

DIXONS ACADEMIES ADMISSION APPEALS GUIDANCE NOTES FOR PARENTS

1 Appeals must be made in writing

If you wish to appeal against the academy's decision you must fill the appeal form linked on the appeals page of the academy's website. If you are unable to access the internet, the appeals coordinator can provide you with a paper form.

You must fill in a separate form for each academy you want to appeal for.

2 What to put in your appeal

It is important to put **all** your reasons for wanting a place on the form. It is *your* responsibility to provide any supporting documentation, such as letters from a hospital consultant / paediatrician or social services to support those reasons.

If you cannot submit all your documents when you submit the form, you can provide additional documents up to the deadline, which is five school days before the appeal hearing. If you provide additional documents after the deadline or on the day of your appeal, the appeals panel may be unable to consider them, or they may defer your appeal to another date. The panel cannot consider documents submitted after the hearing has taken place.

3 What happens next

Your appeal form will be acknowledged within 7 school days of receipt.

For applications in the normal admissions round, your appeal will be arranged within 40 school days of the deadline for appeal forms. For applications outside the normal admissions round, the appeal will be arranged within 30 school days of the appeal form being received.

The clerk to the appeals panel will send you an invite showing the date, time and format of the hearing at least 14 calendar days or 10 school days, before the hearing to give you time to prepare.

The evidence pack, which will include the academy's statement of case, will be sent to you approximately 5 school days before the hearing.

4 Attending the hearing

You should try to attend the hearing if possible. The panel will get a better idea of your case if they can ask you questions. Alternatively, you may send someone to represent you if you are unable to attend.

You may wish to ask someone to attend the hearing to help you or speak for you. This can be a friend or adviser, such as a Choice Adviser, a locally elected politician, or someone who knows your child such as an educational social worker, SEN advisor, or learning mentor. You **must** notify the clerk if you intend to be represented or accompanied at the hearing.

If you choose not to attend the hearing, the panel will decide the outcome based on:

- a) the written evidence you have provided.
- b) a statement given at the hearing by the presenting officer for the academy, giving the reasons why your child cannot be admitted to the academy.

5 Giving your evidence

The hearing follows a set procedure. You may feel the meeting is very structured, as the Chair will be strict on who can speak and when questions can be asked. The Chair will conduct the meeting and guide you through it. You will always have the opportunity to say everything you wish, ask any questions and sum up your case. All the people at the hearing will treat your appeal in the strictest confidence.

The following people will be present:

- a) The panel of 3 or 4 people which will be made up of people who are either:

- lay persons; people without personal experience in the management of any school (other than as a governor or in a voluntary capacity), or
- people with educational experience, such as teachers or parents.

These people are acting independently of the local authority or board of trustees (admission authority) and have no connection with the academy you are appealing for, or the school that your child has been allocated / is attending. These are the people who will make the decision about your appeal.

- b) The clerk is independent of the academy and is there to advise on the procedure and to take notes of the proceedings.
- c) A representative (known as the presenting officer) for the academy will be present to explain and answer questions about the academy's case.

The presenting officer will present information about the application and refer to the academy's statement of case. You may then ask questions and you may challenge any statement made. You will then be asked to give the reasons for wanting your child to go to the academy and you may be asked questions about these reasons.

It is important to give all of your reasons why you want a place for your child at the academy. The panel cannot consider any reasons or evidence submitted after the hearing has taken place.

6 **The panel's decision**

No decisions are made by the panel until all cases in that round have been heard. The panel meets in private, which means no parents or academy representatives will be present. The clerk will be present purely to assist the panel on matters of evidence or procedure and to record the decision but is not involved in the decision-making process.

In making their decision the panel follows a two-stage process.

(a) **First stage**

The panel must assess whether admitting any additional children would cause prejudice to the academy and whether each child would have been offered a place had the admission arrangements been properly implemented. The panel must then consider two separate issues as follows: -

- (i) If the panel decides that all the children who are the subject of the appeals could be admitted without prejudice to the academy, it must uphold all the appeals.
- (ii) Where the academy can satisfy the panel that there would be prejudice, the panel must move to the second stage of the appeal to decide whether any of the individual appellant cases outweigh the prejudice.

(b) **Second stage**

- (i) If the panel decides that admission of additional children could result in prejudice it must consider for each individual case whether the appellant's grounds for admission to the academy outweigh such prejudice. In other words, is your case stronger than the academy's case.
- (ii) If there are several cases which outweigh the prejudice to the academy and merit admission, but the panel determines that the academy could not cope with that number of successful appeals, the panel must then compare all cases and decide which of them to uphold.

7 **Finding out about the decision**

The clerk will write to you to let you know the results of your appeal in writing within 7 calendar days, or 5 school days, after all the hearings for that round have taken place.