

Independent School Admissions Appeals

A quick guide



How to appeal for a place at a school or academy located in Newham

Independent appeals

Our appeals process is compliant with the Department for Education's School Admissions Appeals Code.

We commission the Newham Independent School Admissions Appeals Service (NISAAS) to provide an independent clerk to the appeals panel and that clerk appoints the panels, all of whom are fully trained by a legal professional.

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan

For children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) the process outlined below does not apply. If a family disagrees with the decision made by the local authority regarding their child's education they can appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal.

Before proceeding we recommend parents/carers get independent advice from Special Educational Needs Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS) 0203 373 0707 or email sendiass@newham.gov.uk

Who can request an independent appeal hearing?

All applicants refused a place at any of their preferred schools have the legal right to appeal against the decision and have their case heard by an Independent Appeal Panel, unless the application is withdrawn.

This means you cannot appeal for a place at a school unless:

- you have applied for a place at the school and your application has been refused; and
- the school is included on your most recent application.

You cannot appeal if:

- you have not applied for a place at the school; or
- the school is listed lower than the school you were offered; or
- you withdrew your application before a decision was made; or
- the school is not included on your most recent application.

How often can an applicant appeal?

Normally only one appeal can be lodged for the same school for a particular year group.

However, if a family who have already appealed have a significant change in their circumstances, a second appeal may be agreed. The admission authority for the school will review the detail of the family's new circumstances and decide if a second appeal should be granted.

What can a family not appeal for?

Whilst all applicants refused a place at a preferred school have the right of appeal, this does not include a place in:

- Any school for which they have not applied or where the preference has been withdrawn or they have not applied for the new term
- A different year group to that determined by the child's date of birth
- An SEND Resource Provision or special school (see note above regarding EHC plans)
- An Alternative Provision (AP).

How to lodge (apply for) an appeal?

Before deciding whether to appeal, parents/carers should read each school's published policy for admitting pupils, think about their reasons for wanting their child to attend the school and the strength of their case. For example, saying a child likes the school, their friends attend or the school has a good reputation may not be sufficient to have a successful appeal.

Schools located in Newham (except Harris Academy Chobham and Harris Science Academy East London)

- Complete and submit the simple online application on Newham website:
www.newham.gov.uk/schoolappeals
Or
- If you cannot fill-in and submit your online form, ask for help by calling the Council on 020 8430 2000 or email the Newham Independent School Appeals Service at Nisas@newham.gov.uk

Harris Academy Chobham and Harris Academy East London

- Complete the process detailed on their website

Schools outside of Newham

For all schools outside of Newham, families can find out about their appeals process by visiting the school's website or by calling the school.

Can I get advice on what to say in my appeal?

Officers at the Council and staff in schools can only provide general advice about what happens in the hearing and how to structure a case (known as written and verbal representations).

Neither the local authority nor the school you are appealing for can give advice on the content of an appeal as they made the decision to refuse the offer of the place and they will be defending this position at the hearing.

To help prepare their written and verbal representations we strongly recommend appellants speak to members of their family and friends who they trust to give good advice. If the family has a social worker or other professional support worker, they should be able to assist.

What happens after lodging an appeal?

Applicants who lodged their appeal online will receive an automatic acknowledgement (receipt with a unique appeal reference number) that will provide more information. If this does not arrive within an hour, email educationappeals@newham.gov.uk for advice.

What happens next?

Ten working days before your hearing, appellants will:

- Receive a letter from NISAAS, who are independent, advising you where, when and how your appeal will be heard and the names of who will be present. It will usually be during office hours and held virtually through a conferencing facility, for example Zoom. Alternatively your appeal may be heard in person at either Newham Dockside, Newham Town Hall or another suitable venue.
- Be sent a formal statement (known as written representations) from the Admission Authority explaining why the school could not offer a place and why the school cannot admit additional children.

If the appellant knows any of the panel members, they must declare this to NISAAS before the hearing starts, stating how they know them.

From when the appeal is lodged up to the day of the hearing, the appellant should be preparing their own case; this is known as written representations. This should include any documents that can verify the facts of your case, such as medical evidence or letters.

For supporting documents to be considered by the Independent Panel, they should be submitted to them at least one day before the hearing.

What is the timeline?

Appeal hearings are timetabled for every month during term time but the period of time between when an appeal is lodged and when it is actually heard is set in law.

Normal admissions:

The normal point of entry to school is September, as part of a transition from one year group to another, for example primary to secondary transition and 14-19 transition.

For all applicants whose school application was submitted in time for an outcome to be sent to them on national offer day 1 March 2027, appeals must be heard within 40 school days of their deadline for lodging appeals.

The deadline for lodging appeals for September 2027 entry will be **23:59 on 31 March 2027** for Year 7 entry.

For all applicants whose school applications were submitted too late for the outcome to be sent to them on national offer day **1 March 2027**, appeals must be heard where possible within 40 school days of their deadline for lodging appeals or within 30 schools days of the appeal being lodged.

In year admissions

In year admissions are where a place is applied for outside of the normal entry points, for example when a family arrives in Newham from overseas or elsewhere in the UK during the school year.

There is no closing date for lodging an in year appeal; the only requirement is that you have not withdrawn your application for the school.

All in year admission appeals must be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.

Who attends the independent appeal hearing?

Appellant and their optional support;

- Friends and family
- Advocate
- Legal representative

We strongly recommend that appellants attend the hearing as they may provide vital information to the case on the day. However, the case can be heard in their absence if they notify NISAAS that they do not want to attend or otherwise simply fail to attend on the day and have not already requested another date.

Independent clerk

The clerk has knowledge of the School Appeals Code, the School Admissions Code, other law relating to admissions and other relevant law, and is able to offer advice to enable the panel to undertake its judicial function.

The clerk's role is to provide an independent and impartial service. They will provide an independent source of advice (or seek appropriate advice) on procedure and on admissions law, keep an accurate record of proceedings by taking detailed notes, and provide the parties with written notification of the Independent panel's decision.

The Independent Panel

The panel will consist of three people, one from each group below and the third from either group.

- Lay people, being people without personal experience in the management of any school or provision of education in any school, except as a school governor or in another voluntary capacity
- People who have experience in education, who are acquainted with educational conditions in the local authority area.

One of the panel will be Chair. They will lead the meeting and have a casting vote in the event of a split decision. Members of the panel will have no link to your child's current school or the school you are appealing for or any other school that forms part of your case.

Admission Authority Presenting Officer

The Presenting Officer's role is to present the admission authority's decision not to admit the child and to provide detailed answers to any questions about the case and about the school.

Local authority special educational needs advisor

Where a child has special education needs (SEN) but does not have an Education Health and Care plan, the admission authority may sometimes request that an SEN advisor (not linked to the school) attends to provide specialist information to the panel.

School representative (optional)

If the presenting officer is not from the school, the school may send a representative to support the presenting officer. Their only role is to answer specific questions about the school and provide important information.

Observers

Observers may attend some hearings. This is usually for training purposes or to review the process – they will play no part in the hearing.

What are the different types of hearings?

Your appeal may be heard as part of a multiple group appeal or as an individual hearing.

The panel members can ask questions at any time throughout any type of hearing.

Multiple group appeals

Multiple appeals are arranged when a number of appeals have been received in relation to the same school.

Admission authorities must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the same panel hears each of the multiple appeal hearings. Where this is not possible and more than one panel has to consider appeals for the same school, each panel must make its own decision independently. A panel hearing multiple appeals must not make decisions on any of hearings until all the appeals for that school have been heard.

Individual hearing

An individual appeal is where the hearing is only with one family throughout – for Stage 1 and Stage 2.

Order of the hearings

Stage 1

1. Introductions.
2. Final opportunity for all parties to disclose knowledge of each other.
3. The chair of the appeal panel explains the appeals process and the order of business to all parties.
4. The admission authority's presenting officer explains why the child was not offered a place at that school, known as the Admission Authority's verbal statement.
5. The appellant and the panel can ask questions on the Admission Authority's statement.

Stage 2

Appeal hearings only move to Stage 2 if the case is not upheld upon conclusion of Stage 1

6. The appellant or their friend or formal representative explains why they think the child should be admitted to the school and supplies any supporting documents that may help their case.
7. The presenting officer and the panel ask the appellant questions about their case.
8. The presenting officer from the admission authority will sum up their case.
9. The appellant is given the opportunity to sum up their case.
10. If the chair is happy that everyone has had an opportunity to sum up their case, the appellant and the presenting officer from the admission authority will be asked to leave.

For multiple group appeals, the order of the hearing is the same but at Stage 1 the presenting officer will state their case to a group of parents/carers all appealing for the same school, in the same year group. Each group will then have an opportunity to question the presenting officer as a group. This means all parties will hear the questions and the answers.

Following the group section of the appeal after the conclusion of Stage 1, if applicable the hearing will move to Stage 2. At Stage 2 each appellant will then have a private hearing where they present their own case.

How does the panel make its decision?

Stage 1: The panel may find that the admission arrangements did not comply with admissions law or had not been correctly and impartially applied, and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied or had been correctly and impartially applied;
OR

The panel may find that the admission of additional children would not prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

If the appeal panel is satisfied with the admission authority's case, it then moves onto Stage 2 to review the case presented by the appellant.

The panel must balance the prejudice to the school against the appellant's case for the child to be admitted to the school. It must take into account the appellant's reasons for expressing a preference for the school, including what that school can offer the child that the allocated school or other schools cannot. If the panel considers that the appellant's case outweighs the prejudice to the school, it must uphold the appeal.

For all year groups from reception to Year 6 in multiple 'group' appeals, the panel must not compare the individual cases when deciding whether an appellant's case outweighs the prejudice to the school. However, where the panel finds there are more cases that outweigh prejudice than the school can admit, it must then compare the cases and uphold those with the strongest case for admission. Where a certain number of children could be admitted without causing prejudice, the panel must uphold the appeals of at least that number of children.

What happens if an appellant is unhappy with the outcome of their appeal?

For next steps visit www.gov.uk/schools-admissions/complain-about-the-appeals-process (DfE):

The decision of the Independent Appeal Panel is legally binding on the admission authority and the appellant. However, if an appellant feels that correct procedures were not followed they may complain to:

For maintained local authority schools Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO):

Visit www.lgo.org.uk or email advice@lgo.org.uk

The Ombudsman is not able to overturn the appeal panel's decision. However, if they agree with your complaint and determine a failure in the process, they may make recommendations for a suitable remedy. For example, that an appeal is reheard by a different panel and with a different clerk.

For academies including free schools, university technical colleges and studio schools.

The DfE will investigate the complaint on behalf of the Secretary of State if it considers there are to be sufficient grounds to do so.

A complaint to the Department for Education must be lodged within six months of the date of the appeal hearing.

Department for Education helpline

Telephone: **0370 000 2288** Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Can anyone overturn the decision of the independent panel?

Neither the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman nor the Secretary of State for Education can review or overturn the decision of an appeals panel.

Only the courts can review and overturn an appeals panel decision where the appellant or admission authority is successful in applying for a judicial review of that decision.



Primary to Secondary Transfer Appeals for September 2026 Heard by 24 July 2026

Establishment	Heard	Upheld	Not Upheld
Bobby Moore Academy	0	0	0
Brampton Manor Academy	69	1	68
Cumberland Community School	1	0	1
Eastlea Community School	0	0	0
Forest Gate Community School	15	0	15
Harris Academy Chobham	4	0	4
Harris Science Academy East London	0	0	0
Kingsford Community School	0	0	0
Langdon Academy	0	0	0
Lister Community School	0	0	0
Little Ilford School	1	0	1
Oasis Academy Silvertown	4	2	2
Plashet School	0	0	0
Rokeby School	0	0	0
Royal Docks Academy	0	0	0
Sarah Bonnell School	0	0	0
School 21	0	0	0
St Angela's Ursuline Convent School	0	0	0
St Bonaventure's Catholic Comprehensive School	0	0	0
Stratford School Academy	0	0	0
Total	94	3	91



