

Admission Appeals

Frequently Asked Questions

Why make an appeal?

You have a statutory right to make an appeal to an Independent Body against a place not being offered at Sir Thomas Rich's. You are also entitled to appeal to more than one school at the same time.

What grounds should I use for my appeal?

Unfortunately, neither the school nor the Clerk to the Appeals Panel can advise you specifically with regard to this. It has to be your decision as to whether or not you consider you have grounds for an appeal. You will need to demonstrate to the appeals panel that your son is of the required academic standard for Sir Thomas Rich's. Your child's primary school may provide you with evidence to support your case. You may have personal circumstances, medical reasons or other mitigating circumstances that you wish to include in your appeal. Evidence should be provided where possible rather than just stating that this exists. Please note however that as all parents/carers will want to express that they consider STRS will be a good school for their son, this may not, in itself, be a strong case for an appeal.

Do I need good presenting skills to be successful at an appeal?

No – please be reassured that the panel is interested in your reasons for your choice of school for your son, not in your presenting skills. The panel will have read all of the paperwork that you submitted prior to the deadline so it is not necessary to go through everything at the hearing – just bring out the salient points.

Please also note that there is not a dress code applicable for parents attending the appeal. It would be appreciated if mobile phones are switched off during the hearing.

When should my appeal be lodged by?

Your appeal should be received by the school by the deadline as set out in the Appeal Information Pack.

When do I need to submit evidence by?

Please complete in full the form which was sent to you by the school and return it by the deadline. If you have any additional evidence you wish to include after submitting your appeal, this can be sent to the School usually up to about 10 days before your hearing. (The Clerk or the School can advise you of this deadline, if you intend to submit additional information.) The Clerk can then copy and send these additional papers to the panel prior to the appeal hearing. Papers received after this date or brought to the hearing may not necessarily be considered by the panel.

As explained in the letter with your appeal pack, the paperwork you submit is photocopied for each panel member. We ask that papers are single sided, suitable for black and white copying, not stapled or in folders. It is helpful if page numbers can be included.

Should I attend the hearing?

Parents/Carers are strongly encouraged to attend the hearing – but please note that it can be heard in your absence. In these circumstances the panel considers the appeal based on the written information submitted.

How formal is the hearing?

The hearing is a legal process but the panel will try to keep the hearing as informal as possible.

Is there a code of practice for the appeal?

Please refer to the Department for Education Admission Appeals Code which can be found on the www.gov.uk website.

Who is present at the hearing?

Apart from the clerk and the panel members, the school's presenting officer will be present to explain why your son has not been successful in obtaining a place at the school. The school's representative(s) will arrive and leave with you and takes no part in the decision making of the panel.

Who are the Appeals Panel members?

The panel is normally comprised of 3 members. The members of the panel are completely independent from the school and are comprised of a person who has experience in education (who is acquainted with educational conditions in the local authority area, or who is a parent of registered pupils at school) and at least one lay member. One of the panel members will act as the Chair of the Panel.

What is the role of the Clerk to the Appeals Panel?

The clerk is also completely independent from the school. The clerk will make the arrangements with the panel members and will ensure the panel receives all the papers you have sent well in advance of the hearing and will liaise with you concerning the hearing itself. The clerk will also communicate with you the decision of the panel following the appeal.

What if I have special needs or require an interpreter?

Please advise the clerk beforehand and the necessary arrangements can be discussed.

Who makes the decision as to whether or not the appeal is successful?

The panel makes the decision in private after all appeals for the school have been heard. The clerk is present to note the panel's decision but does not play a part in making the decision. Please remember when you are making your case at the appeal hearing that it should be addressed to the panel and not to the school's representative who is present only to explain the school's position and plays no part in the panel's decision.

Can I bring a friend to the appeal?

Yes – you may bring a friend in support or an advisor to speak for you. Please advise the clerk beforehand if you plan to bring a friend or advisor to the appeal hearing.

Should I bring my son to the appeal?

You may bring your son to the appeal. Please consider that the conversation at the appeal hearing will be about him and for some children this can be rather overwhelming. Some parents also find it easier to be able to speak about their reasons for appeal without their son being present. The presence, or not, of your child, has no impact on the panel's decision. Please advise the clerk beforehand if you plan to bring your son to the appeal hearing.

What procedure does the appeal follow?

The appeal hearing will generally follow the following procedure:

- 1 Parents and Presenting Officer called in, Chair of Panel to introduce everyone and explain procedure and decision process.
- 2 Presenting Officer to explain the School's Case.
- 3 Parents to ask questions of Presenting Officer.
- 4 Panel to ask questions of Presenting Officer.
- 5 Parents to explain reasons for appeal.
- 6 Presenting Officer to ask questions of Parents.
- 7 Panel to ask questions of Parents.
- 8 Presenting Officer to sum up.
- 9 Parents to sum up.
- 10 Parents and Presenting Officer to leave.

When will I hear the result of the appeal?

The clerk will advise you when the decision will be conveyed to you – this is usually within 5 working days of the final appeal being heard. The decision made by the panel is final and is binding upon the school.

Is the decision of the panel final?

The decision of the panel cannot be overturned. However, if you consider that there has been maladministration in the running of the appeal process you may contact the Education Funding Agency (EFA). The Clerk will provide information about this in the decision letter.

Appellants do not have a right to a second appeal in respect of the same school for the same academic year unless, in exceptional circumstances, the admission authority has accepted a second application from the appellant because of a significant and material change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school, and still refused admission.