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Guidance

School admissions arrangements

How to object to admission arrangements and how admission authorities can apply for an in-year variation or appeal against a direction to admit a child.

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Applies to England

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Object to a school's admission arrangements

Anyone may object to the admission arrangements of a school. This includes:

- parents
- members of the public
- governing boards
- academy trusts
- local authorities
- religious authorities

You can object to the schools adjudicator because you consider a school's admission arrangements do not comply with the [School Admissions Code](#) or other legislation.

To object to or refer the admission arrangements of a school, complete and return the [Objection to school admission arrangements](#) (ODT, 39.3 KB) form.

Deadline for objections

Objections must be made before 15 May. Objections will be considered by the adjudicator if they're made on time.

Admission arrangements can be referred to the adjudicator at other times, however the adjudicator has the discretion on whether or not to consider the case if it is referred after 15 May.

Adjudicators' decisions

The adjudicator will decide whether or not to uphold an objection, or parts of an objection. The adjudicator will also identify any other parts of the admission arrangements which do not conform with the [School Admissions Code](#) or other legislation.

They will write their decision in what is called a determination, and set a date for the admission authority to revise its arrangements. Adjudicators' decisions are binding and enforceable and can only be challenged by judicial review in the High Court.

Adjudicators do not consider the admission of individual children to schools other than through the direction process.

Apply for an in-year variation to admission arrangements

Once admission arrangements have been determined for a particular academic year, they cannot be revised by the admission authority unless to give effect to:

- a mandatory requirement of the Code
- admissions law
- a determination of the adjudicator
- any misprint in the admission arrangements

Admission authorities may propose other variations where they consider such changes to be necessary in view of a major change in circumstances. For community, voluntary and foundation schools, such proposals must be referred to the adjudicator for approval, and the appropriate bodies notified. See paragraph 3.6 of the [School Admissions Code](#).

Admission authorities should use the [Request for an in-year variation for admissions](#) (ODT, 42.3 KB) form to make their variation proposal.

Academy schools proposing to vary admission arrangements should contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Appeal against a direction to admit a child

A local authority has the power to direct the admission authority for a voluntary aided or foundation school in its area for which it is not the admission authority, to admit a child even when the school is full. The local authority can only make a direction in respect of a child who has been refused entry to, or has been permanently excluded from, every suitable school within a reasonable distance.

A local authority also has the power to direct the admission authority for a voluntary aided or foundation school for which it is not the admission authority, in any part of England, to admit a looked-after child. The local authority cannot make such a direction in respect of a school from which the child has been permanently excluded. See paragraphs 3.23 to 3.28 of the [School Admissions Code](#).

For academies, directions are made by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education. Requests from local authorities for an academy to be directed to admit a child should be made to the ESFA. See paragraph 3.29 of the [School Admissions Code](#).

Before deciding to give a direction, a local authority must consult the governing board of the school, the parent of the child and the child if they are over compulsory school age.

Timescales

If, following consultation, the local authority decides to direct, it must inform the governing body and headteacher of the school of its intention to direct. The governing board can appeal the intention to direct the school to admit the child to the OSA within:


- 7 days for a looked-after child
- 15 days for a hard-to-place child

Please note that these timescales are actual days, not working days, and include weekends, bank holidays and school holidays.

If you wish to appeal against a direction to admit a child
email: osa.team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk.

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