APPEALS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What happens if we have been unsuccessful?

The letter sent by Lancashire County Council will ask you to notify them whether or not you accept the place being offered. If the answer is no you should definitely contact them to say so and ask for an appeal form to be sent to you.

How do I make an appeal?

You should complete the form from Lancashire County Council explaining your reasons for your appeal. We cannot stress enough how important it is for you to complete this form fully and also to provide as much supporting information about your appeal. Typical reasons for appealing might be that your child has attended a church primary school and therefore you would like them to continue with a church school-based education, mentioning the special atmosphere and ethos which we believe is part of Fisher More. Your child may have a special talent for an activity which we support as an extra-curricular club such as dancing or sport or want to get involved in charity work such as SVP (something which is not necessarily on offer at all the local high schools). Family circumstances and/or health issues might mean that Fisher More is the most appropriate school. The appeal form is your initial opportunity to give your reasons and also will give us some guidance about how we might be able to help you further.

Why does the school have to oppose an appeal?

The school has a standard admission number of 150. Any places awarded over this number has consequences for the delivery of the curriculum, the number of teachers employed, the size of the building, etc. Although we would love to take all the children who want to come to Fisher More, we have to oppose appeals on the grounds that the school cannot accommodate more than 150 each year so when a family submits an appeal form, the school also has to complete their own submission giving these reasons.

How is the appeal organised?

As Lancashire is a very large county with many schools, LCC have a programme for hearing appeals which begins shortly after the Easter holidays and lasts until into July. We are notified of the date(s) when our appeals will be heard and your form and our submission must be sent to the Legal Department by a specified deadline. Once this deadline has passed neither party can send in any more information. You will then receive a letter giving you a date and time for your appeal. It is vital that you attend as failure to do so is generally seen as a lack of interest by the panel and your appeal will fail. We do not recommend you take your child to the appeal as although the panel will try their utmost to put you at your ease, parents often become quite emotional by the process. Everyone involved in the appeal hearing will receive copies of both the parents and the school’s submissions prior to the meeting.

Who listens to my appeal?

The panel consists of three people, all experienced in educational matters and specifically the appeal situation. One person represents LCC, the second represents the Diocese and the third is a lay person with sympathies to and knowledge of a Catholic education. None of the panel will be from this locality and will consequently not know any of the people coming before them. One of these three people will chair the meeting. Ms Hayes will represent the school and Mrs Schofield (Pastoral Administrator with responsibility for admissions) will be present for clarification and information reasons. The Clerk to the appeal panel will also be present.
**Where is the appeal held?**

Our appeals are usually held in a room at Burnley Football Club. The Clerk to the panel greets the parent(s) and the Headteacher in the foyer and explains the process before everyone goes together to the room where the panel are meeting.

**What happens next?**

The Chair of the panel starts off the proceedings by introducing themselves and their colleagues. The parents are asked to tell the panel why they are appealing for a place. This is when it is most helpful and advantageous for the parents to have already sent in as much information as possible as it is not possible for additional items to be brought up at this point. The panel may then ask the parents to expand on anything which is unclear or ask further questions.

Ms Hayes is then asked to present her case for opposing the appeal and the panel will ask her questions specific to your child’s appeal.

Both sides are asked to summarise their situations and then they leave the room with the clerk while the panel deliberates. If there is only one appeal the panel may make a decision on the same day. Typically though (and most usually for the summer appeals), the decision is notified by letter to both parties afterwards.

**What are my chances of success?**

The panel really do act sensitively and objectively, using their judgement and experience to determine the best outcome as far as possible. They will also take other factors into account such as the size of other year groups. Last summer 12 families out of 24 won their appeal for a place.

**What if I win my appeal?**

We will make sure the LCC Pupil Access Office is aware of this and we will also be in contact with your child’s primary school to ensure they are included in our transition arrangements.

**What happens if I lose my appeal?**

It is only possible to appeal once in any school year so if you are unsuccessful you either have to accept the place being offered by LCC or you must find a place at another school yourself.

**Is there a waiting list?**

Yes, we do have a waiting list in operation for the full Autumn term of that academic year. After this time it is assumed that the child has generally settled in another school unless we hear to the contrary.

Helpful phone numbers and contacts:

- **School:** 01282 865299  Ask for Mrs Schofield. Mrs Yates may also be able to help if Mrs Schofield is unavailable.
- **LCC:** 01254 220718  Pupil Access Office