



Twyford C of E Academies Trust:

Apply to become a Volunteer School Appeals Panel Member

- Are you interested in Education and want to get involved?
- Do you have excellent listening skills, have the ability to put people at ease and make balanced decisions?
- Would you like to become involved in an important, impartial service provided to parents and schools?

If you have answered yes to any of the above why not apply to become a Volunteer School Appeals Panel Member.

What is a School Admission Appeals Panel?

This is a panel of people independent of the County Council or the Governing Bodies (i.e. the admitting authorities) for schools, which hears appeals from parents or guardians if their child is refused a place at their preferred school or if their child is permanently excluded from school.

What does a School Admission Appeals Panel do?

The law that governs appeals against a decision not to offer a child a place or to exclude a child is set out in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The contents of this Act are then regulated by the School Admissions Code and the School Admissions Appeal Code, other law relating to admissions, and relevant human rights and equalities legislation. The appointed panel considers the reasons why the admission authority has refused a child a place or excluded a child from school as well as the special circumstances of the parent or guardians case. They then make a decision on the issues in line with the regulations, codes other guidance and law that affects admissions and admission appeals in England. The decision of the panel is binding on the admission authority.

Who is on the panel?

A panel is made up of three people, a chair and at least two others. One panel member must have some experience of education (e.g. a parent of a child at school, a teacher or somebody with experience of education) a second member must be a "lay" member (e.g. those without experience in education (except as a governor or in another voluntary capacity)). All panel members must be independent of the admissions authority, the parties appealing and the preferred school. The panel is fully supported by a trained Clerk who is there to undertake administrative duties and advise on legal and procedural issues but is not part of any decision made by the panel.

Do panel members receive training?

Yes all panel members are trained before sitting on a panel and this is refreshed at least every two years.



Can anyone be a panel member?

The School Admissions (Appeal Arrangements (England) Regulations 2012 disqualify certain people from membership of an appeal panel. A person is disqualified if they are:

- a. ***A member of the local authority which is the admission authority or in whose area the school in question is located***
- b. ***A member or former member of the governing body of the school in question,***
- c. ***Employed by the local authority or governing body of the school in question, other than as a teacher or teaching assistant,***
- d. ***Any person who has, or at any time has had, any connection with the authority, school or any person in sub-paragraph c)above which might reasonable be taken to raise doubts about that person's ability to act impartially***
- e. ***Any person who has not attended training required by the admission authority arranging the appeal panel.***
- f. ***A person employed as a teacher or a teaching assistant by the local authority or the governing body of another school maintained by the authority may not be take n, by reason only of that employment, to have such a connection with the authority as mentioned in paragraph (d) above. A person who is a teacher or teaching assistant at a school may not be a member of an appeal panel for the consideration of an appeal for that school. A person may not be a member of an appeal panel for the consideration of a decision not to offer a child a place where they were involved in making that decision or provided information which contributed to the decision.***

What skills do panel members need?

The choice of school for a child is very important for that child and their family. Not being offered a preferred choice of school or being excluded from a school can be an emotional experience for a family. Panel members must be able to approach each appeal with impartiality and independence. They must be able to listen to each side and put people at ease so that they can present their case fully. The panel members must ensure that everyone is heard and the process is fair. Based on evidence presented to them they must be able to make a balanced decision.

How much time would a panel member need to give?

The appeals are arranged so that they are heard for half a day or a full day depending on the amount of appeals received. Appeals usually increase after parents/guardians are notified of the primary and secondary school their children have been allocated, this is usually in early summer.

Do panel members get paid?

Panel Members provide a very important volunteer service which is unpaid. However Panel Members are entitled to expenses, such as travel when attending panel hearings and training.

More information about School Admission Appeals Panels and how to volunteer is available from: Valerie Drake email: clerks@twyford.ealing.sch.uk