Apply to become a Volunteer 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 answered YES to any of the above then why not apply to become a Volunteer Appeals Panel Member.

What is a School Admission Appeals Panel?

This is a panel of people independent of the Governing Body (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. 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?

Yes, unless you are employed by the Local Authority in any capacity other than as a teacher. Teachers may serve but not participate in proceedings relevant to their own school. You cannot serve if you have been a Councillor on the local council.

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 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 during the working day. Appeals usually increase after parents/guardians are notified of the secondary school their child has been allocated. These appeals are usually held early summer and generally take two or three days to be heard.

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.

Contact cchandler@barrbeaconschool.co.uk for more information.

DMB/cc/Volunteer Appeal Panel Member
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