


School admission arrangements, applications and requests

07 February 2025  Joanna Goddard

The admission authority has many legal responsibilities in admission law and under the School Admissions Code 2021, including:

- Determining and publishing the admission arrangements for each school every year, setting out (among other things) the over-subscription criteria and tiebreaker to be used for allocating places, and the procedures to be followed by parents when making applications in the normal admission round and in-year and submitting other requests.
- Consulting with stakeholders on proposed changes to admission arrangements from those for the previous intake, ahead of determination and publication in accordance with the statutory timetable.
- Responding to objections/referrals about determined admission arrangements lodged with the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) by parents, other schools, local authorities or members of the public.
- Submitting requests for consent to vary determined 'admission arrangements' to the OSA in the case of maintained schools, and Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in the case of academies, where there has been a 'major change in circumstances'.
- Dealing with admission applications in the normal admission round (via the local authority's coordinated scheme) and in-year applications (either in-house - the default position - or via the local authority's coordinated scheme, if opted-into) in a fair and consistent manner, in compliance with the Admissions Code and other relevant law.
- Participating in the local authority's Fair Access Protocol for placing specific categories of children who have failed to achieve a place through normal in-year admission processes.
- Dealing with admission related requests made by parents (for example, requests for admission outside normal age group).
- Responding to consultations by the local authority on proposed directions to admit named children, and submitting appeals against directions to the OSA.
- Arranging admission appeals submitted by parents against the refusal of a place to be heard before an independent Admission Appeal Panel.

Our team of specialist lawyers are on hand to provide advice and practical support in respect of any queries you have relating to your school's admission arrangements, supporting you with admission appeals or any of the other matters referred to above.

Ensuring school admission arrangements are compliant

We can review your school's admission arrangements for compliance and/or draft new 'admission arrangements' for you, and support you with effective consultation, determination and variation of 'admission arrangements'.

We can also provide specialist advice on:

- Challenging Fair Access Protocol placement.
- Refusing admission on the grounds of 'challenging behaviour' (under Para. 3.10).
- Refusing admission under the 'twice excluded' rule.
- Responding to consultation by the local authority on a proposal to direct the admission of a named child, and with a subsequent appeal to the OSA against such a direction if necessary.

Further support and training

We offer full admission training for headteachers, senior leaders and governing boards as well as admission appeals training for panel members and clerks.

[Find out more](#) →

Key contact



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