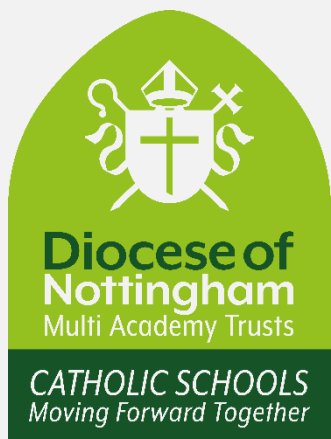




Catholic Schools Appeals Service

School Admission Appeals Guidance

September 2026

Contents

ABOUT THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS APPEALS SERVICE (CSAS).....	4
The CSAS Team	4
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW	5
Who is the Admission Authority?.....	5
School Admissions Code 2021, Paragraph 2.7.....	5
Key Areas of the School Admission Appeals Code	5
A REMINDER ABOUT PROCEDURES	5
Ranking of Applications.....	5
Normal Round Admissions.....	5
In-Year Admissions	6
Virtual Decision-Making	6
In-Year Admissions	6
Supplementary Information Forms (Sifs).....	6
Waiting List	7
Presenting Officer.....	7
Timetable for appeals	8
Document Sharing and GovernorHub	9
Admission Appeals Charges	10
What Type of Admission Appeal?.....	11
Ordinary Prejudice Appeals	11
Infant Class Size Appeals (ICSP) (KS1 only)	11
Excepted Pupils	12
Future Infant Class Size Appeals.....	13
The School's Case.....	13
Practical Tip.....	14
What is the School Statement?	14
Structure of the Model Statement.....	15
Presenting the Strongest Possible Case	16
Pupil Need and Cohort Characteristics	16
Teaching and Learning.....	17
Staffing	18
Financial Implications and Resources.....	18
Health and Safety.....	18
Linking Evidence to Prejudice.....	19
CHECK LIST FOR A SCHOOL STATEMENT	20
Final Quality Check	21

APPEALS FLOWCHART.....	22
THE HEARING.....	23
Single Appeals	24
Multiple Appeals.....	25
Infant Class Size Appeals	25
Conclusion of a Hearing	26
AFTER THE APPEAL.....	26
Key Point.....	27
Feedback and Complaints.....	27
Contact details.....	28

This guidance is intended to help Presenting Officers understand the admissions appeals process and their role within it. It provides practical advice on preparing for an appeal, presenting the school's case, and navigating each stage of the process with confidence.

If you require any assistance or clarification at any stage, please contact the Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager, Sarah Hand, who will be happy to help.

ABOUT THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS APPEALS SERVICE (CSAS)

The Catholic Schools Appeals Service (CSAS) is an independent admission appeals service supporting Catholic schools. Operating under the umbrella of the Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service (NRCDES), CSAS provides professionally administered, impartial, and legally compliant appeal arrangements, ensuring that all parties can have confidence in the fairness and integrity of the appeals process.

CSAS is committed to ensuring that admission appeals are conducted fairly, transparently, and in accordance with statutory requirements. We:

- **Ensure that every parent receives a fair, independent, and impartial appeal hearing** for their child at their preferred school.
- **Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, regulations, and statutory guidance** before, during, and after the appeals process.
- **Provide comprehensive training for appeal panel members and clerks**, enabling them to carry out their duties professionally, effectively, and lawfully.
- **Offer independent and impartial advice and guidance** on the admissions appeals process to governing bodies, headteachers, and parents who have submitted appeals.
- **Prepare, collate, and distribute appeal documentation and hearing papers** to panel members, clerks, schools, and parents within the timescales prescribed by the School Admission Appeals Code.
- **Organise and administer appeal hearings**, ensuring that suitable arrangements are in place to facilitate a fair, transparent, and accessible process.
- **Communicate appeal decisions to parents and schools promptly and efficiently**, in accordance with statutory requirements.

The CSAS Team

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Who is the Admission Authority?

For schools within a Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), the **MAT is the Admission Authority**. Whilst responsibility for the day-to-day administration of admissions, including admission appeals, may be delegated to the school's Local Governing Body, the MAT retains overall legal responsibility for admissions and appeals.

School Admissions Code 2021, Paragraph 2.7

Admission authorities must allocate places on the basis of their determined admission arrangements only. A decision to offer or refuse admission must not be made by one individual in an admission authority. Where the school is its own admission authority, the whole governing body, or an admissions committee established by the governing body, must make such decisions. The admission authority must keep a clear record of any decisions on applications, including in-year applications.

As the Admission Authority, the MAT is responsible for ensuring that admission appeals are arranged in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code. The Admission Authority may appoint a third-party provider, such as the **Catholic Schools Appeals Service (CSAS)**, to administer and manage appeals on its behalf. However, responsibility for ensuring that appeals are conducted lawfully, fairly, and in compliance with statutory requirements remains with the Admission Authority.

The School Admission Appeals Code 2022 applies to all appeals.

- The Code is essential reading. It can be downloaded from:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code>

Key Areas of the School Admission Appeals Code

At a minimum, all those involved in the admissions appeals process should be familiar with the following sections of the School Admission Appeals Code:

The statutory timetable for arranging and hearing appeals (Paragraph 2.1).

The information and evidence that must be provided in advance of the appeal hearing (Paragraph 2.9).

The procedures for conducting appeal hearings, including the roles of the parties involved (Paragraphs 2.15 to 2.20).

The decision-making process followed by appeal panels when determining appeals (Section 3).

A REMINDER ABOUT PROCEDURES

The School Admission Appeals Code should be read and understood in its entirety. However, the following provisions are particularly important and should be familiar to all those involved in the admissions appeals process:

Ranking of Applications

Normal Round Admissions

The initial ranking of applications may be undertaken by the Headteacher or administrative staff. However, the final ranking must be reviewed and approved by **at least two members of the Local Governing Body**. The decision and the rationale for it should be formally recorded in the minutes.

In-Year Admissions

In accordance with the MAT's scheme of delegation, decisions on in-year applications must be approved by at least two members of the Local Governing Body and formally recorded in the minutes.

Virtual Decision-Making

Where it is not practicable to convene a face-to-face meeting, decisions may be made remotely, provided that the participating governors are able to consider the application and reach a collective decision whilst being "present" through appropriate means, such as telephone or video conferencing. Any decisions reached in this way must be formally recorded in the minutes.

In accordance with the MAT's scheme of delegation, decisions on in-year applications must be approved by at least two members of the Local Governing Body and formally recorded in the minutes.

In-Year Admissions

Parents have the right to apply for a school place at any point during the school year. Schools must not impose their own cut-off dates for in-year applications and must not refuse to accept an application because it is received late in the academic year. Every application must be processed and a formal decision made in accordance with the published admission arrangements.

Where an application is received towards the end of the academic year, it is entirely appropriate to clarify with the parent the year group for which admission is being sought. However, this does not remove the school's obligation to consider the application and issue a formal admissions decision.

As with all admissions decisions, the admission authority should ensure that a clear record is retained showing how the application was considered, who made the decision, and the reasons for that decision.

Supplementary Information Forms (Sifs)

Where a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) is required as part of the school's admission arrangements, schools must take reasonable steps to ensure that applications are assessed fairly and consistently.

Particular care should be taken where:

- No SIF has been received.
- A SIF has been received but is incomplete.
- Parents have indicated that they wish to be considered under a faith-based oversubscription criterion but have not supplied the supporting evidence required by the admission arrangements.
- Information provided by the parent appears inconsistent with the application submitted through the Local Authority.

Experience has shown that some parents mistakenly submit their SIF to the Local Authority rather than directly to the school, despite guidance being provided on both the school's website and the Local Authority admissions portal. **Local Authorities do not accept responsibility for forwarding SIFs or supporting documentation to schools, and admission authorities should not assume that documents submitted to the Local Authority have been received by the school.**

Schools should therefore have a clear process for identifying applications where a SIF or supporting evidence is missing and should make reasonable enquiries before places are allocated.

Any follow-up process must be applied **consistently to all applicants**. Schools must not contact some parents to request missing information whilst declining to do so for others in similar circumstances. Selective follow-up could call into question whether the admission arrangements have been applied fairly, consistently, and impartially.

Where a school has a practice of contacting parents regarding missing SIFs, missing evidence, or incomplete information, that practice should be applied uniformly to all affected applicants and an appropriate record maintained of any communication.

Maintaining clear records of any follow-up action will assist the admission authority in demonstrating to an appeal panel that the admission arrangements were applied correctly, consistently, and impartially to all applicants.

Practical Tip: Keep a record of all attempts to contact parents regarding missing SIFs or supporting evidence, including emails, letters, and telephone calls. This can be invaluable if the application later becomes the subject of an admission appeal.

If circumstances change before the appeal is heard and the child becomes entitled to a place, the school should offer the place without delay and notify the Clerk immediately. In such cases, the appeal should normally be withdrawn or cancelled, as there is no longer a decision to refuse admission for the panel to consider.

Waiting List

Do not refer to a child's position on the waiting list in your school's case statement. While it is appropriate to explain that the school maintains a waiting list and that it is ranked strictly in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria, the numerical position of an individual child on that list should not be disclosed or relied upon as part of the school's case.

This is because an appeal panel must determine the appeal based on the circumstances of the case and the requirements of the School Admission Appeals Code. A child's position on the waiting list is not a relevant consideration in the panel's decision-making and must not influence the outcome of the appeal. Waiting lists are subject to change as new applications are received and ranked in accordance with the oversubscription criteria, meaning a child's position can move up or down at any time.

Appeal panel members cannot take into account where a child is placed on a waiting list when deciding an appeal. Instead, they must consider the admission authority's case and the individual circumstances presented by the appellant in accordance with the statutory appeals process.

Parents may ask for information about their child's current position on the waiting list, and schools should provide this information upon request. Parents may ask for information about their child's current position on the waiting list, and schools should provide this information upon request. Schools should also explain that waiting list positions are subject to change as further applications are received and ranked in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria.

Presenting Officer

The admission authority is responsible for presenting its case to the independent appeal panel and demonstrating that the admission arrangements were correctly applied and that the decision to refuse admission was lawful,

reasonable, and in accordance with the published admissions criteria. The School Admission Appeals Code makes clear that the panel must consider whether the admission arrangements complied with the law and were correctly and impartially applied in the individual case.

At the appeal hearing, the school's representative, known as the **Presenting Officer**, will present the admission authority's case and may be questioned by the panel and the appellant about:

- the school's published admission arrangements;
- how applications were ranked;
- how the admission decision was reached;
- who made the admission decision; and
- whether the admission arrangements were applied correctly and consistently.

The Presenting Officer **must be fully familiar with the application in question** and have all relevant admissions records, rankings, and decision-making information readily available.

A school **must not support or oppose an individual appeal**. The role of the Presenting Officer is to present the admission authority's case in a factual, objective, and impartial manner. Their responsibility is to explain how the admission arrangements were applied and the reasons for refusing admission, rather than to advocate for or against a particular child receiving a place.

All parties will have received and reviewed the school's written case in advance of the hearing. The Presenting Officer is therefore **not expected to read the case statement verbatim**. Instead, they should provide a concise summary of the school's case, highlighting the key points for the panel. In most cases, this should take **no longer than 5 to 7 minutes**.

Where hearings are conducted remotely via Zoom, the Presenting Officer should join the meeting in good time before the scheduled start. If the Presenting Officer has not joined the hearing **within five minutes of the scheduled start time**, the appeal panel may proceed in their absence and consider the school's written case as submitted.

The written case statement and supporting evidence will be taken into account by the panel whether or not the Presenting Officer is present at the hearing.

An appeal must be **made in writing**. Appeals cannot be submitted by telephone.

A model appeal form is available for parents wishing to lodge an appeal. Schools should ensure that a copy of the form, together with details of how to submit it and the relevant deadline, is provided to any parent who expresses a wish to appeal.

Timetable for appeals

The Department for Education sets statutory timescales for the organisation and hearing of admission appeals, and these must be followed. Schools should therefore familiarise themselves with the appeal timetables published on their website for:

- Appeals for admissions in the normal admissions round.
- Appeals for late applications in the normal admissions round and in-year applications.
- Appeals submitted after the published appeal deadline.

The Clerk is responsible for organising appeal hearings and will notify the school of the deadline for submitting its case statement and supporting documents.

Schools are expected to work collaboratively with the Clerk and to give appeal matters appropriate priority. All deadlines for the submission of case papers and supporting evidence should be met to enable appeals to be administered fairly, efficiently, and within the statutory timescales prescribed by the School Admission Appeals Code.

Document Sharing and GovernorHub

To support a secure, paper-free appeals process, CSAS will use **GovernorHub** as the central platform for sharing appeal documentation between the school, the Clerk, appeal panel members and the Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager.

When the Admission and Appeals Manager receives notification of an appeal on the Contact Spreadsheet, they will create a dedicated GovernorHub folder for that appeal and upload the appeal form, acknowledgement letter and any initial documentation.

The school's nominated administrator and Clerk will be given access to the folder and should upload all subsequent appeal documents directly to GovernorHub, including:

- The completed appeal form from the appellant(s).
- The school's case statement.
- Supporting evidence.
- Admission arrangements (Admissions Policy).
- Application forms and Supplementary Information Forms (SIFs).
- Relevant correspondence.
- Any additional documents requested by the Clerk.

Once the appeal panel has been appointed by the Clerk, access to the folder will be given to all parties, but restricted to:

- The Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager.
- The Clerk.
- The appeal panel members.
- The school's nominated administrator.

Schools should not share access credentials or permit access to any other individual.

Parents and appellants must never be given access to GovernorHub. Appeal papers for parents will be shared separately by the Clerk using secure electronic methods.

Following the appeal hearing, the Clerk will upload:

- A copy of the decision letter.
- The Clerk's notes and record of the panel's decision-making.

The school will be notified when these documents are available.

Schools are responsible for downloading and retaining any documents required for their records. GovernorHub folders will normally be deleted by CSAS **one calendar month** after the school has been notified that the post-hearing documents have been uploaded.

Schools should ensure that all appeal information is handled confidentially and only accessed by those with a legitimate role in the appeals process.

Use the statement check list

The check list is included to help you...

It is essential that admissions procedures are applied consistently and that decision-making is properly documented. Failure to do so may weaken the admission authority's case and increase the likelihood of an appeal being upheld.

Admission Appeals Charges

Following feedback from schools, we have undertaken a comprehensive review of the Catholic Schools Appeals Service (CSAS) to identify opportunities to reduce administrative burdens, improve cost transparency, strengthen compliance, and deliver better value for schools and trusts.

As part of this review, we have considered both clerks' fees and the CSAS charging structure and are pleased to introduce a clearer and more predictable approach to appeal costs. One of the key outcomes is the introduction of a fixed charging structure, enabling schools to budget with confidence and removing many of the variable costs previously associated with admission appeals.

We have also modernised our processes through the introduction of electronic systems and a fully paper-free appeals process, eliminating copying and printing requirements for schools. This streamlined approach reduces administration, supports more efficient case management, and lessens the burden on school staff.

In addition, we have strengthened our procedures to enhance data protection and GDPR compliance, whilst ensuring that all aspects of the service continue to operate in accordance with the requirements of the School Admission Appeals Code. Together, these improvements provide schools with a secure, transparent, and professionally managed appeals service that offers greater consistency, efficiency, and value.

In addition, we have reduced the CSAS administration fee from a maximum of £65 to a fixed fee of £35 per appeal, providing greater clarity and predictability for schools.

The maximum cost of a single appeal will now be £200. The panel expenses allowance has been increased to reflect the move to a fully paper-free appeals process and to cover any reasonable costs incurred by panel members who choose to print documents for their own use.

To ensure the process runs as efficiently as possible, a purchase order (PO) number will be requested when an appeal is lodged with CSAS. We would be grateful if schools could provide this promptly to avoid any delays in processing. The PO number should be for £200 per appeal.

Where an appeal is withdrawn after it has been lodged with CSAS, the school may be charged for costs already incurred in administering the appeal. The level of any charge will depend on the stage reached in the process and the work undertaken prior to the withdrawal.

In determining any charge, consideration may be given to administration costs, clerking work already completed and, where applicable, any costs associated with the appeal panel. No charge will normally be made for panel member expenses where an appeal is withdrawn before the panel has convened. However, where an appeal is withdrawn at a later stage, costs associated with the hearing may still be payable if they have already been incurred.

What Type of Admission Appeal?

It is important to identify from the outset which type of appeal is being heard, as different rules and procedures may apply.

Ordinary Prejudice Appeals

Most admission appeals are heard as **ordinary prejudice appeals**. This includes:

- All Key Stage 2 appeals.
- All Key Stage 3 appeals.
- All Key Stage 4 appeals.

Some Key Stage 1 appeals.

Most Key Stage 1 appeals are heard under the **Infant Class Size** rules. However, where those rules do not apply, for example because the class contains fewer than 30 pupils, the appeal will be heard as an ordinary prejudice appeal.

If you are in any doubt about which type of appeal applies, you should contact the **Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager** at the earliest opportunity for advice.

Infant Class Size Appeals (ICSP) (KS1 only)

An Infant Class Size (ICS) appeal arises where admitting an additional child would result in an infant class exceeding 30 pupils per qualified teacher, or would require the school to reorganise classes or staffing in order to remain compliant with infant class size legislation. This applies to Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes.

Infant class size appeals are different from other admission appeals because the appeal panel's powers are limited in law. In these cases, the panel is not carrying out the usual balancing exercise between the parent's reasons for wanting a place and the prejudice to the school. Instead, the panel is reviewing whether the admission authority's original decision was lawful, correctly applied, and reasonable.

An appeal panel can only uphold an infant class size appeal if one of the following applies:

- the admission of an additional child would not, in fact, breach the infant class size limit;
- the admission arrangements were unlawful, or were not in compliance with the School Admissions Code, and the child would have been offered a place if they had been lawful;
- the admission arrangements were not correctly or impartially applied and the child would otherwise have been offered a place; or
- the decision to refuse admission was one that no reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances.

The threshold for demonstrating that a refusal decision was unreasonable is exceptionally high. The courts have established that the decision must be "perverse" or "outrageous" in its defiance of logic, such that no reasonable admission authority would have made it. Personal circumstances, however compelling, are unlikely on their own to meet this test.

Parents are entitled to attend and present their case to the appeal panel. However, where an appeal is being heard under infant class size legislation, factors such as childcare arrangements, transport difficulties, family circumstances, medical issues, siblings attending different schools, or parental work commitments can only be considered insofar as they are relevant to one of the legal grounds above. The panel cannot uphold the appeal simply because it is sympathetic to the family's circumstances. As a result, infant class size appeals are rarely successful unless there has been an error in the admissions process or the admission arrangements themselves.

Note: Certain categories of "excepted pupils" may be admitted above the infant class size limit in accordance with legislation and the School Admissions Code

If the appeal is in this category, you must state this clearly. The CSAS issues information sheets explaining these appeals to parents. You must also make it clear in your statement that Infant Class Size Prejudice applies. You have to make it clear that you cannot take any corrective measures i.e. you do not have resources, accommodation or teachers to be able to avoid 30 children in the class.

Excepted Pupils

The legislation recognises that there are certain circumstances in which a child may be admitted to an infant class even where this results in the class exceeding the normal limit of 30 pupils per teacher. These children are known as **excepted pupils**.

The categories of excepted pupils include:

- looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- children admitted following the allocation of a place by an independent appeal panel;
- children admitted under the local authority's Fair Access Protocol;
- children admitted following a direction by a local authority or the Secretary of State;
- children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other suitable school available within a reasonable distance;
- children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth has been admitted when the class was below the infant class size limit before the final admission was made.

A child who is admitted following the success of an appeal automatically becomes an **excepted pupil**. This means that their admission does not immediately require the school to reorganise classes or employ an additional teacher. The child remains an excepted pupil for the remainder of the school year in which they are admitted and for the whole of the following school year, or until class numbers fall back to 30 or below, whichever occurs first.

Headteachers should be aware that pupils admitted as excepted pupils can lawfully take the number of children in an infant class above 30. However, if class numbers subsequently reduce, the school would not normally be permitted to admit further pupils simply because the class had previously exceeded the statutory limit.

If an appeal panel upholds an appeal for a Reception child and admission would increase the class size from 30 to 31, the child may still be admitted because they become an excepted pupil. The school would not be required to create an additional class solely as a result of that admission.

This explanation is consistent with both the **School Admissions Code** and the **School Admission Appeals Code** and is written in a way that should be accessible to school staff who may not be familiar with the detailed legal framework

Future Infant Class Size Appeals

Where admitting an additional child would not breach the infant class size limit immediately, but would result in a future Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 class exceeding the statutory limit of 30 pupils per teacher, the appeal may still be heard as an Infant Class Size (ICS) appeal.

In such cases, the appeal will be determined on the same limited grounds as any other infant class size appeal. However, it is essential that the school's case clearly demonstrates how the admission of an additional pupil would lead to a breach of the infant class size legislation in a future infant year group.

It is not sufficient simply to state that future prejudice will occur. The school's written case should include clear evidence, including current and projected pupil numbers, anticipated class organisation arrangements, and staffing structures. The aim should be to show, as clearly as possible, how the admission of an additional pupil would lead to classes exceeding the statutory limit or require the school to take unreasonable measures to avoid doing so.

Appeal panel members and parents may have little or no educational background, so it is important that any future class organisation issues are explained in straightforward language and supported by clear figures. If the evidence is unclear or does not convincingly demonstrate future infant class size prejudice, the panel may conclude that the admission authority has not demonstrated that the appeal should be determined under infant class size legislation and may instead hear the appeal under the normal prejudice balancing process. This significantly increases the likelihood of an appeal being upheld.

Schools may also wish to argue that admitting additional pupils would create organisational difficulties or prejudice once pupils reach Key Stage 2. Whilst such arguments may be relevant to a standard prejudice case, they do not fall within infant class size legislation because there is no statutory class size limit for Key Stage 2 pupils. As a result, concerns relating solely to future Key Stage 2 classes cannot be used to justify an appeal being heard as an Infant Class Size appeal.

Practical Tip: When presenting a future infant class size case, include a simple table showing current numbers, projected cohort sizes, proposed class structures, and staffing arrangements for each relevant year group. This will help the panel understand the school's position and reduce the risk of misunderstandings during the hearing.

The School's Case

The appeal panel can only consider the evidence presented by both parties. It is therefore essential that the school's case is complete, accurate and submitted on time. In most instances, the school will have only one opportunity to present its case and supporting evidence.

The burden rests with the admission authority to demonstrate why a place was refused and, where applicable, why the admission of an additional pupil would cause prejudice to the efficient education of existing pupils or the

efficient use of resources. The panel's decision will be based on the evidence provided, so a well-prepared case is crucial.

The following documents form the school's case and should be submitted to the Clerk by the deadline advised. In accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code, appellants and panel members must receive the appeal papers a reasonable time before the hearing. CSAS will normally issue papers at least 10 school days before the hearing wherever possible.

1. School Statement
2. Copy of the refusal letter
3. Current Admission Policy (including oversubscription criteria)
4. Details of parental preferences (available from the Local Authority)
5. All relevant correspondence with the parent(s)
6. The application form and any supplementary information form (SIF)

Schools should ensure that all relevant evidence is included within their original submission.

Appeal panels generally expect the school's case to be fully presented in advance of the hearing. New evidence or additional arguments should only be introduced where they relate to matters that could not reasonably have been foreseen when the case was prepared or where circumstances have changed since the submission was made. Any new information that comes to light after the school's case has been submitted should be provided to the Clerk as soon as possible so that it can be shared with all parties.

Care should also be taken to ensure that the written case is clear and accessible. Panel members and parents may have no educational background and may not be familiar with school organisation, admissions processes or funding arrangements. A concise, evidence-based explanation supported by clear data is far more persuasive than lengthy or technical submissions.

Practical Tip

Before submitting the school's case, ask a colleague who is unfamiliar with the admission issue to read it. If they can understand the school's position and the reasons for refusal without further explanation, the appeal panel is more likely to do so as well.

What is the School Statement?

The **School Statement** is the most important document in the school's case. It explains how places were allocated, why the child was refused a place, and why the school cannot admit additional pupils.

The statement should provide the appeal panel and parents with a clear, factual, and evidence-based explanation of the admission authority's decision.

A well-prepared School Statement should:

- explain how the admission arrangements were applied;
- show how the child's application was considered and ranked against the published oversubscription criteria;
- demonstrate that the admission arrangements were applied correctly and consistently;
- explain why a place could not be offered; and

- provide evidence of the impact that admitting additional pupils would have on the efficient education of pupils and/or the efficient use of resources.

The School Statement forms the basis of the school's case at the appeal hearing. As all parties will receive and read the statement in advance, the Presenting Officer will normally provide a brief summary of the key points and answer any questions from the panel and parents.

It is therefore essential that the statement is accurate, comprehensive, and supported by appropriate evidence, as there may be limited opportunity to introduce new information during the hearing.

Model statements are available from the Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager or on the resource section on GovernorHub

- **Model Statement 1:** Normal Round Appeals (Reception and Year 7 admissions)
- **Model Statement 2:** In-Year Appeals (all other admissions)

When using a model statement, please ensure that all instructional text, drafting notes, highlighted sections, and colour-coded prompts are removed or amended as appropriate before submission. These elements are included solely as drafting aids and should not appear in the final version provided to the Clerk, parents, or the appeal panel.

Structure of the Model Statement

The model statement is divided into two parts:

Part A: The Individual Child's Case

This section explains how the child's application was processed and considered. It should include:

- the relevant admissions round;
- the published admission arrangements;
- the oversubscription criteria applied;
- the child's ranking;
- the final cut-off criterion and, where applicable, the cut-off distance; and
- the reason the child was not offered a place.

Part A will differ for each appeal because it relates specifically to the individual child and application.

Part B: The School's General Case

This section sets out the school's wider case and explains why additional admissions cannot be accommodated.

Depending on the nature of the appeal, Part B should include evidence relating to:

- accommodation constraints;
- classroom capacity;
- staffing implications;
- curriculum delivery;
- health and safety considerations;
- the efficient use of resources; and

- any other factors demonstrating prejudice to the school.

Where the appeal is being heard as an **Infant Class Size Appeal** or a **Future Infant Class Size Appeal**, Part B must clearly explain how admitting an additional child would breach the infant class size legislation, or result in a future breach, and should include projected class organisation and pupil number data where relevant.

Presenting the Strongest Possible Case

The strongest School Statements are those that are clear, factual, and supported by evidence. Do not assume that panel members will be familiar with your school's organisation, staffing structure, accommodation, funding arrangements, or operational challenges. Wherever possible, use straightforward language, provide supporting data, and explain the practical impact of admitting an additional pupil.

Your statement should clearly demonstrate how the admission of additional pupils would prejudice the efficient education of pupils already on roll and/or the efficient use of the school's resources. This may include evidence relating to class organisation, accommodation, staffing, curriculum delivery, specialist facilities, health and safety considerations, pastoral support, and financial pressures. The panel will be looking for evidence of actual impact, rather than general assertions that the school is full.

It is essential that all information provided to the appeal panel is accurate, evidence-based, and up to date. If circumstances change after your case has been submitted, you should notify the Clerk immediately so that the panel and parents can be provided with the most current information. Panel members will often scrutinise pupil numbers, class organisation, and capacity figures in detail, and any inconsistencies are likely to be explored during the hearing.

A clear, well-reasoned, and evidence-based School Statement will assist the panel in understanding the school's position and reaching a fair and informed decision.

Pupil Need and Cohort Characteristics

Consider whether there are particular features of your pupil population that place additional demands on staffing, accommodation, teaching capacity, or school resources. Examples may include:

- A high proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- A significant number of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- A high proportion of pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL).
- Pupils requiring significant pastoral, behavioural, or emotional support.
- Large numbers of vulnerable pupils requiring targeted intervention and support.

Where you rely on any of these factors, explain their practical impact on the day-to-day operation of the school. For example, you may wish to demonstrate how they increase demands on teaching staff, support staff, specialist accommodation, intervention programmes, or pastoral services. The panel will be looking for evidence of how admitting additional pupils would add to these demands and further affect the school's ability to meet the needs of pupils already on roll.

Where possible, support your case with relevant data, percentages, pupil numbers, or examples rather than relying on general statements.

If accommodation is a factor in your case, explain clearly how admitting additional pupils would affect the school's ability to operate safely and effectively.

You may wish to include evidence relating to:

- Changes to accommodation since the school's net capacity assessment was undertaken.
- Current and projected classroom occupancy levels.
- Planned building works or accommodation changes expected within the next 9 to 12 months.
- Class organisation arrangements and any constraints on reorganising classes.
- The availability and capacity of specialist teaching spaces, such as science laboratories, technology rooms, music rooms, and sports facilities.
- Dining hall capacity and lunch arrangements.
- Playground provision and supervision arrangements.
- The availability of indoor space during adverse weather.
- Corridor widths, staircases, pinch points, and movement around the site.
- Toilet and changing facilities.
- Storage provision for coats, bags, lunchboxes, musical instruments, and PE equipment.
- The availability of intervention spaces, meeting rooms, and pastoral support areas.

When relying on accommodation issues, explain not only the limitation itself but also the practical impact on pupils, staff, and the operation of the school. For example, consider whether additional pupils would affect timetabling, access to specialist facilities, supervision arrangements, learning environments, or the delivery of support services.

Where helpful, photographs, floor plans, site maps, timetables, or capacity calculations may be included as supporting evidence to assist the panel in understanding the issues identified.

Teaching and Learning

Evidence demonstrating a direct impact on teaching and learning is often among the most persuasive elements of a school's case.

You may wish to include information about:

- Current class sizes and staffing arrangements.
- The impact of larger classes on curriculum delivery and lesson organisation.
- Access to specialist teaching spaces and practical subjects.
- Reduced opportunities for individual support, feedback, and differentiation.
- Limitations on intervention programmes, small group work, and targeted support.
- Constraints on the delivery of SEND provision.
- Challenges in maintaining effective classroom management, supervision, and pupil engagement.

Where possible, explain the practical consequences for pupils already on roll. The panel will be looking for evidence of how admitting additional pupils would affect the quality of education provided, rather than general statements about increased numbers. Supporting evidence such as class size data, timetables, staffing information, or details of existing interventions can help to illustrate the impact.

Staffing

Where staffing is a significant factor, you may wish to provide evidence relating to:

- Current staffing levels and deployment.
- Difficulties in recruiting or retaining staff.
- Staff vacancies or reliance on temporary, agency, or supply staff.
- Long-term staff absences and their impact on school operations.
- The effect that additional pupils would have on teacher workload and capacity.
- The consequences of having to reorganise classes or employ additional staff.

Where these factors are relied upon, explain the practical impact on the school's ability to deliver education effectively and meet the needs of pupils already on roll. The panel will be looking for clear evidence of the challenges created by additional admissions, rather than general statements about staffing pressures.

Where possible, support your case with specific examples, staffing data, vacancy information, workload implications, or financial considerations, as evidence-based arguments are likely to carry greater weight with the panel.

Financial Implications and Resources

Where resources are a significant factor, you may wish to provide evidence relating to:

- Why existing budgets cannot accommodate additional provision.
- The costs associated with creating additional teaching groups.
- Staffing costs arising from the admission of additional pupils.
- Resource limitations within specialist teaching areas.
- Additional pressures on support services, intervention programmes, and pastoral provision.

Where these factors are relied upon, explain the practical impact on the school's ability to use its resources efficiently and meet the needs of pupils already on roll. The panel will be looking for evidence of how additional admissions would affect the school's operations, rather than general statements about budget pressures.

Where possible, support your case with specific financial information, costings, staffing implications, or examples of existing resource constraints. Remember that prejudice to the efficient use of resources must be demonstrated through evidence and cannot simply be assumed.

Health and Safety

Health and safety considerations can be particularly persuasive where they are supported by clear evidence and demonstrate a direct impact on pupils, staff, or the day-to-day operation of the school.

You may wish to include evidence relating to:

- Accident statistics and any identifiable trends.
- Particular concerns regarding supervision of pupils.
- Congestion at entrances, exits, corridors, staircases, or other circulation areas.
- Emergency evacuation arrangements and capacity.
- Capacity limits within classrooms, specialist teaching spaces, or communal areas.
- Risks associated with specialist facilities, equipment, or practical subjects.

- Safeguarding concerns arising from overcrowding or reduced supervision.

Where these factors are relied upon, explain the practical implications of admitting additional pupils and how this could affect the school's ability to maintain a safe environment. The panel will be looking for evidence of genuine risks or operational challenges rather than general concerns about increased numbers.

Where available, support your case with accident logs, risk assessments, health and safety audits, fire evacuation assessments, safeguarding reviews, or professional advice. Evidence-based arguments are likely to carry greater weight than anecdotal examples alone.

Linking Evidence to Prejudice

For every point you make, ask yourself:

"How would admitting one or more additional pupils affect the efficient education of pupils already attending the school and/or the efficient use of the school's resources?"

This is the key question the appeal panel will be considering throughout the hearing. If the connection between the issue you have identified and the resulting prejudice to the school is not clear, the argument is unlikely to carry significant weight.

The strongest cases do more than simply identify a problem. They explain **why the issue matters, how additional admissions would make it worse, and what impact this would have on existing pupils, staff, resources, or the school's ability to operate effectively**. Whenever possible, support your arguments with specific examples and evidence rather than general assertions.

CHECK LIST FOR A SCHOOL STATEMENT

This checklist should be completed and submitted with the School Statement to confirm that all required information has been included.

Admission Arrangements
Admission policy attached and applicable to the relevant admission year.
Date of approval/adoption by the Governing Board or CMAT included.
Oversubscription criteria clearly identified.
Evidence that the admission arrangements were applied correctly and impartially.
Child's Application
Child's oversubscription category clearly stated.
Category is consistent with the published admission arrangements and Local Authority records.
Details of the decision to refuse a place, including the date and body/person responsible for the decision.
Application form and any Supplementary Information Form (SIF) included.
Copy of the refusal letter included.
Normal Round Appeals
Number of offers made under each oversubscription criterion included.
Oversubscription criterion under which the last child was offered a place identified.
Where relevant, the distance of the last child offered a place is stated.
Where relevant, the distance from the appellant's home to the school is stated.
Method used to measure distance explained.
Infant Class Size Appeals
The statement clearly identifies whether this is a current Infant Class Size Appeal or a Future Infant Class Size Appeal.
Evidence provided to demonstrate why infant class size legislation applies.
Future projections included where future infant class size prejudice is being claimed.
Prejudice to the School
Clear explanation of how admitting additional pupils would prejudice the efficient education of pupils already on roll.
Clear explanation of how admitting additional pupils would prejudice the efficient use of resources.
Evidence provided to support all prejudice arguments.
Impact on teaching and learning explained.
Impact on staffing and class organisation explained.
Accommodation and Capacity
Current net capacity stated.
Confirmation that net capacity remains accurate, or explanation of any changes since calculation.
School organisation and class structure explained.

Floor plans, photographs or accommodation plans included where relevant.
Dining arrangements explained.
Playground capacity and wet weather arrangements addressed.
Toilet provision addressed.
Specialist teaching facilities and workstations addressed where relevant.
Storage provision addressed where relevant.
Circulation issues identified (corridors, stairways, bottlenecks, entrances and exits).
Pupil Need and Support
Relevant SEND information included.
Relevant EAL information included.
Any significant pastoral, behavioural or safeguarding considerations included.
Health and Safety
Health and safety concerns explained.
Accident statistics or incident data included where relevant.
Evacuation, supervision or site safety issues addressed where relevant.
Final Checks
All figures, pupil numbers and class sizes checked for accuracy.
All supporting evidence attached.
The statement is clear, factual and free from unexplained educational jargon.
The statement explains both <i>what</i> the issue is and <i>why</i> it would adversely affect existing pupils or school resources.
All documents submitted to the Clerk by the required deadline.

Final Quality Check

Before submitting the School Statement, ask yourself:

Would someone with no educational background understand why the child was refused a place and how admitting additional pupils would prejudice the efficient education of pupils already on roll and/or the efficient use of resources?

If the answer is "yes", your statement is likely to assist the panel in understanding the school's case.

APPEALS FLOWCHART

Appellant completes appeal form and returns it to school with a PO number for £200 per appeal



School acknowledges receipt of the appeal form by email



Complete the spreadsheet and return to the Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager (by email)



The Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager will acknowledge the appeal has been received by CSAS, send the parent information about the procedure and notify them of the contact details of the Clerk. The Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager will set up a folder on GovernorHub for your administrator to upload all the appeal documents to



The Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager will confirm with school the details of the Clerk who will contact you and agree arrangements for your appeal(s)



Contact your LA and ask for details of preferences made and places offered.
This information should be uploaded to GovernorHub with your case



Start preparing your School Case

You must upload this to the GovernorHub folder, together with the admissions policy, application form, supplementary information form and any other relevant correspondence, by the deadline given by the Clerk;
the Clerk has to send this information to the appellants at least a week before the appeal date.

THE CLERK WILL ADVISE YOU OF THE DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT



Decide who is to represent the school at the appeal – often it is the headteacher



The Clerk will send you copies of any additional papers received – read these carefully – remember you are not allowed to present new information at the hearing – only in advance



If this is your first appeal, make sure you understand the procedure – read the Code or ask the Clerk



Attend the appeal



After the appeal, the Clerk lets you know the decision and informs the appellant in writing
– they will also inform the Local Authority

The Clerk will upload their notes and a copy of the decision letter to the GovernorHub folder



You should keep file copies of all papers – these should be retained for two years. Please ensure you download all paperwork from the GovernorHub folder within one month of the date of the appeal as the folder will be deleted after a month

THE HEARING

The presenting officer puts the school's case forward to the panel and parents. **Remember an overview taking a maximum of 5-7 minutes**

The panel will be comprised of a chair and at least two other panel members, with at least one member from each category below.

- a) lay people - someone without personal experience in the management of any school or provision of education in any school (except as a school governor or in another voluntary capacity);
- b) people who have experience in education, who are acquainted with educational conditions in the local authority area, or who are parents of registered pupils at school.

Under Paragraph 2.12 of the School Admission Appeals Code, the admission authority must appoint a **Presenting Officer** to explain and present the reasons why a place was refused and to put forward the school's case to the appeal panel.

The Presenting Officer must be familiar with the school's admission arrangements, the application being considered, and the evidence contained within the school's case statement. They should be prepared to answer detailed questions from both the panel and the appellant and should remain present throughout the hearing.

Only **one person** should act as the Presenting Officer. Where an additional representative attends the hearing, their role is limited to providing factual information or answering questions directed to them by the panel. They should not participate in presenting the school's case unless specifically invited to do so.

In most cases, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will be the most appropriate person to undertake this role. However, the role may also be carried out by the Chair of Governors or another suitably experienced governor. When selecting a Presenting Officer, careful consideration should be given to their knowledge of the school and its admission arrangements. Panel members may ask detailed questions about matters such as class organisation, staffing, accommodation, pupil numbers, curriculum delivery, or the admissions process. The school bears the burden of proving its case, and an inability to answer relevant questions may undermine the weight given to its arguments.

The role of the Presenting Officer is to present the admission authority's case in a factual, objective, and professional manner. They should not support or oppose an individual child but should explain how the admission arrangements were applied and why the admission authority believes that admitting additional pupils would cause prejudice to the efficient education of pupils already on roll and/or the efficient use of the school's resources.

Under no circumstances should the Presenting Officer meet with members of the appeal panel without the appellant being present. Any such contact could amount to a breach of the School Admission Appeals Code and may compromise the integrity of the appeal process.

Similarly, schools must not invite panel members to visit the school site before a hearing in order to view accommodation, capacity, or organisational issues. The panel's decision must be based on the evidence presented in the school's written case and at the hearing itself. Where appropriate, supporting evidence such as photographs, plans, timetables, or capacity data may be included with the school's case statement.

Single Appeals

The School Admission Appeals Code requires appeal hearings to be conducted in two stages. A typical single appeal hearing will follow the process below:

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair of the Panel will introduce those present, explain the purpose of the hearing, and outline how the appeal will be conducted. The panel will consist of trained, independent panel members supported by a Clerk.

2. Stage One: The School's Case

The Presenting Officer explains why the child was refused a place and sets out the admission authority's case. This will include how the admission arrangements were applied and why the school believes that admitting additional pupils would cause prejudice to the efficient education of pupils already on roll and/or the efficient use of resources.

The appellant and the panel members will then have the opportunity to ask questions.

3. Stage Two: The Parent's Case

The appellant presents their reasons for wanting a place at the school and explains why they believe the appeal should be upheld.

The Presenting Officer and the panel members may then ask questions about the parent's case.

4. Summing Up by the Presenting Officer

The Presenting Officer is invited to briefly summarise the school's case, followed by the appellant's summary of their case. No new evidence should be introduced at this stage.

5. Summing Up by the Appellant

The Appellant is invited to briefly sum up on behalf of their child.

6. Private Deliberations

Once both parties have concluded their presentations, all participants leave the hearing except the panel members and the Clerk. The panel will then consider the evidence in private and reach its decision. The Clerk remains solely to provide procedural advice and record the panel's decision and reasons but takes no part in the decision-making process.

7. Notification of the Decision

The panel's decision and reasons will be sent to both parties in writing, normally by email, as soon as possible after the hearing.

The role of the Presenting Officer throughout the hearing is to answer questions, clarify points within the school's written case, and assist the panel's understanding of the school's position. As all parties will have received the school's case papers in advance, there is no need to read the case statement word for word; a concise summary of the key points will normally be sufficient.

Multiple Appeals

Where there is more than one appeal for the same year group, the appeal process differs slightly.

The hearing begins with a **group Stage One**, at which all appellants attend together. The admission authority presents its case explaining why places were refused and why the admission of additional pupils would cause prejudice to the efficient education of pupils already on roll and/or the efficient use of resources.

During this stage, all appellants are entitled to hear the school's case and may ask questions of the Presenting Officer. They are also entitled to hear any questions asked by other appellants and the responses given. In some cases, this group hearing may take place on a separate day or evening before the individual appeal hearings.

Once the group Stage One hearing has concluded, **Stage Two** is heard separately for each family. Each appellant meets with the panel individually to present their own reasons for wanting a place at the school. This ensures that personal circumstances can be discussed confidentially.

The procedure for each individual Stage Two hearing is as follows:

1. **The appellant presents their case.**
2. **Questions are put by the Presenting Officer and the panel.**
3. **The admission authority briefly sums up its case.**
4. **The appellant briefly sums up their case.**
5. **The panel considers the appeal in private.**

The panel must not make any decisions until **all appeals for that year group have been heard**. Once every appeal has concluded, the panel will consider the cases and reach its decisions in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code.

Decisions will be communicated in writing, normally by email, as soon as possible after the final appeal has been heard.

As with single appeals, all parties will have received the school's case papers in advance. The role of the Presenting Officer is therefore to summarise the school's case, answer questions, and assist the panel's understanding of the issues, rather than to read the written statement verbatim.

Infant Class Size Appeals

In Infant Class Size (ICS) appeals, the panel does not carry out the usual balancing exercise between the school's case and the parent's reasons for wanting a place. Instead, the panel's powers are limited by law and it can only uphold an appeal in very specific circumstances.

The panel must consider:

- Whether admitting an additional child would breach the infant class size limit of 30 pupils per teacher.
- Whether the admission arrangements complied with the mandatory requirements of the School Admissions Code and Part 3 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
- Whether the admission arrangements were correctly and impartially applied in the child's case.
- Whether the decision to refuse admission was one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

Although parents are given the opportunity to present their case, the panel can only uphold the appeal if one of the above grounds is established. Personal circumstances alone are not sufficient grounds for an Infant Class Size appeal to succeed.

The threshold for finding a decision to be unreasonable is very high. The panel would need to be satisfied that the decision to refuse admission was perverse, irrational, or so unreasonable that no reasonable admission authority would have made it. Successful appeals on this ground are therefore rare. The procedure for an Infant Class Size appeal is also slightly different. After hearing the school's case, the panel will normally proceed directly to the parent's case. The panel will then retire at the conclusion of the hearing to consider all of the evidence and reach its decision in private.

Conclusion of a Hearing

At the conclusion of the hearing, the **Presenting Officer must leave the meeting at the same time as the appellant**. It is important that parents can see that the Presenting Officer takes no part in the panel's decision-making process.

The appeal panel will then consider the case in private, accompanied only by the Clerk. The Clerk's role is to provide procedural advice and record the panel's decision and reasons; the Clerk does not participate in the decision itself.

Once the panel has retired to make its decision, there must be **no communication between the Presenting Officer and the panel**. If further information is required, the panel will seek it through the Clerk and any additional information must be shared with all parties.

These safeguards are fundamental to ensuring that the appeals process is independent, transparent, and compliant with the School Admission Appeals Code. In the event of a complaint, one of the first matters likely to be considered is whether the panel's decision-making process remained private and free from any actual or perceived influence

AFTER THE APPEAL

The panel's decision will normally be communicated to parents in writing, usually by email. In very exceptional circumstances, the decision may be communicated by another method, but this is at the discretion of the Clerk and the appeal panel.

Where an appeal is upheld, the decision is binding on the admission authority and the child must be admitted to the school. In the case of a successful Infant Class Size appeal, the child will be treated as an **excepted pupil**, allowing the class to exceed the statutory limit until numbers reduce and the class returns to compliance with Infant Class Size legislation.

There is no further right of appeal for the same school and the same academic year unless there has been a **significant and material change in circumstances** since the original appeal was heard.

The Clerk will upload the decision letter and appeal record to the appeal's GovernorHub folder and notify the school when these documents are available. The Clerk may also offer feedback where the panel has identified issues relating to admissions procedures, decision-making, or the evidence presented.

It is important to remember that the **Clerk plays no part in the panel's decision-making process**. The Clerk's role is to provide procedural advice to the panel, ensure that the appeal is conducted in accordance with the School

Admission Appeals Code, and maintain an accurate record of proceedings. Decisions are made solely by the independent panel members. The fact that an appeal is upheld does not indicate that the Clerk has done anything wrong; it simply means that the panel, having considered all of the evidence presented, has reached an independent decision to allow the appeal.

Appellants may complain to the appropriate complaints body, currently the Department for Education (DfE), if they believe there has been maladministration or a failure to follow the School Admission Appeals Code. However, neither parents nor schools may complain simply because they disagree with the panel's decision. The panel's decision is binding on both parties. A complaint can only be made about the way the appeal was conducted, not the outcome itself.

If a school has concerns about the conduct of an appeal, these should be raised with the Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager in the first instance.

Schools should download and securely retain appeal documentation from GovernorHub. CSAS will normally delete GovernorHub appeal folders one calendar month after post-hearing documents have been uploaded. The Admission Authority remains responsible for retaining appeal records in accordance with statutory requirements

Key Point

The appeal panel's role is to make an independent decision based on the evidence presented. Once that decision has been reached, it is binding on both the admission authority and the appellant unless successfully challenged on procedural grounds.

Feedback and Complaints

We hope that schools will never need to make a formal complaint about the service provided by the Catholic Schools Appeals Service (CSAS). If you have any concerns, we would encourage you in the first instance to contact the Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager to discuss the matter informally. Many issues can be resolved quickly through discussion and clarification without the need for a formal complaints process.

CSAS is committed to providing a high-quality, professional service, and feedback from schools is always welcomed. If you would like to provide feedback on your experience of the service, please contact the Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager, **Sarah Hand**, at **sarah.hand@nottingham-des.org.uk**.

If, however, you consider that the service provided by CSAS has fallen short of your expectations and you wish to make a formal complaint, please set out your concerns in writing and email them to **complaints@nottingham-des.org.uk** within **10 school days** of the appeal hearing. Please include **"CSAS Complaint"** and your school name in the email subject line.

Please note that complaints must relate to the administration or management of the appeals process and **cannot be made simply because you disagree with the panel's decision**.

The Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager will investigate the complaint and provide a written response within **10 school days**.

Where the complaint concerns the Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager, the matter will be investigated by an appropriate officer of the **NRCDES**. The same timescales will apply.

CSAS views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve. All complaints are taken seriously and are investigated fairly, objectively, and in confidence.

Contact details

Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager	Sarah Hand
Email Address	Sarah.hand@nottingham-des.org.uk
Telephone Number	01332 293833 ext 208 / 07471 355534