

Frequently Asked Questions

School Appeals Panel Members

Do you have excellent listening skills, 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?

We are looking for new volunteers to become members of the Torbay Independent Appeals Panel. Panel members must be able to put nervous parents at ease and make balanced decisions to ensure that parents and schools receive a fair appeal hearing.

What do panels do?

If a parent is refused a place at their preferred school for their child or if their child has been permanently excluded from school they can appeal to an independent panel. The Panel will consider the special circumstances of the parent's case, the reasons why the admission authority refused their child a place or excluded their child from school and makes a decision on the issue. The decision of the Panel is binding on the admission authority.

Who is on the Panel?

We have a pool of members and use three members to sit on our panels. There are two types of Panel Member – those with experience of education (e.g. a parent of a child at school or somebody with experience in education) and “lay” members (i.e. those without any experience in education).

Would I receive training?

Yes, all new Panel Members have to receive training before taking part in an appeal. After this initial training Panel Members will receive regular refresher training.

How much time would I need to give?

Appeals can only be heard during school terms, the appeals are arranged so that there would be a half a day to a days worth of appeals at any one time. Appeals tend to peak at the time when parents are notified of the primary and secondary schools that their children will be attending, this is usually May to July.

Do I get paid for serving on the Panel?

Whilst service on the Panel is voluntary, members are entitled to expenses (such as travel) and refreshments are usually provided for Panel Members throughout the day for sessions held in person. Please note most of our appeals are held virtually via Zoom.

How do I apply to become a panel member?

For an application form or more information please contact the Governance Support team on **01803 207087** or email **governance.support@torbay.gov.uk**