

Parents' Guide to Admission Appeals

The local authority (LA) makes every effort to offer you a place at the school you prefer. Sometimes this is not possible, usually because the school is full and the LA had to use the admission criteria to decide who is offered a place and who is refused.

This guide is intended to give parents an understanding of their rights and how an appeal is organised.

In addition to the guidance below, further information and advice can be found by contacting:

ACE Education Advice Telephone: 0300 0115 142 Opening times Monday - Wednesday from 10am - 1pm. Term time only. www.ace-ed.org/uk/1107 and/or The Department for Education.

Parents' checklist of things to do when considering an appeal

Step	Action	Next step	Notes
1	Consider the LA offer of an alternative school if you have been refused a place at your preferred school.	2	
2	Contact the admission service to see if another offer may be made at a different school that is more acceptable to you.	3	
3	If there is no other acceptable offer write in and ask for an appeal form.	4	
4	Return the form and send any supporting materials by the date written on the form.	5	
5	Wait for the notice of the appeal hearing date.	6	
6	Attend (if you wish) the appeal hearing and speak to the panel.	7	
7	Wait for the letter giving the panel's decision.	8 or 9	
8	If your appeal is successful your child will have a place at the school.		End of Appeal Process.
9	If you do not win your appeal, you may wish to repeat step 2 or you may wish to send your child to the school that was offered in the first offer letter.		End of Appeal Process.

The powers of appeal panels

- Panels are set up to consider individual appeals from parents wishing to get a place at a school for their child.
- The panel does not have the power to consider complaints or objections on wider aspects of admission policy or practice.
- The decision of the panel is binding on the Governors of the Academy.
- The decision of the panel is binding on the parent.

- The appeal is the final stage in the admission process and there are no higher authorities or people to hear your appeal.

What do you need to prepare?

In order to appeal you need to complete and return the appeal form to Walthamstow Academy by the date written on the appeal form.

An appeal form can be collected from:

- Walthamstow Academy
- Requested by e-mailing margaret.harris@walthamstow-academy.org
- By telephoning: 020 8172 1007
- You should write your reasons for appealing on the form.
- You should also give other written information to support your appeal at this stage; it can be a written statement of what you intend to say at the appeal. The additional papers should be made available well before the hearing so that the panel can read them in advance. We need at least 10 working days before the hearing to arrange this.
- You may wish to get independent advice.
- You should give your reasons why you think that your child should attend your preferred school.

How many appeals can I have?

You can appeal only once for a place in a school year group at your preferred school unless there is a substantial change to your circumstances. The admissions authority can grant an additional appeal if they agree that your circumstances have substantially changed and they were not discussed at your first appeal.

What happens at hearings?

The Democratic Services Unit will write to you to tell you when the hearing will be held.

You may wish to bring a friend or family member with you to your appeal.

You do not have to attend the hearing; you may like the panel to consider your appeal using the written materials only. Let the clerk to the panel know if that is what you want to happen.

- The people appealing usually wait in a waiting area until the hearings start.
- The panel and the clerk to the panel are in the room used for the hearing.
- The representative from the Academy waits outside the hearing room and away from the parents waiting area.
- The clerk will invite the parents and the representative into the room for the hearing to begin.
- After the general introduction the representative gives an overall account of the application processes and why the Governors of the Academy do not want additional children added to the school roll.
- There is an opportunity to ask general questions but not relating to a specific child.
- Parents then go back to the waiting area so that the panel can hear each individual case in private.
- At the end of each hearing the parents leave, the representative waits outside the room and the next set of parents are invited in to give their case, the representative also joins them.
- At the end of the set of hearings the last parents leave and the representative waits outside for the next school appeal session or leaves the building if there are no more hearings.

The Academy does not take any part in the decision making part of the hearings.

The clerk remains with the panel and they consider all the hearings and make their decisions.

- As soon as possible after the hearing the clerk writes to parents with the decision.

Withdrawal of an Appeal

- If you decide at any time to withdraw an appeal you have already lodged, please inform Walthamstow Academy by writing to Admission Appeals, Billet Road, London E17 5DP, email: margaret.harris@walthamstow-academy.org

What happens if I win?

If the panel agrees that your case is stronger than that of the Admissions Authority, your child will be offered a place at your preferred school then the LA must make arrangements for your child to have a place at the school.

What happens if I do not win?

If you do not win your appeal the offer of a school place on the most recent offer letter from the LA will still be available.

If this school is not acceptable the admission service may be able to find another alternative.

What happens if I refuse to send my child to any school?

If your child is below statutory school age then you may defer entry to school until the next term.

- If you refuse all other offers of places you must then let the LA know how your child is to be educated.
- You might consider a school in another LA.
- You might consider an independent school (you will be liable for all the costs).
- You might consider 'education arrangements made by parents' such as tutors etc. (you will be liable for all the costs).
- If you do not make suitable arrangements we will contact the Education Welfare Service who will visit you and you may be liable to legal action.

Complaints about appeal hearings

If you believe that your hearing was conducted improperly or unreasonably you may complain to the Commissioner of Local Administration (the Local Government Ombudsman).

The Local Government Ombudsman cannot overturn the panel's decision.

Is there anything else after an appeal?

The only way that an appeal panel's decision can be overturned is by a decision of the courts. You would have to be successful in applying for a judicial review of the decision.