



# SCHOOL ADMISSIONS APPEALS

September 2026



MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL

## Introduction

To Parents/Carers

This booklet will be of interest to those parents/carers who have not been able to obtain a place for their child in the school of their choice.

This booklet deals with the admission appeals for all Manchester schools where the local authority is the admission authority. If you are appealing for a school where they are their own admission authority, you will need to contact the school direct. You can also contact the School Admissions Team (see point 30), who will be able to advise you further.

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 gives parents the right to express a preference for the particular school(s) they wish their child to attend.

If your request for a place at a particular school has been refused in writing by the admission authority, you can:

- a. Appeal: you have the right to appeal against the admission authority's decision to refuse the admission.
- b. Contact the local authority's Admissions Team to ask about vacancies in other schools (contact details at the back of the booklet).



# 1

## How do I find a school for my child to attend?

If you are told there is no place available at your preferred school, you should contact the School Admissions Team - contact details can be found in point 30 of this booklet. There are details of all Manchester Schools available at [manchester.gov.uk/admissions](http://manchester.gov.uk/admissions).

# 2

## How do school waiting lists operate?

School waiting lists for community and voluntary controlled schools are maintained by the School Admissions Team. Each child on a school waiting list is given a category as described in the admissions booklet. Children are then put in priority order according to these categories. If a place becomes available in the relevant year group, the child at the top of the list can be admitted to the school. At the end of the academic year, all applicants will be removed from all waiting lists. The only exception will be if the applicant has not been offered a place at any Manchester school. Waiting lists for other types of schools are maintained by the schools.



# 3

## I have considered all the other schools available but I still want my child to go to the original school. What should I do?

You are entitled to appeal against the admission authority's decision to refuse your child a place at the school of your choice. You can submit an appeal online at: [schoolappeals.manchester.gov.uk/home](http://schoolappeals.manchester.gov.uk/home) where you will need to create an account on the school appeals portal.



# 4

## When can I not appeal?

If your child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools, or if your child has been placed at the school by IYFAP, you cannot appeal for two years from the date of the latest exclusion.

# 5

## Appealing for a primary school place

You should appeal when you have been refused a place in writing at your preferred school and you have considered other primary schools for your child.

If your child is beyond the reception class age, you can appeal after you have been told in writing of the admission authority's decision to refuse admission in the year for which you have applied.

Under Government legislation, reception, year 1 and year 2 classes must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single schoolteacher. If a place has been refused on the grounds of infant-class size, an appeal can only be upheld if:

- a. The child would have been offered a place if the admission arrangements had been properly implemented.
- b. The child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had not been contrary to mandatory provisions in the School Admissions Code and Part 3 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
- c. The decision to refuse admission was not one a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances.

# 6

## Is there a deadline for me to submit my appeal for a primary school place?

If you wish to ensure that your appeal for a reception place is considered before the start of the autumn term, you should submit your appeal form by 18 May 2026 (see note 31 for where to submit your appeal).

# 7

## When should I appeal for a secondary school place for Year 7 in September 2026?

You should submit your appeal form by 31 March 2026 if you want to ensure that your appeal is considered before the start of the autumn term (see note 31 for where to submit your appeal).

If your child is not transferring from Year 6 to Year 7, you can appeal after you have been refused a place in writing in that particular year group.

# 8

## How long will it take for my appeal to be heard?

- a. Appeals for entry into Year 7 at secondary school in September 2026 received by the published deadline date of 31 March 2026 should be heard by the end of the summer term where possible.
- b. Appeals for entry into reception class in September 2026, received by the published deadline date of 18 May 2026, should be heard before the end of the 2026 summer term.  
  
If you miss the deadline for a reception appeal, then it could be during the summer holidays, or the autumn school term before your appeal is heard. This is because it can be difficult to arrange some appeal hearings while the schools are closed for the summer.
- c. Appeals for in-year admissions must be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.



# 9

## Admission appeal timescales

The appeals process is laid down by legislation and correct procedures must be followed. They have been drawn up to ensure that both you and the admission authority have an equal opportunity to prepare the case for presentation to the Independent Appeals Panel. Once your appeal form has been received, the Admissions Officer gathers all the relevant information together (which usually also means contact with the school you have appealed for) and prepares a statement giving the reason why a school place is not available. The panel will then consider this alongside your case.

Panel members have a statutory duty to act in accordance with the following Acts and Codes:

- a. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as amended by subsequent legislation and case law.
- b. The Codes on School Admissions and School Admission Appeals, which have been produced by the Department for Education.

Arrangements will be made to call a hearing of the Independent Appeals Panel and you will be notified of this date at least fourteen school days prior to the hearing date.

# 10

## What if the school I am appealing for is a Roman Catholic primary/secondary school or Academy?

The governors of voluntary aided schools are responsible for arranging for an independent panel to hear appeals against a decision to refuse admission to a school. The appeals service does not facilitate appeals for Manchester Academy, Wright Robinson, William Hulme, King David Primary or King David High School. To make an appeal for other voluntary aided schools, you can submit an appeal online at: [schoolappeals.manchester.gov.uk/home](http://schoolappeals.manchester.gov.uk/home) via the school appeals portal.

# 11

## What should I put as my reasons for appeal?

If you wish to appeal, you must create an account on the school appeals portal so you can then complete a school appeal form, setting out the grounds for your appeal. The admission authority must not limit the grounds on which an appeal can be made. If you also wish to submit any further supporting evidence, you can do so by a specified deadline. If any of your evidence arrives after this date, the panel has to decide whether to accept it before the hearing commences.

Remember that you are appealing for a school rather than against the one you have been allocated.

# 12

## Medical and other supporting evidence

If there are medical and/or social reasons why a parent/carer wishes their child to go to a particular school, they can submit evidence to support this. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to obtain the evidence. In order for this to be considered it must be sent at the time of the appeal application.

# 13

## I don't wish my child to miss any education before the appeal is considered. What should I do?

You have a duty to ensure that your child is educated. You should arrange for your child to start at the school that has been offered to you. This will not adversely affect your appeal.

The Admissions Officer will endeavour to offer an alternative school while you are waiting for your appeal to be heard.

## 14 Group appeals - what are group admission appeals?

Where there are a large number of appeals for a particular school or Academy, parents may be invited to attend at the same time to hear the admission authority's presentation. The panel and all parents appealing for school places will then be able to put questions to the representative from the admission authority.

The panel then determines whether the admission authority has proved it would be prejudicial to the provision of efficient education and the efficient use of resources to admit more children to that year group.

If the panel finds that prejudice has been proved, you and all the other parents will be invited to make your individual cases to the panel at the times allocated. The panel and the admission authority representatives will then be able to ask you questions.

## 15 What does the Appeals Panel consider?

- The Appeal Statement prepared by the admission authority.
- The appeal form submitted by the parent/carer.
- Any other written evidence submitted by the Presenting Officer.
- Any other written evidence submitted by the parent/carer.

A copy of the Appeal Statement will be placed on the appeals portal account approximately eight school days before the appeal hearing.

## 16 What will happen at the hearing?

The hearing will be as informal as possible and the chair will try to put you at ease. The panel has to follow a procedure. Details of the procedure will be sent to you by the Clerk when you are told of the arrangements.

## 17 Who attends the panel hearing?

The following parties attend the Independent Appeals Panel hearing:

- The Independent Appeals Panel (see note 19).
- The Clerk to the Independent Appeals Panel.
- The Presenting Officer from the admission authority and possibly a representative of the school you have appealed for.
- An interpreter, when requested.
- Yourself/representative - if you choose to bring a representative, they must not be a representative of the school that is the subject of the appeal, as this could create a conflict of interest and be unfair to other parents who are appealing.

## 18 How does the Appeals Panel reach its decision?

The panel will carefully consider the evidence presented by both parties, before reaching a decision.



## 19 Who makes up the Independent Appeals Panel?

The Appeals Panel consists of three members. The panel will comprise one person from each of the categories below:

- a. At least one person experienced in education who is acquainted with educational conditions in the area or who is the parent of a registered pupil at a school
- b. At least one lay member. Lay members are persons without personal experience in the management or provision of education in any school (although lay members may have experience as governors of other schools or have been involved in education in any other voluntary capacity).

The third panel member will be from either (a) or (b).

The chair may either be a lay member or a person experienced in education.

None of the Appeals Panel will have any former knowledge of the case other than your appeal form and the admission authority's statement. All members of the Appeals Panel are independent of the school and the admission authority.

## 20 Should I attend the Appeals Panel hearing?

You can choose whether to attend the hearing or not, but you are recommended to attend. Each case is likely to last for about 20 minutes, although there is no set time limit.

If you decide not to attend the hearing, the panel could consider and determine the appeal in your absence. In this situation the appeal will be dealt with by reference to the information submitted by both the admission authority and yourself. It is therefore important that you tell the panel in writing everything you want them to take into account.

At the appeal hearing, one of the aims of the panel is to make sure that you get a full and fair hearing.

## 21 Can I have legal representation?

Yes, but it is not necessary as the hearing is not a Court of Law and we endeavour to keep the hearing as informal as possible. The Presenting Officer will not usually have a solicitor present. The clerk is present to ensure that the procedure is correctly followed and the principles of natural justice are observed.

## 22 When and where are Appeals Panel hearings held?

All admissions appeal hearings will continue to be conducted remotely:

- by video conference

You will be contacted in advance of the hearing via your school appeals portal account. This is to confirm your appeal hearing date and time, and to provide the Zoom link for you to attend the hearing. If you have marked your form to state that you do not want to attend the hearing, you will still be informed of the date and time of the hearing.

The appeal hearing is held in private, and no parties will be permitted to record the proceedings. You can be represented or accompanied by a friend at the hearing via video or telephone or through written submissions.

The appeal hearing will last around 20 to 30 minutes but you'll be allowed as much time as possible for you to present your case to the panel.

Following the conclusion of the remote hearing, the panel will consider their decision in private, with the clerk present.

The Independent Appeal Panel (IAP) will be considering a number of appeals on the same day as yours and it's not always possible to keep to the exact timeslots provided. Appeal hearings may be longer or shorter than planned so we may contact you slightly earlier or later than the time of your hearing. Please do not contact us unless you have not received your joining email or automated phone call within 20 minutes of the start time of your hearing.

#### **Technical failure**

If at any time during the remote hearing you lose connection, end the phone call or video conference. The clerk will attempt to contact you again for your remote hearing to resume. Where this is not possible, this would usually result in the remote hearing being rescheduled. However, if it's not possible to do so, the appeal panel will retain the right to determine the appeal on the basis of the written information submitted before the appeal.

## **23** What if I am unable to attend on the date given to me?

You should email the Clerk immediately to arrange for a new date at: [school.appeals@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:school.appeals@manchester.gov.uk)

## **24** What happens if I decide not to attend?

If you have indicated on your appeals form that you wish to attend the hearing but subsequently decide not to, it is extremely important that you inform the Clerk to the Independent Appeals as soon as possible by email.

If you fail to attend on the day of the hearing and have not notified the Clerk prior to this date, the Appeals Panel may go ahead and make its decision on the written information you have submitted.

## **25** Will I be told of the decision of the Appeals Panel?

Yes. You will receive the outcome usually on the day the decision is made and a decision letter will be sent via the appeals portal as soon as possible. Where there are multiple appeals held over a number of days, the decision will be available on the school appeals portal once all the decisions on the appeals for the school have been made.

## **26** Is the decision of the Appeals Panel final?

Yes. The decision is binding on the admission authority unless it is overturned by a Court of Law.

## **27** What do I do if my appeal is refused?

As previously stated, parents are under a duty to ensure that their children are educated. You should find an alternative school for your child as soon as possible and you may wish to discuss your available options again with the Admissions Team.

## **28** If my appeal is refused, can I appeal again?

For any particular school you can only appeal once per year. However, when there are significant and material changes in the circumstances of the parent or school, the admission authority would then consider whether a further appeal could be heard.

## **29** My child is not yet five years old. Can I appeal for a place at a nursery?

No. The appeals system only applies to primary and high schools.

## 30 How do I contact the Admissions Team?

Email: [school.admissions@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:school.admissions@manchester.gov.uk)

By post:  
PO Box 532, Town Hall, Albert Square, Manchester M60 2LA

Phone: 0161 245 7166  
There is a phone queuing system.

## 31 How do I contact the Clerk to the Independent Appeals?

Web: [manchester.gov.uk/schoolappeals](http://manchester.gov.uk/schoolappeals)  
Email: [school.appeals@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:school.appeals@manchester.gov.uk)

## 32 What if I wish to complain about the way my appeal has been dealt with?

You should first write to the complaints address at Manchester:  
<https://www.manchester.gov.uk/complaints>

You may complain about maladministration on the part of an appeal panel to the Local Government Ombudsman in respect of maintained schools – call 0300 061 0614 – or to the Secretary of State (the Education and Skills Funding Agency) in respect of Academies – call 0370 000 2288.

You can access both online at:

[www.lgo.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.lgo.org.uk/contact-us)

[www.gov.uk/schools-admission/complain-about-the-appeals-process](http://www.gov.uk/schools-admission/complain-about-the-appeals-process)

## Other local authorities

**Bolton**  
01204 333 333

**Bury**  
0161 253 5000

**Cheshire East**  
0300 123 5012

**Cheshire West and Chester**  
0300 123 7039

**Oldham**  
0161 770 4213

**Rochdale**  
01706 925 982

**Salford**  
0161 793 2500

**Stockport**  
0161 217 6022

**Tameside**  
0161 342 3214

**Trafford**  
0161 912 5007

**Wigan**  
01942 489013

## 33 Other useful reading

Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998  
School Admissions Code 2021  
School Admission Appeals Code October 2022  
Applying for your child's primary school place  
Applying for your child's secondary school place



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