

Information for parents on Fixed Period Exclusion from school

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Rosemary Pearce - Exclusion/Reintegration Officer,
(Sanford House Swindon)

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Exclusion from school can be a very worrying and upsetting time for you and your child. The aim of this leaflet is to explain;

- **about fixed period exclusions,**
- **what you can do if you disagree with the exclusion,**
- **where you can get advice and support.**

What is a Fixed Period Exclusion?

This means that your child cannot attend school for the period of the fixed term exclusion, which may be for a set number of whole days or during lunchtime. The Head Teacher will have taken this decision, after consideration of the circumstances. At the end of this period your child must return to school, and the school may invite you and your child to a meeting to discuss how your child can be supported back at school. This is a good time to talk about your concerns, and what can be done to help your child.

The school must ensure they provide an education for your child during the exclusion and this is done by sending work home for all exclusions of five days or less. If the exclusion is for more than five days then the school must provide suitable full-time educational provision from the sixth day and inform you of these arrangements. This may be on the school site or at a suitable provision away from the school.

In exceptional cases a fixed term exclusion may be extended or made permanent. If this happens the head must write to you again giving reasons for the change. A separate leaflet is available about permanent exclusions, and can be obtained from the Exclusion/Reintegration Officer (see Contact List – back page).

What is my responsibility as a parent?

During your child's exclusion the school will set work for him/her to complete, for the first five days, and will let you know the arrangements for this in the letter informing you of the exclusion. It is your responsibility to ensure that your child completes this work and that it is sent back to the school for marking.

In the five days of any exclusion your child must not be found in a public place without reasonable justification during school hours, otherwise you could be issued with a fixed penalty notice of £50, or face prosecution.

If your child is excluded for more than five days, the school must provide him/her with full time education from day six. Each school has their own arrangements for this provision which may be on your child's school site or at an alternative venue. The letter informing you of the exclusion should include any appropriate arrangements.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your child is not near the school or on the school site during school hours (unless they are attending the full time provision on the longer exclusions) as this could put them at risk of further exclusion if they misbehave.

What happens next?

On the day of the exclusion you are usually informed by telephone. This call is to outline that there is an exclusion and to agree arrangements for your child to be sent home. This **must** be followed by a letter within one school day.

This letter must contain:

- The exact length of the fixed period exclusion.
- The reasons for the exclusion.
- Your right to put your case to the governing body and how your child may be involved in this.

- The person you should contact if you want to put your case to the governing body.
- The school days on which you are required to ensure your child is not in a public place during school hours without justification, and the fact that you may be prosecuted, or given a fixed penalty notice, if you do not ensure it.
- The arrangements for your child to continue his/her education, for the first five days of an exclusion, by the school setting and marking work. It is your responsibility to ensure that work sent home is completed and returned to the school.
- Any arrangements for your child to continue his/her full time education with provision other than their usual school. You should be given at least 48 hours written notice of this.
- That you will, if appropriate, be invited to attend a reintegration interview and the consequences if you do not attend it.

Ideally the letter should also contain:

- The latest date that the governing body can meet to discuss your case.

- Your right to have a copy of your child's school record if you write to the school to request it.
- The date and time your child should return to school. If your child is excluded for lunchtimes only, then how many lunchtimes should be indicated. If your child is in receipt of free school meals the school must make arrangements for a meal to be provided.
- The name and number of an officer at the Local Authority who can provide advice. This will be an Education Welfare Officer who can advise you and attend meetings with you if you would like support.
- The telephone number of the Advisory Centre for Education (see telephone numbers on this leaflet), which is a long established independent national charity providing advice to parents.

How can I get more help for my child?

Discuss your child with a senior member of staff at the school to outline clearly where the issues lie and what support is needed to help your child. The school will want to ensure that your child has no unidentified learning needs which may be affecting his/her

behaviour, and will also suggest ways in which support staff in school can work with your child. If necessary the school may develop a written plan (called an Individual Education Plan). This will be done in a meeting between the school, your child and you, and be reviewed every 6 weeks.

If your child's behaviour does not improve sufficiently, the staff may suggest that other professionals from outside the school are asked to help your child, with your permission. These may, for example, include Educational Psychology, or Outreach Behaviour Support Teams, who support your child in school. Each child is different, and it is important that you and your child meet with school staff to ensure that support is offered and taken up.

In order to identify your child's needs and agree with you what support is appropriate, you may be asked to complete a Common Assessment Framework (CAF). This is a voluntary process which you would complete in discussion with a member of school or other agency staff. This assessment is particularly helpful in cases of several fixed term exclusions, but may be used at any stage as early intervention and should help reduce the risk of further exclusions.

It may be that your child's behaviour is much more difficult than average, or your child cannot control his/her feelings or that he/she has emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. These are types of difficulties which require the correct help to prevent worsening behaviour.

Your child may require a statutory assessment of his/her needs, and more information around this complex area is available from Swindon Parent Partnership, which advises and supports parents in this area (see Contact List, back page).

Applications for a Statutory Assessment can be made by school staff or by parents, who usually work together with the Local Authority through the process.

Who decides if the governors are to meet to look at the exclusion?

Add together this exclusion and any other exclusions this term:

- If the total is 5 school days or less the governors do not automatically arrange to meet with you, but must consider any representations made by you in relation to the exclusion. Write and ask to meet them if

you want to. Governors will hear and discuss the situation with you, but in the case of exclusions of five days or less they do not have the power to overturn them.

- If the total is five and a half school days or more the governors have to meet with you if you request it. You can do this by writing to the Clerk to the Governors. For exclusions of this length the Governors are able to overturn the exclusion if they feel it is appropriate. This is called reinstatement.
- If the total is over fifteen school days the governors will automatically meet to consider the exclusion, whether or not you choose to attend.

Also;

If your child will miss a public exam (not SATs) during the exclusion period then a member of the governors can meet with the school to decide if your child can attend to take the examination.

The Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) offer excellent advice and support on how to prepare your case to put to the governors (see Contact List back page).

You can take a friend, relative or adviser along to the Governors meeting as support if you wish. The Education Welfare Service in Swindon offers this support (see Contact List back page).

What support is there for parents?

- Discuss this with school staff. They may be able to inform you of support for parents which can be accessed from the school, or from other services within Swindon.
- Discussion with your Education Welfare Officer, who may be able to suggest where support is available for you and your child's particular requirements.
- There are groups which meet to support parents in building on their existing skills to try different parenting ideas and strategies with their children. Parents can ask to be referred to these groups through professionals they are working

with, or the Exclusion Officer at the Local Authority (see Contact List back page).

Parenting Contracts and Orders.

- The governors may ask you to sign a parenting contract between you and the school, if they feel you need support with your child's behaviour. This agreement would be entered into on a voluntary basis.
- In some cases if your child has had 2 fixed term exclusions for misbehaviour in 12 months, and the school or Local Authority feel you are unwilling to work with them, the Local Authority may apply to a magistrate's court for a Parenting Order, which could require you to attend parenting classes etc.
- For further information on Parenting Contracts and Orders please contact the Exclusion Officer (see Contact List back page).

Other sources of help and Information

Exclusion/Reintegration Officer

-for advice on exclusion procedures and processes, parenting classes, parenting contracts and orders.

Tel: 01793 465731

Address: Sanford House, Sanford Street, Swindon.

Education Welfare Officer

-for advice and support to attend exclusion meetings.

Tel: 01793 465797

Address: Education Welfare Service, Sanford House, Swindon.

Swindon Parent Partnership Service

-for advice on Special Educational Needs issues.

Tel: 01793 466515

Diversity and Ethnic Minority Achievement (DEMA)

-for advice on Race Equality issues.

Tel: 01793 463057

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

-for independent advice on exclusion.

Tel: 08080 05793

www.ace.ed.org.uk

Publications:

- Improving Behaviour and Attendance: Guidance on Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units (Sept 2008).
- Advice and Guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on managing pupil behaviour and attendance (Nov 2005).

The above publications are available from the Department for Children Schools and Families Publication Centre.

To obtain a copy

Tel: 0845 6022260

www.teachernet.gov.uk/

exclusion: and www.dcsf.gov.uk/

behaviourandattendance/guidance: