



# Admissions Policy

## 2023-24

Policy Name:	Admissions Policy			Review Date:	Every Year
Presented to the Resources Committee:	Date: 23/03/2023	Adopted by the Full Governing Body:	Date: 23/03/2023	Chair of Governors Signature:	

# **ADMISSIONS POLICY 2023-24**

## **Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2022) 'School Admission Appeals Code'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- SEN Information Report

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The Local Authority (LA) is responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance when carrying out the overall admission of pupils into the school.
- Clearly communicating any reasons for rejecting the admission of a pupil, as well as the parent's right to appeal and the appeal process.
- Implementing any advice or recommendations given by the Schools Adjudicator without undue delay.
- Determining the admission arrangements on an annual basis and publicly consulting stakeholders on any proposed changes to the admission arrangements.
- Setting clear, fair and effective oversubscription criteria which do not discriminate against any pupil.
- Communicating oversubscription criteria clearly to parents.
- Notifying the LA of any in-year admissions and their outcomes.

The governing board is responsible for:

- Liaising with the LA where relevant regarding admitting pupils to the school.
- Working with the LA when determining the school's capacity.
- Ensuring that the LA has all the information it needs to set admissions arrangements.
- Making arrangements for pupils admitted through in-year admissions to start as soon as possible.
- Publishing a link to the full, determined admissions arrangements on the school's website.

The Schools Adjudicator is responsible for:

- Acting in line with the relevant legislation and guidance pertaining to admissions.
- Receiving concerns and objections regarding the admission of pupils and making recommendations to the admission authority as a result of these concerns and objections.
- Approving variations to determined admissions arrangements where there has been a major change in circumstances or law.

The appeals clerk is responsible for:

- Having an in-depth knowledge of the relevant appeals codes and other relevant law.
- Providing an independent and impartial service for admission appeals.
- Making the necessary administrative arrangements for hearings.
- Notifying all parties of the order of proceedings in advance of an appeals hearing.
- Responding to queries from appellants in advance of an appeals hearing or identifying who will be appropriate to respond.
- Being an independent source of advice on procedure and admissions law.
- Keeping accurate records of proceedings and providing written notification of the appeals panel's decisions.

## **Admissions to Year 7**

- 1 Queen's Park High School is an 11-18 Academy. The Governing Body is the admissions authority and the Published Admission Number (PAN) for September 2023 is 180 places.
- 2 Queen's Park High School's admission arrangements are reviewed by the governing body of the school on an annual basis following discussion with the Local Authority, who co-ordinate the process on the Academy's behalf. Information on the admissions and appeals process appears in the Authority's booklet "**Transferring to Secondary School – Applying for Secondary School Places.**" The booklet is available in September and can be viewed on the Local Authority's website [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/education-and-learning/school-admissions/school-admissions.aspx](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/education-and-learning/school-admissions/school-admissions.aspx) or a hard copy can be obtained on request. The contact address is: School Admissions, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Wyvern House, The Drumber, Winsford, CW7 1AH  
Telephone: 0300 123 7039 or Email: [admissions@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)
- 3 In prioritising applications from parents expressing a preference for the school, the criteria below will be used. The oversubscription criteria is reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and compliant with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation. This means that the oversubscription criteria will not unfairly disadvantage, whether directly or indirectly, any child based on a protected characteristic or economic disadvantage.

In the event that there are more applicants than available places, the LA has applied the following oversubscription criteria, in order of priority given:

Children with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) where QPHS is named on the statement, as the school can best meet the needs of the child, and who meet the minimum entry requirements, will have automatic entitlement to a place at QPHS, and will be admitted before all other applicants.

- a Looked-after children or previously Looked-after children but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements, or special guardianship order). The definition of Looked after is as follows: A child is looked after by a local authority if he or she has been provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more

than 24 hours, in the circumstances set out in sections 20 and 21 of the Children Act 1989, or is placed in the care of a local authority by virtue of an order made under part IV of the Act. Formal consultation on this change did not take place as this amendment was a mandatory requirement.

- b Siblings – students with elder brothers or sisters, step-brothers or step-sisters, half-brothers or half-sisters, adopted brothers or adopted sisters living together as part of one household, already attending the preferred school, and expected to continue at the school in the following school year.
  - c Children resident within the designated catchment zone of the school, as defined by Cheshire West and Chester <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/education-and-learning/school-admissions/catchment-areas/secondary-school-catchment-areas> Children will be classed within this category if they and their parents/carers are resident within the area served by the school on the closing date for applications.
  - d Children not resident within a school's local catchment zone but attending a school designated as a partner school for admissions purposes, as out-of-zone students. These Primary schools are:
    - Belgrave
    - Chester Blue Coat CE
    - Dodleston CE
    - Eccleston CE
    - Hoole CE
    - Lache
    - Overleigh St Mary's CE
    - The Grosvenor Park C of E Academy
  - e. Distance - Distances are measured in a straight line from the centrally plotted Basic Land and Property Unit point (BLPU) of the child's home address to the centrally plotted BLPU point of the school as defined by Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG). Proof of address may be required to verify place of residence.
- 4 Where the school can accommodate some, but not all students qualifying under one of the preceding criteria, priority will be given to students having regard to the subsequent criteria.
- 5 Late applications for places will be considered after all applications received on time.
- 6 Repeat applications will not be considered within the same school year, unless the parents' or the school's circumstances have changed significantly since the original application was made.

## **Admissions to Year 12**

- 7 Applications for admission to the Sixth Form are dealt with by the school in line with the relevant published admissions arrangements and not by Cheshire West and Chester Council.

8 Children already in the school are not required to apply formally for places in Year 12 but should have reached the minimum entry requirements for admission into the sixth form, where relevant. Minimum entry requirements are the same for internal and external applicants.

9 Schools will not interview students or their families for entry to Year 12, although meetings may be held to provide advice on options and entry requirements for particular courses.

### Sixth Form Minimum Entry Requirements

10 The normal minimum entry requirements for admission to the sixth form to study primarily at A level is 5+ GCSEs at grades 9-4 including a strong pass (grade 5) in English and maths. Further information on specific course entry requirements will be provided by the school

11 Minimum entry requirements for admission onto specific vocational courses vary and a full list of requirements can be obtained from the school. Parents are advised to contact the school for further information.

12 Sixth Form Admission Arrangements - Oversubscription Criteria

a Looked-after children or previously Looked-after children but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements, or special guardianship order). The definition of Looked after is as follows: A child is looked after by a local authority if he or she has been provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, in the circumstances set out in sections 20 and 21 of the Children Act 1989, or is placed in the care of a local authority by virtue of an order made under part IV of the Act.

b Children resident within the designated catchment zone of the School. Children will be classed within this category if they and their parents/carers are resident within the area served by the school on the closing date for applications.

c Distance - Distances are measured in a straight line from the centrally plotted Basic Land and Property Unit point (BLPU) of the child's home address to the centrally plotted BLPU point of the school as defined by Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG). Proof of address may be required to verify place of residence.

### Published Admission Number – External Candidates Only

13 The maximum admission number for the admission of external candidates is 40 places. This number relates to the admission of external candidates only and is based on an estimate of the maximum number of external candidates likely to be admitted, although it would be acceptable to exceed this if demand for available courses can be met.

## **In Year Admissions**

- 14 Admissions for any year group other than the start of Year 7 will be classed as In-Year applications and will be handled directly by the school.

Where families wish to change the school their child attends at other times of the year after the start of Year 7, the school should be contacted in the first instance in order to make an appointment to visit. Parents will be given an indication of whether there are places available in the relevant year group. If other applicants want the same place the school will apply the same published criteria to determine priority for that place. If there are no places available the school will be able to inform parents of the Appeals process.

If an application is made for a student to be admitted to the school and the required year group is below the published admission number applicable to the age group, the students will be accepted subject to the provisions of this policy. The school may refuse to admit a child where there are places available on the grounds that admission of such a student would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources in any year group.

The school will consult and co-ordinate its arrangements, including over the rapid re-integration of children including those who have been excluded from other schools and who arrive in the area after the normal admissions round, in accordance with local in-year fair access protocols for securing schools for unplaced children.

## **Waiting Lists**

- 15 In any year where QPHS receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate until 31<sup>st</sup> December of the same year. The waiting list will be maintained by the School and it will be open to any parent to ask for their child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application.

Position on the waiting list and allocation of places will be determined solely in accordance with the over-subscription criteria outlined above. When a place becomes available, the name at the top of the list will be automatically contacted. Whenever a new applicant is added to the waiting list, the list will be re-ordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

## **Appeals**

16. In circumstances where a school place is refused, parents, and in some circumstances their children, will have the right to appeal against an LA's decision to refuse admission.

Where this is the case, the LA will establish an independent appeals panel to hear the appeal. The appeal panel will perform its judicial function in a transparent, accessible, independent and impartial manner, and operate according to principles of natural justice.

The LA and appeal panel will ensure that it acts in accordance with this Code, the School Admissions (Appeal Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, the School Admissions Code, other law relating to admissions, and relevant human rights and equalities legislation, for example, the Equality Act 2010.

The procedures outlined within this section will apply to all appeals lodged on or after 1 October 2023. Appeals lodged on or before 30 September 2023 will be heard in accordance with the 'School Admissions Appeals Code' 2012 and the School Admissions (Appeal Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended.

The governing board will be aware of and, where relevant, assist the LA with the admissions appeals procedure.

## **Timetable**

The LA will set a timetable for organising and hearing appeals that:

- Includes a deadline for lodging appeals which allows appellants at least 20 school days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to prepare and lodge their written appeal.
- Ensures that appellants receive at least 10 school days' notice of their appeal hearing.
- Includes reasonable deadlines for appellants to submit additional evidence, for admission authorities to submit their evidence, and for the clerk to send appeal papers to the panel and parties.
- Ensures that decision letters are sent within 5 school days of the hearing wherever possible.

The LA will publish the appeals timetable on their website by 28 February each year.

The LA will ensure that appeals lodged by the appropriate deadlines are heard within the following timescales:

- For applications made in the normal admissions round, appeals will be heard within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals
- For late applications, appeals will be heard within 40 school days from the deadline for lodging appeals where possible, or within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.
- for applications for in-year admissions, appeals will be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.

Within the sixth form, where the offer of a place would have been conditional upon exam results, appeals will be heard within 30 school days of confirmation of those results. Where the offer of a place would not have been conditional upon exam results, appeals will be heard within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.

Any appeals submitted after the appropriate deadline will still be heard, in accordance with the timescales set out in the table published by the LA.

## **Notifying appellants of the right to appeal and the appeal hearing**

When informing a parent of their unsuccessful admissions application, the LA will send written notification of their decision.

This will include:

- The reason why admission was refused.

- Information about the right to appeal.
- The deadline for lodging an appeal.
- Contact details for making an appeal.

Parents will be informed in the letter that, if they wish to appeal, they must make the appeal in writing. The LA will not limit the grounds on which an appeal can be made.

The LA will provide appellants with written notification of the date and all final arrangements of the appeal hearing no later than 10 school days before the hearing. This notification will include the deadline for the submission of any further evidence that was not sent in the original appeal.

The LA will comply with any reasonable request for information from parents to help them prepare their case for the appeals hearing.

The LA will ask appellants whether they intend to call any witnesses or be represented at the hearing and inform them that they may waive their right to 10 school days' notice of the hearing if they so wish.

### **Constitution of appeals panels**

The LA will appoint a clerk to the appeal panel who is independent of the school and the education functions of the LA. The clerk will have sufficient knowledge of the 'School Admission Appeals Code', the 'School Admissions Code', other law relating to admissions and other relevant law, as well as being able to offer advice to enable the panel to undertake its judicial function.

The appeals panel will comprise of a chair and at least two other panel members.

The panel will also include at least one lay person and one or more people with experience in education.

In accordance with 'The School Admissions (Appeal Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, the clerk to the panel will ensure that no disqualified person is allowed membership of the panel. A person will be disqualified if they are:

- A member of the LA which is the admission authority or LA in whose area the school is located.
- A member or former member of the governing board of the school.
- An employee at the LA or governing board of the school, other than a teacher or TA.
- Any person who has, or at any time has had, any connection with the LA, school or LA who may not act impartially.
- Any person who has not attended training required by the LA arranging the appeals panel.

The LA will ensure that panel members and clerks will not take part in hearings until they have received appropriate training as outlined within the School Admissions Appeals Code'.

The LA will ensure that panel members are independent from the school and will remain independent for the duration of their service.

The chair of the appeals panel is responsible for the conduct of the hearing, including introducing parties, explaining the roles of the clerk and the panel and how the hearing will be conducted, and ensuring that parties have sufficient opportunity to state their case and ask questions.

The LA will indemnify the members of the appeals panel against any legal costs and expenses they incur in connection with any decision taken in good faith whilst acting as a member of the appeals panel.

Members of the appeals panel will be eligible to receive travel and subsistence allowances where applicable, and will, where appropriate, be compensated for any loss of earnings or expenses.

## **Evidence**

All evidence relating to the appeal hearing will be passed on to the clerk. This evidence will include details of:

- How the admission arrangements and the co-ordinated admissions scheme apply to the appellant's application.
- Reasons for the decision to refuse admission.
- How the admission would cause prejudice to the education provision of the school.

The clerk will send all the papers required for the hearing to both parties and the members of the panel seven days before the hearing.

## **Attendance and representation**

It will be the LA's responsibility to make arrangements for appeal hearings. Appeal hearings may be held in person, remotely by video conference or a mixture of the two (a hybrid hearing).

Appeal hearings held entirely by telephone will only be permitted where video conferencing cannot be used relating to connectivity or accessibility and if the appellant and presenting officer both agree.

Regardless of the forum chosen, appeal panels will allow appellants the opportunity to make oral representations.

The LA will provide a presenting officer to attend the hearing and present the LA's case to the panel, ensuring that this person is a member of staff who is well acquainted with the school.

The presenting officer will be responsible for relaying to the attendees the decision not to admit the child, and answer questions where necessary, either in person or remotely. Appellants may attend in person or be represented by another individual. Where appellants cannot attend, a decision will be made based on the written evidence.

## **Appeals hearings**

Where appeal hearings are held in person, the LA will take all reasonable steps to ensure the venue is appropriate, accessible to appellants, and has a suitable area for appellants and presenting officers to wait separately from the panel before and between appeals.

Appeal hearings that are held remotely will be held in such a way that means the appeal is capable of being heard fairly and transparently. Attending parties will be able to present their cases fully and the LA will be satisfied that each participant has access to facilities that allow them to engage in the hearing at all times.

Where a hybrid hearing is to take place, the arrangements above will be complied with as appropriate.

Hearings, whether conducted in-person or remotely, will be held in private.

The order of appeal hearings will be as below:

- Case for the LA.
- Questioning by the appellant(s) and panel.
- Case for the appellant(s).
- Questioning by the LA and panel.
- Summing up by the LA.
- Summing up by the appellant(s).

## **Reaching a decision**

When reaching a decision, the LA will follow the specific two stage process outlined in section three of the 'School Admission Appeals Code'.

Decisions will be decided by a simple majority of votes cast. If votes are split equally, the chair will make the casting vote. The panel will either uphold or dismiss an appeal and will not uphold an appeal subject to any specified conditions.

To communicate the decision made, the panel will send a letter to the appellant, signed by the clerk or chair of the appeals panel, no later than five school days after the decision has been made.

The decision letter will contain clear reasons for the panel's decision and a summary of the relevant factors raised by the parties and considered during the hearing. In the case of applications outside the normal admissions round, the LA will ensure that the pupil is admitted to the school without unnecessary delay.

Appeals by the parent of a child with an EHC plan against the choice of school named in the EHC plan will be considered by the First-tier Tribunal (SEND) and not the appeals panel.

In cases where there are multiple appeals, the LA will ensure that, where possible, all appeals are heard by the same appeals panel with the same members, and that no decisions are made until all the appeals have been heard.

In all hearings the clerk to the panel will ensure that an accurate record is taken of the points raised at the hearing, including the proceedings, attendance, voting and reasons for decisions. These notes will be kept securely by the LA for a minimum of two years and are, in most cases, exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

## **Further appeals and complaints**

Appellants will not have the right to more than one appeal in respect of the same school for the same academic year unless, in exceptional circumstances, the LA has accepted a second application from the appellant due to a material change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school but still refused admission. Appellants can apply for a place at the school for a different academic year.

Appellants may complain about maladministration on the part of an appeal panel to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsmen. The LA will inform parents about the arrangements for making a complaint.