
School Admissions Appeals Guidance for Parents 2025/6

March 2025

This document explains how you can make an appeal and how the appeals process works in Lewisham.

Please read this document carefully before you complete your form as it contains key information and advice which you will need to help you prepare for your appeal.

Please be aware that statistical information on appeals is published annually and can be found on the Lewisham website, under schools for primary schools, and secondary schools.

Your appeal will be arranged by the Appeals Team within the London Borough of Lewisham Governance Team, which operates independently from Lewisham's School Admissions Service.

Parents often find it frustrating when they realise how very limited the powers of the Independent Review Panel (IRP) are. That is why this guidance explains the role of the IRP, and it is not to discourage you in any way from appealing or attending the appeal hearing, which is your legal right.

Primary School Appeals

When do I have a right of appeal for the school place I want for my child?

You have the right to appeal when the school you have chosen for your child to attend is full and your application for a place has been refused by the admission authority.

Lewisham's Admission Authority in the case of Lewisham Community Schools is the London Borough of Lewisham. Please check the list below before completing an appeal application form because Lewisham's Independent Education Appeals Service **only** accepts appeals for the following schools:

Adamsrill Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Ashmead Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Athelney Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Baring Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Beecroft Garden Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Brindishe Green Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Brindishe Lee Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Brindishe Manor School	Nursery/Reception
Coopers Lane Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Dalmain Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Deptford Green School	Secondary
Deptford Park Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Downderry Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Edmund Waller Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Elfrida Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Eliot Bank Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Fairlawn Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Forest Hill School	Secondary
Forster Park Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Gordonbrock Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Grinling Gibbons Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Haseltine Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Holbeach Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Horniman Primary School	Reception
John Ball Primary School	Nursery/Reception
John Stainer Community Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Kelvin Grove Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Kender Primary School	Nursery/Reception

Kilmorie Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Launcelot Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Lucas Vale Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Marvels Lane Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Myatt Garden Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Perrymount Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Rangefield Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Rathfern Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Rushey Green Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Sandhurst Primary School	Nursery/Reception
Stillness Infant School	Nursery/Reception
Stillness Junior School	Junior
Sydenham School	Secondary
Torridon Infant School	Nursery/Reception
Twin Oaks Primary school	Reception

Please **do not** send appeals to Lewisham's Independent Education Appeals Service if the school you are appealing for is not in the above list, unless you are told by the particular school(s) you applied for that they have a service arrangement with Lewisham's Admissions Appeals Service.

If your child has been refused admission to a voluntary aided school, an academy, or a school in another borough you are entitled to appeal against the governors' decision or against the admission authority within which the school is located (where the school is not a Lewisham School). Details of the appeals arrangements are available from the school / authority concerned.

You can appeal in the following circumstances:

Primary appeals (includes Primary Reception and In-Year admission)

1. You may appeal where your child has been refused a place in the school (s) you named on your original application form during the main allocation process for September 2025 admission.
2. You may also appeal if you have applied for a new school in year (for example if your child has been attending one school and you want them to attend a different school for the coming academic year) and your application has been unsuccessful.

These appeal hearings will take place in the summer term 2025 between May and July. To ensure your appeal, or appeals, for the school (s) named on your Primary School Appeal form are heard during the summer term, we must receive your appeal (s) by **14 May 2025**.

Primary schools' appeals lodged after 14 May 2025 will be heard within 40 school days of the appeal deadline or 30 school days of the appeal being received, whichever is the later date.

You **cannot** appeal for a place at any school not named on your original application form.

Please note:

Appeals for Reception (children aged 5 to 7 entering infant classes). There are grounds on which appeals in this category can be allowed. Such appeals will be subject to Infant Class Size legislation. This special legislation limits the grounds on which appeals can be successful if the addition of your child would mean exceeding the infant class size limit of 30.

In limited circumstances there are some exceptions to the Infant Class Size Initiative. These are prescribed by law.

Secondly, if the Panel decides that the answer to either of the two points below is "yes", then your appeal will be upheld (successful). Otherwise, your appeal will not be upheld (not successful):

- That the child would have been offered a place if the admissions arrangements had been properly implemented. Here, the Panel must be satisfied not only that admission arrangements were not applied correctly but also, if they had been, your child would have been offered a place.
- That the decision to refuse admission was one which a reasonable admission authority would make in the circumstances of the case. Here, the Panel must be satisfied that the decision to refuse to admit your child was "perverse in the light of the admission arrangements", that is, it was "beyond the range of responses open to a reasonable decision maker" or "a decision which is so outrageous in its defiance of logic or of accepted moral standards that no sensible person who had applied his mind to the question could have arrived at it."

The table below provides statistical information relating to the number of Primary/Reception Class appeals (including in-year) administered by the Governance Team in 2024 up to January 2025:

Appeal type	Number heard	Number upheld
Primary	19	0

Secondary Transfer Appeals 2025-2026

Please note:

Appeals for all other children, including transfer to secondary schools. There are two stage process for deciding these appeals:

Stage 1 – Factual Stage

The Panel must consider if the school's published admission criteria were applied correctly in your case, or if the admission of an extra child would 'prejudice' the provision of education at the school.

If the Panel decides that the admission arrangements were applied incorrectly and that your child would have been offered a place, had they been applied, they will uphold your appeal. Also, if the Panel decides that the admission of an extra child **would not** prejudice the provision of education at the school, it will uphold your appeal. If the Panel cannot find in the other stage, it will go to stage 2.

Stage 2 – Balancing Stage

The Panel will consider your reason(s) for wanting your child to attend the school(s). They will decide whether your reason(s) for appealing for a place at your preferred school(s) outweighs the Admission Authority's reason(s) for refusing your child a place.

- You may appeal where your child has been refused a place in the school (s) you named on your original application form for transfer to secondary (Year 7) admissions round during the main allocation process for September 2025 admission.
- You may also appeal if you have applied for a new school in year (for example if your child has been attending one school and you want them to attend a different school) and your application has been unsuccessful.

These hearings will take place during the summer term 2025, between May and July. To ensure that your appeal, or appeals, for the school (s) named on your Secondary Application form are heard during the summer term, we must receive your appeal (s) by **the 14 May 2025**.

Secondary schools' appeals lodged after 14 May 2025 will be heard within 40 school days of the appeal deadline or 30 school days of the appeal being received, whichever is the later date. You cannot appeal for a place at any school not named on your original application form.

The table below provides statistical information relating to the number of Secondary School appeals (including in-year) administered by the Governance Team in 2024 up to January 2025:

Appeal type	Number heard	Number upheld
Secondary	8	1

Frequently asked questions

1. Is there anything I should do before deciding to appeal?

If you feel that the admission arrangements were not correctly and impartially applied, (for instance that the Admissions Authority did not deal with your application in accordance with the admissions policy set out **on the Lewisham website, under schools** 'applying to start primary school 2025-26), or that the decision did not comply with admissions law (for instance it did not comply with the Government's School Admissions Code), you are strongly advised to discuss this with the Admissions Authority for the school before deciding whether to appeal.

If it is a Lewisham community school (as listed in this guidance), contact the School Admissions Team at: schooladmissions@lewisham.gov.uk or on tel: 020 8314 8282. If it is found that a mistake has been made, and that your child should have been offered a place, it may be possible for Lewisham's School Admissions Team to put the mistake right without the need for you to make an appeal.

2. Are there circumstances where I do not have the right to appeal?

The London Borough of Lewisham does not allow parents who have appealed unsuccessfully to re-apply and subsequently appeal again for a place at the same school in the same academic year unless there are significant and material changes in your circumstances. Documentary proof of such changes will be required. This is outlined in the national [School Admissions Appeals Code](#).

You will also lose your right to appeal for the school if your child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools. In this case you are unable to appeal for two years after the most recent exclusion.

3. How likely is my appeal to be successful?

Appeals only arise when schools are oversubscribed in a particular age group and as such it is difficult for an appeal to be upheld especially for an infant class size appeal.

Infant class size appeals

It is highly unlikely that appeals for infant classes of 5-, 6- and 7-year-olds will be successful due to special legislation that restricts classes to a maximum of 30 pupils with a single teacher. Where the admission authority has refused admission on the grounds that to admit the child would breach the infant class size limit, the circumstances in which an Appeal Panel can uphold an appeal are **severely limited**. In these circumstances the Appeal Panel can only uphold an appeal where:

- it finds that the admission of an additional child would not breach the infant class size limit; or
- it finds that the authority's admission arrangements did not comply with the mandatory requirements of the School Admissions Code, and part 3 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998;
- it finds that the admission arrangements were not correctly and impartially applied in the case in question;
- it finds that to refuse admission was one which a reasonable admission authority would not have made in the circumstances of the case.

In considering whether the admission arrangements had been correctly and impartially applied, or whether the decision to refuse admission was a reasonable one, the Appeal Panel will only be able to look at information that was available to the Admissions Authority when the decision was taken. This is because, if the Authority was not aware of information when the decision was made, it could not have taken that information into account.

New information can only be introduced if it shows that a mistake was made (for instance if the Admissions Authority says that it did not receive your application on time, and you have evidence that the application form was received before the closing date). In addition, it is not enough to show that a mistake was made. It has to be shown that, if that mistake had not been made, your child would have been offered a place.

In considering whether the decision was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case, the Appeal Panel will need to be satisfied that the decision was 'perverse in the light of the admission arrangements' i.e. it was 'beyond the range of responses open to a reasonable decision maker' or 'a decision which is so outrageous in its defiance of logic or of accepted moral standards that no sensible person who had applied his mind to the question could have arrived at it' ([School Admission Appeals Code](#) section 4.10).

Given the limited nature of the possible grounds on which an appeal may be upheld, Infant Class Size Appeals are rarely successful and your personal reasons for wanting the school, however strong, cannot be taken into account unless any of the above circumstances apply. Notwithstanding that, in limited circumstances, there are some exceptions to the Infant Class Size Initiative. These are prescribed by law. The excepted children are:

- Children admitted outside the normal admissions round with statements of special educational needs specifying a school.

- Looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round.
- Children admitted, after initial allocation of places, because of a procedural error made by the admission authority or local authority in the original application process.
- Children admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds an appeal.
- Children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance.
- Children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round.
- Children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil.
- Children with special educational needs who are normally taught in a special educational needs unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school, who attend some infant classes within the mainstream school.

4. How do I make an appeal?

For the main secondary transfer and reception admission rounds, parents wishing to appeal can do so by filling in the online form at: www.lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/education/schools/school-admission/applying-to-start-secondary-school/Pages/Secondary-school-admission-appeals.aspx#appeal. For those who cannot apply online a hard copy of the form, can be sent to you, please contact the Governance Support Team at the London Borough of Lewisham on 020 8314 8577. Once you have completed the form it should be emailed to schooladmissionappeals@lewisham.gov.uk by **31 March 2025** for **Secondary Schools Appeals** and by **14 May 2025** for **Primary Schools Appeals**. Alternatively, it can be returned to the Independent Appeals Clerk, care of: Jasmine Kassim, Governance, 2nd Floor Civic Suite, Lewisham Town Hall, 1 Catford Road, SE6 4RU by the closing dates.

5. School Admission Appeals Timetable

Date	Event
03/03/2025	Secondary Transfer (September 2025 entry to Year 7) offers made
31/03/2025	Deadline for lodging a secondary transfer appeal
16/04/2025	Primary intake (September 2025 entry to reception class) offers made
14/05/2025	Deadline for lodging a primary intake appeal
May/June/July 2025	Appeal hearings for both secondary transfer and primary intake

6. What if I miss the deadline for returning my appeal form?

If you miss the deadline your appeal will still be heard. However, we endeavour to hear all appeals lodged before the deadline by the end of the summer term before your child begins or returns to school. If you do not submit your appeal before the deadline, we will not be able to conduct your appeal until September when your child has already begun or returned to school. Submissions will continue to be accepted as in-year appeal hearings will also take place in November 2004, and January 2005 within the following guidelines:

- **Primary schools' appeals lodged after 14 May 2005 will be heard within 40 school days of the appeal deadline or 30 school days of the appeal being received, whichever is the later date.**
- **Secondary schools' appeals lodged after 31 March 2005 will be heard within 40 school days of the appeal deadline or 30 school days of the appeal being received, whichever is the later date.**

7. What if my child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN)?

If your child has a statement of special educational needs or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), your child's school placement will be dealt with under a separate process.

Your child's current statement or EHCP will be amended by the Special Educational Needs Team who will consult the school(s) of your preference and will issue a revised statement or EHCP once a school place has been identified.

If you are not satisfied with the revised statement or EHCP including the school place named, you will be advised of your right to appeal to the SEN Tribunal. To discuss school admissions for your child, please contact the Special Educational Needs Team at: SEN@lewisham.gov.uk or on tel 020 3049 1502. You can also email and request to contact the Special Educational Needs Team via the school appeals email: schooladmissionappeals@lewisham.gov.uk

8. What if my child has a disability and I feel there has been discrimination in the refusal to offer a place?

If you believe your child has been refused a school place because of his or her disability, you have a right of appeal as this is unlawful under disability legislation.

Schools and admission authorities must not discriminate against a disabled child in the arrangements they make for determining admission to school.

The Appeal Panel will consider the Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance in their Code of Practice for Schools. They must, along with their usual deliberations, consider whether the pupil has been refused admission for a reason that relates to their disability.

9. When and where do appeal hearings take place?

At least ten school days before the hearing the independent appeals clerk will write to you inviting you to the appeal hearing. The email/letter will inform you of the time, date, and location of your appeal hearing.

You will receive the case statement relating to your appeal at least five school days before the hearing **via Egress email link**. Hardcopies are usually sent via Recorded Delivery Postal Service.

Appeal hearings are via Microsoft Teams Technology, and you can download the app for free:

- Free download link : <https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/free>

To take part in the meeting, you will need access to a computer, or a mobile device, such as tablet or mobile phone with a camera, speakers, and a valid email address.

The Clerk will send you a link to a free download of Microsoft Teams if you already do not have it on your device. Upon request, the Clerk will also arrange a test session via Microsoft Teams at least two days before your scheduled appointment.

The remote meetings should remain confidential, and only attended by those invited. You should turn off all recording devices while the appeal proceedings are taking place. You should not record the confidential hearing.

10. What if I do not have the required device to download Microsoft Team?

Alternative appeal arrangements

Please state in your appeal submission if you do not have access to a computer or a mobile device, or reasons why you do not feel able to take part in a video conference. The Clerk will then discuss and arrange an alternative option(s) with you.

11. Who makes the arrangements for my appeal (s)?

If you are appealing for a place at a Lewisham Community school, where the London Borough of Lewisham is the admissions authority, we will make all the arrangements for your appeal.

Where the school is not a Lewisham School, the governors are the admission authority and therefore responsible for the appeal arrangements. A list of Lewisham Community Schools, both Primary and Secondary are listed above, and can also be found on the Lewisham website. Please do not send your appeal to schooladmissionappeals@lewisham.gov.uk if the school you are appealing for is not listed in the above list on pages 2 and 3 of the guidance note.

12. Who will consider my appeal?

The letter inviting you to attend the appeal hearing will advise you that you may be accompanied by a friend or representative. The admission authority will send you a statement or written summary of the reasons for refusing your child a place. The statement will also include details of the school you have been offered under Lewisham's Council's admission co-ordinated scheme.

As the notice is sent at least ten days before the hearing date, please note that if you choose not to attend the appeal, and you have not informed the clerk to cancel the panel in time, the hearing will go ahead in your absence based on written submissions sent in by yourself and the Admission Authority.

The appeal panel will consist of either three or five members who are independent of the London Borough of Lewisham and are not employees. Panel members may include people who are school governors and people with knowledge of the education provision in the area. These are the people who will decide whether to uphold your appeal or not.

13. Can I attend the hearing?

Yes, you will be invited to go to the hearing and present your case in person. **Most parents take up this opportunity.** Please let the Clerk know of within at least 7 school days before the hearing if you are unable to attend the appointment made for you.

If you do not wish to attend the hearing, your appeal will be considered on the written evidence you provided with your appeal form, and the Admission Authority's written statement. This also applies if you do not arrive for your hearing, having previously indicated your wish to attend and having not contacted the Appeals Clerk.

Please inform us if you change your mind about attending or decide to withdraw your appeal within seven school days, so that we can inform the panel and prevent any unnecessary delays to other participants.

14. Can I bring anyone with me to help me present my case?

You may bring with you a friend, family members or representatives who may speak on your behalf. Bearing in mind the importance of maintaining a reasonably informal atmosphere, it should not normally be appropriate for you to bring a solicitor or lawyer. However, if you do wish to bring a friend or adviser please tell us when you return your appeal form. **If you intend to have a legal representative to put your case, you must inform us in advance as the Council may also want to ensure it has legal officers in place.** You also have the right to nominate a representative to attend the appeal in your place.

It is not permissible for a representative of the school (s) you are appealing for to accompany you to the hearing or provide letters of support.

15. What if I have a special need or disability?

Please let us know on the appeal form if you have any disabilities or special requirements and need assistance. We will try to meet your needs wherever possible.

16. What happens if English is not my first language and I need an interpreter?

You may have an interpreter at your appeal hearing. If you would like us to arrange this for you, please tell us which language you require on the appeal form. Alternatively, if you would prefer, you may arrange your own interpreter. If you are doing this, please let us know when lodging your appeal or as soon as possible before the hearing. You may ask a friend or adviser to speak on your behalf in addition to an interpreter.

17. Can I bring my child?

Unless your child is appealing with you, or on their own behalf, for entry to the 6th form it is for you to decide whether the child for whom you are appealing should attend the hearing. However, it is for the Appeal Panel to decide whether it is appropriate for a child to remain after giving evidence. If you have younger children, we ask that you make alternative childcare arrangements in advance of your appeal.

18. What do I need to do and who can help me?

You are responsible for presenting your case, for deciding what you would like to say at the hearing and what written information you want the Appeal Panel to have. The appeal form will be an important part of your case and you need to fill it in as fully and carefully as possible attaching any supporting information to it. The Appeal Panel will be sent a copy before the hearing.

You may also wish to contact the ACE Education Advice which gives independent advice to parents. They have an advice line on 0300 0115 142 Monday–Wednesday 10am to 1pm (term time only). Their website address is www.ace-ed.org.uk. You can also write to them at: Email: enquiries@ace-ed.org.uk

Or via post:

ACE Education Advice & ACE Education Training
36 Nicholay Road
London N19 3EZ

You can also access adviser via Citizen Advice through their national phone service:

Adviceline (England): [0800 144 8848](tel:08001448848)

Adviceline's available 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. It's usually busiest at the beginning and end of the day. It's not available on public holidays. If you call from a mobile, we'll ask you to enter a local landline number on your keypad. This can be any number - we only use it to send your call to a local adviser if one's available.

There are a few parts of England they don't cover yet. If you're in one of these areas, we'll give you other options when you call.

They will answer as soon as they can - at busy times you might need to wait up to an hour. If the wait is long, they will tell you about other ways to get advice. You can also try calling again later.

Calls to Adviceline are free from mobiles and landlines. You can [see more about their call charges](#).

19. What if I want to send additional evidence to support my appeal application.

If you wish to submit further supporting evidence after submitting your appeal form, we ask you to do this **at least seven school days** in advance of your hearing.

A short document, such as a doctor's letter not previously available will be accepted up to **three working days** prior to your hearing. However, information received after these deadlines will not be circulated and may not be accepted by the panel.

An appeal panel **must** decide whether any material not submitted by the specified deadlines is to be considered, taking into account its significance and the effect of a possible need to adjourn the hearing.

To submit further evidence or additional information, please email us at: schooladmissionappeals@lewisham.gov.uk.

Please note: You cannot submit any evidence after a decision has been made on your appeal case.

20. What if my appeal is based on medical and/or social reason(s)?

If your case is based on medical or social reason(s), supporting documents should have been submitted to the Admission Team at the time you applied for a school place for your child.

Please note that such paperwork would not normally form part of your appeal, as these should have been dealt with by the medical social panel. However, an appeal panel **must** decide whether any material not submitted by the specified deadlines is to be considered, taking into account its significance and the effect of a possible need to adjourn the hearing.

21. What if I have additional documentation to support my appeal on medical and/or social reason(s)?

Because the medical and/or social documentation you submitted at the time of your application for a school place would have been considered, the outcome decision letter considered by the medical and/or social panel should confirm whether either or both criteria was applied when considering your application for your preferred Lewisham community school. The decision letter should have informed you that you cannot appeal against the decision reached by the medical and/or social panel.

Please note that for the Independent Appeal Panel to consider any additional information in this regard, it is vital that the documentation is supported by an appropriate professional (e.g., general practitioners, education psychologists, health care professionals or similar professions). **The documentation must clearly show why your preferred school is the only school able to meet your child's needs.**

You should also note that if your medical or social application is successful, your child will be prioritised accordingly on the waiting list based on the Published Admission Number (PAN) for that particular year group might already been met.

Furthermore, the Independent Appeal Panel cannot overturn a decision reached by the medical social panel but may consider additional information received and oral representations made by you to decide whether you or the school has the stronger case.

22. What if the Published Admissions Number (PAN) for the Year Group is filled for the particular year group you are appealing for?

If such a situation arises, there is a possibility that your appeal can be upheld in particular instances:

- For primary school appeals, in addition to the legal requirements, exemptions and infant class size legislation, the

Panel will need to be satisfied that the decision to refuse to admit your child was 'perverse in the light of Lewisham's admission arrangements - i.e., it was:

- a) 'beyond the range of responses open to a reasonable decision maker' or
 - b) 'a decision which is so outrageous in its defiance of logic or of accepted moral standards that no sensible person who had applied his mind to the question could have arrived at it'.
- For secondary school appeals, in addition to the legal requirements, and exemptions, the Panel must not reassess the capacity of the school, but must consider the impact on the school of admitting additional children, and would consider the following:
 - 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 Protocol¹⁵;
 - d) the impact on the organisation and size of classes, the availability of teaching staff, and the effect on children already at the school.

23. What if I have moved house after I applied for a school place?

If your case is based on a house move you should provide written evidence, such as proof of the completion of purchase or a tenancy agreement. Lewisham's Admission Team may seek independent evidence from you regarding your address, prior to your hearing, which confirms or supports what you say. **We advise you not to appeal until you have exchanged mortgage or tenancy contracts.**

24. What If I have complaints about the allocated school place offered to my child?

We advise you to provide evidence, including any letters of complaint and other correspondence, if part of your case for seeking a new school for your child is your dissatisfaction with the current school, such as you believed your child would be bullied or discriminated against.

Please note that a member of Lewisham's Admission Team may check with the school concerned so action can be followed up with the school if necessary. Lewisham's Admission Authority may also submit written evidence from your child's current school.

25. What if I have religious or philosophical reasons about the allocated school place offered to my child?

If you have religious or philosophical reasons for wanting your preferred school, we ask you to provide supporting evidence to help the Appeal Panel have a full and proper understanding of your case.

26. Will I know in advance what the admission authority's case is?

The answer is "Yes". A copy of the Lewisham authority's statement will be sent to you at least five school days, and usually also sent via Recorded Delivery Postal Service to you **within reasonable time** before the appeal, unless you have agreed to a shorter period than this. The statement will summarise why it has not been possible to offer a place at your preferred school(s) for your child.

27. Can I withdraw my appeal?

You can withdraw your appeal at any time before the hearing date by telephone or in writing to the Appeals Team via the following contacts:

- 5 days before the hearing: send post c/o Jasmine Kassim, Governance, 2nd Floor Civic Suite, Lewisham Town Hall, 1 Catford Road, SE6 4RU.
- 3 days for the hearing: email us at: schooladmissionappeals@lewisham.gov.uk.
- In an emergency on the day of the appeal hearing telephone the Appeals Clerk on 0208 314 8577 and also send an email to the Governance Team at committee@lewisham.gov.uk

28. Can I re-submit a new appeal application for the same year group if I am not satisfied with the decision by the Panel?

You can only appeal once for a place in the same school in the same academic year.

However, if an admission authority accepts a second application from you because there has been a significant change in circumstances but again decides not to offer your child a place, you can appeal this second decision.

If you have been offered a school place but it's not in the year group you would like, **you would not have the right to appeal this decision**. However, you may make a complaint about this decision through the admission authority's formal complaints procedure.

You need to be aware that if you withdraw your appeal application after you have been given a date and time for the hearing, you will not be able to reinstate that application for the remainder of the school year you were appealing for.

29. What reason(s) should I give to support my case for submitting an admission appeal application?

It is important that you focus your appeal submission on criteria listed in Lewisham's Published Admissions Scheme. This must be consistent with statements in your admission application for a school place. Notwithstanding that, there is no limit to the reasons you can give as to why you wish to appeal but following would be unlikely to lead to a successful outcome:

- Family members (other than siblings) currently enrolled at the preferred school.
- Your child's siblings or family members were ex-pupils at a school.
- Your child has difficulties/disabilities, without sufficient professional documentation to clearly show why your preferred school is the only school able to meet such needs.
- Your personal work commitments.
- Your family members'/partner's address or work commitments
- Your childcare arrangements.
- Travel arrangements - Lewisham Council has its own home to school transport policy but the statutory walking distance is the distance between home and school that the Government thinks a child should be able to walk: two miles for children under eight years of age. three miles for pupils aged 8–16 years.
- Closest school to your home.
- The status of a school's Ofsted rating.
- the child was a former pupil of a school's nursery.

30. What happens at the appeal hearing?

The appeal is private, and all papers and discussions are treated as confidential.

If you are appealing for a Lewisham community school, the Clerk will give you access into the remote meeting via Microsoft Team, and the Chair will introduce all those present.

The Panel will include someone with experience in education and a lay member. The Chair may be drawn from either of these categories.

The Panel is completely independent of Lewisham – the members will have no connection with yourself, the school, or Lewisham's Admission Authority, and why in Lewisham's view, your appeal should not be upheld.

The Clerk will also attend the hearing. The Clerk's role is to explain the appeals procedure to all parties and to ensure that the relevant facts provided by yourself, and the Authority are recorded, along with the Panel's decisions and reasons. The Clerk is also there to provide advice on law and procedure.

This process may sound formal, but it is followed to ensure that appeals are heard efficiently i.e., they are transparent and fair. The Panel will ensure that you feel comfortable and can say everything which is relevant to your appeal.

- The presenting officer will also attend the hearing, representing the case for the Admission Authority. For Lewisham community school appeals, this will usually be a senior Admissions Officer but could be another member of the school admissions team. At the beginning of the hearing, the presenting officer will explain how your application has been dealt with by the Authority.
- The Panel will then ask the presenting officer any questions, and you can ask questions too.
- After this, you will be able to put your case to the Panel, in any way you wish. The Chair of the Panel will make sure you are given the opportunity to say everything that you want to say, in your own time. The Panel and the presenting officer may ask you questions about your case if they are unsure about anything you have said.
- You and the presenting officer will then both be given the opportunity to sum up, and the hearing will come to an end. You, and the presenting officer will leave the virtual room. The Clerk will remain with the Panel. The Panel will decide whether to uphold your appeal or to refuse it. The decision will be recorded by the Clerk and sent to you within 5 school days.

31. How long will my appeal hearing be?

Hearings generally last for approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour but may take longer, depending on the circumstances of each case.

32. What must the appeal panel consider in coming to its decision about my appeal?

It is very important to understand that if you are appealing for an infant class, the law says that the Appeal Panel may only uphold an appeal if:

(a) it finds that the admission of an additional child would not breach the infant class size limit; or

(b) it finds that the admission arrangements did not comply with admissions law or were not correctly and impartially applied, and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied or had been correctly and impartially applied; or

(c) the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

In considering whether the admission arrangements had been correctly and impartially applied, or whether the decision to refuse admission was a reasonable one, the Appeal Panel will only be able to look at information that was available to the Admissions Authority when the decision was taken. This is because, if the Authority was not aware of information when the decision was made, it could not have taken that information into account.

New information can only be introduced if it shows that a mistake was made (for instance if the Admissions Authority says that it did not receive your application on time, and you have evidence that the application form was received before the closing date).

It is not enough to show that a mistake was made. It has to be shown that, if that mistake had not been made, your child would have been offered a place.

In considering whether the decision was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case, the Appeal Panel will need to be satisfied that the decision was 'perverse in the light of the admission arrangements' i.e. it was 'beyond the range of responses open to a reasonable decision maker' or 'a decision which is so outrageous in its defiance of logic or of accepted moral standards that no sensible person who had applied his mind to the question could have arrived at it' ([School Admission Appeals Code](#) section 4.10).

For appeals which are not subject to infant class size legislation, once the hearing has been completed, the Chair will inform you that the panel will consider, in private, the case you have made and explain how they will reach their decision. If there are several appeals for one school, the decisions will be made after all the appeals for that school have been heard. The Admission Authority's representative presenting officer does not take any part in these decisions.

When considering appeals the panel must consider:

- (a) the wishes of the parents; and
- (b) the arrangements for admissions published by the Admission Authority.

The Admission Authority representative must demonstrate that the decision was made in accordance with the published arrangements and that exceeding the agreed admissions number will affect the quality of the education offered to all children in the year/tutor group. If the Panel is not satisfied that the Admission Authority representative has successfully demonstrated its case, your appeal will be allowed without further consideration. If they feel you have outstanding reasons for wanting your child to attend the school, they will allow your appeal.

The panel's decision is binding on the parent, presenting officer and the school.

33. How will I find out the outcome of my appeal?

The Clerk will send you the decision in writing at least within five school days of your appeal hearing.

34. What if I am not happy with the way the appeals process was conducted?

If you feel dissatisfied with the way in which the Admission Authority has operated its admission arrangements or with the way in which the appeal was conducted, you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman, www.lgo.org.uk Telephone 0300 061 0614

35. Can I appeal again if my appeal is rejected?

Parents who have appealed unsuccessfully are not allowed to re-apply and subsequently appeal again for a place at the same school in the same academic year unless there are significant and material changes in your circumstances. Documentary proof of such changes will be required. This is outlined in the national [School Admission Appeals Code](#).

Please note that all information received for appeals will be shared with members of the Panel hearing your case, and other participants listed in your invitation letter, which usually include the Clerk, and representatives from schools and Lewisham Council Admission Authority.