

PLACING IN SCHOOLS APPEAL COMMITTEE



RECRUITMENT OF NEW MEMBERS 2025



RECRUITMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

What are we looking for?

The West Lothian (Placing in Schools) Appeal Committee is looking for more education experienced people and parents to help decide on appeals for places at schools or against the exclusion from schools.

Who is on the committee?

The committee is made up of 3 people; one is an expert in education who will chair the meeting; one is the parent of a child at a school in West Lothian; and one is a councillor from West Lothian Council or an appointed member from the council's Education Executive.

What do committee members do?

Committee members hear from the parents/guardians of children who have been refused a place at the school of their choice. They also hear appeals when a parent or guardian feels that their child was wrongly excluded from school. In some cases, the young person concerned must submit an appeal. They also hear the case made by the education authority on their reasons for refusing a placing request or excluding a child from school.

How are committee members selected and appointed?

Members of the committee are appointed by the council's Chief Solicitor. Anyone interested in getting involved must complete an application form. Applicants will be short listed and successful candidates will be invited to attend an informal information session to discuss the committee and their suitability for the role.

Members are appointed to serve on the committee for a period that coincides with the local government term of office. New members will serve until May 2027 (or earlier if they chose to resign or are no longer eligible to be involved).

Parent members can only serve on the committee while they have a child at a school in West Lothian. Should your child leave school prior to May 2027, your membership of the committee will automatically cease.

I work, will I need to take time off to attend appeals?

Appeals take place on week days during business hours. In June when the block appeals are being considered, the committee usually meets two to three times per week, often for full days. Outwith this period, meetings are scheduled to take place once a month with hearings held only as and when required.

For members who are employed, this usually means asking their employers for time off work. Whilst many large companies support voluntary work, it is advisable to speak to your employer to ensure they will support you in your application.

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Will I receive training?

You will receive training to prepare you for your role on the committee and ad-hoc training to keep you updated with changes. New members will require to attend at least one hearing as an observer.

The training will provide an overview of the statutory duties and give guidance on developing the necessary skills.

Preparing for a hearing

Around 10 days before a hearing, committee members are sent reports and papers relating to individual cases. Members must prepare for each hearing by reading the papers to make sure they fully understand the circumstances and reasons for the appeal.

During the hearing members must:-

- ensure that their conduct during the hearing is fair and that everyone at the hearing is given the opportunity to speak and present their case; and
 - make clear, well founded decisions based on the information presented at the hearing.
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Keeping information safe

As a public body, West Lothian Council has responsibilities under data protection legislation. The papers you receive in advance of attending an appeal will contain extremely sensitive information about children, young people and their families. Each member is responsible for keeping the information safe at all times, including if traveling to a hearing. They must also ensure that the documents are disposed of in a secure manner.

Key requirements

- Have an awareness and interest in education and schools across West Lothian
 - Be a good listener able to understand and interpret information presented orally and in writing
 - Be capable of making decisions based on information received separating relevant and irrelevant facts
 - Have the ability to challenge the views of others in order to reach a reasoned decision
 - Maintain confidentiality and be impartial at all times
 - Possess good communication skills
 - Be willing to participate and contribute to training as required
 - Be able to demonstrate experience of decision making in sensitive cases
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How can I get involved

You can complete an online application form, e- mail schoolappeals@westlothian.gov.uk or call 01506 281609