

SPE for returning Singaporeans closes 13 November: tests on 2 December, school places from February 2027

Description

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If your family is moving home from overseas and your child missed Septemberâ??s tests, the SPE for returning Singaporeans is the route to watch this week. MOEâ??s Supplementary Placement Exercise opened on 4 November and closes on Friday 13 November 2026, with English and Mathematics tests in Singapore on Wednesday 2 December. Successful applicants get their secondary school posting on 1 February 2027 and start school that month.

Here is how it works, who it suits, and the alternatives if the timing does not fit.

SPE for returning Singaporeans: key dates

All dates below come from MOEâ??s 2026 placement exercise announcement and the SPE page. MOE marks the SPE schedule as tentative.

- 4 to 13 November 2026: applications open through the Candidates Portal.
- By November 2026: entry proof is emailed once the application is approved and payment goes through.
- Wednesday 2 December 2026: English and Mathematics tests, held in Singapore.
- 8.30am Monday 11 January to 4.30pm Wednesday 13 January 2027: view the list of eligible schools and submit choices on the SPE Portal.
- From 8.30am Monday 1 February 2027: posting results released on the SPE Portal.
- 2 to 10 February 2027: report to the posted school, by Wednesday 10 February at the latest.

With only four working days left, this is not one to leave to the weekend. Note that MOEâ??s page mentions a payment step but does not list the fee, so have a card ready when you apply.



Source: Kranji Secondary School

Who the SPE is for

The SPE is a centralised, merit-based exercise for returning Singaporeans who want a place in Secondary 1, 2 or 3 at the start of the 2027 school year. It exists for families who could not get back in time for SPERS-Sec, the main exercise whose tests ran in early September.

MOE says the SPE is not compulsory. Secondary 4 is generally not an entry point for returning students because it is a national examination year.

What the tests cover

According to MOEâ??s annex to the announcement, the English and Mathematics papers test literacy and numeracy, and also include non-content-based general ability questions on reasoning and thinking. Based on how your child does, MOE gives you a list of schools they are eligible for, so that returning students join schools with peers of similar ability.

How posting works

- You pick up to six schools from your childâ??s eligible list.
- MOE sets aside some extra places for returning Singaporeans during posting.
- Posting takes into account test results, your choices and vacancies.
- If none of your choices works out, MOE assigns a school with vacancies as near to your home as possible.
- If you decline the posting, you can approach another school directly, subject to vacancies.

The alternatives if SPE does not suit you

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Assured School Placement

If you mainly want a school close to home and are not chasing a particular school, MOEâ??s Assured School Placement skips the centralised test entirely. MOE guarantees a place in a school with vacancies as near to your address as possible, even before you land, though the school may run its own test or interview to decide the level and class.

The catch is timing. Schools typically do not take new students in Term 4, so applications made now are processed for the following year, and MOE notifies families in December. You apply via an online form within three months of the intended start date, giving your intended residential area if you do not have a permanent address yet.

Leave of Absence and other routes

- Children who left on Leave of Absence while a parent was posted overseas can usually re-join their former school immediately on return.
- You can also approach schools directly, subject to vacancies.
- International and other privately funded schools are an option, though Singapore Citizens need MOE approval for most foreign system schools.

Junior college and Millennia Institute hopefuls had a separate route: our earlier piece on SPERS-JC/MI applications covered that exercise, whose test took place on 6 November.



Source: Bukit Panjang Government High School

Our tips before you hit submit

- Apply to SPE only if your child genuinely could not sit the September SPERS-Sec tests. MOE notes that SPERS-Sec students start in January with their peers, while SPE students join in February.
- Book flights so your child is in Singapore for 2 December, since the tests are not held overseas.
- Brush up on English, which MOE stresses is the main medium of instruction in local schools.
- Look into the Singapore Leaders Networkâ??s fully sponsored Overseas Transition Support programme, listed on MOEâ??s returning Singaporeans hub.
- Budget for uniforms and textbooks, and check whether your family qualifies for MOE school financial assistance for 2027.

Families with a younger child sitting the PSLE this year have their own crunch coming, with PSLE results on 24 or 25 November and a seven-day window for school choices. If both apply to your household, block out late November and early January in the family calendar now.

Date Created
09/11/2026
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