

# **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL PLACEMENT SYSTEM**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Students who complete the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) at the Junior High School level and meet the relevant requirements are able to enter public Senior High Schools or Technical/Vocational Schools under the Ghana Education Service (GES), through a school placement system called the Computerised School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS), administered by the GES.

## **2.0 STEPS LEADING TO PLACEMENT**

### **2.1 Selection of School by Candidates**

BECE candidates choose their preferred schools in consultation with their parents/guardians and their school authorities, using the school register provided for that year by GES.

Each student is required to make three (3) choices. Students must indicate their preferred schools in descending order (i.e. from the most preferred to the least preferred); their preferred programme of study (General Science, General Arts, Business, etc); and their preferred residential status (Day or Boarding), for each of their first three choices.

Additionally, students are to select one Technical School and Programme. Technical Schools have all been put in Category E. The student may select a Technical School with a Day or Boarding residential option as preferred, or as available.

Also, candidates are to select school with compulsory Day Status and it must be a school from category D. The school chosen must also be within the candidate's catchment area, so that the student can conveniently commute to the School, as a **DAY STUDENT**.

The 5<sup>th</sup> choice of school can also be the same as any of the candidate's first four schools chosen. For instance, a candidate is allowed to choose School A as their first choice, with a boarding status, and then choose the same school as their 5<sup>th</sup> compulsory **DAY OPTION**.

The school selection sheet must be signed off by a parent/guardian and a copy obtained from the school for record-keeping after the head teacher has endorsed it.

After the selection is done, the District Exam Officers uploads the data unto the database of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) platform.

## **2.2 School Choice Verification**

Subsequently, GES will release a telephone short code that can be dialled to obtain the list of schools, programmes of study and residential status the candidate has chosen, per the official records. This verification process is to enable any incorrect inputs that may have been forwarded to WAEC to be remedied with the correct information.

## **3.0 PLACEMENT**

Following release of the BECE results by WAEC, the placement process begins. Using the candidate's aggregate from their four core subjects (English, Mathematics, Integrated Science and Social Studies), and two of their best grades from their elective subjects.

The vacancies declared earlier by each school are then fed into the CSSPS.

There are three modes by which placement is done under the CSSPS:

- A. Automatic Placement
- B. Self-Placement
- C. Manual Placement

### 3.1 Automatic Placement

- i. This is the process by which the CSSPS places the students, by merit, into one of their chosen schools in a descending order. This is done automatically without any manual intervention.
- ii. If the candidate's aggregate falls within the merit of the programme chosen for their first choice, the CSSPS then checks the student's preferred residential status, and then places them accordingly, based on the available 'space'. If the desired residential status is full, the CSSPS moves the candidate to their second choice, and then repeats the process until placement is done.
- iii. For instance, if a student with aggregate 8 would otherwise get placement in school A, but had chosen a Boarding option (which tends to be more competitive), and there happens to be no available space because other candidates with better aggregates have secured placement into the boarding house, the system will **NOT** place that student on Day Status in that school because the Day Option was not the candidate's residential choice for that school. The system will rather move them to their Second Choice School to attempt to get both their preferred programme as well as their choice of residential status. If unsuccessful, the system will proceed to their third choice, and the process is repeated until the student is placed.
- iv. Where a candidate has chosen a school both as Boarding and as their Compulsory Day Option, and if the system is unable to secure a boarding residential allocation for them, it will then seek to place them on with a Day residential allocation in that school.

Where a school is oversubscribed for a particular programme by students with similar aggregates, a **Tie-Breaking System** is employed to determine the placement, using the following parameters:

#### a. The number of Grade Ones

For example, If 300 students with Aggregate 6 are competing for Science in School A and there are only 120 available slots for Science , the ranking will be done such that those with Nine Ones will gain admission, followed by those with Eight Ones, and so on.

### **b. Raw Score**

If there is a further need to break a tie, this will be done in descending order with respect to the raw scores obtained.

### **c. Subject performance**

A further tie-breaking, where necessary, will then follow taking into consideration the best grades obtained in the Core Subjects, in a manner as follows:

- English, then
- Mathematics, then
- Integrated Science, then
- Social Studies.

**The Placement results** are then released by GES, in an announcement via a Press Communication. After the official release, candidates can check their school placement via:

- Text message, or
- An Online portal i.e. <http://www.cssps.gov.gh>

In checking their placements, candidates will be able to access the following information:

- i. Placed school (name and location).
- ii. Residential status (whether Day or Boarding)
- iii. Programme of study
- iv. Track Designation: Green or Gold (if the school is a Double Track School)
- v. School calendar start date.

The placement results should then be printed out with other relevant documents and taken to the school in which the candidate has been placed, in order to enrol, obtain a school prospectus and prepare for school.

### **3.2 Self-Placement**

**In some instances, a student may not be successful in securing placement in any of their choices.** Self-placement is a process that gives such candidates an opportunity to go into the CSSPS portal and select from schools with available vacancies.

#### **3.2.1 Features of Self-Placement**

- i. Only Schools with available vacancies will be displayed on the portal.
- ii. Schools with vacancies will be displayed for candidates to choose based on their aggregate.
- iii. Schools shown will have their location and residential options available.
- iv. A candidate can change schools as many times as possible depending on available spaces. The changes **CEASE** immediately a candidate enrolls in a school.

#### **3.2.2 The Self-Placement Process**

A candidate will log into the system using their index number.

The candidate will choose their residential preference i.e Day or Boarding.

- a. If a candidate selects **Boarding**, all schools with boarding vacancies will be displayed.
- b. If a candidate selects **Day**, then there will be a drop down menu for the candidate to select:
  - i. Day within catchment area; OR
  - ii. Day outside catchment area

- c. The 'Day within catchment area' option displays only schools with Day vacancies within 16km of the JHS the candidate attended.
- d. Day outside catchment area displays all schools with day vacancies.

Before the 'Day outside catchment area' option is effected, the candidate must confirm again if they intend to attend school outside their catchment area as a Day Student.

### **3.3 Manual Placement**

The Manual/Special Placement is a means by which certain candidates are placed due to their peculiar situations. The following categories of candidates are placed manually:

- i. Special Needs and Gifted candidates (visually/ hearing impaired, etc.)
- ii. Seminarians
- iii. Protocol Allocation

#### **3.3.1 Manual Placement – Special and Gifted Students**

There are specific schools which accept special and gifted candidates.

The manual placement system provides the following capabilities for such candidates:

- i. Allows re-entry for special students only
- ii. There is a separate interface for manual processing for special students.
- iii. Provides separate allocation of vacancies for special students in selected schools.

#### **3.3.2 Manual Placement – Seminarians**

Seminary schools are establishments that train a section of their students for future Priesthood.

These institutions conduct their own interviews and examination exercises to select specific candidates who are best suited for the purposes of the Seminary.

A list of candidates from each Seminary Institution is submitted to GES headquarters for processing.

### 3.3.3 Protocol Allocation

A fraction of the declared vacancies is reserved for protocol allocation for schools. This allocation is mainly used to serve stakeholders of the schools.

**Table 1:** A sample of 2019 schools' subscription numbers compared to available vacancies

No	REGION	SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL SELECTION	VACANCY	%
1	Ashanti	Kumasi Senior High/Tech	38,033	1346	4%
2	Central	Ghana National College	35,604	998	3%
3	Ashanti	Anglican Senior High, Kumasi	29,778	1411	5%
4	Ashanti	KNUST Senior High	28,875	1104	4%
5	Central	Aggrey Mem. A.M.E. Zion Snr. High	22,677	1167	5%
6	Ashanti	Armed Forces Senior High/Tech,	19,924	1205	6%
7	G. Accra	Forces Senior High/Tech,	19,848	692	3%
8	Ashanti	Asanteman Senior High	19,270	1340	7%
9	G. Accra	Achimota Senior High	18,918	1314	7%
10	Bono	Sunyani Senior High	18,053	1445	8%
11	Ashanti	T. I. Ahmadiyya Senior High, Ksi.	17,321	1472	8%
12	Central	Wesley Girls Senior High, Cape Coast	5,105	620	12%
13	G. Accra	Presby Boys Senior High, Legon	7517	1272	17%
14	Eastern	Aburi Girls Senior High	6634	701	11%
15	Volta	Mawuli School, Ho	13072	1338	10%

## 4.0 DOs AND DON'Ts OF SCHOOL PLACEMENT

### 4.1 DOs

- Ensure you pay close attention to ALL of your school choices
- Ensure that the schools are in order of preference from your first priority to the least priority.

- Ensure that your compulsory Day option is within your catchment area where you can conveniently commute.
- Ensure that as a parent/guardian you take active interest in your child/ward's school choices.
- Ensure that you consult your child/ward's teacher to obtain a realistic prospect of the child's chances of gaining admission to a particular school.
- In the case of Technical Programmes, ensure that you consult the school register to verify that the schools you select offer your desired programmes.

#### **4.2 DO NOTs**

- Do not outsource school choices to someone without your express involvement.
- Do not leave school choices to an internet cafe attendant in the case of self-placement.
- Do not assume that you can choose a school as a Day Student and switch to Boarding upon admission
- Do not assume that you can choose a 'less competitive' Programme at a school and switch to a 'more competitive' one upon admission.
- Do not choose schools based on where your friends are going or what programmes they want to read.

### **5.0 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

These twelve (12) frequently asked questions and answers are provided here to help teachers, parents/guardians and students to appreciate the placement system,

#### **1. I missed out on all my five choices. What do I do?**

Candidates who miss out on all their choices after the automatic placement system is done, still have the opportunity to select schools with vacancies available through the Self-placement process described earlier.



**2. Can a candidate with good grades miss out on their first, second or all of their choices?**

YES. All spaces in the schools are competitively filled taking into consideration the available spaces in the school (i.e. Preferred residential status and programme of choice). Hence, qualified candidates are ranked from the highest score to the lowest and it will cut off when the spaces are exhausted.

Those who did not get placements are then moved to their next school of choice to compete for space there, and the process continues further down the chain.

**3. Is it possible for someone with aggregate 7 not to get access into a particular school but someone with aggregate 10 can get into that same school?**

YES. Programmes selected and residential status may differ from one candidate to the other. Therefore, the competition for slots may differ. For instance, in most cases, the Science programme of study is highly competitive over other programmes, and so is a Boarding accommodation status over a Day Status.

**4. A candidate with Aggregate 10 got placed on a particular Programme and residential status and yet another with Aggregate 8 did not, even though they chose the same programme and residential statuses. How is this possible?**

There is a protocol system of placement that allocates 5% of a school's declared vacancies to the school for allocation to its stakeholders. It is therefore possible for the ward of an alumni or a staff member of the school to get admission ahead of another child seeking admission to the same school. Other stakeholders include the Missions and the Traditional Seats of the relevant school. Talented candidates such as those good in Sports may also be considered by a school for some of its protocol slots. Similarly, 30% of spaces in the country's top 55 schools have been reserved for candidates from public Junior High Schools. As such, candidates from Public Basic

Schools across the country compete for the 30% of space. Hence, the competition for the 60% is different from the competition for the 30%.

**5. Is it possible for someone who did not choose a particular school to be placed into that school?**

NO. It is not possible during the automatic placement process. However, a candidate can get placement into a school through 'protocol' placement procedures.

**6. Can a person change school after enrolment?**

No. The Placement process ends once a candidate begins the admission process by going to the school to complete the relevant form(s). Any movement from one school to another after enrolment is considered a transfer. A student can only transfer after one academic year.

**7. Can a student change their residential status or programme of study after placement?**

NO. A candidate usually gets placed into a particular school based on their preferred programme and the residential status they chose. A candidate competes for a slot in a particular school based on the preferences provided. Therefore, neither the residential status nor the programme of study can be changed.

**8. Can I change a school I selected through self-placement?**

YES. A candidate who got placed in a school through self-placement, can change the school on the portal so long as that candidate has not enrolled in a school.

**9. I selected and was placed in a school that was on my list of school choices. Can I change to another school?**

NO. You cannot change to another school, if the school was one of the five schools you chose.

**10. Can I be enrolled into a school when I or a representative of mine is not present?**

NO. For enrolment to be successful, the school will need the student's unique ID, address and details of their parents or guardians, and phone number. Once a candidate or parent/guardian submits their forms to the school placed, the school uses the information provided on the forms to enrol the candidate. Therefore, it is not possible for a school to get all such personal information of a candidate without the candidate or a representative being present in the school.

**11. I was enrolled in a school but my name can no longer be found on their system. What can be done?**

If indeed a candidate was enrolled in a particular school but the details can no longer be found on the school's system, the Head of the school will formally report to the appropriate office for redress. The candidate should not be sent away from the school.

**12. The head of the school I want my child/ward to go to says there is space in the school. Can the child be placed there on this basis?**

NO. Schools have established ways of communicating to authorities. Placement is done on the basis of the vacancies declared by the schools. Once those vacancies have been filled by the CSSPS in that school, we are unable to do any further placements in the school.