School Appeals – Frequently Asked Questions & Guidance Notes

Academic Year 2026-2027

My child has not been given a place at the school I applied for, what can I do?

You are entitled to appeal the decision to refuse your child a place at any school you named on your common application form. In most cases this will be because the school is full and there were other children who lived closer to the school than you do.

Our admissions criteria is:

1. Looked after and previously looked after children
2. Siblings
3. Children of Staff
4. Straight Line Proximity – children will be prioritised according to the distance they live from the school.

How is a sibling defined?

A sibling must attend either Bullers Wood School for Girls or Bullers Wood School for Boys in Year 7 to Year 11 at the time of application/the application deadline, and Year 8 to Year 12 at the time the applicant child is admitted to the School.

For the avoidance of doubt, siblings who are in Year 11 at the time of application/the application deadline who will not be transferring to Year 12, and siblings who are in Year 12 or 13 at the time of application will not meet the definition of a sibling.

In this policy, a 'sibling' is a full sibling (sharing both parents), half sibling (sharing one parent), adopted sibling, long term foster sibling (i.e. not a temporary placement), step-sibling (one child's parent married to the other child's parent) or a natural or adopted child of their parent's cohabiting partner. In all cases, the sibling must live and sleep at the child's home address (as defined by this policy) for more than 50% of their time from Sunday to Thursday night during term time, where they are being raised as part of the same core family unit.

For the avoidance of doubt, a child of a friend or extended family member (e.g. cousin) will **not** be a 'sibling' for this purpose, even if they live and sleep at the same address as the applicant child.

For inclusion in this category, parents must clearly state the sibling's full details in the application form.

More information can be found in our Admissions Policies for **2026-2027** on our website:

Bullers Wood School for Girls – Admission Policy for 2026-2027 for September 2026 Entry

Bullers Wood School for Boys – Admission Policy for 2026-2027 for September 2026 Entry

Inicio Educational Trust is a company limited by guarantee
Chief Executive: Mr Terry Millar MA
Registered in England, Company Number: 7588418
Registered Office: St Nicolas Lane, Logs Hill, Chislehurst, Kent. BR7 5LJ

How do you measure the home/school distance and how do you ensure it is correct?

Bromley Admissions administers our allocation of school places and they provide and check the home/school distance. They will provide a statement about each student appealing and how the admissions criteria have been applied in their case.

What has been the proximity in recent years?

How far the school is able to offer under the distance criterion is dependent on the applicants who applied, what criterion that they are considered under and where they live.

Year	Bullers Wood School for Girls	Bullers Wood School for Boys
2022	1.266 miles	1.465 miles
2023	1.252 miles	1.226 miles
2024	1.439 miles	1.397 miles
2025	1.526 miles	1.531 miles

I put your school down as my first preference but have not been offered a place. My friend, however, put you down as a lower preference and has been offered a place – why?

Schools are not allowed to know the preference where they have been placed on the common application form, only the local authority are aware of this. All applicants are considered under the school's published admissions criteria. If two or more schools can offer the child a place, the local authority will look at preferences and offer places to the highest preference school.

You are my closest school, I can't understand why my child has not been offered a place?

Your child has been considered under the distance criterion. The furthest distance we were able to offer for **September 2026** was:

Bullers Wood School for Girls – 1.558 miles

Bullers Wood School for Boys – 1.861 miles

You must therefore live further than this distance and this is the reason your child was not offered a place.

I have to work and my family member/friend who has children attending this school has agreed to support me with the school runs, do you take this into consideration?

We are unable to take such matters into consideration. We have set admissions criteria to ensure every child has an equal opportunity.

The school my child has been offered will be a difficult journey for them; is this taken into consideration?

Journey time is not taken into consideration. If we took all such matters into consideration for every child, we would not be able to apply the admissions criteria fairly and without discrimination.

My child is high achieving/excels at sports, are these things taken into consideration?

We are a non-selective school. All applicants are considered under the published admissions criteria.

How does the waiting list work?

All children that apply to the school and have not been offered a place go on the waiting list **unless** they have been offered a place at a school they listed as a higher preference. Your child will remain on the waiting list until **31st December**. If you wish to be considered for a place after the waiting lists have closed, you will need to reapply for an In-year Admission.

Places are offered from the waiting list as they become available as per the admissions criteria. An applicant's place on the waiting list can change from day to day as new applicants are added to the list.

For waiting list enquiries please contact the local authority as the school does not have access to the waiting lists.

If I appeal, will that change my place on the waiting list?

No.

How many appeals have been successful in previous years and did this result in the school having to exceed its Published Admissions Number?

Year	Bullers Wood School for Girls			Bullers Wood School for Boys		
	Appeals Heard	Appeals Upheld	Appeals Rejected	Appeals Heard	Appeals Upheld	Appeals Rejected
Sep-22	21	1	20	23	1	22
Sep-23	7	0	7	16	0	16
Sep-24	4	1	3	11	1	10
Sep-25	9	0	9	8	0	8
TOTALS	**41**	**2**	**39**	**58**	**2**	**56**

The Published Admissions Number (PAN) has sometimes been exceeded due to an appeal being upheld, **however** in most cases a student has declined their place during the summer so that we were back to PAN by the start of the term in September.

What is your Published Admissions Number?

Our published admissions numbers are: Bullers Wood School for Girls – 232 students

Bullers Wood School for Boys – 180 students

How do I make an appeal?

Please visit the Admissions and Appeals pages on our website:

Admissions and Appeals for Years 7-11 - Bullers Wood Girls (bwsgirls.org)

Admissions and Appeals - Bullers Wood Boys (bwsboys.org)

Here is some more information about schools appeals, taken from the Borough's booklet:
Admissions_Secondary_2026-27 (bromley.gov.uk) (Pages 12 & 13)

Admissions myths

You may hear many different stories about the admissions process from various sources and may be given some tips from other people on how to secure a place, but there are no secret formulas to getting a school place.

Here are some things that we have heard people say and the reason why they are not correct:

"Only applying for one school will mean that I have to get a place at that school"

This is not true. If the school is oversubscribed with children who have a higher priority than your child, the Council won't be able to offer this school and will allocate a place at an alternative school, which may not be one of your preferred schools and may be some distance from your home.

To give your child the best opportunity of getting a preferred school, we strongly recommend you use all six of your preferences, and include at least some local schools in your list.

"Living close to the school means I am guaranteed a place there"

This is not true. We cannot guarantee that your child will be offered a place at a particular school. All places are offered based on the published oversubscription criteria for each school and we strongly advise that you read and understand these criteria when making your application.

"It doesn't matter if I miss the application deadline"

This is not true. If you apply after the deadline, your application will be processed and considered after all those applications that were received on-time and your preferred schools may already be full by that time. We strongly advise that you do not miss the closing date for applications (31 October 2025).

"If I appeal, I will get the school I want"

This is not true. All appeals are considered by an independent appeal panel for the relevant school, and they make decisions based on the cases they hear, whether they feel the school is full to capacity and whether they are satisfied that the admissions process has been carried out correctly. There is no guarantee that you will be successful in gaining a place at appeal.

"Members of the Bromley Admissions Team can get me the school I want"

This is not true. Whilst the Admissions Team can provide you with clear advice, help you understand the oversubscription criteria for each school and assist you in navigating the admissions processes, we cannot influence the outcome of any application.

"Schools will only offer me a place if I have named them as a first preference"

This is not true. Schools do not know what preference they have been named. All children are ranked in accordance with the individual school's over-subscription criteria. The Council will then offer the highest available preference from all those able to offer a place.

Guidance Notes

All schools are required to abide by the School Admissions Code and the School Admission Appeals Code.

When a local authority or an admission authority informs a parent/carer of a decision to refuse their child a place at a school for which they have applied, it **must** include the reason why admission was refused; information about the right to appeal; the deadline for lodging an appeal and the contact details for making an appeal. Parents/carers **must** be informed that, if they wish to appeal, they have to set out their grounds for appeal in writing. Admission authorities **must not** limit the grounds on which an appeal can be made. *School Admission Appeals Code, 1st October 2022 (Section 2.5)*.

The Department of Education has agreed to continue allowing schools to hold virtual admission appeal hearings. Parents/Carers can have their appeal hearing either by Video Conferencing (Zoom platform) or by Telephone Conference Call.

Your daughter/son has been considered for a place at Bullers Wood School for Girls or Bullers Wood School for Boys under their published admissions policy but has not been offered a place as there were other applicants who had a higher priority as per the criteria below:

1. Looked after and previously looked after children
2. Siblings
3. Children of staff
4. Straight line proximity – children will be prioritised according to the distance they live from the school.

Therefore, if your child has not been offered a place at the school, it is because they live further away than the last place offered under the proximity criterion.

For **Year 7 September 2026** our schools received:

- Bullers Wood School for Girls – 758 applications
- Bullers Wood School for Boys – 648 applications

The Appeal Process

The closing date for completed appeal forms is **Tuesday 31st March 2026.**

School Admission Appeals will be heard as follows:

- Bullers Wood for Girls – Tuesday 9th June 2026 and Wednesday 10th June 2026

- Bullers Wood for Boys – Thursday 4th June and Friday 5th June 2026

You will be given at least 10 school days' notice of your appeal hearing date and time.

School Admission Appeals will be heard by a panel of three members. They are completely independent of the school and recruited by Sharon Oliver Consultancy Ltd. Neither the appeals clerk nor the panel members will have any connection to the school.

The Clerk will send you a letter which will advise you of the date and time of your appeal hearing and will include all of the documentation you have sent for your appeal, plus the Headteacher's statement as to why they are unable to admit additional students and their admissions policy. You will be given a date in the letter to send in any further supporting documents.

The Panel will receive a copy of the above-mentioned documentation and any further supporting documents that you provide.

Process for the appeal hearing

Stage 1

When making their decision the panel must consider the following:

a) **whether the admission arrangements (including the area's co-ordinated admission arrangements) complied with the mandatory requirements of the School Admissions Code and Part 3 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998;**
and
b) **whether the admission arrangements were correctly and impartially applied.**
c) **whether the admission of additional children would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.**

The school will have provided the following:

- A copy of their published admissions policy, which shows how all applicants were considered for a place.
- A statement to confirm why they cannot accept any further students

Parents/carers should read the Headteacher's statement and consider if there are any questions that you would like to ask the school about this statement in the appeal hearing.

NB. Questions raised at this stage are restricted to those regarding the school's general statement. Keep all questions about your own case until your individual appeal hearing.

Stage 2

The Panel must balance the prejudice to the school against the parent/carer's case for the child to be admitted to the school.

You will be given a date and time to present your individual case to the panel. This is your opportunity to tell the panel why it is important for your child to attend the school, even if it is full, and the prejudice to their education/difficulties they would face if they had to attend another school.

Schools are not allowed by law to hold places in case an appeal is upheld. If a vacancy occurs in the required year group it will be offered as per the published admissions policy. Appealing for a place will not change your child's place on the waiting list.

You may invite a member of your family, a friend, or a representative to join you, either to help you say what you want, or to speak for you, or to simply give you support. The friend/adviser may be a locally elected politician or an employee of the local authority such as a social worker, special educational needs adviser or learning mentor, provided there is no conflict of interest. ***Please notify the clerk in advance if you intend to call any witnesses or be represented at the hearing as they will need to be invited to the meeting.***

You should consider writing down what you want to say, or bullet point specific points, this may help you to feel more confident and ensure that you have said everything you want to say.

If you are appealing because of a medical condition, it is important that you send in any supporting documents that will back up your case for the panel to take into consideration, within the time stated in your invitation letter.

The Panel will not make any decisions until they have heard all of the appeals.

The decision of the Independent Appeals Panel is binding on all parties.

Please note that Appeal Panels cannot take into consideration the academic ability of the child unless the school is a grammar school.

If you wish to appeal, please complete the appeal form which is available from the school website and **return via email** to:

Mrs H Berry **Bullers Wood School for Girls** hberry@bwsgirls.org 020 8467 2280	Mrs K McCarthy **Bullers Wood School for Boys** kmccarthy@bwsboys.org 020 8016 0710

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