



GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CARERS

SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS

FOR YEAR GROUPS 3-13

Expressing a preference for a school for your child is a matter for careful consideration. It is disappointing when you are not offered a place at the school you prefer. However, it is important to recognise that although you have the right to express a **preference** for the school you would like your child to attend, you **do not** have a right of **choice**.

If your child is refused a place at your preferred school you do have a right of appeal to an **Independent Appeal Panel**. This leaflet is aimed at helping you should you decide to make an appeal.

HOW TO APPEAL

If you do wish to make an appeal you should complete the enclosed application form and return it to the address on the form as soon as possible together with any supporting evidence.

You will receive at least 10 school days notice of the date and time of the appeal, unless you agree to less notice, for example if an Appeal Panel has already been arranged to hear other appeals for your preferred school.

A week before you will be sent copies of all the papers which will be referred to at the hearing, including the Admission Authority's case and your evidence. All the papers are also sent to the members of the Appeal Panel and the Admission Authority. You will find it useful to bring the papers with you to the meeting.

What to Include in Your Case

Describe your child and their interests. Think about all your reasons for wanting them to go to your preferred school and why it would be difficult for them if they did not go there. Include any reasons which you feel are important; do not expect the Panel to guess. Think about how you can prove your points. Do you have any reports that support your case?

It is important that you look at other schools with places available. Visit them with your child and do not just take the word of others. Do not just give negative views of these schools, however, if you think going to these schools will cause your child problems, include these reasons in your case.

THE APPEAL HEARING

You are invited to attend the meeting in person and you may bring a friend or be represented. If you are bringing anyone with you, you should tell the Clerk to the Panel before the hearing. It is not recommended you bring any children with you to the appeal hearing. Should you wish, the appeal can be heard on written evidence alone, however, this does not give the Panel an opportunity to ask questions or clarify issues with you.

There will be three people on the Appeal Panel plus a Clerk. The members of the Panel are all volunteers and will have undertaken training as required by The School Admissions Appeals Code. The Clerk will advise on procedure and the School Admissions and School Admission Appeals Codes if required. The Council's solicitor may also be present to ensure that the legal requirements of the hearing are met. **Only** the three members of the Appeal Panel are involved in making the decision.

An officer representing the Admission Authority will put forward the case for the school, and will explain why your child was refused a place. The Headteacher of the school may also be present to answer questions

You and the Panel members can then ask questions about the information you have heard. The Admission Authority has to prove that admitting your child to the school would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.

Both you and the presenting officer (and Headteacher or Solicitor if present) will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the Panel decides whether or not the Admission Authority has made its case.

If the Panel decides that the Admission Authority **has not** made a case then your appeal automatically succeeds and your child will be admitted to the school. If the Panel finds that the Admission Authority **has** made its case, you will be asked to give your reasons why you think that your child should be admitted to the school. The Panel members and the presenting officer can then ask you questions about your case.

The Panel will then consider all the information and will decide who has the stronger case, the Admission Authority or you.

You will be told the Appeal Panel's decision by telephone followed by a letter.

The decision of the Independent Appeal Panel is final and binding on both you and the Admission Authority

IF YOUR APPEAL IS NOT SUCCESSFUL

- The law requires that your child receives an education
- You can contact the School Admissions Team on 01202 261936 for details of other schools within Poole that have places available. You may also wish to contact other Local Authorities for details of schools within their area.
- Try not to be negative to your child about other schools. Visit the schools with your child and do not just take the word of others.

- You can ask for your child to be put on a waiting list for your preferred school, but a waiting list is subject to change. Children can move down waiting lists if others apply who have greater priority under the school admission policy. The length of time your child is on the waiting list is not taken into account if a place becomes available.

This information is as accurate as possible at the time of going to press. However, there may be changes to the information provided as a result of developments in central or local government policies

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I expected to be given my catchment/nearest school if my preferred school(s) was full?

There is no guarantee of being offered a place at your catchment or nearest school, even if you did name it as a preference. If you didn't name it as a preference, your application would only be considered if there were still places after all the other parental preferences were considered.

After the appeal, will my application take priority on the waiting list?

No, the waiting list is ordered in accordance with the published admission criteria. Children can move down waiting lists if others apply who have greater priority under the school admission policy.

I only put one preference on the application form – does this not give me higher priority for the school – either for the application or appeal?

No, just putting one preference means your application was only considered by one school and that any offer of a place at an alternative school will only be considered once all the other preferences had been considered.

How many places are kept back for those who appeal?

None, if a school is full it has allocated all available places for your year group in accordance with its oversubscription criteria. Legally, schools are not able to keep any places back for appeal or for any other reason

My appeal is about the school I've been offered / My issue is with the Council as I don't want the school I've been offered for my child

There are no appeal rights against the school you've been offered. The Panel hear the appeal as to why the school you are appealing for refused you a place and whether that decision was correct. The school you've been offered is not considered in the Panel's decision.

I don't feel the school's order of priority is fair – can I appeal against this?

No, if a school is changing its admission policy it must consult with other schools, parents and other interested parties in accordance with the School Admissions Code. This is done 18 months in advance. The Appeals process is not the forum to raise issue with a valid legal admission policy.

Where can I get further information about appealing / school places?

You can contact the Clerk to the Independent Appeals Panel regarding appeals guidance:

Appeals Officer
BCP Education Appeals Service
Democratic Services
Civic Centre
Poole
BH15 2RU

Tel: 01202 633048

Email: school.appeals@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

You can contact the School Admissions Team if you wish to discuss waiting lists / places available at other schools:

Telephone: 01202 261936

Email: school.admissions@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Or you can visit them above Poole Central Library in the Dolphin Shopping Centre:

Monday-Thursday 09:00am-5:00pm

Friday 09:00am-4:45pm