

**PLEASE READ THIS BOOKLET BEFORE
COMPLETING THE APPEAL FORM**

ADMISSION TO STRETFORD HIGH SCHOOL

HOW TO APPEAL

INTRODUCTION

Any parent, whose application for their child to attend Stretford High School has been unsuccessful, has the right to appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel. This booklet tells you how to appeal.

HOW CAN I APPEAL?

If, you wish to appeal against this decision, you must complete an appeal form and send it to: -

**Appeals Section
Democratic & Performance Services
Trafford Council
Trafford Town Hall
Talbot Road
Stretford
M32 0TH**

by the date shown on your appeal form. If you do not appeal within this time then your appeal may be delayed.

A separate appeal form is required for each child.

You are advised to fill in the appeal form and return it promptly, providing as much relevant information as you feel is necessary to be considered. Please fill in all the sections and ensure that the correct year group is indicated on the form.

HOW DO I PREPARE MY CASE?

You are responsible for presenting your case and deciding what oral or written information you want to put before the Appeals Panel, and what witnesses, if any, you wish to bring to the hearing.

The appeal form is an important part of your case and should be filled out carefully.

Your written evidence should be submitted with your appeal form by the date given on the appeal form. If you then wish to submit any further evidence e.g. medical report which is not available at the time you submit your appeal form, please send it to the Appeals Section by 11 May 2018. The Appeals Section cannot do this for you and the Appeals Panel will not request any information or make any enquiries on your behalf.

If for some reason you are unable to submit all your evidence by 11 May, please contact the Appeals Section with the following details:-

- (i) a brief description of the evidence
- (ii) the reasons for the delay in submitting it, and
- (iii) the date when the evidence will be available

An extension to the deadline of 11 May will then be considered.

Please note that if you submit additional evidence after the deadline of 11th May or any agreed extension, the panel may decide not to consider it, or adjourn your appeal to a later date which may be after the end of the other programmed appeals.

Written evidence

Please note that the documents you send to us will be photocopied (for panel members and the Stretford High School representative) in black ink. Therefore any text which has been highlighted with a highlighter pen will not be apparent. If you wish to draw particular attention to information, please consider an alternative method such as underlining.

If any of the additional documents you submit contain your home address, it would be helpful if you could “blank” this out on the copy you send to us.

You may bring with you to your appeal, any witnesses you wish to support your case. You must make arrangements for your witnesses to attend the appeal hearing, as the Appeals Section or Appeals Panel will not do this. Please give details of any witnesses to the Appeals Section prior to the hearing.

You may like to write down what you wish to say at the appeal hearing, and any questions that you wish to ask. Please remember to bring with you all the information sent to you prior to the appeal, as this will contain details of why your child has been refused a place at Stretford High School.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Once the Appeals Section has received your completed appeal form, they will acknowledge receipt of your appeal and arrange a date for the appeal to be heard. Parents will usually be given 10 school days written notice of the appeal. But, where an appeal needs to be heard earlier, this notice period can be waived by parents.

Secondary appeals for decisions sent out on the national offer date (01/03/18) for entry to Year 7 in September 2018, will be heard within 40 school days of **Friday 4 May 2018** (the deadline for lodging appeals).

Secondary appeals for late applications will, if possible be heard with the on-time appeals. But if this is not possible, they will be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.

All other appeals will be heard within 30 school days.

THE HEARING

Do I have to attend the hearing?

It is strongly recommended that you attend both stages of the appeal hearing, as it is usually easier to explain your case to the Appeals Panel in person. Alternatively, you may send someone else to represent you at the hearing. If you do not wish to attend the hearing or send a representative,

then your appeal will be heard in your absence on whatever information you and the Stretford High School representative have submitted.

If you do not attend the appeal hearing on the date/s set and have not informed the Appeals Section that you wish to have your appeal deferred, your appeal will be heard in your absence.

You may be accompanied or represented at the appeal hearing by a friend or representative. Details of these people should be given to the Appeals Section prior to the hearing.

Please note that government guidance (The School Admissions Appeals Code) states that a representative of the school may not attend the hearing or make any written submissions in support of your appeal.

WHO WILL HEAR THE APPEAL?

The Independent Appeals Panel will be made up of three or four members. It will include Lay Members and Members with an Interest in Education, none of whom have any connection with Trafford Council, the Local Education Authority or Stretford High School.

Sitting with the Appeals Panel, will be a Clerk who ensures that the correct procedures are followed and that the appeal hearings are conducted fairly. They remain with the Panel when the hearing is finished, but play no part in the decision-making.

A representative from Stretford High School will also be present to explain why your child has been refused a place at the school. At the end of the hearing, he/she will leave and take no part in the decision-making process.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE APPEAL HEARING?

The hearing will be as informal as possible and the Chair of the Panel will try to put you at ease. However, certain formal procedures have to be followed to make sure that everyone who appeals is given a fair hearing. The following is a summary of the procedure that will be followed:

Stage 1 - The case for Stretford High School

When all parents and the School Representative are present along with the Panel Members and Clerk:

- (1) The representative from Stretford High School presents their case.
- (2) You and/or your representative may ask questions about Stretford High School's case.
- (3) The Panel may also ask questions.

Stage 2 - Your Case:

When individual parents and the School Representative are present along with the Panel Members and Clerk:

- (1) You and/or your representative will present your case.
- (2) The representative from Stretford High School may ask you questions.
- (3) The Panel may also ask you questions.

The representative from Stretford High School will then sum up the case for the school and you or your representative may sum up your case.

The representative from Stretford High School, you and/or your representative will leave the hearing at the same time, and will take no further part in the Appeal.

Where there is more than one appeal for the school, the Panel will hear all the appeals before making any decisions.

All appeals at Stage 2 of the process are heard in private and are treated as confidential.

DECISIONS WILL BE NOTIFIED IN WRITING ONLY

HOW DOES THE APPEAL PANEL REACH ITS DECISION?

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as amended by the Education Act 2002, says that a school which determines its own admissions must comply with parents' preference except in certain circumstances, which include:

- A. If compliance with the preference would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of the School's resources;
- B. If the preferred school is wholly selective by reference to high ability or aptitude and the admission of the pupil would be incompatible with such selection under the admission arrangements.

The Appeals Panel must apply the following procedure in reaching their decision.

Stage 1: Establishing the facts

The Appeals Panel must consider whether:-

- a) the published admission arrangements comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code and the School Standards & Framework Act 1998, and
- b) whether they were correctly applied to your child, and
- c) whether the school has proved that admitting another child to the school would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources at the school.

If the Panel consider that the published admission arrangements are not lawful or were not correctly applied to your child, they must then consider whether your child would have been offered a place if the admission arrangements had been lawful or properly applied.

If the Panel are satisfied that your child would have been offered a place, your appeal must be allowed unless a significant number of children have been affected and admitting all of them would cause significant prejudice.

If the Panel consider that the published admission arrangements are lawful and were correctly applied they must then consider whether, as a matter of fact, prejudice would arise if your child were admitted to the school.

If the Appeals Panel is satisfied that there would be prejudice it will move to Stage 2 of the decision-making process.

If the Appeals Panel is satisfied that all the appellant's children could be admitted to the school before prejudice is established, all the appeals will be allowed.

If the Appeals Panel is not satisfied that all the appellant's children could be admitted to the school before prejudice is established, it must go on to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Balancing the Arguments

The Appeals Panel will consider the reasons you have given for requesting a place at the school and balance them against the prejudice that would be caused if your child were admitted to Stretford High School.

If they decide that the reasons you have put forward in support of your appeal outweigh the prejudice, they will allow your appeal.

If they decide that the reasons you have put forward in support of your appeal do not outweigh the prejudice, they will refuse your appeal.

IS THE DECISION OF THE APPEAL PANEL FINAL?

Yes, the decision is binding on both you and Stretford High School.

IF MY APPEAL IS UNSUCCESSFUL CAN I APPEAL AGAIN?

1. You only have one right of appeal in each academic school year for a particular school unless, in exceptional circumstances, the school has accepted a second application because of a significant and material change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school, and refused admission.
2. An appeal for your child's admission to the school in September can be held before the end of the previous school year so that the admission can commence at the start of the new school year. However, such an appeal will be classed as relating to the school year commencing in the September.

3. You may, however, submit an appeal for more than one school during the same academic year.

QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED BY PARENTS

1. Can the Appeals Section give me advice regarding the information I present to the Appeals Panel?

NO you must decide what information you wish to present to the Appeals Panel. Such information should be included on or attached to your appeal form or sent to the Appeals Section by Friday 11 May 2018. If you are unable to submit the information by this date please contact the Appeals Section as soon as possible with a brief description of the information, the reasons for the delay and the date when the information will be available. An extension to the deadline of 11 May will then be considered. If information is submitted after the deadline or any agreed extension, the panel may decide not to consider the information or adjourn your appeal until a later date which may be after the end of the other programmed appeals.

2. Will the Appeals Section/Appals Panel obtain copies of medical reports/other information/make telephone calls in relation to my appeal?

NO if you wish the Appeals Panel to consider medical information etc. you must obtain that information and send it to the Appeals Section by 11 May 2018.

3. Will the Appeals Section/Appals Panel arrange for witnesses to attend the appeal hearing in support of my appeal?

NO if you wish anyone to attend the appeal hearing in support of your appeal, you must make the necessary arrangements and give details to the Appeals Section BEFORE the hearing.

4. Can I bring a legal representative, friend or other representative with me to the hearing?

YES but please inform the Appeals Section at least 3 working days BEFORE the hearing.

5. Can I request an interpreter?

YES however, if you are able to bring a relative or a friend this may be more beneficial to you as this person will usually already have knowledge of your circumstances and can help explain your case to the Appeal Panel. If you do not know anyone who can interpret for you then you must give the Appeals Section as much notice as possible and indicate what language is required.

WHAT IF I HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?

The Admissions Officer at Stretford High School will be happy to answer any questions you may have relating to admission to the school.

The Appeals Section will be happy to answer any questions relating to your appeal and procedures at the appeal.

Stretford High School – 0161 876 1850

Appeals Section - 0161 912 4221/2798 - Appeal/procedures.

The staff in the Local Education Authority Admissions Team can give you information relating to admission to other schools in Trafford. Their number is 0161 912 5007.

For more information on the admission appeals process, parents are referred to the School Admissions Appeals Code 2012 published by the Department for Education.