



# **School Admission Appeals**

## **Key Stage 2, 3 & 4 Appeals**

### **A Guide for Parents/Carers**

# **Covid-19 Regulation Guidance Updated January 2021**

This guide provides information and guidance for parents/carers appealing against the decision made by an admitting authority to refuse their child a place at a school. It covers Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 and gives information on the appeals process and covers many frequently asked questions. Separate information is available for Infant Class Size appeals, as they are governed by additional legislation. If you have any questions that are not dealt with here, please contact the School Appeals Service:

**Appeals Officer  
BCP Education Appeals Service  
Democratic Services  
BCP Civic Centre  
Bournemouth  
Dorset BH2 6DY**

**Tel: 01202 118911**

**Email: [school.appeals@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:school.appeals@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)**

# CONTENTS

Page

Introduction	3
--------------	---

## THE ADMISSION PROCESS AND ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

1. Why didn't I get the school place I wanted?	4
2. Should I accept an alternative school place?	4
3. How do I lodge my appeal?	4

## THE APPEALS PROCESS

4. What happens after I submit my appeal?	5
5. When will my appeal be heard?	5
6. Where will my appeal be heard?	5
7. What information will be sent to me and the Appeal Panel?	6

## THE APPEALS HEARING

8. Preparing for my appeal	6
9. Can I know why previous appeals were upheld?	7
10. What if I want to withdraw my appeal?	7
11. What happens at the appeal hearing?	7
12. How long will the appeal hearing take?	7
13. Who are the Appeal Panel and what are their powers?	7
14. What is the role of the Clerk to the Appeal Panel?	8
15. What is the Decision-Making Process that the Appeal Panel uses?	9
16. What is different about Multiple Appeals	10
17. What is different about Grammar School appeals?	10
18. What is different about Sixth Form appeals?	11
19. What is different about In-year Fair Access appeals?	11
20. What if I have a disability?	12
21. What happens if I need an interpreter or other help?	12

## AFTER THE APPEAL HEARING

22. What happens after the appeal hearing?	12
23. Can I complain?	12
24. What if I feel the decision of the Appeal Panel was wrong in law?	13
25. Can I appeal again if my appeal is rejected?	13

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

26. Where can I get further support and advice?	13
---	----

Appendix 1	Glossary of terms and abbreviations	16
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## Introduction

Under Section 94 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, all admitting authorities must offer an opportunity to appeal the refusal of a place at a school or academy. The 2012 School Admission Appeals Code sets out the guidance that should be used for admission appeals.

This guidance is to help you understand what is involved in an Independent School Admission Appeal in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. It is not intended to be a complete legal guide, although every effort has been made to cover all the important points.

You have no legal right of appeal until you have received a letter of refusal from the Local/Admission Authority.

The Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Education Appeals Service arranges School Admission Appeals for all Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools as well as most Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies in the BCP area. Please contact the service for clarification if needed.

## The Impact of Coronavirus on School Admission Appeals

The Government has made some amendments to the legislation surrounding School Admission Appeals to allow for appeals to be heard during the current pandemic. Whilst they have not changed the legislation relevant to the Panel's Decision-Making Powers or the Infant Class Size Legislation, they have changed how appeals are to be heard. This change is in force for all appeals lodged up until 30 September 2021.

In order to effectively manage all the appeals that we service and to ensure fairness for all parties to be able to access the hearing, we will be planning on behalf of each of the admission authorities we service appeals for, for our Panels to hear all appeals based on written submissions only. This is after a great deal of consideration on access, consistency and fairness for ALL parents/carers appealing as well as considerations on staffing and IT provision to support video/conference calls.

Consideration has been given for the ability to hold all appeals in a timely manner as well as the fact some parents/carers are key workers, some have childcare responsibilities so would find joining a call difficult at a specific time, plus be able to fully participate. In addition to the fact that some parents would be working and unable to join the call.

It has been decided that the conditions in the Regulations cannot be met consistently for all parties if we were to hear appeals in any other way, therefore our Appeal Panels have decided to hear appeals based on **written submissions** only. This being the case, please ensure you check your emails on a regular basis once your appeal has been lodged.

## 1. Why didn't I get a place at the school I wanted?

All parents/carers have a right to express a preference for the school they would like their child to attend. Although every effort is made to offer your child a place at your preferred school, this is not always possible. All admission authorities must offer a place at the school unless there is a legal reason for refusing a place.

The most common reason for not offering a place is that the school(s) received more applications than places available and other children had a higher priority for the place at the school than your child when the school's admission policy was applied. For in-year applications, it is usually that the school is up to its published admission number in the year group.

In both instances, the school will not wish to admit more pupils as this will adversely affect resources and the education of other children at the school.

## 2. Should I accept an alternative school place?

If you have not been offered a place at the school you would like, it is sensible to consider an alternative school place for your child. If you have not already done so and it is something the school offers, you should visit the school you have been offered or speak to them about any concerns you have. If you accept a place at an alternative school, you can still appeal for a place at any school that was named on the application form you submitted. Accepting an alternative place will not affect any appeal that you lodge.

## 3. How do I lodge my appeal?

All parents/carers have the right to appeal against any decision to refuse your child a place made by or on behalf of an admission authority under legislation produced by the Department for Education (DfE). You have the right of appeal if you have parental responsibility, irrespective of whether you are the natural parent or if you care for a child who lives with you. It does not have to be the same person who submitted the application form.

If you do wish to appeal, you will need to complete an appeal form stating why you want your child to attend that school. You can appeal for a place at more than one school, but you cannot appeal for a school you did not name on your application form.

Your appeal must be made in writing and you must explain the reasons why you are lodging an appeal. **If you submit an appeal form without setting out your grounds of appeal, it will be returned to you as you will have not lodged your appeal correctly.**

Please note that your right is to appeal the refusal of a place for your child by an admission authority. There is no right of appeal against which alternative school having been offered to you – this is done to ensure your child has a school place (where the Local Authority has responsibility to do so).

Your refusal letter will advise how to obtain an appeal form and the form will tell you where to return it to. Normally, you will need to submit your appeal by a certain date – this information can be obtained from the school(s) website by viewing their Appeal Timetable.

#### **4. What happens after I submit my appeal?**

After you submit your appeal we will:

- send you confirmation that we have received your appeal;
- in due course, we will email you with a letter giving you at least 14 calendar days' notice of the date/date range during which your appeal will be heard;
- we will send you a copy of the school's written submission and a copy of the submission you presented to date that the Panel will consider;
- there will be an opportunity for all parents/carers to question the school's case, the school to question each parent/carer's case and the Independent Panel to question all cases;
- once the Panel has all the information, they will have a virtual meeting between themselves with their Clerk to consider and determine the appeals lodged for this school – this will be in line with the legislation set out in the Appeals Code. The changes to this under the current pandemic, is that if one Panel Member were to fall ill, the remaining two Panel Members can reach a decision still;
- after the appeal hearing, we will send you a letter giving the Panel's decision and detailing their reason for it.

#### **5. When will my appeal be heard?**

The School Admission Appeals Code sets out the following timetable for when appeals will be heard.

- For applications made in the normal admission round (i.e. applications made by the specified deadline to start in Reception, transfer to Junior/Middle School or start Secondary School in the coming September), appeals must be heard within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals;
- For late applications (i.e. applications made after the specified deadline to apply to start in Reception, transfer to Junior/Middle School or start Secondary School in the coming September), appeals should be heard within 40 school days from the deadline for lodging appeals where possible, or within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged;
- Applications for in-year admissions (all applications that are not part of the Primary, Junior/Middle or Secondary intakes for September onwards; (This could be for any year group at any time of year) appeals must be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.

Due to the current pandemic, the legislation has been temporarily amended to suspend the deadlines by which appeals should be heard. They now allow schools longer than the above timeframes, if needed and state that all appeals are heard as soon as is reasonably practicable. When we confirm receipt of your appeal, we will advise you of the anticipated timescale as to when your appeal will be heard.

#### **6. Where will my appeal be heard?**

The Panel Members and Independent Clerk will attend a virtual hearing to consider and determine your appeal. As detailed above, you will be advised at least 14 days in advance of the date range for your appeal to be heard. Neither you nor the school will attend this virtual hearing – the panel will consider all written information provided.

## 7. What information will be sent to me and the Appeal Panel?

We will send you the School's written submission of their case and a copy of your appeal submission you presented to date. We will subsequently send you an email with a form for you to complete should you have any questions to ask the school about their case – these questions must be generic to the school's case and not specifically about your child. The Panel Members and School will also be sent forms for them to submit any questions to you regarding your grounds of appeal. All questions submitted will be circulated accordingly and you will be given a deadline in which to respond and attach any supporting evidence. Once the deadline has passed all the answers to the questions will be sent to the Panel Members and School along with any late evidence provided and you will receive the following documents:

- Questions from Panel Members to the School with the answers
- Questions from Parents to the School with the answers

Please note, there will be no further opportunity to raise questions on these responses.

Please be assured everything you submit within the deadlines will be submitted to the Panel Members and the Clerk will ensure they have the information before they consider your appeal.

## 8. Preparing for my appeal

The Appeal Form will be an important part of your case and you need to fill it in as fully and carefully as possible, giving your grounds for your appeal.

Any supporting evidence must be emailed to us as either Word or PDF documents, we cannot accept photos of documents as they are not usually of a standard to read or email to the Panel Members.

The Admission Authority must comply with reasonable requests from parents/carers for information which they need to help them prepare their case for appeal.

It is important to provide written evidence to support your grounds of appeal. The Admission Authority may seek independent evidence from you on matters like medical conditions or your address, prior to the hearing, which confirms or supports what you say.

Please note that we retain any evidence or supporting documents sent to us as part of your appeal. Please do not submit any original documents and ensure you submit copies to us. Also, bear in mind that the Appeal Panel may not have been given any previous correspondence you might have had with the Admission Authority – it is up to you to submit **all** documentation you wish to be included as part of your appeal.

If you wish for the Appeal Panel to have confirmation from someone such as your doctor or social worker as to what you have said on your appeal form, it is **up to you** to obtain this written support and send it to us before the deadline to received paperwork. We are unable to contact professionals on your behalf for more information.

**Please Note - You cannot submit any evidence after your appeal has taken place.**

## **9. Can I know why previous appeals were upheld?**

Previous decisions on school admission appeals do not set precedent, so no-one can predict whether your appeal will be successful or not. In addition, school appeals are confidential, so you cannot ask to see copies of previous appeals or know why other appeals were successful. Your appeal will be considered on your own circumstances.

## **10. What if I want to withdraw my appeal?**

You can withdraw your appeal at any time before the hearing. Please contact the BCP Education Appeals Service as soon as possible by telephone and follow this up with an email as confirmation. Please note, our service is completely separate from school admissions, so if you subsequently accept a place either at your preferred or an alternative school, your appeal will not automatically be cancelled.

## **11. What happens at the appeal hearing?**

The Appeal Hearing will be conducted in accordance with the guidelines given in the [School Admission Appeals Code](#) (which came into force on 1 February 2012). The School Admission Appeals Code is a national code governing School Admission Appeals. It imposes mandatory requirements and includes guidance on the conduct of Appeal Hearings. The Appeal Panel must, by law, have regard to the Code.

## **12. How long will the appeal hearing take?**

This will depend on how many appeals are being heard at the hearing – you will be advised of the date range for your appeal.

## **13. Who are the Appeal Panel and what are their powers?**

Please note, under the Covid-19 Regulations the rules have been relaxed with regard to what happens if one of the three panel members withdraws (temporarily or permanently) to make it permissible for the Panel to continue with and conclude the appeal as a Panel of two.

When you decide to appeal against the decision of the Admission Authority to refuse a place for your child at their school, a special panel called an Appeal Panel will hear your appeal.

The Appeal Panel is made up of people who are completely independent of the school and education functions of the Local Authority. The Appeal Panel comprise of a Chairperson and at least two other Panel Members with at least one from each category listed below:

- lay people – someone without personal experience in the management or provision of education in any school (excluding experience as a school governor or in another voluntary capacity).
- persons who have experience in education, are acquainted with education conditions in the Local Authority area or are parents of registered pupils at a school.

In Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, there are three members on an Appeal Panel – all of whom are volunteers. They are not allowed to be Local Authority Councillors and they receive no payment other than reimbursement for expenses. They will have undertaken training as required by the School Admission Appeals Code.

None of the Appeal Panel Members will have had any connection with the admissions process affecting your particular case or any former knowledge of your case other than your appeal form and supporting documents alongside the Admission Authority's statement.

You will be notified of the names of your Appeal Panel Members prior to the hearing. Upon receiving this notification, should you have any objections regarding impartiality, these should be notified to the Clerk immediately.

The Appeal Panel will consider your case and that made by the Admission Authority and can question both parties. It will take into account all evidence submitted in writing by all parties. The Appeal Panel will either accept or reject your appeal. It has no other power. If it accepts your appeal, your child must be offered a place at the school you have appealed for.

The decision of the Appeal Panel is final and binding on all parties. The Appeal Panel cannot allocate places at a school other than the school that they are hearing the appeal for.

The Appeal Panel cannot:

- enter into a debate with either party on issues raised;
- attach any conditions if it allows your appeal;
- hear complaints or objections in wider aspects of local admission policies and practice;
- reassess the capacity of the school;
- take into consideration your child's position on the waiting list for the school;
- order the Admission Authority to change your position on the waiting list for the school;
- consider general matters regarding admission arrangements or admission policies.

#### **14. What is the role of the Clerk to the Appeal Panel?**

The Clerk is not a member of the Panel but has an important part to play in ensuring that all relevant facts are established and that the appeal hearing is conducted in a fair way. The service they provide is both independent and impartial. The Clerk's main role at the hearing is to:

- Be an independent source of advice (or to seek appropriate advice) on procedure, on the School Admissions and School Admission Appeals Code, and on the law on admissions, giving any advice in the presence of all parties where practicable;
- Ensure that both the appellants and the Admission Authority have had the opportunity to present relevant facts ahead of the hearing;
- Assist the Panel, Admission Authority, or the appellants with procedure and obtaining advice where directed by the Panel Chair to do so;



- Record the proceedings, attendance, voting outcomes, Panel decisions and reasons in a form that the Panel and Clerk agree is appropriate. All notes and records of the proceedings taken by the Clerk are the property of the Panel. These notes are prepared and retained on the basis that they may be required to be disclosed to the Local Government Ombudsman, Education and Skills Funding Agency or are required as part of a Court proceeding;
- Notify all parties of the Appeal Panel's decision.

## 15. What is the Decision-Making Process that the Appeal Panel uses?

The Appeal Panel must follow the two-stage process as set out in the Appeals Code for all appeals (other than infant class size prejudice appeals):

### First stage – examining the decision to refuse admission

The Appeal Panel must consider the following matters in relation to each child that is subject of an appeal:

- a) whether the admission arrangements (including the area's co-ordinated admission arrangements) complied with the mandatory requirements of the School Admissions Code and Part 3 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; and
- b) whether the admission arrangements were correctly and impartially applied in the case in question.

The Appeal Panel must then decide whether the admission of additional children would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.

### Consideration of prejudice

Whilst the Panel must take into account the school's published admission number, the Admission Authority must be able to demonstrate prejudice over and above the fact that the published admission number has already been reached. The Panel must not reassess the capacity of the school, but must consider the impact on the school of admitting additional children. In reaching a decision as to whether or not there would be prejudice, the Panel may consider the following factors:

- a) what effect an additional admission would have on the school in the current and following academic years as the year group moves through the school;
- b) whether any changes have been made to the school's physical accommodation or organisation since an admission number was originally set for the relevant year group;
- c) the impact of the locally agreed Fair Access Protocol;
- d) the impact on the organisation and size of classes, the availability of teaching staff, and the effect on children already at the school.

If the Admission Authority fails to satisfy the Appeal Panel on any of these points, the Panel will allow your appeal.

However, in multiple appeals where a number of children would have to be offered a place and the Appeal Panel agree that to admit that number of children would cause serious prejudice, it must proceed to the second stage.

### Second stage – balancing the argument

If the Appeal Panel has not found any grounds to allow your appeal at the first stage, it **must** move onto the second stage, which involves balancing the arguments.

The Panel will consider the reasons why you wish your child to attend the school and balance the prejudice to the school against your case for your child to be admitted to the school.

The Panel will take into account your reasons for expressing a preference for the school, including what the school can offer your child that the allocated or other schools cannot. If the Panel considers that your case outweighs the prejudice to the school, it will uphold your appeal. The Panel must not take into account where your child is on the waiting list.

In multiple appeals (where there is more than one appeal for the same school and year group), the Panel must not compare the individual cases when deciding on whether a child'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.

If your appeal is part of a multiple appeal which runs over one day or longer, no decisions are made until all the appeals have been heard.

## **16. What is different about Multiple appeals?**

If your appeal is for a school where there are other parents also appealing at the same time for places for their children in the same year group (often for an entry year into a school – e.g. Year 3 in a Junior School or Year 7 in a Secondary School), this is termed a multiple appeal. The Appeal Panel will be considering the appeal in line with the same legislation, however at Stage 1 of the appeal, they will be considering if the school can take **all** of the children appealing. It is important to understand that in many cases, it is unlikely that a school will have space to take say 40 or 50 more children without it causing prejudice, so in accordance with the guidance, the Appeal Panel will then proceed to stage 2 to hear each individual case in turn. When considering each appeal at stage 2, they will be looking at why your child must attend this school and then decide if this need outweighs the school's case. If they feel there are more children that outweigh the school's prejudice than the Appeal Panel feel the school can cope with, they then compare cases and only uphold the strongest appeals with a need to attend this school, up to the number they feel the school can cope with.

## **17. What is different about Grammar School appeals?**

Grammar schools are permitted to select their entire intake on the basis of high academic ability. They do not have to fill all of their places if applicants have not reached the required standard. The Panel can **only** uphold an appeal where it is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate the child is of the required academic standard **and** that prejudice to the school has been outweighed.

If the school has already filled all the available places at the school, then the Appeal Panel must follow the two-stage decision making process, ensuring for each appellant they consider at stage 2, that they decide if they have sufficient evidence to show the child is of the required academic standard.

If the Appeal Panel finds that the child is not of the required academic standard, they **must** refuse the appeal. The legislation does not allow the Appeal Panel to devise its own method of determining if the child is of grammar ability.

If the Appeal Panel have more children who have met the required academic standard appealing than there are places available, then they consider each appeal at stage two as to whether the case has outweighed prejudice to the school. The Appeal Panel must then compare the cases and uphold the appeals with the strongest cases for admission.

It is important therefore that any appellants whose child has not met the required standard provide written evidence of high academic ability as well as showing that their case for admission to the school will outweigh the school's case **and** be a strong case for a place at the school when compared to other appeals being considered at the same time.

If your child has met the required standard yet has been refused a place because of the application of the school's oversubscription criteria (i.e. more applicants who met the standard than places available) – you need to present a case as to why your child should be given a place at the school, despite it being full.

Full details of the statutory guidance regarding appeals for grammar schools can be found in the [School Admission Appeals Code](#).

## **18. What is different about Sixth Form appeals?**

If the school sixth form did not offer your child a place, both you and your child have the right to appeal – if you both appeal, your appeal will be heard together and allow both you and your child opportunity to present your cases as we understand each may present a different argument. If they did not offer you child a place because there were other that more closely met the school's admission criteria, then the appeals process is the same as all other school admission appeals.

If you child was refused admission because they did not meet the entry requirements specified by the school (for example 5 GCSEs grade 4 or above), the Panel will only uphold the appeal if it considers that the admission authority's decision was unreasonable based on the information available to it. For example, if there are specific reasons or special circumstances that meant your child was not able to provide GCSEs at the relevant grades (e.g. if they were not studying in England). Appeal Panels are not permitted to make their own assessment of the child's ability.

## **19. What is different about In Year Fair Access appeals?**

If your in-year application for a school place meets the criteria set out in the locally agreed Fair Access Protocol, your application for a school place will be decided by the local Pupil Placement Panel. They try to consider the needs of your child as well as ensuring no school is required to take a disproportionate number of children with challenging behaviour. In these circumstances, an admission authority may refuse to admit a child even though places are available in the particular year group.

If you are refused a place at one of your preferred schools, this triggers the right of appeal. The appeal will still be heard under the two-stage process described above, however at the first stage, the presenting officer for the school will present their case for refusal, demonstrating how the admission of your child would prejudice the

provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources. This applies to in-year appeals only for children who meet the Fair Access Protocol. Further details on this can be obtained from the relevant School Admissions Team listed at the end of this guidance.

## **20. What if I have a disability?**

Please let us know if you have a disability that prevents you being able to participate in the appeal hearing with it being based on written materials. We will contact you and see what arrangements we can make to accommodate your needs.

## **21. What happens if I need an interpreter or other help?**

You may request an interpreter to help you prepare your case ahead of the hearing dates. If you would like the Clerk to arrange this for you, at the school's expense, please ask the Clerk well before the hearing advising of the language you require. Alternatively, if you would prefer, you may arrange for your own interpreter to assist you, but at your own cost.

## **22. What happens after the appeal hearing?**

The Clerk will send you a brief letter notifying you of the outcome of the appeal as soon as possible once the Panel has made its decision and not before the final day of the hearing for multiple appeals. A detailed letter will then be sent to you within 7 calendar days, giving the Panel's reasons for their decision – this may take longer however during busy times.

The decision of the Appeal Panel is binding on you, the School, the Admission Authority and the Local Authority. If the appeal is unsuccessful, there is no further right of appeal. You should contact the Local Authority admissions team to discuss the alternatives available.

If your appeal is successful, you will be advised to contact the school to make arrangements for your child to start as soon as possible.

## **23. Can I complain?**

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) can investigate written complaints about maladministration on the part of an Appeal Panel for maintained schools. **A complaint to the Ombudsman is not a further appeal.** It must relate to the **administration** of an Appeal rather than the Appeal decision. Maladministration covers issues such as failure to follow correct procedure or a failure to act independently and fairly. It does not cover the merits of a decision that the Appeal Panel has made.

Complaints about maladministration on the part of an Appeal Panel for an Academy, or that an Academy Trust has failed to comply with the Appeals Code in setting up a Panel, are investigated by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). This Agency is appointed to investigate complaints about Academies on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Neither the Ombudsman nor the ESFA is able to overturn the Appeal Panel's decision but, where they find that there has been maladministration in the appeals process,

they may make recommendations for a suitable remedy. For example, they may recommend that an appeal is reheard by a different Panel with a different Clerk.

Details of how to make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman or Education Skills Funding Agency will be given in your decision letter.

## **24. What if I feel that the decision of the Appeal Panel was wrong in law?**

If you or the Admission Authority consider that the decision of the Appeal Panel was legally wrong, either party could apply for a judicial review. If a judicial review is granted, the Court would consider the lawfulness of the Appeal Panel's decision. If it found the Appeal Panel's decision to be unlawful or unreasonable (irrational or perverse legally), it could overturn the decision, or it could order a fresh hearing be set up with new Panel Members.

If either party wishes to consider this course of action, they should take independent legal advice as soon as possible, as normally there is a 3-month time limit from the date of the decision.

## **25. Can I appeal again if my appeal is rejected?**

You do not have a right to a second appeal in respect of the same school for the same academic year unless, in exceptional circumstances, the Admission Authority accept a second application from you because of a significant and material change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school, but still refuse admission.

## **26. Where can I get further support and advice?**

In the first instance, contact the BCP Education Appeals Service who can help you with any queries you may have about this guidance and the appeals process:

**Appeals Officer  
BCP Education Appeals Service  
Democratic Services  
BCP Civic Centre  
Bournemouth  
Dorset BH2 6DY**

**Tel: 01202 118911**

**Email: [school.appeals@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:school.appeals@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)**

We are unable to assist you with the preparation of your case, so please refer to the following pages for support services which may be available to you.

Below are other sources of information and advice that you may wish to use:

## **Children's Information Service (CIS) - Bournemouth and Christchurch**

The Children's Information Service team is able to assist with enquiries about other aspects of admissions, alternative school preferences and queries about school transport for Bournemouth and Christchurch. They can be contacted via phone and email as below:

Tel: 01202 123222 Mon – Thur 09.00am – 5.00pm  
Email: [cis@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:cis@bcpcouncil.gov.uk) Fri 09.00am – 4.30pm

## **School Admissions Team – Poole**

The School Admissions Team can assist with enquiries about other aspects of admissions, alternative school preferences and queries about school transport for Poole. They can be contacted via phone and email as below:

Tel: 01202 127963 Mon – Thur 09.00am – 5.00pm  
Email: [school.admissions@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:school.admissions@bcpcouncil.gov.uk) Fri 09.00am – 4.30pm

## **Child Law Advice Service - Coram Children's Legal Centre (CLCC)**

Coram Children's Legal Centre (CLCC) is an independent national charity specialising in law and policy affecting children and young people. CLCC provides free legal information, advice and representation to children, young people, their families, carers and professionals via their Child Law Advice Service. As well as limited advice on their number below, they also offer a paid for call back service – please refer to their website.

Telephone: 0300 330 5485 Mon – Fri 8.00am – 6.00pm  
Website: [www.childlawadvice.org.uk](http://www.childlawadvice.org.uk)

## **Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) Advice**

The Advisory Centre for Education is an independent national education advice centre which provides information on the education system. ACE produces a wide range of publications which offer helpful advice on children's education.

Telephone: 0300 0115 142 Mon, Tue, Wed 10.00am – 1.00pm term time  
Website: [www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)

## **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)**

SENDIASS provide free impartial independent information, guidance and support to parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

SENDIASS for Bournemouth and Christchurch:

Telephone: 01202 451970 Email: [sendiass@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:sendiass@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

SENDIASS for Poole:

Telephone: 01202 261933 Email: [sendiass@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:sendiass@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

## **Independent Parental Special Educational Advice (IPSEA)**

IPSEA is a national charity which provides free legally based advice to families who have children with Special Educational Needs

Telephone: appointments to speak to an advisor can be booked via their website

Website: [www.ipsea.org.uk](http://www.ipsea.org.uk)

## **School Admissions Code and School Admission Appeals Code**

The school admission process, including the school appeals process must be administered in accordance with the School Admissions Code and The School Admission Appeals Code. These Codes are issued by the Secretary of State for Education and can be viewed at:

<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code>

<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code>

Of course, you are free to seek your own advice from other sources if you prefer.

To obtain **Education Acts and relevant regulations**, visit [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

## Appendix 1

### Glossary of terms and abbreviations

Academy	An Academy is a type of school which receives its funding directly from central government and is independent of direct control by the Local Authority. They employ their own staff and set their own admission criteria. They sometime receive additional support by personal or corporate sponsorship which aims to raise standards and helps explore new ways of working.
Admission Authority (AA)	Admission Authority. The body responsible for the school admission policy. This is the Local Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools and the Governing Body for all other Schools and Academies.
Admission Arrangements	The arrangements for admitting pupils to schools which include admission numbers, application procedures and timetables, admission criteria, information about waiting lists, and information about how late applications will be handled.
Admission Criteria	When a school is oversubscribed, applicants are ranked according to the admission criteria. The criteria set out what categories of applicant have priority for places at a school.
Catchment Area	A school's catchment area is a geographical area local to the school and usually listed by streets or shown as a specified area on a map.
Community School	A Community School is run by the Local Authority, which employs the staff, owns the land and buildings and decides the admission criteria.
DfE	Department for Education. The central government body that issues guidance on capacity of schools, school admissions and appeals.
EA / SSFA	Education Act / School Standards & Framework Act.
EAL	English as an additional language.
EBD	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties. One of the types of Special Educational Needs.
EHCP	Where a child has a high level of Special Educational Needs, the LA will issue a legal document called an Education Health and Care Plan (formerly known as a Statement). This will set out the support that will be provided for the pupil. Where an EHCP also names a school at which the pupil is to be educated, the pupil must be admitted to that school even if it is oversubscribed.
Excepted Pupil	The infant class size legislation allows for the entry of an additional child under certain limited exceptional circumstances over the limit of 30. That child is classed as an "excepted pupil".



Equal Preference System	The Equal Preference System was created to prevent admission authorities (particularly where an individual school is the Admission Authority) giving higher priority to parents who make a particular school their first preference. It means that every school preference you express is treated as if it is a unique application.
Fair Access Protocol	This applies to casual admissions and establishes a mechanism to ensure access to education is secured quickly for unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, and ensures that all schools in an area admit their fair share of children with challenging behaviour. This includes admitting children above the published admission number to schools that are already full.
Foundation Stage 1	Reception Year
Grammar School	A grammar school selects all (or substantially all) of its pupils on the basis of general (i.e. academic) ability.
Indicated Admission Number (IAN)	The number calculated by dividing the net capacity by the number of year groups to be accommodated at the school.
Infant class	A class in which the majority of pupils will reach their fifth, sixth or seventh birthdays during the school year.
Infant class size legislation	The law which says that an infant class must not have more than 30 pupils in a class with one school teacher.
Key Stage 1	Year 1 and 2
Key Stage 2	Years 3 - 6
Key Stage 3	Years 7 - 9
Key Stage 4	Years 10 & 11
Key Stage 5	Years 12 & 13
K Register	Replaced the old system of School Action and School Action plus as a way of identifying the children needing support with Special Educational Needs when the school provides interventions.
LA	Local Authority. The local government body which has responsibility for the provision of education in its area.
Looked After Children (see also previously Looked After Children)	Children who are in the care of Local Authorities as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989. In relation to school admissions legislation, a 'looked after child' is a child in public care at the time of application to a school.
Net Capacity	The net capacity of a school is the number of pupil places available according to the DfE's method of calculating space in schools.

Normal Admission Round	<p>If applying for a place in a Reception Class, transfer to Junior School or Secondary school to start in the coming September, and the application is made by the deadline given, the application is classed as being in the normal admission round application.</p> <p>If the application is made after the deadline to apply, it is classed as a “late application”</p> <p>If the application is to start at any other time of the year, or is for any other year group, it is classed as an in-year application.</p>
Normal Home Address	This is the child’s usual home address and it is used to calculate the distance from home to school where distance is an over-subscription criterion. Evidence of address is always required and admission authorities will investigate applications that they believe may be fraudulent.
Normal / Relevant age of entry	The year in which pupils are or will normally be admitted to the school in question (e.g. Reception Year, Year 3 or Year 7).
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher.
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education. A government body which carries out inspections of schools.
Oversubscribed	A school is “oversubscribed” when more people have applied for places than there are places available.
Oversubscription Criteria	The published criteria that an Admission Authority applies when a school has more applications than places available in order to decide which children will be allocated a place.
Pastoral Care	The care and welfare of a child.
PSHE	Personal, Social & Health Education.
Preference	Parents can express a preference for a particular school but that does not guarantee a place at that particular school.
Previously Looked After Children	Children who were looked after (by the local authority) but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order).
Published Admission Number (PAN)	<p>This is the number of children to be admitted to a school in a given year. The number depends on the amount and type of accommodation available at the school and is worked out using instructions set out by the Department for Education. It is agreed before the admissions process begins and normally the school will not offer more places than this number.</p> <p>Note – the school is not allowed to admit fewer pupils than the PAN if the school is oversubscribed.</p>

Sibling Rule	Some schools give priority for siblings where one or more of the siblings already attend the school. Siblings can include half, step and adopted children who reside at the same address as the older or younger child.
Supplementary Information Form (SIF)	Some schools ask for additional information that is not collected on-line or on the application form, so that they can follow their admission rules, for example faith schools. Always check the school's own website to see if an additional form is required for your application.
SEN	Special Educational Needs. These are needs which a pupil has that require extra support in school.
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.
TA	Teaching Assistant.
Voluntary Aided Schools	These are mainly religious or 'faith' schools, although anyone can apply for a place. The governing body employs the staff and sets the admission criteria. The school's buildings and land are normally owned by a charitable foundation, often a religious organisation. The governing body contributes to building and maintenance costs.
Voluntary Controlled Schools	Voluntary Controlled schools are similar to Voluntary Aided schools, but are run by the Local Authority. As with community schools, the Local Authority employs the school's staff and sets the admission criteria. School land and buildings are normally owned by a charity, often a religious organisation, which also appoints some of the members of the governing body.
Waiting List	A list of children held and maintained by the Admission Authority when the school has allocated all of its places, on which children are ranked in priority order against the school's published oversubscription criteria.
Work places	The unit of measurement used to ensure that the spaces in schools are weighted fairly.