Berry Pomeroy

Parochial CE Primary School

**Exclusion Policy**

**Preface**

New arrangements for school exclusion came into force in September 2012. These will apply to any pupil excluded on or after 1 September 2012 from a maintained school, academy school / Free School, alternative provision academy / Free School or pupil referral unit in England.

Revised regulations and guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion are now available.

**Overview**

Under the new arrangements, the process for challenging a school’s decision to permanently exclude a pupil will change. The current system of independent appeal panels will be replaced by independent review panels.

Where requested by a parent, an SEN expert will need to be appointed by the local authority or academy trust to advise the independent review panel.

The independent review panel will be able to uphold the decision to permanently exclude a pupil; recommend that the governing body reconsider its decision; or direct the governing body to reconsider its decision. A direction to reconsider will be limited to circumstances where a panel decides that the school has acted illegally, irrationally or where there are significant flaws in procedure.

Where a governing body decides not to offer to reinstate a pupil following a direction from a panel to reconsider its decision, the panel will be expected to require an adjustment to a schools budget or payment of £4,000 towards the cost of alternative provision.

Where a parent alleges discrimination (under the Equality Act 2010) in relation to a fixed period or permanent exclusion, they will also be able to make a claim to the First-tier Tribunal (for disability discrimination) or a County Court (for other forms of discrimination).

**Key responsibilities**

**Headteachers**

* Headteachers’ powers to exclude remain unchanged but there will be new statutory guidance on the use of these powers.

**Governing bodies**

* Governing bodies will perform the key role of determining whether an excluded pupil should be reinstated. This will involving reviewing the decision of the Headteacher and considering the outcome of any independent review panel hearing.

**Local authorities / academy trusts**

* Where requested by a parent, local authorities or academy trusts will need to arrange an independent review panel to consider the decision of a governing body to uphold a permanent exclusion. Panel members will need to be trained in how to perform their role.
* Local authorities or academy trusts will also need to appoint a special educational needs expert to advise the panel, where requested by a parent.

**Local authorities**

* Local authorities will need to oversee adjustments to a school’s budget or payments by a school, where a school does not offer reinstatement following a direction by a panel to reconsider its decision to permanently exclude a pupil.

**Reasons for exclusion/ rationale**

Underpinning the policy is the need to ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community and to maintain a safe and happy environment in which all can learn and succeed. This School will try to reduce the need to use exclusion as a sanction.

The decision to exclude will be taken in the following circumstances:

* In response to a serious breach of the Schools Behaviour Policy
* If allowing the pupil to remain in school would constitute a risk to the education and welfare of students or others in the school

Exclusion is an extreme sanction and will only be administered by the Headteacher, or in his/her absence by another senior colleague. Any permanent exclusion would be based upon a thorough investigation and consideration by the Headteacher. Any decision to exclude taken by the school must be made according to the principles of administrative law and it must be lawful, rational, reasonable and proportionate.

Exclusion, whether fixed term or permanent, may be used for any of the following examples of unacceptable conduct:

* Verbal abuse to staff and others
* Verbal abuse to students
* Physical abuse to/attack on staff
* Physical abuse to/attack on students
* Indecent behaviour
* Damage to property, including arson
* Misuse of illegal drugs or other substances
* Theft
* Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or member of staff
* Sexual abuse or assault
* Supplying an illegal drug
* Carrying an offensive weapon
* Unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported and for which sanctions have been unsuccessful
* Persistent disruptive behaviour

This list is not exhaustive and there may be other cases where a Headteacher feels exclusion is justified.

**Details of the Exclusion Process**

**What does exclusion mean?**

This means that a child is not allowed to attend school. Exclusion is usually the result of a particularly serious incident or a series of incidents. The Headteacher must tell parents/carers in writing how long the exclusion is for and the reasons for it. As long as the exclusion lasts, the child concerned must not enter the school grounds or use school transport services and parents are responsible for supervising their child during school time. Parents should ensure that their child does not hang around the school gates, even to meet friends after school.

There are three types of exclusion.

• **Lunch time exclusions** - may not be more than 90 in a school year.

• **Fixed period exclusions** - last for a specific number of days but cannot be longer than 45 days in the school year.

• **Permanent exclusions** - means that a child may not be allowed to go back to the school again, unless they are reinstated by a meeting of the Discipline Committee.

**Unofficial** - indefinite period or ‘cooling off’ periods of exclusion from school have no legal status. Schools must not use such sanctions and must follow the correct procedures as described in Improving ***Behaviour and Attendance: guidance on exclusions from schools and pupil referral units*** DCSF September 2008

**Who can exclude a child from school?**

Normally, only the Headteacher can exclude a pupil. However, if the Headteacher is absent from school, the most senior teacher, who is acting on the head’s behalf, can exclude a pupil.

**Who can parents talk to about a fixed period exclusion?**

The Headteacher and the staff of the school should use the period of exclusion to plan for the successful reintegration of their child. It would be sensible for parents/ carers to discuss with the Headteacher what they can do to help. Help and advice can be obtained from the Inclusion and Reintegration Officer in a local area.

The school should hold a reintegration meeting, usually at the start of the first day back after exclusion, which the parent/carer should make every effort to attend and join in. Apparent/carer's failure to attend a reintegration meeting will be one factor taken into account by a magistrates’ court when deciding whether to impose a parenting order, if at any future date a parenting order has been applied for by the school or local authority. However, the Headteacher must allow a child to start back at school once the exclusion has finished even if the parent/carer is unable or does not want to attend the meeting.

**What happens to a child's education during the exclusion?**

During the exclusion, school staff must still set and mark work for the first five days. The Head will explain the arrangements for collecting it and handing it in. If a child is due to sit a public exam, such as GCSEs, during the exclusion, this should not be affected. If the fixed period exclusion is for more than five days, the school or local authority must make arrangements for the pupil’s full time education from the sixth day onwards.

If a child has been permanently excluded, the school is still responsible for setting and marking work for the first five days. Devon County Council has responsibility for providing full time education from the sixth day

If a child is due shortly to sit public exams and the head considers that these should not be taken in the school from which he or she has been permanently excluded, it will be necessary to make alternative arrangements.

**What are the entitlements of a parent or carer? Can they appeal against a child's exclusion?**

There are a number of steps which the school has to take.

• The parent/carer must be informed immediately, ideally by telephone.

• Within one day, the head must inform the parent/carer by letter that their child has been excluded, the type of exclusion and the reasons for it. The letter should

also state the date that the child can return to school and the time of the

reintegration meeting.

• The Head must notify Devon County Council and the Governors' Discipline Committee set up by the governing body, of the child’s exclusion for any fixed period exclusion over five days or a permanent exclusion.

• The Headteacher’s letter tells the parent/carer that they have the right to make representations to the Chair of the Discipline Committee about the decision to exclude a child. If the parent/carer wishes to state their case to the Discipline Committee, the clerk to the Committee has the discretion to arrange a meeting for fixed period exclusions up to five days and the parent/carer may be invited to attend.

• If the exclusion is for between 1 and 15 days and the parent/care wishes to make representations to the Discipline Committee, the clerk must call a meeting.

• For fixed period exclusions between 5 and 15 days if the parent/carer wishes to make are presentation to the to the Discipline Committee, the Clerk must call a meeting between the sixth and fiftieth school day after the exclusion started.

• The parent/carer is entitled to receive a copy of any report which is provided to the Discipline Committee at its meeting to consider the exclusion.

• The parent/care has the right to have any letters, documents or reports to be translated in to another language if needed.

**What is the purpose of the Discipline Committee meeting?**

**Who will attend?**

The Discipline Committee must decide at its meeting whether or not it agrees with the Headteacher’s decision to exclude a child. If they do not agree, they must direct reinstatement – in other words, instruct the head to allow the child to return to school. If the exclusion is for fewer than five days in the term, the Discipline Committee may only consider the parent/care's views; it has no power to direct the school to reinstate. The parent/carer will be invited to attend the meeting, the Headteacher and a DCC representative will also be present. The parent/carer, or the school, may request a DCC representative attends the meeting. The parent/carer should make every effort to attend and may take along a friend or advocate. If a child has a statement of special educational needs or additional needs, the parent/carer may wish to get support from Devon Parent Partnership and can also send a written statement or other evidence for the Committee to consider.

**Can a child attend the Committee meeting?**

There are no hard and fast rules and the parent/carer's wishes will be taken into account by the Discipline Committee. If the parent/carer feels that the child should also attend this request should be made as soon as possible directly to the clerk of the Discipline Committee. The Discipline Committee will normally allow the child to attend and to speak if it is requested .

**What happens at the Discipline Committee meeting?**

The Headteacher’s written report and any written statements or letters will be circulated before the meeting to everybody who will be attending.

At the meeting, the Chair of the Discipline Committee will introduce everybody and invite the Head to outline the reasons for excluding the child. The parent/carer will be able to ask questions of the head and of other witnesses who may give information at the meeting. After that, the parent/carer and child, if they attend, will be able to put their case. The parent/carer should be prepared to answer questions from the head and Discipline Committee about their case.

The DCC representative will attend the meeting to give the Discipline Committee guidance in general terms, for example, how other schools in the area have dealt with similar incidents. They can also draw the attention of the Discipline Committee to issues where there is a lack of clarity or where more information may be needed or where guidance appears to have been ignored. They will not comment on the appropriateness of an individual exclusion.

When the Discipline Committee has heard all the information, the parent/carer, the DCC representative and the head will be asked to sum up. The parent/carer will all be asked to withdraw while the Committee makes its decision.

**How will the parent/carer hear about the Discipline Committee's decision?**

Normally the decision will be made by the Discipline Committee at the end of the meeting. The parent/carer will also receive a letter from the committee clerk within one school day of the meeting, which sets out the decision and the reasons for it.

In the case of a permanent exclusion, a fixed period exclusion of more than five days, or any exclusion where the pupil loses the opportunity to take a public examination, the decision will state whether a child should be reinstated to the school. If the Committee agrees that a child should be reinstated, the parent/carer will be told the date on which they can return to school. No conditions may be attached to this decision.

**What happens if the Discipline Committee decides not to reinstate the child after a permanent exclusion?**

If the Discipline Committee decides that a child should not return to school, the parent/carer has the right to appeal to the Devon School Appeals Panel. This is an independent panel which meets at County Hall in Exeter. The Inclusions and Reintegration Officer will write to the parent/carer to explain the procedure and send the appeal form.

If apparent/carer decides to appeal, they must do so within 15 school days of the date on which they receive the decision letter from the Discipline Committee.

**What happens if a child remains permanently excluded at the end of this procedure?**

The child cannot return to the same school. The Inclusion and Reintegration Officer will contact the parent/carer to discuss what should happen next. And will explain to the procedures for educating the child and work with the parent/carer to find an alternative placement.

**Does this information apply to all pupils?**

This information applies to exclusions of all pupils aged up to 18. It applies to all schools maintained by Devon County Council, including nursery classes in school, but not ‘free-standing’ nursery schools.

For pupils who are older than 18, the pupil can appeal in their own right; for all other pupils, the parents or carers must appeal.

Some Information drawn from Devon County Council Guidance on Exclusion 2012