

School Admission Appeals

Information for parents

Frequently Asked Questions

These notes are intended as a supplement to the more detailed “**Notes on the appeals process**”.

You are strongly advised to read the full “**Notes on the appeal process**” before the Appeal Panel meets to decide upon your appeal.

Frequently Asked Questions

Date and time

Q: When will I find out the date and time of my appeal hearing?

A: The Appeals Team will send you a letter outlining the arrangements for the hearing as soon as it can following receipt of your appeal. You will receive at least 14 days’ notice of the date and time of your appeal hearing, unless your appeal is received late.

Q: How will you decide the date and time?

A: By taking into account information on your Appeal Form about when you will be available, as far as we can. Your appeal may be scheduled with a number of others on that day, or in that week. Your appointment will normally be during normal office hours. Appeals do not take place during the school holidays.

Q: What should I do if I find out that I might not be able to make that date and/or time?

A: Email or phone the Appeals Team immediately and we will do what we can to make other arrangements, but regrettably it may not always be possible to change at short notice.

 **01609 533385**

Q: How long will the appeal take?

A: There is no set time limit although it is rare for individual hearings to last more than one hour.

Q: Will my appeal hearing start on time?

A: Although the Appeal Panel tries to keep to time, there may be some delay in starting, especially if there are a lot of appeals to be heard on that day. We advise that you make sure you are free for at least two hours after your allotted time. Your appeal will **not** be dealt with before the time quoted unless you consent.

Q: What if I don't turn up?

A: The appeal will be decided in your absence, on the basis of the written evidence, but the Panel will not take your non-attendance as an indication of your commitment.

The appeal hearing and confidentiality

Q: Can I bring a friend or representative with me?

A: Yes, but it would be helpful if you could telephone the Appeals Office to let staff know; so that the Clerk may make any necessary arrangements and tell the Appeal Panel Members beforehand.

Q: Who else will be at the appeal?

A: You will be brought into the appeal by the Clerk at the same time as the Admission Authority representative (and other parents if you have been scheduled as part of a Grouped appeal). The three Members of the Panel will be present already when you arrive.

Q: What does it mean by Grouped appeals? I thought it was private.

A: If there is more than one appeal for the same school and year group we usually arrange for all parents and carers to be given the same appointment time so that all parents can start the hearing together and hear (and question) the case by the Admission Authority's representative. After that part is over **each appellant's case is taken individually, in turn, in private.**

Q: Who stays with the Panel after my appeal is finished?

A: Only the Clerk stays behind to give the members of the Panel any help they need. You and the Admission Authority representative leave at the same time at the end of your hearing.

Q: Who makes the decision?

A: Only the three Members of the Panel can decide whether your appeal should be allowed ("upheld") or dismissed ("not upheld"). The Clerk is not involved in deciding your appeal. If your appeal is "upheld" your child will be admitted to the school for which you were appealing. If your appeal is "not upheld" the decision of the Admission Authority remains unchanged and your child will not be admitted to the school.

Information for the appeal panel

Q: What should I say to the Panel members and what do they want to know?

A: Everything that you think will help them make an informed decision about your child's case because you only get this one opportunity to try and convince the Panel to uphold your appeal.

Q: Have the Panel members seen my appeal form and papers?

A: Yes, papers are usually sent out about a week before the date of the hearing. The Panel members read the papers thoroughly before they see you.

Q: Does everyone get the same papers?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there anything I should or shouldn't say?

A: You are in the best position to decide this because only you know what was and/or is important to you about the school you want your child to go to, or why the school to which the Admission Authority has allocated your child a place is not right for them.

Q: Which reasons do you think are the most important?

A: Parents have many different reasons for appealing for a particular school. The Panel will carefully consider all of them before making a decision.

Q: Can the Clerk help me in the hearing?

A: Only by making the procedures clear or on occasions when the Clerk thinks it might help the Panel understand the points you want to get across. However, the Clerk cannot make your case for you because they must remain independent and impartial.

Q: What if I get too nervous or upset?

A: The Members of the Panel and Clerk understand that the admission process and attending a hearing, often to talk about very personal matters, can be a very stressful experience for you. They will be sympathetic and try to put you as much at ease as they can.

The decision

Q: How does the Panel decide?

A: By what is called 'The Two Stage Process' (except for Infant Class Size appeals – please see the separate notes on these appeals).

Briefly that is:

Stage 1

The Panel decides whether admitting an additional child would have an adverse effect upon the education and welfare of pupils already at the school. If they decide that there would be no adverse effect your appeal is allowed. If they decide that admitting any child **would** have an adverse effect then they must go to the next stage. The Panel also check that your application was administered correctly.

Stage 2

The Panel will balance your reasons for wanting your child to go to the school and the effects upon your child if she/he didn't go, against the Admission Authority's reasons for making no more admissions to the school, because of the effect on children already there.

(Please read the more detailed explanation of this as described in the “**Notes on the appeals process**”).

Timing of the decision

Q: Will a decision be made straightaway?

A: That depends upon how many appeals there are for the same school. If you are the only one appealing, you will be able to find out the decision the next working day. However, if there are several appeals, the Panel cannot make a decision on any of them until all the appeals have been heard.

Q: How and when will I know the decision?

A: The letter sent to you with your appeal papers will include a telephone number and details of when you can ring to get the result of your appeal.

Q: Must I telephone to get the result?

A: No. You need not telephone if you would rather wait for the formal letter, which will be sent out as soon as possible after your appeal has been heard.

Q: Do you send a letter informing me of the decision?

A: Yes, always.

Complaints/further appeals

Q: Is there another appeal if this one fails?

A: No, the decision of the Appeal Panel is binding on you and the Admission Authority, but you can complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Education and Skills Funding Agency if you feel the Authority or the Admission Appeal Panel have acted improperly. Full details will be included in your decision letter if your appeal is unsuccessful.