

Wootton Academy Trust



Appeals Procedure

**Procedure for parents and carers to appeal against a decision by
WAT to not offer a place at Wotton Upper School**

Updated May 2017

Procedure for parents and carers to appeal against a decision of Wootton Academy Trust not to offer a place at Wootton Upper School

Any parent or carer whose application for a place at Wootton Upper School is unsuccessful must be advised of their right to appeal against this decision in the letter informing them of the outcome of their application as well as the reason their application was unsuccessful.

Normally, this letter will be issued by Bedford Borough Council on behalf of the school as applications for places normally go through the council.

WAT uses **Bedford Borough Council's Independent Appeal's Panel** to hear any parental/carers appeals.

Bedford Borough Council's website gives more information about how to appeal.

https://www.bedford.gov.uk/education_and_learning/schools_and_colleges/cadem/school_admission_appeals.aspx

Parents and carers are encouraged to contact the Executive Principal's Secretary at Wootton Academy Trust [WAT] for a preliminary conversation or alternatively they may prefer to contact the Office of the Clerk to the Appeal Panel on **(01234) 228523** or by email School.Appeals@bedford.gov.uk if they have any questions or concerns.

What can I do if the child I am raising is not offered a place at Wootton Upper School?

If your child is not offered a place at Wootton Upper School, WAT must explain the reasons for the decision in writing, and give you information on how to appeal against the decision. You can respond in any (or all) of the following ways:

1. If you believe WAT has made a mistake in applying the criteria in your case e.g. catchment area, feeder school, siblings, child of a member of staff not being considered properly, you should contact the WAT immediately. If WAT agrees that a mistake has been made, the child may be offered a place in the school without going through the appeal process.
2. You can ask for their name to be added to the school's waiting list. If the child is looked after, or was previously looked after before you got a residence order or special guardianship order, they ought to be top of the waiting list, along with any other children in the same legal circumstances who were not offered a place.
3. You can apply to other schools, although you would be advised to check with the local authority first whether they have any places available.
4. You can make an appeal to an appeal panel, stating why the child should be offered a place at the school, even though the school is full to capacity.

You may not be able to appeal if the child has been permanently excluded twice within the last two years and is not offered a school place.

How and when do I appeal against refusal of a place?

If you choose to appeal, your appeal would be made to Office of the Clerk to the Appeal Panel, Bedford Borough Council who hear appeals on behalf of WAT, who would arrange for an Appeal Panel to hear the appeal. (i) Your appeal must be in writing, and your letter of appeal will trigger the appeals process.

Appeal hearings generally have to be held within 40 school days of the appeal being lodged.

It is important to prepare your appeal carefully, since if it is unsuccessful it will not be possible to appeal again in the same academic year, unless there is a significant change in your or the child's circumstances. In formulating your appeal, you should consider whether or not the school's admission arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code and relevant law.

What is the Admissions Authority?

WAT is the Admissions Authority for Wootton Upper School.

How will my appeal be processed?

Appeals must be carried out in accordance with the School Admissions Appeals Code, which has the force of law. It sets out the process which must be followed when a parent or carer is appealing against a school's refusal to admit a child. It aims to ensure that appeals are considered fairly. The code says that:

- There must be an Appeal Panel set up which **must** "perform a judicial function and must be transparent, accessible, independent and impartial, and operate according to principles of natural justice."
- The Appeals Panel must consider whether:
 - the school has a lawful admissions code,
 - the admissions code was correctly and impartially applied in your case, and
 - the problems faced by the child you are raising, if they do not go to the school, outweigh the problems the school will face if they have to take an extra child. If the problems caused to the child outweigh those caused to the school, the appeal will be successful and the child will be offered a place.

Further information

<https://www.gov.uk/schools-admissions/appealing-a-schools-decision>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/275897/school_admission_appeals_code_1_february_2012.pdf

M. Gleeson
Executive Principal
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