

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

If you have been refused a place at any school that you have named on your most recent school admission application you have the legal right to appeal against the decision and have your case heard by an Independent Appeal Panel. Our appeals process is fully compliant with the Department for Education School Appeals Code.

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) you cannot use the process outlined in this section. Parents/carers whose children have EHCP can appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) against decisions made by Local Education Authorities in England about their children's education. To lodge the appeal you must contact the council's Special Educational Needs (SEN) section.

You can only appeal for a place at a school where you have expressed a preference and been refused a place. You cannot appeal for a school if you have not made an application for it or the application has been withdrawn.

You can normally only appeal for the same school once for each academic year. In exceptional circumstances you may be able to appeal more than once, if there are significant changes to your personal circumstances. A change or significant change to your personal circumstances does not mean you will automatically be given a second appeal. The school's admission authority will decide if a second appeal can be granted.

If you want to appeal for a place at any secondary school located in Newham (except Chobham Academy) you must complete the Council's online appeal form www.newham.gov.uk/schoolappeals or send in a letter of appeal detailing all your reasons – these are known as your written representations. To appeal for Chobham Academy check their website or call the school.

You must send your appeal to:

Newham Independent School Appeals Service (NISAS), 1000 Dockside Road, London E16 2QU.

To appeal for Chobham Academy or a school that is in another borough you must check their website for details of their application process.

Your school application outcome letter will tell you how to appeal if you wish to do so.

When will my case be heard?

Statutory timetable

For 'on time' school applications made in the normal admissions round, appeals will be heard within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.

For 'late' school applications, appeals should be heard within 40 school days from the deadline for lodging appeals where possible.

If you lodge your appeal after the relevant deadline your appeal will be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.

'Normal' admissions are applications for reception, primary to secondary, infant to junior and 14-19 transition for entry in September 2020.

To be considered as 'on time' for primary to secondary and 14-19 transition your common application for entry in the next academic year must be received by the national closing day 31 October 2019.

The deadline for lodging appeals for September 2020 entry will be **Friday 20 March 2020** for primary to secondary and 14-19 transition.

For In Year admissions, appeals will be heard within

30 school days of the appeal being lodged. There is no closing date for lodging an In Year application, the only requirement is that you have not withdrawn your application for the school you are appealing for.

If you withdraw your application for the school you are appealing for before the hearing, your appeal will be cancelled.

What you cannot appeal for?

You do not have a right of appeal for a place in a:

- school where you have not applied and been refused
- school where preference has been withdrawn
- different year group
- SEN Resource Provision
- Alternative Provision. However, you may make a complaint in accordance with the relevant published complaints procedure.

How do I appeal?

Before deciding whether to appeal, you will probably want to think about the school's published policy for admitting pupils, your reasons for wanting your child to attend the school, your child's view of what school they should attend and how strong your case is.

If you are not offered a place at the school you have named as your first preference, or any other schools you named as preferences on your most recent application, visit

www.newham.gov.uk/schoolappeals or call **020 8430 2000** for details.

If you decide to proceed and lodge an appeal, upon receipt of your appeal, NISAS will send you an acknowledgement which will also outline the next steps.

What happens next?

Ten working days before your hearing:

You will receive a letter from NISAS who are independent of the admission authority, telling you where and when

your appeal will be heard. It will usually be during office hours at Newham Dockside, Newham Town Hall or another suitable venue.

You will also be sent a statement from the admission authority explaining why your child could not be offered a place at the school you are appealing for.

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

To be guaranteed for consideration by the Independent Panel you must submit any written representations for receipt by NISAS at least 24 hours before the hearing. Any new evidence received after this date or presented as oral (spoken) representations during the hearing may not be considered or may result in a fresh date being set before your hearing starts or an adjournment on the day.

Who is present at an Independent Appeal Panel?

The school's admission authority, or the clerk acting on behalf of the admission authority, must appoint an independent appeal panel that is comprised of a chair and at least two other panel members. In Newham the panel is made up of three independent people and our panels will consist of the following persons, with at least one from each category:

a) Lay people (someone 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);

b) people who have experience in education, who are acquainted with educational conditions in the local authority area.

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.

If you know one of the panel members you must declare this to NISAS before the hearing starts, advising them of how you know them.

Admission authorities will ensure that panel members are independent and retain their independence for the duration of their service.

One of the panel members will be the chair. They are responsible for the conduct of the hearing including introducing the parties and explaining the roles of the clerk and the panel, explaining how the hearing will be conducted, and ensuring that the parties have sufficient opportunity to state their case.

Also in the room will be an independent clerk and the Admission Authority's Presenting Officer. The clerk's role is to provide an independent and impartial service. They will provide an independent source of advice (or to 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 panel's decision.

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 being heard and about the school. In some cases where the local authority is presenting the case it may be necessary for the school to also attend but they will only answer questions.

At some appeals there may be an observer, who could be there for training purposes to ensure proceedings are being carried out correctly – they will play no part in the hearing.

What happens at the hearing?

The hearing is quite informal. You are strongly advised to attend. You can take a friend or relative if you wish, but remember that the hearing is informal and legal representatives are rarely needed. A friend, relative or representative could be a locally elected politician, or an employee of the local authority, such as an educational social worker, SEN advisor or learning mentor, provided this will not lead to a conflict of interest. Admission authorities cannot allow an employee of the school you are appealing for or a member of the admission authority concerned to attend as your representative.

If it is not possible for you to attend, you may make your case in writing to be considered in your absence. If you do not attend, your case will be presented for you using your exact words from your written representations.

Multiple 'Group' Appeals

Multiple appeals are when a number of appeals have been received in relation to the same school. Admission authorities **must** take all reasonable steps to ensure that multiple appeals for a school are heard by one panel with the same members. Where 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 those appeals until all the appeals have been heard.

Multiple appeals may be heard either individually or in groups. Hearing multiple appeals individually means holding a series of consecutive appeal hearings. The panel **must** ensure that the presenting officer does not produce

new evidence in later appeals that was not presented in earlier appeals as this would mean that appellants whose cases were heard earlier in the process would not have the opportunity to consider and respond to the new evidence. If new evidence comes to light during the questioning of the presenting officer, the clerk **must** ensure that the panel considers what bearing that evidence may have on all appeals.

The order of the hearing (non grouped appeals) is normally:

1. **Introductions.**
2. **The chair of the appeal panel explains the process to you.**
3. **The Presenting Officer from the admission authority explains why your child could not be admitted to that school.**
4. **You have the opportunity to ask questions on the Admission Authority's statement to the officer from the parent, carer, friend or representative.**
5. **You or your friend or representative explains why they think the child should be admitted to the school. You may give any evidence that may help your case.**
6. **The Presenting Officer can ask you questions.**
7. **The Presenting Officer from the admission authority will sum up their case.**
8. **The panel members can ask questions at any time throughout the hearing.**
9. **You are given the opportunity to sum up your case.**
10. **If the Chair is happy that everyone has had an opportunity to sum up their case you and the Presenting Officer from the admission authority will be asked to leave.**
11. **For group appeals the order of the hearing is the same but the Presenting Officer will state his case to a group of parents/carers all appealing for the same school, in the same year group. As a group you will then have an opportunity to question the Presenting Officer. All parties will hear the questions and the answers. Following this grouped stage each parent/carers will then have a private hearing where they present their own case.**

How does the panel make its decision?

Apart from appeals to reception and Year 1 and 2 classes (see below), the panel has to go through a two-stage process:

Stage 1: The panel finds 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 finds that the admission of additional children would not prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use.

Stage 2: If the appeal panel is satisfied with the admission authority's case, it then looks at the case presented by the parent/carers.

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 or other schools cannot. If the panel considers that the appellant's

case outweighs the prejudice to the school, it must uphold the appeal.

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 which 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.

When multiple appeals are grouped, the presenting officer's case is usually heard in the presence of all the appellants at the beginning of the hearing (or sometimes at the start of each day when a hearing runs over a number of days). The appellants' cases are then heard individually without the presence of other appellants.

In multiple appeals where a number of children would have been offered a place and to admit that number would seriously prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources, the panel must proceed to the second stage.

The decision of the Independent Appeal Panel is binding on the admission authority.

However, if you feel that the correct procedures for your appeal were not followed, you may complain to Local Government Ombudsman in respect of maintained schools.

If the Ombudsman agrees with your complaint, they may make recommendations for a suitable remedy. For example, they may recommend that an appeal is reheard by a different panel and with a different clerk. The Ombudsman is not able to overturn the appeal panel's decision.

Appellants considering making a complaint can contact

Local Government Ombudsman:

Call **0300 061 0614**

Visit **www.lgo.org.uk**

Email **advice@lgo.org.uk**

Write to them at:

Local Government Ombudsman

PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH

The Secretary of State cannot review or overturn an appeal decision relating to a maintained school. An appeal panel's decision can only be overturned by the courts where the appellant or admission authority is successful in applying for a judicial review of that decision.

Please note that the section below only applies to academies and free schools

Education Funding Agency

If you have appealed for a place at an academy located in Newham and you are concerned that the appeal did not comply with the Code or was set up incorrectly, and this affected the outcome of the appeal, you can complain to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) within six months of the date of the appeal hearing. The EFA will investigate the complaint on behalf of the Secretary of State if it considers there are sufficient grounds to do so.

You can submit your completed complaint form by email to:

academyquestions@efa.education.gov.uk or online at www.gov.uk/schools-admissions/complain-about-the-appeals-process

The Secretary of State for Education has no power to review the decisions of individual appeal panels.



**Primary to secondary transfer appeals for September 2019
Heard by 18.07.2019**

Appeal Establishment	Heard	Upheld	Not Upheld
Bobby Moore Academy	7	0	7
Brampton Manor Academy	113	2	111
Chobham Academy	Contact Chobham Academy		
East London Science School	5	1	4
Eastlea Community School	0	0	0
Forest Gate Community School	17	1	16
Kingsford Community School	3	0	3
Langdon Academy	4	0	4
Lister Community School	3	0	3
Little Ilford School	35	1	34
Oasis Academy Silvertown	0	0	0
Plasht School	19	3	16
Rokeby School	0	0	0
Sarah Bonnell School	6	0	6
School 21	19	0	19
St Angela's Ursuline Convent School	5	0	5
St Bonaventure's Catholic Comprehensive School	5	0	5
Stratford School Academy	3	0	3
The Cumberland School	0	0	0
The Royal Docks Community School	0	0	0
Total	244	8	236

