



# COOMBE WOOD SCHOOL

## Appeals Information for Mid-Term Admission 2018-19

Provided a valid application for a place at Coombe Wood School has been made for your child and this application was refused, you have a right of appeal against the decision. Appeals are heard by an Appeal Panel consisting of three to five voluntary members who are independent of the School. More information regarding the Appeals Panel is contained later in this document.

The School is bound to abide by its determined Admissions Criteria when allocating places for our School and you should think very carefully about the decision to appeal.

### How to make an appeal

If you decide to appeal against the decision not to offer your child a place at Coombe Wood School, then you will need to undertake the following:

1. Download an Appeals Pack from the Coombe Wood School website <http://www.cws-croydon.co.uk/Appeals>
2. Complete the Appeal Against Mid-Term Admission form and return it along with any supporting documents to arrive by 20 school days from the date of notification that an application for a place had been unsuccessful.
3. Include on the form, the grounds of your appeal.
4. You are requested to supply **one original and four copies** of your form and all supporting documentation.

Additional evidence may be submitted up to two weeks before the date of the Hearing. Any information received after this date or brought to the Hearing may only be considered at the discretion of the Clerk.

### What Happens Next?

The Clerk to the Appeals Panel will write to you at least 10 school days before the Appeal Hearing to confirm the location, date and time of the Hearing. Your hearing will be within 30 days of the appeal being lodged.

The Clerk to the Appeals Panel will send all your submitted information and the Appeal Statement from the School to all the Panel Members well in advance of the Hearing. This can include comments or information from the Head of School which is relevant to your individual appeal. It may also include information from the School about class size, school accommodation, staffing and whether an additional child will prejudice the efficient use of resources at the School.

## The Appeal Panel

Appeals are heard by an independent panel of three to five voluntary members of the public. The panel must consist of one lay member and at least one person with experience in education. Others present at hearings are the independent Clerk who organises, takes notes and advises on procedures and the Presenting Officer from the Admission Authority.

Panels cannot include members of the governing body of the School you are appealing to, staff at the Local Authority or anyone else who may not be sufficiently neutral in making a decision.

The Chair of the Panel (one of the three to five members) will direct the Appeals Hearing and make sure everyone present is treated fairly.

The Clerk will take the minutes and make all of the arrangements for the Hearing. The Appeals Panel members will have received training to ensure that they fully understand the appeals process and have adhered to the School Admission Appeals Code.

Representatives of the Admission Authority (the School) will also be there to present their case but they will only be present at the same time as the appellants.

## What Happens at the Hearing?

Both the Admission Authority (the School) and parents are given an opportunity to explain their case.

The usual procedure is:

- the Panel Chair welcomes everyone and explains the procedure
- the case for the admission authority is heard
- questioning of the admission authority by the parents and Panel
- the case for the parents is heard
- questioning of the parents by the admission authority and Panel
- summing up by the admission authority
- summing up by the parents

The Panel Members may ask questions at any time of either the School Presenting Officer or the parent/s or their representative. You will be given every opportunity to say what you want to and make your case as to why your child should attend the School.

Each case will be heard individually. You may also bring a friend or relative to your Appeal Hearing or be represented, **but you should NOT bring your child to the Hearing**. Anyone who comes with you can speak on your behalf. You may bring an interpreter with you if you wish. Appeals usually last about 30-45 minutes.

Although it is preferable that you attend to answer any questions about your side of the case, you do not have to attend. Your appeal can be decided on the written information available at the Hearing. You must inform the Clerk if you are unable to attend and the case will be heard in your absence.

## **Reaching a Decision**

The Appeal Panel reaches a decision in private (although the Clerk is present to make notes) by a majority vote. After the Appeal Hearing the Panel will consider all the evidence presented to them carefully and objectively before reaching a final decision.

The Clerk to the Appeals Panel will write to parents and the Admission Authority (the school) if possible within 5 school days to advise them of the decision. This decision of the Appeal Panel is final and binding on the appellants and the School.

## **Following your appeal**

Should you have a complaint about the administration of your appeal, you have the right to contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) who may decide to investigate your complaint. You should be aware that the decision of an Appeal Panel cannot be overturned; the ESFA can only consider whether a panel was set up correctly and acted in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code. The ESFA's contact details are: Academies Central Unit (Academy Complaints), Education Funding Agency, Earlsdon Park, 53-55 Butts Road, Coventry, CV1 3BH, or they can be contacted via an online complaint form via their website, or via telephone on 0370 000 2288.