**SUSPENSIONS and EXCLUSIONS**

Generally, exclusion are used in schools as a last resort when all other available alternatives have been tried.

**Types of Exclusion**

There are two types – one is a suspension (for a stated fixed period of term) and the second is an exclusion which is permanent

**Suspension**

A **suspension** is for a specific **period** of time. A pupil may be **suspended** for one or more **fixed** periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year)

**Exclusion**

A**n exclusion** is the most serious sanction a school can give if a child does something that is against the school's behaviour policy (the school rules). It means that the child is **no longer allowed to attend the school** and their name will be removed from the school roll.

**My child has been excluded – what can I do?**

This can be very upsetting and worrying for you and your child. In this guide we have set out the sorts of things you will need to think about. These fall into the following categories:

(a) what should be happening to your child now s/he is excluded

(b) how your child will be educated in the future

(c) whether to challenge the decision to exclude your child and how to go about it.

**What’s happens next?**

Good practice is that the school provide work for your child for the first 5 days of an exclusion.

If your child is permanently excluded The Local Authority (LA) must provide suitable full-time education for your child from the 6th school day of a permanent exclusion. Full time means between 20 and 25 hours a week, depending on the age of your child.

The LA will normally be in contact with you within 48 hours to arrange this. You can ring the LA to check that something is being done. You can email the Exclusions Officer at Secondary-Behaviour-Support@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

**Staying at home**

It is very important that your child stays at home and is not in any

public place during school hours for the first 5 days of the exclusion. If s/he is found in a public place and you don’t have a very good reason, you may be issued with a penalty notice.

**Next steps**

Very often children who have been excluded are sent to a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or an Alternative Provision first, but this is usually a short-term solution. After that the LA will often use its Fair Access Protocol to offer them a place in a new school.

The Fair Access Protocol is a local agreement about how to get hard-to-place children back in school as quickly as possible.

**Challenging the exclusion**

You may wish to challenge the exclusion if:

- you want your child to be reinstated back to their excluding school

- you don’t want your child back in the school, but you feel the exclusion

was unfair.

You have the right to challenge the exclusion by making representations to the school governors and, if they don’t agree with you, you can appeal to an Independent Review Panel (IRP). More information will be given when you have spoken with the Royal Greenwich Inclusion Officer. You will, whether you choose to make representations or not, be notified by the clerk to the governing body of the time, date and location of the meeting. You have a right to attend the meeting. If you do wish to bring anyone with you, ask for a representative of the Local Authority to be invited, or you need any special arrangements to be made to help you to attend and/or contribute towards the meeting (for example, step-free access, an interpreter or a signer), please inform the school your child attends at the same time as making your representations, or as soon as possible thereafter, so that the appropriate arrangements can be made for you.

If you are successful, the exclusion will be overturned, and your child might be given the right to return to the school. However, many appeals do not succeed and not all successful appeals result in the child being reinstated in the school.

**Law and guidance on exclusions**

The government has issued guidance on the law on exclusions, which schools,

Governors and LAs need to follow, Guidance on Exclusion from maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

**When can the school exclude a child?**

A child should only be excluded from school:

- if they have seriously broken the school’s behaviour policy and it would seriously harm the education or welfare of themselves or others if they remained in school.

**A child should not be excluded for minor incidents such as**

- not doing homework or poor academic performance

- lateness or truancy

- pregnancy

- breaking school uniform/appearance rules (except where persistent

and ‘in open defiance’ of these rules)

- behaviour of parents such as parents’ refusal or inability to come to

a meeting

- for their own protection from bullying.

**Looked after children**

Schools are expected to only consider the exclusion of looked after children as an ‘absolute last resort’. Looked after children may have unmet social and emotional needs. Schools are expected to proactively support and co-operate with foster carers and the local authority. Before excluding a Looked after Child the school should discuss their concerns with the local authority to consider alternatives. The child’s social worker should be involved at the earliest opportunity to work with the school to avoid exclusion. If your child is looked after you will need to contact for advice and support looked-after-children-education@royalgreenwich.gov.uk .

**Children with Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP)**

Schools should not exclude pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) of other than in the ‘most exceptional’ circumstances. If your child has an EHCP you will need to contact SEND team for advice and support special-needs@royalgreenwich.gov.uk .

**Serious offences**

In exceptional circumstances, a Head may exclude for a first or one-off serious

offence where such behaviour can affect the discipline and well-being of the

whole school. For example:

- serious actual or threatened violence against a pupil or a member of staff

- sexual abuse or assault

- supplying an illegal drug or carrying an offensive weapon.

If the basic facts of the case have been clearly established on the balance of

probabilities (i.e. it was more likely than not to have happened) and the Governors

or the Independent Appeal Panel believe that your child has carried out such an offence they will not normally reinstate your child.

**Incidents outside school**

Children can be excluded for behaviour which took place outside school if the

Head feels that there is a clear link between that behaviour and maintaining good behaviour and discipline within the school which brings the school into disrepute.

**Informing you about the exclusion**

The Head must tell you about the exclusion immediately, ideally by telephone

followed up by a letter/email within one school day. The communication must include the following information:

- what type of exclusion and the period from what date

- the reasons for it

- your right to state your case to the Governors, how to do this and the latest

date by which the Governors must meet (it must be within 15 school days of

the exclusion)

- the days when you must make sure your child is not in a public place during

school hours

- what arrangements the school has made for your child to continue his or her

education for the first 5 days, e.g. by giving homework and marking it

- when your child will be provided with alternative suitable full-time education.

For further information, please contact the dedicated phoneline in the Council’s Contact Centre for support and advice: 020 8921 5517 or you can find further information of the Royal Greenwich website <https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/SchoolExclusion>.