



Stockport

Independent Appeals Panel

**How to appeal for a place at
your preferred school**



For further information and to appeal online or visit our website at
www.stockport.gov.uk/admissionappeals or scan the QR Code*



Stockport

Independent Appeals Panel

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Corporate and Support Services
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Town Hall, Stockport SK1 3XE

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Introduction

If you are not happy with the school offered to your child, you can appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel as described in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. As a first step in the procedure, you can discuss with an officer in the Council's Admissions Team why the school of your choice has not been allocated. If you wish to do this, please telephone 0161 217 6022 to discuss.

How can I appeal?

If your request for a place at a particular school has been turned down, you will be offered an alternative. If, however, you wish to appeal against the decision, you can do so by completing an appeal form online at www.stockport.gov.uk/admissionappeals.

If you would like a PDF copy of the appeal form to return via email or post, please contact us at admission.appeals@stockport.gov.uk.

When will my appeal be heard?

Appeals for September admission in **Reception** or **Year 7** will be heard from May to July. Appeals cannot be heard over the school Summer holidays. In-year appeal hearings are usually arranged within four weeks. Where possible, the Panel will hear all appeals for the same school before coming to any decisions.

If you are appealing before your child is due to start primary or secondary school, it is important that you register your appeal **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** to ensure that a decision is made well before the start of the new school year in September. The Council publishes a deadline each year, details of which can be found in the booklets 'Secondary Education in Stockport' and 'Primary Education in Stockport' produced by the Corporate Director for People or on the Council website. Completed 'appeal forms' should be returned within twenty school days of the refusal letter from the Corporate Director for People.

The date of the hearing will be arranged by the Secretary to the Independent Appeals Panel who will give you at least fourteen calendar days notice via email of the date and time of the appeal which are currently being held remotely via Microsoft Teams.

Preparing for your appeal

The Secretary to the Independent Appeals Panel will send you a statement of reasons for the refusal in advance of the appeal. **This information will be sent to you in a password protected document via email.**

You might like to make a brief note of what you would like to say to the Appeals Panel and also to write down any questions you might wish to ask.

You can mention why the school would be the best for your child, and what special reasons you have for wanting your child to go to your preferred school.

It is important that you tell the Appeals Panel ALL the reasons why you want your child to attend the school of your choice i.e. medical, social, practical and educational arguments. You are strongly recommended to submit any medical evidence (if appropriate) prior to the appeal. If you wish you can bring a friend or representative to the remote meeting to help you present your case.

Who will be at the appeal?

Your appeal will be heard by an Independent Appeals Panel consisting of three volunteers including at least one 'lay person', in an informal atmosphere and will be conducted in such a way as to put you at ease. The meeting is held remotely via Microsoft Teams and all information is treated in confidence. A representative of the Corporate Director for People will attend to explain why a place has not been granted at your preferred school. All appeals are determined on their individual merits.

Do I have to attend the hearing?

You do not have to attend although it is usually easier to explain your case if you are there. If you are unable to attend the appeal on the date or time offered, your appeal can be determined on the basis of the information you have provided in the Admission Appeal Form (together with any additional information you may have submitted).

What will happen at the hearing?

The hearing will be as informal as possible. However, certain procedures have to be followed to make sure that everyone making an appeal is given a fair chance to present their case.

At the hearing

1. You will join the Microsoft Teams meeting via video conferencing with a web-cam or by dialing in on your telephone.
2. Attendees will introduce themselves and the Chair of the hearing will talk through the process that will be followed.
3. An Education Officer representing the Corporate Director for People will present their case, explaining why your child was not given a place at your preferred school.
4. You may ask questions.
5. The Panel members may ask questions.
6. You present your case, explaining why you feel that your child should be given a place.
7. The Education Officer may ask you questions.
8. The Panel members may ask you questions.
9. The Education Officer will sum up.
10. You will have the final word on the matter.
11. Both sides will withdraw while the Panel comes to a decision.

The decision

In most appeals the Panel goes through two stages. The Panel first has to decide whether there was a good reason for refusing your application i.e. whether admission would be prejudicial to efficient education or efficient use of resources. An example might be where the school had very small classrooms and could not fit your child in, without making the space too cramped for good teaching and learning.

If the Panel decides that there was not a good reason for turning down your application the Panel must grant your appeal. However, if it decides there was, it must move on to the second stage.

The Panel has to 'balance' whether the benefits of your child going to the school you prefer outweigh the negative effects on the school and the other children of having one more pupil in the class. If the Panel decides your case is equal or stronger they must grant your appeal.

Infant Class Size appeals

Different rules apply if your application has been refused because the infant class (Reception, Years 1 & 2) your child would go into would exceed 30 pupils per school teacher. Only in very limited circumstances can admission over the limit be permitted. The Panel will consider the following matters:-

- a) whether the admission of an additional child/children would breach the infant class size limit;
- b) 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;
- c) whether the admission arrangements were correctly and impartially applied in the case in question;
- d) whether the decision to refuse was one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

If the Panel agrees that you should have been offered a place, the Corporate Director for People must make a place available for your child at your preferred school.

What happens after the hearing?

It is appreciated that you will be anxious to know the result of your appeal as quickly as possible. You will therefore be informed of the Panel's decision via email as early as possible, which is usually within seven calendar days of your hearing. You will not be able to find out the decision of your appeal by telephone.

What if I lose my appeal?

If you are unsuccessful your child will not be able to attend the school for which you appealed unless a place becomes available. The Services for People Directorate will already have told you which other schools have places available. If you have problems finding an appropriate place, you should contact the Admissions Team Tel: 0161 217 6022.

If you wish to print the appeal form and post it to the Town Hall, please send it to the below address:-

Secretary to the Independent Appeals Panel
Corporate and Support Services
Democratic Services
Town Hall
Stockport
SK1 3XE

* Smartphone users can download a QR reader application onto their phone for free. When they see a QR code they can use the phones camera to scan it and are directed automatically to the related web information. The cost of using a QR code is dependent on your mobile phone contract or pre-paid bundle. For further information on costs please contact your mobile provider.