

Review panels: an overview of the process

Pre-panel

- A panel is triggered through a school policy or procedure. The headteacher informs the clerk and chair.
- The panel chair and clerk liaise with relevant bodies (LA/HR etc) and work to the relevant policies/guidance.
- The clerk* acts as a point of contact for all parties throughout the process. The whole process must be kept strictly confidential.
- The review panel is convened by the clerk and should be held within the relevant timescales unless there is good reason as not doing so could be seen as a breach of procedure.
- The clerk organises the panel members, which should be at least three in a maintained school; this might vary in an academy. It is good practice to have an odd number as this is more robust in terms of voting.
- The clerk then agrees a time and date for the panel with all parties. A neutral venue might be needed. Consider separate waiting areas for the parties attending.
- The clerk ensures all parties are aware of who they may invite to attend and their right to make representations. Witnesses might be identified and invited to submit evidence/ attend the review panel.
- The clerk will collate all evidence into a clearly organised and numbered evidence pack and distribute to the panel and relevant attendees within the stated timeframe.
- The panel members should read through evidence pack thoroughly and note what questions they might ask.

Panel

- The panel chair will ensure the agenda is followed and that the panel hearing follows the correct protocols.
- The clerk will take comprehensive and detailed notes; a true and accurate record of what took place at the review panel with questions and responses clearly set out and attributed.
- All parties are given an opportunity to state their case and will be questioned as per the agenda.
- Panel members will listen carefully and ask questions where they feel further information is needed, making their own notes as needed.
- The panel chair ensures all parties are given an opportunity to ask questions of the panel or other attendees. The chair closes the meeting.

*The clerk's functions may sometimes be undertaken by another nominated person.

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The decision

- The clerk and any professional advisers to the panel remain whilst the
- panel members consider the evidence. The clerk may need to advise on
- procedure or refer to their meeting notes.
- The clerk should take notes of the deliberations. These will evidence how and why the panel reached its decision - either unanimously or by majority vote - and aid the wording of the outcome letter. These notes do not form part of the panel minutes.
- The panel members will vote on their decision. This should be by majority if necessary.
- The panel must agree the wording for the outcome letter which should clearly explain the reasons behind their decision. The letter will be drafted by the clerk.

Post-panel

- After the meeting, the decision is communicated in writing to the relevant parties in accordance with the method and timeframe in the policy.
- The panel chair may agree to communicate the decision verbally first.
- The clerk produces draft minutes; once approved by the panel chair these are sent to all parties as outlined in the policy and filed confidentially in school. The IRMS toolkit for schools gives details on record retention.
- The panel chair follows up on recommendations and ensures the post-panel steps are carried out.