

# CATHOLIC SCHOOLS APPEALS SERVICE

## Appeal Panel Members – your questions answered

Thank you for your interest in becoming an appeal panel member.

Here are some of the questions which are often asked.

If you have any other queries please let us know.

When you have read this information, if you are willing to be entered on our database and called as a member, please contact us to confirm this.

You can do this by emailing [annazimand@talktalk.net](mailto:annazimand@talktalk.net) or [julie.sweeney@nottingham-des.org.uk](mailto:julie.sweeney@nottingham-des.org.uk) or by ringing the Diocesan Centre.

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### ***Do I have to know about admissions law?***

If you are a Lay Member, you do not initially need to know a great deal about the law regarding admissions although, if you are a school governor, you will already have some basic knowledge from your own school. You will also need to do some reading and we will provide you with information papers to help you. You will find that as you serve on panels, you will become more conversant with the detail of the law. Don't forget that at all times, there will be a trained Clerk on hand to advise and guide you and other panel members.

### ***What training is provided?***

We try to provide a day's training session at the Diocesan Centre each year. Where the need arises, we are also willing to travel to other areas to provide training. Local Authorities sometimes provide training sessions for panel members in their area. When you first become a panel member, you will be invited to sit in and observe some panel hearings. We will not ask you to sit on a panel until you feel confident.

### ***How often will I be asked to sit on a panel?***

There is no simple answer to this question as the incidence of appeals can be unpredictable. The main body of annual appeals normally take place during the summer term but increasing numbers of appeals happen throughout the year. The more panel members we recruit, the fewer times each will be called and of course, we will understand if we call you and you are not available.

### ***How far do will I have to travel?***

You are more likely to be asked to sit on a panel in an area of the diocese where you are not known and where you can be truly independent. This does mean some travelling will be involved as the diocese covers a wide area. We do take distance into account when calling panel members and sometimes we can arrange for transport to be shared. If there are any restrictions on how far you can travel, please let us know.

### ***Do I have to be a Catholic?***

Appeals are part of the judicial process and any suitable people can be panel members. It is helpful however when doing appeals for Catholic schools, for members to have some knowledge and understanding of the Catholic school system and the church's role in education.

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## ***Will I sit on panels in my own area?***

Only if you are truly independent and have no connection with the school in any capacity. In practice, this does mean that you would normally not be called to sit on a local panel.

## ***Will I be paid?***

Panel Members are volunteers but we do pay travel expenses (45p per mile) and meals and refreshments are provided when required.

## ***Where do appeals take place?***

Appeals must take place in a neutral venue. This means that we normally use local council offices, parish halls and occasionally hotels.

## ***How many members on a panel?***

Usually there are three panel members.

## ***How many appeals take place at one time?***

This varies. Sometimes, a school may have just one appeal which takes around half an hour with additional time for panel meetings. More often there will be a few appeals taking up half a day or slightly more. When secondary schools have their annual round of appeals during the summer term, there could be as many as twenty or thirty appeals spread over a number of days.

## ***Where can I find more information?***

We can provide you with information which we send to parents. This will give you a first insight into the appeals process. This information includes a Helpsheet which contains a number of other helpful agencies.

## ***OK – I'm interested, what now?***

You may already have completed our Contact Form and sent it to us. If so, we already have your details and we will add you to our database once you confirm you would like to go ahead. If you haven't had the form, please ask us to send you one.

## ***No thanks but I know someone who might!***

Maybe, after reading this, you feel you are not able to commit the time to this work. Do you know someone who might? If so please pass this information to them.

Thank you for reading this information.

**Anna Zimand**

Catholic Schools Appeals Service