



Hampshire
County Council

Virtual School

Exclusions and Suspensions: Guidance for Parents and Carers

When a child is excluded or suspended from school, it can be a particularly challenging time for families. These moments can affect a child's sense of safety, belonging and progress. As a parent or carer, you are not alone. School and other professionals are here to support you and your child through this process.

Why It Matters

Exclusions and suspensions can disrupt learning, damage relationships, and increase vulnerability. It's important to understand the reasons and work together to support your child's reintegration and wellbeing.

What You Can Do

Here are some steps you can take:

1. Talk to the school about the reasons for the exclusion or suspension.
2. Ask what support was in place before the exclusion and what will be offered now.
3. Work with your child to understand the bigger picture and advocate for your child's needs.
4. Attend meetings and ask for a clear reintegration plan.

Multi-Agency Support

Children often benefit from coordinated support. This might include Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings, input from educational psychologists and help from pastoral staff. Ask your school about what support is available and how different professionals can work together to help your child succeed.

Listening to Your Child's Voice

Your child's feelings and experiences matter. Encourage them to talk about what happened and how they feel about school. Schools can use tools like emotion charts or drawings to help children express themselves. Make sure your child knows their views are taken seriously and lead to action.

Safeguarding Considerations

Exclusions may sometimes be linked to safeguarding concerns. If you believe your child's behaviour is a response to unmet needs or trauma, raise this with the school. Together, you can explore alternative approaches and ensure your child's safety and wellbeing are prioritised.

Reintegration and Transitions

Returning to school after an exclusion is a key transition. Children may feel anxious or disconnected. Ask the school how they will support your child's return. This might include a welcome meeting, mentoring or adjustments to routines.

Final Thoughts

You are not alone. If your child has been excluded or suspended, reach out early. Schools, social workers and other professionals can work with you to understand the situation, challenge decisions where needed and support your child's return to learning and connection.

Terminology

What is an Exclusion?

An exclusion is when a school decides that a child cannot attend school for a period of time because of their behaviour. There are two main types:

1. Suspension (Fixed-Term Exclusion)

This means your child is temporarily not allowed to attend school.

It can last for a few hours or several days, but no more than 45 school days in a year.

The school must tell you:

- why your child is suspended
- how long it will last
- what support will be in place

You should receive work for your child to do at home.

If the suspension is longer than five school days, the school must arrange full-time education from day six.

2. Permanent Exclusion

This means your child is no longer allowed to attend that school.

It is usually a last resort, used for very serious incidents or ongoing behaviour issues.

The local council must arrange full-time education from the sixth school day after the exclusion.

What Happens Next?

- You'll get a letter explaining the decision and your rights.
- You can ask the school's governing board to review the decision.
- For permanent exclusions, you can also ask for an independent review panel.

Other Options Schools Might Use

Managed Move: A planned move to another school, agreed by you and your child.

Off-Site Direction: A temporary placement at another school or unit to help improve behaviour.

If you would like more specific advice or guidance, contact us at virtuelschool@hants.gov.uk (Children in Care) or VSExtendedDuties@hants.gov.uk (Previously Looked After Children, Children with a Social Worker and Children in Kinship Care)