



Admissions and Appeals Update

September 2026

2026/27 - 01

A news and information bulletin from the Director of Education to all headteachers and chief executive officers in the Diocese of Nottingham.

Admission Appeals

Following feedback from schools, admissions appeals processes have been reviewed and strengthened. The service has been modernised through the introduction of a fully paper-free appeals process, reducing administration and eliminating printing and copying requirements for schools. Procedures have also been enhanced to strengthen data protection and GDPR compliance while maintaining full compliance with the *School Admission Appeals Code*.

As part of the review of the Catholic Schools Appeals Service (CSAS), schools will soon notice that we now have a new team of Clerks. The move to stricter GDPR controls, clearer financial processes and a digital-first approach to appeals administration has significantly changed the role of the Clerk. Our previous Clerks decided not to continue under these new arrangements. We are extremely grateful for their years of dedicated service and wish them well for the future.

We are pleased to welcome a new team of Clerks who are committed to delivering a modern, secure and fully compliant appeals service. The new team will attend an INSET day on 14 September and, following this, schools with regular appeals will be allocated a designated Clerk for the 2026/27 academic year. Schools with only occasional or ad hoc appeals will be allocated a Clerk as and when required, although we will seek to maintain continuity wherever possible. As in previous years, this allocation will be reviewed at least annually.

During the first few weeks of term, we ask for your patience and support as the new team and systems become established and embedded. As with any significant service improvement, there may be some initial teething issues. We would therefore be grateful if schools could work proactively with Sarah Hand and the Clerks to help resolve any matters that may arise.

These changes have been introduced with a clear purpose: to strengthen processes, enhance GDPR compliance, reduce administrative burdens and provide better value for schools through a more efficient and sustainable appeals service.

Updated Guidance for Schools on Admissions and Appeals

The updated *Guidance for Schools on Admissions and Appeals* is attached. Please ensure that all previous versions of this document are discarded and replaced with the revised guidance.

Cost of Admission Appeals

A new fixed charging structure has been introduced to provide greater clarity and budget certainty. The CSAS administration fee has been reduced to a fixed £35 per appeal, and the cost of an appeal will now be £200.

To help ensure appeals invoices can be processed without delay, schools will be asked to provide a purchase order (PO) number when an appeal is lodged with CSAS. We would be grateful if this could be provided promptly.

Admissions and Appeals Administration Briefing

As mentioned above, a number of important changes have been made to admissions and appeals procedures for the 2026/27 academic year, including updates to appeals administration, document sharing arrangements, and processes for schools.

We would be grateful if you could encourage the member of staff responsible for admissions and appeals administration within your school to attend a briefing session with **Sarah Hand** on:

Thursday 17 September
1.00pm - 2.30pm

This session will provide an overview of the changes and explain the procedures that schools will need to follow during the coming year. Attendance is strongly recommended for all staff involved in administering admissions and appeals. To book, please [click here](#)

We look forward to seeing your admissions and appeals administrators there.

Primary Headteachers: Year 7 Admissions Applications – Supporting Evidence

We regularly encounter cases where parents have sent supporting evidence for Year 7 admissions applications to the Local Authority rather than directly to the secondary school. As a result, the evidence was not considered, and some children were not offered a place at their preferred Catholic school.

Please review the information on your website and ensure it clearly and prominently states that:

All supporting evidence, including evidence relating to faith-based oversubscription criteria (for example, baptism certificates), must be sent directly to the relevant secondary school at the time of application and not to the Local Authority.

We would also encourage schools to reinforce this message to Year 6 parents at the start of the application process in September through all available communication channels, including emails, texts, newsletters and letters home. Repeating the message will help reduce the risk of parents submitting evidence to the wrong organisation.

Where parents appear to be struggling with the admissions process, please offer support and guidance to help ensure applications and supporting evidence are submitted correctly and on time.

Independent Admission Appeal Panel Members

We are continuing to recruit and expand our pool of **Independent Admission Appeal Panel Members**. We would be most grateful if you could kindly circulate the message below to all of your governors.

If any governor is interested in becoming a panel member, or if you know someone who may be interested in supporting Catholic schools admission appeals through this important role, please contact **Sarah Hand** for further information.

Full training and **ongoing support are provided**, so no previous admissions or appeals experience is required.

Whilst this is a voluntary position, panel members are able to claim reasonable expenses to cover out-of-pocket costs incurred in carrying out their duties.

There is no minimum or maximum level of commitment.

All appeal hearings are conducted remotely via **Zoom**, allowing panel members to participate from home.

For further information or an informal discussion about the role, please contact **Sarah Hand, Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager** by email: sarah.hand@nottingham-des.org.uk

Nursery Admissions

Following a request from one of our headteachers, we have developed a **Model Nursery Admissions Policy** and an accompanying **Nursery Information Booklet**. These documents are available to any school that wishes to use or adapt them for their own setting.

Copies can be obtained by contacting **Sarah Hand, Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager**.

Changes to Published Admission Number (PAN)

Earlier this year, schools were asked to consider whether any changes were required to their Published Admission Number (PAN) for the 2028/29 admission arrangements.

If you have not already done so, please work with your CMAT Governance Lead to ensure that any proposed changes are identified in good time. Schools wishing to reduce their PAN should be aware that a six-week consultation is required and that a number of preliminary steps, including obtaining the Bishop's approval, must be completed before the consultation can commence.

If your school is considering any changes to its PAN, whether an increase or decrease, we kindly ask that you liaise with your CMAT Governance Lead at the earliest opportunity. To ensure there is adequate time to complete the required approvals and, where applicable, consultation processes, the **final deadline** for notifying your **CMAT** Governance Lead of any proposed PAN changes is **Wednesday 23 September**.

If no changes are proposed, no action is required. However, schools considering amendments are strongly encouraged to act promptly in order to avoid missing the relevant deadlines.

6th Form Policies – 2028-2029

CMAT Governance Leads have now been provided with the draft admission policy for **2028/29**. We would be grateful if headteachers could review the draft policy, paying particular attention to the **oversubscription criteria** and ensuring that all **application** and **deadline dates** are updated as appropriate.

Please return any amendments to your CMAT Governance Lead by **Wednesday 23 September** to enable the policy determination timetable to be met. Thank you.

Websites – Admissions and appeals information

As we approach the start of the admissions rounds for 2027-2028, please take the opportunity to review the admissions and appeals information published on your school website to ensure it is accurate, up to date and easy for parents to find.

In particular, schools should ensure that the following documents and information are clearly available:

- The school's admission arrangements for **2026/27** and **2027/28**.
- The school's current **Supplementary Information Form (SIF)**.
- Information on the admissions appeals process.
- The **name** and **email address of the person to whom Supplementary Information Forms and supporting evidence should be sent**.

Schools are also asked to make it clear that **all supporting evidence, including faith-based evidence such as baptism certificates, must be sent directly to the school at the time of application and not to the Local Authority**.

Clear, accessible and accurate information will help parents complete the admissions process correctly and reduce the risk of applications being disadvantaged because supporting evidence has been sent to the wrong organisation. An Admissions & Appeals Privacy Notice for uploading to your websites is included in this pack.

New Appeal Form

In order to ensure consistency and that all the information required to process an appeal is received at the outset, we have introduced a standard appeal form for use by schools that do not currently have access to one.

Parents should no longer be advised simply to submit a letter of appeal. Instead, they should be asked to complete the appeal form, which can be obtained from the school office. Wherever possible, schools are

encouraged to provide the form electronically so that parents can complete and return it by email, making submissions easier to read and process.

Schools are welcome to personalise the form by adding their school logo and a return email address.

Please note that this form is intended to support schools that do not have an existing appeal form available. It is **not** intended to replace any appeal forms or procedures used where schools have agreed local arrangements with their Local Authority. Schools operating under such arrangements should continue to follow the agreed local process.

In-Year Admissions: No Cut-Off Dates for Applications

Schools are reminded that parents have the right to apply for a school place at any time during the academic year. Applications must not be refused or rejected because they are received late in the school year, and schools must not impose their own cut-off dates for in-year admissions.

Attachments

- Guidance for Schools on Admissions and Appeals
- New Appeal Form
- Supplementary Information Form 2026-2027
- Privacy Notice

If you have any queries about admissions or appeals, please contact **Sarah Hand**, Admissions, Appeals and Compliance Manager by email: sarah.hand@nottingham-des.org.uk