

Volunteer School Admission Appeals Panel Members Required.

- 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?

The role of a Volunteer School Appeals Panel Member may be for you.

The Panel: A School Admission Appeals Panel is independent of the Council or the Governing Bodies for schools, which hears appeals from parents or guardians if their child is refused a place at their preferred school. The panel considers the evidence from both parties and then makes a decision on the issues in line with the law, regulations, codes and other guidance that affects appeals in England. The decision of the panel is binding on the authority.

Eligibility: The panel consists 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 authority, the parties appealing and the 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. DMBC employees and Councillors cannot be Appeal Panel Members.

Training: All panel members must receive training and this is refreshed every two years. The next training is on 16th March 2016.

Key skills: 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. They must appreciate that often it is an emotional process for the parents. 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.

Time Commitment: 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. A commitment of at least four times a year is appreciated.

Expenses only: 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.

Application: Interested persons should apply in writing quoting reference L/SM/EL/ED specifying the names of two persons willing to act as referees to :-

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