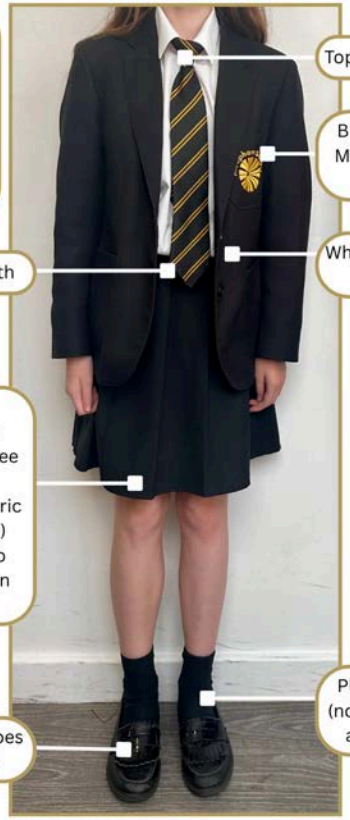
Uniform

Uniform is an important part of **school identity**, and it's certainly different from primary school! As you explore your secondary options, make sure to thoroughly review each school's uniform policy. You'll find they are generally **more prescriptive** than your child's current school.

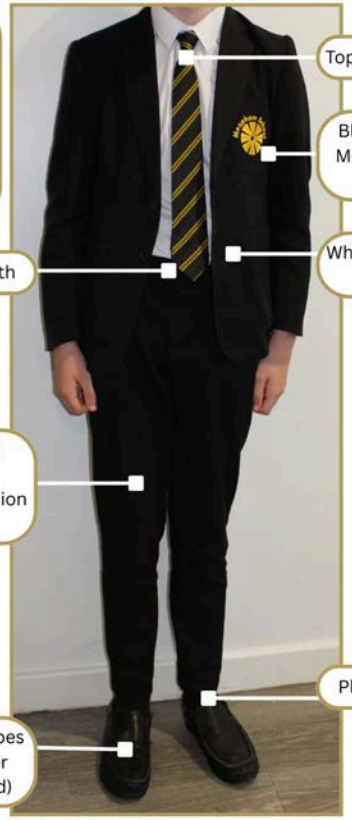
The great news is, you can often purchase key items like blazers well in advance, taking the pressure off last-minute shopping. Schools, like ours, have made a concerted effort in recent years to ensure **affordable and accessible uniform options** are available to families.

A crucial tip from us: be mindful when shopping for skirts – supermarket styles are often designed for fashion trends and may not meet school length requirements. Similarly, school shoes must typically be plain black leather, free from any logos. Beware of athletic brands marketed as 'school shoes' if they don't fit this description; they're very rarely accepted in a formal school setting. Your safest bet is a classic, smart leather shoe suitable for a formal environment.

Uniform Expectations



Uniform Expectations



Behaviour and Support

All secondary schools have **clear behaviour policies**, and that’s a good thing! These policies ensure high expectations for every student, creating a consistent and fair environment. **It is a good idea to check a secondary school's behaviour policy on their website**. We know children, like all of us, sometimes make mistakes. At Meopham, our focus isn't just on correcting errors, but on learning from them and finding positive ways to put things right.

Your child's welfare is always a priority here. We offer a range of **support and interventions** to ensure students feel safe and happy, so they can fully focus on their learning journey.

While clear boundaries are essential, we believe in the **powerful impact of rewards and recognition** to keep students engaged and motivated. Knowing the benefits of meeting expectations is a huge incentive! At Meopham School, we celebrate student success in so many ways: from fun 'queue jump passes' and exciting reward trips to free pizza for excellent work and more formal academic awards and prizes. We love to see our students shine!

Enrichment Opportunities

At Meopham School, we truly believe that **learning extends far beyond textbooks and classrooms**. A rich and vibrant array of extra-curricular activities is absolutely vital for your child's personal growth. It's where they can explore new interests, build exciting skills, and forge lasting friendships.

In a world as competitive as ours is now, well rounded individuals are key to success beyond the classroom. **Cultural capital** is built by offering and encouraging a breadth of opportunities. **When choosing a secondary school, consider its enrichment offer carefully**. Does the school offer a wide range of clubs – from academic and arts to STEM, debate, and environmental groups? Are there diverse trips, including educational visits, cultural experiences, and exciting residential adventures? Critically, do students genuinely participate in and enjoy these activities? Look for a clear **clubs timetable** and ensure there are opportunities for students of all abilities and interests to get involved. **Ask students at Open Evenings** about their enrichment: what do they enjoy about school outside of their lessons? What clubs do they attend? What trips have they been on? These experiences are designed to cultivate essential skills like teamwork, creativity, critical thinking, and leadership, setting your child up for future success.

A robust sports programme is incredibly important for your child's physical health, mental well-being, and for developing invaluable life skills. As you explore schools, think about: **Does the school offer a wide variety of individual and team sports**? Crucially, do they cater for both aspiring competitive athletes and those who simply want to participate, stay active, and enjoy themselves?

Enrichment Opportunities

At Meopham, we are incredibly passionate about **nurturing the leaders of tomorrow**. From volunteering as ambassadors at Trust events, contributing to our vibrant school magazine or active student council to Sixth Formers mentoring younger students, our students consistently impress us with their dedication to developing our school and positively impacting our local community. Being **active members of our local community** is extremely important to our school culture, ensuring that our students interact, learn from and contribute to a variety of local schools, organisations and charities during their time with us.

ENRICHMENT PROGRAMME TERM 5 & 6

Monday

Rounders	15:10 - 16:00	*Field	Miss Flavelle, Miss Frietas & Mrs Huggens

Tuesday

Fidget Club - Yr 7 - 9	Breaktime	English 9	Miss Tiller
Pride Club	Lunchtime	Hums 7	Miss Williams
Year 7 book Club	Lunchtime	English 6	Mrs Porter-Clarke & Ms Rajkumar
History Club	15:10 - 16:00	Hums 7	Miss Williams
Tabletop, Board Games, and TCG Club	15:10 - 16:00	Hums 4	Mr Obbard
Foodventure Club	15:10 - 16:00	Catering	Mrs Kerr
Ukulele Club (Bring your own ukulele if you have one)	15:10 - 16:00	Music 2	Mr Knight

Wednesday

Doodle Club Yr 7 - 9	Lunchtime	Art 3	Mrs Nicolaou
Student Leader Club	Lunchtime	Maths 8	Mrs Greenwood
Rugby (Girls introduction)	15:10 - 16:00	*Field	Mrs Haydon

Thursday

School Magazine	Lunchtime	English 4	Mrs Williamson
MFL Homework Club	Lunchtime	Languages 2	Mrs Lajnef
Stem Club	15:10 - 16:00	Science 3	Miss Orange
Cricket	15:10 - 16:00	Field*	Mr Savory, Mr Huggens, Mr Whittle, Mr Obbard & Mr Goldsmith
Dance	15:10 - 16:00	Main building PA room*	Mrs Greenwood

*meet at the main changing rooms for PE clubs

Travelling to School

We know that **travel to and from school is a top concern** for many parents. You want your child to grow in independence, but safety – especially during those darker winter months – is naturally at the forefront of your mind. We urge you to **research travel options carefully** for any school you're considering.

Many school bus routes safely transport a large number of students, and there's a real '**safety in numbers**' aspect to this. If you ever have any concerns about safety or welfare on a bus, please **don't hesitate to contact the school or the bus company (or both)**! We take parent reports incredibly seriously and are committed to acting on them, providing feedback on how situations have been addressed.

We understand that **safety for children on school transport is paramount**. As such, schools are rightly proactive in taking steps to ensure students' safety and wellbeing on their journey home. Here at Meopham, for example, we **work hand-in-hand with bus companies** to ensure all students feel safe and secure on their journey to school and back home. We keep a register of all students who regularly utilise public transport, we supervise our bus stops at the start and end of the school day and we display posters on all our buses with a number students can contact at the school should they have any concerns on their journey to or from school. Our priority is a **safe and respectful journey for every student**.

Meopham School
Bus & Travel Information for Parents 2025

306/308 Redroute: Gravesend – Sevenoaks (via Vigo & Culverstone)
Free bus passes available for eligible students living in Vigo/local surrounding areas Kent Travel Saver accepted

306/308 Redroute: Sevenoaks – Northfleet Garage (via Gravesend Station)
Morning (AM): Gravesend Station to Meopham School
Afternoon (PM): Meopham School to Gravesend Station
Operated by 1st Bus Stop M1.
Kent Travel Saver & Kent 16+ Travel Saver accepted

416 Redroute: Istead Rise – Gravesend (Thong Lane)
Runs at school times.
Kent Travel Saver & Kent 16+ Travel Saver accepted.

311 Brian Jones Coaches: Cobham / Shorne / Lower Higham
Available for areas more than 3 miles from the nearest school
Kent Travel Saver & Kent 16+ Travel Saver accepted
Funded by KCC in most cases

418 Redroute: New Ash Green / Hartley / Longfield / New Barn / Meopham / Wrotham
Public bus service
Kent Travel Saver & Kent 16+ Travel Saver accepted

TRAIN SERVICES

From Meopham: Services run from Sole Street/Strood/Rochester/Chatham towards Longfield/Farningham/Swanley. The 306/308 Redroute runs outside the station

From Gravesend: Trains come into Gravesend from the Medway Towns towards Northfleet/ Swanscombe/Greenhithe (Bluewater), Stone Crossing & Dartford. The 306/308 Redroute runs from outside the station

https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-transport

KENT TRAVEL PASSES

For students in Years7-11
Apply here:
https://www.kent.gov.uk/education- and-children/schools/school- transport/KCC-travel-saver

For Post16 students aged 16-19
Apply here:
https://www.kent.gov.uk/education- and-children/schools/school- transport/16-travel-saver

School Life

Your child is going to be spending a lot of time at school, so **find out what school life is like**: what are lessons like? How is the school day arranged? Who is your first point of contact? These are **key questions** to ask staff and students at Open Evening

Having the answers to these questions will help you and your child feel more settled, and better able to make an informed decision.

In secondary school, a key difference that students will grow used to is the **wide variety of teachers** they will learn with each week. This can be a big change, but it's important as students advance in their studies that their learning is delivered by **subject specialists**.

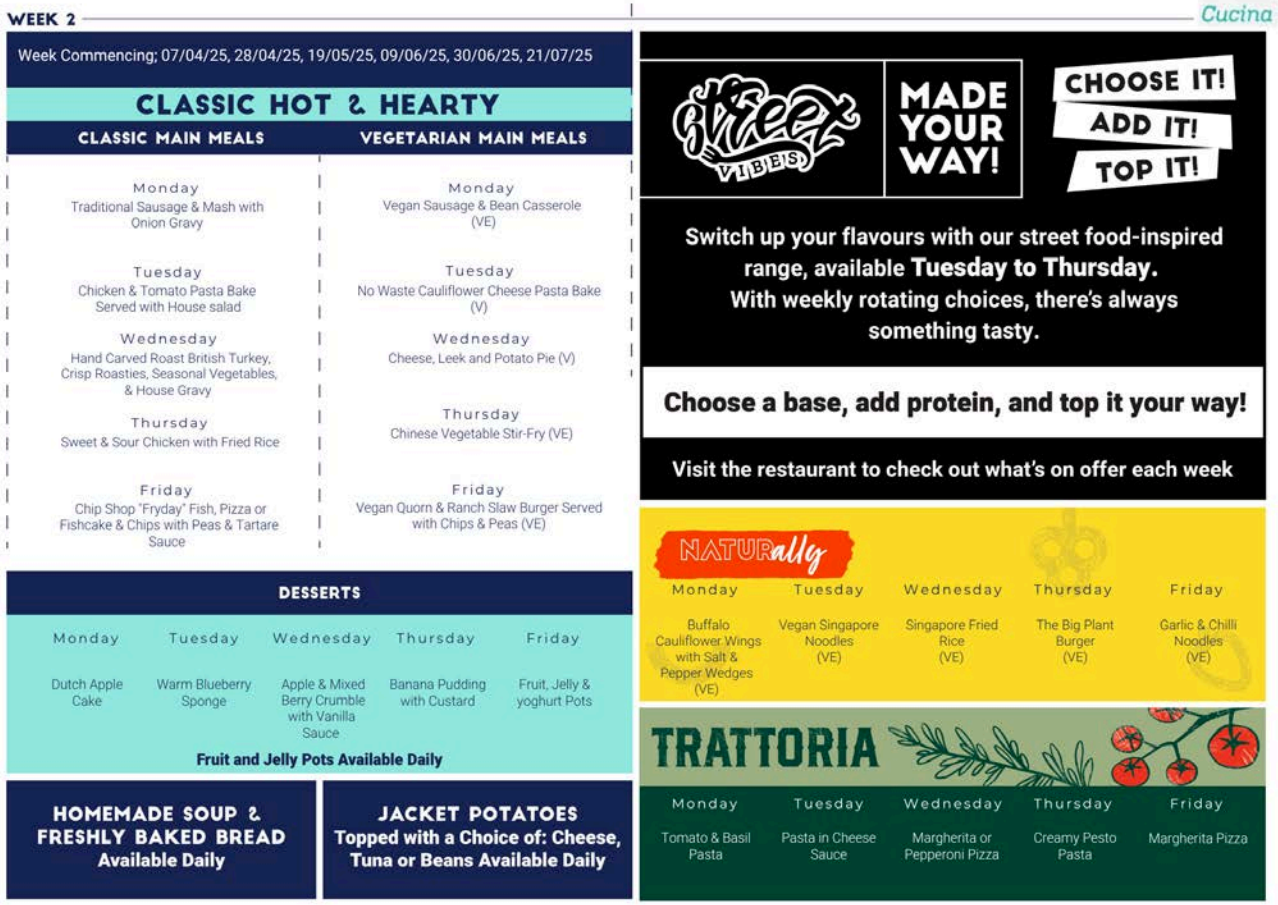
However, to ensure students have a consistent member of staff to go to each day, most schools provide **Form Tutors**, with a daily Tutor Time at some point in the timetable.

Form Tutors will provide key school messages, can support students with any issues they may be having and act as a point of communication for parents and carers. **Ask each school what tutor group arrangements they have to support their students pastorally**.

Food Glorious Food!

The topic we get asked about most by students is the **quality and variety of the food available** - **so find out**! We are very lucky to have our own in-house caterers, who provide excellent food throughout the day. **If you are eligible for Free School Meals you also need to reapply for this** as your child moves from primary to secondary school.

Sample Menu:



WEEK 2

Cucina

Week Commencing; 07/04/25, 28/04/25, 19/05/25, 09/06/25, 30/06/25, 21/07/25

CLASSIC HOT & HEARTY

CLASSIC MAIN MEALS	VEGETARIAN MAIN MEALS
Monday Traditional Sausage & Mash with Onion Gravy	Monday Vegan Sausage & Bean Casserole (VE)
Tuesday Chicken & Tomato Pasta Bake Served with House salad	Tuesday No Waste Cauliflower Cheese Pasta Bake (V)
Wednesday Hand Carved Roast British Turkey, Crisp Roasties, Seasonal Vegetables, & House Gravy	Wednesday Cheese, Leek and Potato Pie (V)
Thursday Sweet & Sour Chicken with Fried Rice	Thursday Chinese Vegetable Stir-Fry (VE)
Friday Chip Shop "Fryday" Fish, Pizza or Fishcake & Chips with Peas & Tartare Sauce	Friday Vegan Quorn & Ranch Slaw Burger Served with Chips & Peas (VE)

DESSERTS

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Dutch Apple Cake	Warm Blueberry Sponge	Apple & Mixed Berry Crumble with Vanilla Sauce	Banana Pudding with Custard	Fruit, Jelly & yoghurt Pots

Fruit and Jelly Pots Available Daily

HOMEMADE SOUP & FRESHLY BAKED BREAD
Available Daily

JACKET POTATOES
Topped with a Choice of: Cheese, Tuna or Beans Available Daily

Street VIBES

MADE YOUR WAY!

CHOOSE IT! ADD IT! TOP IT!

Switch up your flavours with our street food-inspired range, available Tuesday to Thursday. With weekly rotating choices, there's always something tasty.

Choose a base, add protein, and top it your way!

Visit the restaurant to check out what's on offer each week

NATURally

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Buffalo Cauliflower Wings with Salt & Pepper Wedges (VE)	Vegan Singapore Noodles (VE)	Singapore Fried Rice (VE)	The Big Plant Burger (VE)	Garlic & Chilli Noodles (VE)

TRATTORIA

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Tomato & Basil Pasta	Pasta in Cheese Sauce	Margherita or Pepperoni Pizza	Creamy Pesto Pasta	Margherita Pizza

Free School Meals

In challenging times, financial pressures are a real worry for many families. It's important to know that **a range of financial support is available**, even if it's not always widely publicised. If you find yourself experiencing financial difficulties – whether short-term or ongoing – please know that **options exist that you may qualify for.** Don't hesitate to inquire; schools often have staff who can discreetly guide you.

A crucial point to remember, especially if your child currently receives **Free School Meals or you anticipate eligibility: Free School Meals do NOT automatically transfer to secondary school.** You **must re-apply** when your child moves up. This is a common oversight, and we want to ensure every eligible family continues to receive this vital support.

The Admission Process

Every school, including Meopham, **will publish its admissions criteria on its website**, and we cannot stress enough how important it is to **read this carefully and understand the policy.**

As you explore your options, consider:

- **Daily Travel Time:** How will the journey impact your child's day-to-day life? Think about those early mornings and late afternoons.
- **Aligning Values:** Do the school's core values resonate with your family's beliefs? A strong match here can make a world of difference to your child's overall experience.
- **Involve Your Child:** This is their next big adventure! Talk to them about which schools they feel drawn to, what excites them, and where they feel they'd thrive. Their input is invaluable.

Applying for a secondary school in England is done through your **local council**, even if you're aiming for schools outside your immediate area. You'll typically use an easy-to-navigate **online Common Application Form (CAF)**. On this form, you'll need to **rank your preferred schools**, usually with up to four choices.

Mark your calendars! The **closing date for applications is typically in late October**. Then, comes the exciting wait! You'll find out which school your child has been offered **around March**. Once you receive the offer, you'll simply need to respond to either **accept or decline the place**.

In the unfortunate instance that your child doesn't initially get the school you were hoping for, all is not lost! There is still the vital opportunity to **lodge an appeal**. These appeals should be made **directly to the school** you would like your child to attend, and importantly, **you can appeal to several schools at the same time**. If offered an appeal hearing, you'll have the chance to present your case, explaining why you believe your child should be given a place at that specific school.

We understand that this is a **significant and sometimes challenging time** for both students and parents. We sincerely hope that this insight has given you a clearer understanding of the process, what to look for in a school, and most importantly, **the strong values and supportive environment we champion here at Meopham School**.

We wish you the very best of luck with the entire admissions process, and we genuinely **hope to welcome many of you into our school community in the future**!

Meopham School

Year 7 Entry September 2026

Open Evening

Thursday 25th September 2025

4.30pm - 8pm

Presentations @ 5pm, 6pm, 7pm

No booking required

Open Morning Tours

Monday 29th September - Thursday 16th October

Open Morning tours can be booked via eventbrite.co.uk

£9m New Building Now Open

Grammar Stream available for selected students

Ofsted Good Provider

Wrotham Road Meopham Kent DA13 0AH

01474 814 646

Scan to book