

Poole Grammar School
Guidance notes for parents/carers on the admission appeals process

Introduction

The School Appeals Team at BCP Council appoint the Independent Panel to hear admissions appeals. The appeal will be heard by a panel of three people, all of whom are independent from Poole Grammar School and independent from the Governing Body of Poole Grammar School. At least one member of the panel will have some experience in education. The panel is supported by a Clerk, who advises on procedures.

The Procedure

- BCP Schools Admissions Team will notify parents/carers on Wednesday 1st March 2023 whether their child has been given a place in Year 7 at Poole Grammar School for September 2023.

If the application has been unsuccessful the letter will provide the following information:

- that they can give notice to appeal;
 - advised the name and address of the person to whom the appeal must be sent or delivered to;
 - the date by which it should be received;
 - the fact that the appeal must be in writing and that it must set out the grounds on which the appeal is made.
- It is important that parents/carers accept the school place they have been offered by their local authority, thus securing a secondary school place for their child. The acceptance of this place does not affect the right to appeal or prejudice the appeal hearing in any way.
 - Parents/carers need to lodge their appeal in writing stating the grounds on which it is made using the appropriate form which is available on Poole Grammar School website.
 - Annex A for Year 7 September entry appeals. This form needs to be uploaded to the BCP Council appeals portal by the date specified on the form
 - Annex B for in-year appeals for students wishing to join Year 7, 8, 9, 10 or 11 during the current academic year.
 - Appeals need to be submitted directly to BCP Council via their school appeals portal <https://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/Schools-and-learning/School-appeals/Lodging-an-appeal.aspx> Appeals forms should not be sent to Poole Grammar School.
 - Poole Grammar School will advise the parents/carers of the appellant the reason why a place was not granted to their child and that they have the right to appeal. This will include details of the appellant's test scores and the date on which the appellant sat the entrance test. The parents/carers of the appellant will also in due course receive a copy of Poole Grammar School's case as to why a place should not be awarded to the appellant.
 - The School Appeals Team at BCP Council are responsible for convening the date and time of the hearings and appointing a clerk and panel members for the hearing.
 - For applications made within the normal admissions round (Year 7 September entry), appeals must be heard within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.
 - Appellants will be given 10 school days' notice of their appeal hearing, unless they waive this right in order to have an earlier date for their hearing.

- The School Appeals Team at BCP Council will communicate the schedule to Poole Grammar School, the Appeals Panel members and the appellant.
- During the Stage 2 of the appeal, the Appeals Panel:
 - shall allow the appellant the opportunity of appearing and making oral representation;
 - may allow the appellant to be accompanied by a friend or be represented by a nominated family member or friend.

Format of the Appeal Hearing

- The atmosphere at a hearing should be informal where the parties can put their case simply.
- The appeal panel will be assisted by an independent Clerk whose key tasks are to:
 - Explain the basic procedure;
 - Ensure relevant facts are presented;
 - Advise both the Appeals Panel members and the parents/carers on procedure;
 - Record the proceedings;
 - Notify parents of the Appeals Panel's decision.

The order of the hearing will be in two stages:

Stage 1: establishing the facts, at which the panel considers whether the school's published admission arrangements:

1. comply with the mandatory requirements of the School Admissions Code and Part 3 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998;
2. were correctly applied in the individual's case, and decides whether "prejudice" would arise were the boy to be admitted.

If these are proved, the panel moves on to the second stage.

Stage 2: balancing the arguments, at which the panel exercises its discretion, balancing the degree of prejudice to the school against the appellant's case for the boy being admitted to the school, before arriving at a decision.

The format for the two stages is normally as follows:

STAGE 1:

- Specific case for the School, given by the Headteacher or other Representative of the School;
- Questioning by the Parent/carers(s);
- Questioning by the Panel;

At the conclusion of the case for the School the Panel will ask the appellants and the Headteacher to leave whilst they discuss whether the School's published admission arrangements were correctly applied and make a provisional decision on whether "prejudice" would arise were the boys to be admitted. Should the Panel provisionally accept the case for the School then Stage 2 will commence.

STAGE 2:

- The representative from the school is asked for any information regarding the individual
- student.
- The case for the student, usually given by the Parent(s);

- Questioning by the Representative of the School;
 - Questioning by the Panel;
 - Any member of the Panel may ask questions at any time if they require clarification of what is being said or if they need more information in order to reach a decision, but such questions must be put before the summing-up process commences;
 - Summing-up by the Representative of the School;
 - Summing-up by the Parent(s).
- Parents have occasionally asked if their son could present the case or be present at the Appeal. This is considered by the Panel to put undue stress upon the student and is not advisable.
- All Stage 2 Appeals shall be heard in private.

There may be occasions when the Panel is hearing more than one Admissions Appeal in relation to the School. This often the case when Year 7 Entry appeals are scheduled. In this circumstance, Stage 1 of the Appeals will be held with all appellants; the Representative for the school will present the general case in the presence of all parents, the Chairman explaining the procedure to those parents. All the parents, in turn, and in each other's presence, may be invited to question the Representative for the School on what has been said. If the Panel provisionally believes that the school has made its case, the process moves on to Stage 2 (see Section 18).

If such appeals arise because of over-application for the number of places available, they should be dealt with fairly. Therefore the Panel will adjourn its decisions until all hearings have taken place, then consider their decisions and issue them.

- The Panel, through its Clerk, encourage parents to attend to present their case.
- Parents are advised that:-
 - They are encouraged to attend the Stage 1 Hearing where the Headteacher, or their designated deputy, puts forward the School Case.
 - They may elect not to attend Stage 2 in which case the Panel would rely on their written statements:
 - If they do not attend and it is not reasonably practical to offer an alternative date for their child's Stage 2 hearing to be heard, the appeal will have to be held and decided on the information that is available.
- Unless the appellant has consented in writing to a lesser period, the appellant should be given at least ten school days' notice of the date of the meeting of the Panel at which the appeal is to be heard.
 - Substantial new issues raised for the first time at the hearing may mean the hearing has to be adjourned to allow any party taken by surprise to consider the issues.
 - The Clerk will advise the parents/carers of the outcome within 5 school days of the hearing being heard.

Guidance Notes for the Appeal case

- Prepare some written notes to assist you in presenting your case, and be clear of the grounds upon which you want the appeal committee to consider your appeal. As a selective school Poole Grammar has an approved admissions policy based on selection, but you have a statutory right to raise any issue that you wish at the appeal.
- Prepare any necessary documents you wish to refer to at the appeal and ensure that they have been uploaded to the BCP Council school appeals portal in advance and by the deadline (published on the Appeals Form Annex A for Year 7 entry). If your child has not met the required academic standard, the Admission Appeals Panel tends to look for evidence that your child would cope with the pace and pressure of a grammar school education e.g. latest school reports, reasons why the child did not perform to expectation at the entrance exam. The Panel is always interested in the outside activities of the child but does not usually need to see certificates, awards etc. Please put your child's name on all papers and insert page numbers into documents if possible.
- Any documents uploaded after the deadline may not be considered. The Appeals Panel will make any decision about the acceptance of evidence beyond the deadline.
- It is not necessary, but if you wish to do so, you may call witnesses to support your case. These witnesses may make written observations which can be submitted with the documents in support of the appeal, or may come to the appeal to give evidence in person.
- If you wish you may ask a friend or family member to present your appeal for you. The school does however encourage parents / carers who are appealing (or at least one of them) to attend as well.
- If either you, or anyone coming with you, require special facilities or an interpreter, please contact BCP Council admissions appeals team as soon as possible (they can be emailed on schoolappeals@bcpcouncil.gov.uk).
- Please be advised that, in order to be fair and remain impartial, we are unable to discuss details of individual cases or provide specific recommendations as to the evidence to supply to support an appeal case. If you require any information or clarification regarding the appeals process itself please contact Admissions Appeals at Poole Grammar via email on PGSappeals@poolegrammar.com call 01202 692132.
- There is also additional information regarding the admission appeals process on the BCP Council website. Please visit www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/schoolappeals

DECISIONS OF THE PANEL

- The panel will consider all appeals before making and announcing any decisions.
- The decision of the Panel and the grounds on which it was made shall be communicated by the Clerk in writing to the appellant, to the Governing Body and to the Headteacher as Representative of the Governing Body within 5 school days following the completion date of the appeal hearings.
- The decision should state in relation to an unsuccessful appeal that admission to the school cannot be given for whatever reasons were accepted by the Panel, e.g. if the admission would prejudice the provision of efficient use of resources, or as admission is based wholly or partly on selection by reference to ability or aptitude if the boy does not meet the criteria. If, despite these factors, the Panel is considering allowing some, but not all appeals, it may need to compare the circumstances of one case with another to establish which appeal should succeed.
- In either event the decision should be fully and clearly expressed and be capable of being understood by a lay person.
- The Clerk will notify the outcome of each appeal to the parents initially by telephone and in writing within 5 working days after the conclusion of the last appeal (unless there are mitigating circumstances). The notification in writing will be a brief confirmation but if a parent requires a more detailed explanation, this will be provided on request to the Clerk.
- The decision of the panel is binding on the school and the parents. No further appeal by either party is possible within the approved policy and procedure, unless there are further extenuating circumstances which become known following the appeal.

Dr Amanda Smith

Headteacher

(On behalf of Poole Grammar School Governing Body 2022/23)

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