

SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS PANEL MEMBERS



Would you be interested in volunteering to be a member of a school admission appeals panel?

The Governors of Catholic schools are responsible for convening appeals hearings if requested by a parent or carer who is refused admission to their school. The Birmingham Diocesan Education Service recruits and trains individuals to sit on appeals for Catholic schools within the Diocese and is currently inviting applications from individuals who would like to volunteer for this service.

The appeals panel service is an essential and valued service on which schools rely in order to organise independent appeals hearings. Each individual appeal, on average, takes between 20 minutes and half an hour (although some can be shorter or longer than this depending on its complexity). Schools may sometimes only have a single appeal and so the time commitment for sitting on such an appeal panel would be short. However, many schools, usually during the summer term, have multiple appeals lodged and so organise full days to hear a number of appeals consecutively. This can sometimes require a panel member to commit to sitting on an appeal for two or, very occasionally, three days. Where there are a number of appeals for one school, the same panel must hear all of the appeals. However, panel members are free to decide their own availability and it would be entirely your own decision whether to agree to sit on a particular school's panel or not once you are aware of the time commitment involved.

The role is voluntary and flexible. Each appeal hearing is different and interesting. Initial training is compulsory and takes approximately three hours. Panel members then need to attend refresher training every two years. This refresher training takes approximately two hours. All training sessions are held at the offices of the Diocesan Education Service in Coleshill (B46 3EA).

Appeal panels must consist of a mixture of:

- a. Lay Members – These are people without personal experience in the management or provision of education in any school (although it is permissible to use people who have experience as governors of other schools or who have been involved in education in any other voluntary capacity.)
- b. Education Members – People who are acquainted with educational conditions in the area, or a parent who has a child registered at a school.

There are some disqualifications which may affect you sitting on a panel for a specific school but where that occurs, you would be able to consider hearing appeals at other schools.

Although the role is voluntary, panel members are able to claim expenses from the school. Travelling expenses are paid at the rate set by the local authority area in which the school is located but panel members also decide how far they are willing to travel.

If this is a role that you think you might be interested in considering, application forms and further information can be obtained from:

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