

Admission Appeals Guidance for Parents

1. Introduction

We understand that going through the appeal process can be a worrying and anxious time for you and we hope that the information contained in this guide will simplify the process for you.

2. Completing the Appeal Form

If you are appealing for a place at more than one school, you must complete separate forms (available from the school website). Please take the following information into account when you fill in the form:

- Please complete the form clearly and ensure that you provide all the information requested. If you don't this may result in a delay in processing your application.
- Your "reasons for appeal" are very important as this helps the Panel understand your child's case. This section must be completed. If not, the form will be returned to you. Please explain, as fully as you can, why you want your child to attend the school that you have been refused. If you think your application for a place at the school has not been treated correctly or in accordance with the admissions criteria, then you should explain why.
- If there are medical issues involved, it is important that these are supported by written evidence, i.e. doctor's letter.
- If your case is based on a house move, you should provide written evidence to confirm this. For example, a letter from your solicitor or a copy of your tenancy agreement.
- You may also include other relevant letters, correspondence or documents to support your case.
- You don't need to wait until you have all supporting evidence before you send your form to us as this may delay the processing of your appeal. Supporting evidence can be sent in later.
- If, for any reason, you cannot attend the appeal hearing the Panel will make a decision based upon what you have sent in.
- Please make sure you sign and date your form. Please then send to the Magna Learning Partnership Company Secretary, Carina Sawyer (compsec@magnalearningpartnership.org.uk).

3. What Happens Next?

- When your completed form is received by Magna Learning Partnership, it is date stamped and an acknowledgement email is sent to you.
- If there is more than one appeal for the school in question, all appeals will be heard at the same appeal hearing if possible.
- Once a date is agreed an independent appeals panel will be organised, together with a clerk and a suitable venue.
- You will receive a letter/email at least ten school days before the hearing advising of the date, time and venue of your appeal hearing. Given the number of appeals received and other factors it may not always be possible to take into consideration any dates which you have indicated as inconvenient. The letter/email will give you a deadline by which additional supporting evidence can be accepted. The deadline is necessary because paperwork has to be sent to all parties within a statutory timeframe. If you cannot submit your additional supporting evidence by this deadline, you may bring it with you to the appeal hearing (please bring six copies). However, please bear in mind it is up to the panel to decide whether any material not submitted by the specified deadline

is considered. They will take into account its significance and the affect any possible adjournment may have on the hearing.

- You will receive another letter/email approximately seven working days before the hearing date. The letter will include all the paperwork necessary for the hearing to take place. It will include a list of the panel members, clerk and presenting officer; the refusal letter; Magna Learning Partnership's case and your appeal form along with any additional supporting evidence you have provided. This paperwork is also sent to the school, panel members and clerk.
- If you have indicated on your form that you will be attending the appeal hearing and you subsequently find that you are unable to, please let us know. If you fail to attend when you have indicated you will and we have not heard from you, the panel will consider your written case in your absence.
- If you have indicated on your form you will not be attending the appeal hearing and you subsequently find that you can, please let us know so we hear your appeal at the scheduled time.
- If you have agreed to waive your rights to ten school days' notice of your appeal hearing date, it may be possible to hear your appeal earlier. This is because timetables are constantly being amended due to appeals being withdrawn or settled and it may be possible to add other cases to a timetable.

4. Prior to the Appeal Hearing

- Please read the appeal document pack so that you are aware of the contents of the documents that will be referred to during the appeal.

5. The Appeal Hearing

- The hearing will be conducted in private. Those present at the hearing will be:
 - The three independent appeal panel members, these are trained volunteers and are independent of Magna Learning Partnership and its schools.
 - A representative of Magna Learning Partnership, usually the headteacher or deputy headteacher from the school in question.
 - The clerk, whose role it is to provide procedural and legal advice to the panel and to make a record of the proceedings. The clerk does not take part in the decision-making process.
 - The appellant(s) (accompanied by someone if agreed).
- Please arrive at the venue promptly (preferably 5-10 minutes early) and report to the reception area.
- There may be other parents there appealing for the same school or other schools.
- The clerk will meet you and explain what will happen during the appeal hearing. The clerk will also answer any questions about the procedure you may have. If you have any additional supporting evidence that you wish the panel to consider, please hand your six copies to the clerk at this time.
- All parents appealing for the school in question and Magna Learning Partnership's representative(s) will be invited into the appeal room. The chair of the panel will introduce the panel members and explain what will happen during the meeting.

Appeals excluding Infant Class Size

- The appeal hearing will begin with stage one. If there is more than one appeal for the school in question, all parents will attend this part of the appeal hearing. Magna Learning Partnership's representative is invited to explain to the panel why they have had to refuse a place at the school. The panel will check whether a mistake was made in applying the admission arrangements and if the school could take extra pupils without any adverse impact on the standard of educational provision. The panel members will also consider whether the admission arrangements are lawful. They then have the opportunity to question the Magna Learning Partnership's representative and will invite you (and any other parents) to do the same. If you have any questions about the school's case this is the time to ask them. Any questions about your personal case must wait until stage two.
- When stage one is finished, you (and any other parents) and Magna Learning Partnership's representative will be asked to leave the room.
- The clerk and the panel have to decide whether or not the school has made its case.
- Once a decision has been made, the clerk will ask you (and any other parents) and Magna Learning Partnership's representative to return to the appeal room and the decision will be announced.

*If the decision at stage one is that the school has not made its case, it **may** be that you are offered a place at this point.*

If the decision at stage one is that the school has made its case, the appeal hearing goes to stage two.

- Stage two is your own personal and private meeting with the panel. No other parents will be at this meeting. You will be asked to put your own case forward in whichever way you find easiest. You may wish to just highlight the important points of your written case; you may wish to read out your written case or you may wish somebody else to read out your written case.
- The panel will ask you questions about your case and Magna Learning Partnership's representative may wish to ask you questions.
- The chair will make sure you have covered all points that you wanted to make and will ask if you feel you have had the opportunity to fully put your case to the panel.
- At the end of stage two you and Magna Learning Partnership's representative will be asked to leave the room. This is also the end of your participation in the appeal hearing and you are now free to leave.

If there are other parents appealing for the school in question, they will have their stage two hearing

- When all parents have completed stage two, the clerk returns to the appeal room and the panel make its decisions.
- You will receive a telephone call either later that day or the following day to be told the outcome of your appeal. This will be followed by a letter, usually within five days of the appeal hearing, confirming the panel's decision and the reason(s) for their decision.

Infant Class Size Appeals

- The appeal hearing will begin with Magna Learning Partnership's representative explaining to all parents who are appealing the reasons why no more children can be admitted to the school.
- The panel then has the opportunity to question Magna Learning Partnership's representative and will invite you (and any other parents) to do the same. If you have any questions about the school's case this is the time to ask them.
- You and any other parents and Magna Learning Partnership's representative then leave the appeal room while the panel consider the school's case.
- You will then be invited back into the appeal room for your private appointment with the panel to explain your case. No other parents will be present.
- The panel then has the opportunity to question you and will invite Magna Learning Partnership's representative to do the same.
- You and Magna Learning Partnership's representative will then be asked to leave the room. This is the end of your participation in the appeal hearing and you are now free to leave.

If there are other parents appealing for the school in question, they will have their appeals heard in private

- When all parents have had their appeals heard, the clerk returns to the appeal room and the panel will then make their decision.
- You will receive a telephone call either later that day or the following day to be told the outcome of your appeal. This will be followed by a letter, usually within five days of the appeal hearing, confirming the panel's decision and the reason(s) for their decision.

6. The Decision

- Each appeal will be considered on its own merits.
- The decision will take full account of all submissions and information submitted to the panel, the school's Admission Arrangements, the School Admissions Appeals Code 2012 and the School Admissions Code 2014.
- The appellant and the Magna Learning Partnership representative will be notified verbally of the decision usually either the day of the appeal or the day after the appeal. They will also be notified in writing as soon as possible and in any event within five school days of the hearing.
- If the appeal has been upheld contact will be made by a Magna Learning Partnership representative to make the necessary arrangements.
- There is no right of appeal against the decision of the panel.

Please note that this document is intended as a guide and procedures may be subject to slight changes.