

NOTES FOR CLERKS

The clerk should take charge of the physical running of the panel to ensure that everything is impartial. Panels can be stressful events, especially for any parents involved so it is the clerk's responsibility to make sure that they are put at ease as much as possible.

Venue:

- panels are usually held on school premises, although in exceptional circumstances a neutral venue can be found
- the room reserved should be private and a suitable size to accommodate everyone in attendance – ascertain if there are any people accompanying the parents/guardians so that sufficient room and seating can be made available
- ensure there is somewhere parents and any witnesses can wait separately from members of the panel and the head

Before the meeting:

- make sure that the room is tidy so that there are minimal distractions
- make sure that water and tissues are available for all attendees
- ensure that everyone has access to a table so that they can keep papers etc in order during the meeting
- find out the wi-fi code in the school if panel members are working electronically
- decide where panel members, school representatives and other attendees should sit; panel members should be seated together and you, as the clerk, should have enough room to work
- ask panel members to arrive half an hour before the panel is due to start so that you can brief them on any procedural matters and so that you can ensure they know running order

During the meeting:

- all school staff attending should come into the room at the same time as the parents
- attendees should not be left alone in the meeting room
- you should make introductions and outline the order of proceedings, including the fact that panel members will be able to question attendees – a paper agenda can be distributed to help
- have your own copy of the pack and a spare in case of any attendees not bringing their own
- make clear, dated notes – they could become part of any evidence if the decision is appealed and will need to be filed away for safe keeping

At the end of the meeting:

- attendees will be asked to leave once all questions have been asked
- remind all attendees that the decision of the panel will be distributed within the guideline time
- remain with the panel members to ensure that their decision making process is fair, within the legal remit and that decisions and any recommendations are recorded accurately
- ensure that all panel members are satisfied with the content of the decision letter before distribution
- distribute the decision letter to all relevant parties.