

School Admissions and Appeals Factsheet



This is a Factsheet about School Admissions and Appeals complaints. It should be read together with our general information leaflet about our service.

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 the Ombudsman.

What the Ombudsman can do

He 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 are dissatisfied with the way your LEA has implemented its school admissions procedure in relation to your child, or with the conduct of an Admissions Appeal Panel, you can complain to the Ombudsman, but please do so as soon as possible.

What the Ombudsman cannot do

He cannot:

- compel an LEA to offer your child a place at a school;
- overturn the decision of an Admissions Appeal Panel. However, if he believes the Panel hearing was improper or unfair, he 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

Before making a complaint to the Ombudsman, you should consider whether the LEA has acted properly:

- LEAs should publish their admissions policies, including the criteria they use when allocating school places;

- LEAs should honour parents' preferences when allocating school places to children. However, this is not always possible, e.g. if the parents' preferred school is oversubscribed;
- When more applications are received for places at a school than are available, LEAs must use their published 'oversubscription criteria' to prioritise applications. However, it is rare for more than 30 children to be allowed places in an Infants class.

Before making a complaint to the Ombudsman, you should consider if an Appeal Panel has acted properly:

- LEAs should advise parents how to appeal to an Appeal Panel if their child is refused a place at the school of their choice;
- Appeal Panels are independent and hear the cases of both the LEA and the parents;
- Appeal Panels decide whether the parents' reasons for wanting their child to be admitted to a school should outweigh any disadvantage 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

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/schooladmission/?lang=en>

The Ombudsman is independent and impartial; he cannot order public bodies to do what he recommends – but, in practice, they almost always do.

Examples of cases that the Ombudsman has looked at can be found on our website.

Please see www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk

If you are unsure whether the Ombudsman would be able to look into your complaint, please contact us:

- **phone** 0300 790 0203;
- **e-mail** ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk;
- **visit the website at** www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk;
- **follow us on Twitter:** @OmbudsmanWales;
- **write to:** The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
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