Ombwdsmon
Ombudsman
Cymru • Wales

School Appeals

Introduction

This is a Fact sheet about School Admissions and Appeals complaints. It should be read together with our 'How to Complain' webpage, available on the 'Making A Complaint' tab.

Complaints about school admissions should be brought to the attention of the relevant Local Education Authority (LEA) first, but complaints about admission appeals can be brought straight to us.

What we can do

We can:

- Look at complaints about school admissions procedures in Wales and the admissions appeals process;
- Look at complaints from parents who consider an LEA has implemented its school admissions procedure unfairly;
- Look at complaints from parents who consider an Admissions Appeal Panel has acted improperly.

If you wish to complain to us, please do so as soon as possible.

What we cannot do

We cannot:

- Compel an LEA to offer your child a place at a school;
- Overturn the decision of an Admissions Appeal Panel – however, if we believe the Panel hearing was improper or unfair, we may recommend that the appeal should be heard by a new Panel;
- Look into admissions or appeals involving Independent schools.

Issues to bear in mind

- A child does not have an absolute right to a place at their parents' preferred school;
- LEAs must use their 'over-subscription criteria' to prioritise applications when there are more applications than places available at a school. Generally speaking, there can be no more than 30 children in an infants' class;
- Appeal panels are independent of the LEA and hear the cases of both the LEA and the parents;
- Appeal panels have to decide whether the parents' reasons for preferring the particular school outweigh the prejudice caused to the school if it admitted their child.

Further information

LEAs and Admission Appeal Panels must have regard to the Statutory Codes on School Admissions and Appeals. Copies may be downloaded from the Welsh Government
website

https://gov.wales/school-admissions-code

https://gov.wales/school-admission-appeals-code

We are independent and impartial; we cannot order public bodies to do what we recommend – but, in practice, they almost always do. Examples of cases that we have looked at can be found on our website, on the 'Publications' tab under 'Our Findings'.

Contact us

If you are unsure whether we would be able to look into your complaint, please contact us on 0300 790 0203 or ask@ombudsman.wales

Also available in Welsh.

Easy Read

School Admissions and Appeals 