



## Preparing your questions and concerns about an exclusion

This information is for parents preparing their 'representations' (questions and concerns) about an exclusion for a child with SEND, ahead of meeting with the Governing body of a school or an Independent Review Panel ( IRP )

Think about your questions

When thinking about your questions and concerns start with a bullet-point list of the things you want to highlight or ask about.

**When making this list consider:**

- How **your child has been impacted**. Ask them to explain how they have been affected and how they feel so you can share this at the meeting.
- Were the **statutory duties around exclusions followed?** (check the statutory guidance from [DfE](#) including Annex C, pages 55-61 which is a guide for parents, and information from [Child Law Advice](#))
- **Reading through the school's evidence** about the incident/s and support in place & identify any gaps or discrepancies in information. For example, **what was put in place** to help your child manage their feelings and behaviour, and was this having any impact?
- **Reading the schools' behaviour policy** as this may help you identify some further questions. For example, was the exclusion in accordance with their policy?
- **Check the support plan**, You can ask school for a copy if you do not have one. Do you have any concerns about the support that was in place at the time of the incident/s?
- **What other support options** were available and, where you feel another option would have been more appropriate than exclusion, why. You can check the schools' own website for support options (SEN policy & SEN Information report).
- Reading through any **specialist reports** for details of recommended strategies
- Any information or **circumstances the Head Teacher was not aware of** (don't wait for the meeting in this case - get in touch with the Head Teacher as soon as you learn of the exclusion).

- Whether you feel the Head Teacher **took into account your child's SEND** and/or made reasonable adjustments.
- Whether you feel the Head Teacher considered what **further assessment or support might be needed** to identify and address your child's needs in order to reduce their risk of exclusion, such as a referral to the Local Authority Inclusion Service for specialist advice.
- **If your child has an EHC plan**, was the Annual Review brought forward and were any changes to the plan made, for example with their needs, provision or with the outcomes?

## Prepare & organise

1. **Decide if you will go to the governor meeting/IRP** and whether you would like a **friend/family member to accompany you for support on the day** (let the governing body/IRP know in advance). You can submit your questions, statement & evidence in advance if attending will be difficult for you
2. **Use your bullet-point list** to prepare and prioritise what you want to highlight to the governors or Independent Review Panel and start to plan questions you would like to ask.
3. **Group your questions** so you are not jumping about between issues.
4. **Organise your evidence** so you can easily find and refer to points on the day for example, use highlighters, post-it notes, file sections or indexing etc.
5. **Preparing a statement** to read out can be a useful way to summarise, and to help you to stick to your key points. You could ask a friend/family member to read this out on your behalf.
6. **Your child could also prepare a statement**, particularly where they are not attending. Help them prepare their views in writing or maybe submit as a short video.
7. **Reading the evidence** & information from school about your child can be very emotional. Take your time to look through this and more than once can help. Your emotions will hopefully lessen the more times you read it, and in turn you will be able to fully digest & identify any gaps or questions.
8. **Refer to letters or reports** that evidence your points

## Evidence might include:

- school progress reports & support plans such as IEP's/Pupil Passports, meeting notes or written strategies etc.
- home to school record book (where one is in place) or incident reports
- CAF meeting notes
- reports from an educational specialist, for example an Educational Psychologist, CISS, SENDAT, or the local authority recommendations etc
- reports/letters from health, for example school or specialist nursing services, paediatrician, speech & language, occupational or sensory therapists, wellbeing or mental health services including clinical psychologist etc.
- Education, Health & Care plan (where one is in place), including Annual Review paperwork
- Individual Health Care plan (where one is in place)

- General guidance in the public domain, for example as provided by Bexley in their local offer, the school's own website, the Department for Education statutory guidance & related law, the NHS, Council for disabled children (CDC) or from organisations such the National Autistic Society etc.

### **On the day**

#### **Remind yourself...**

1. you are doing this because you are seeking answers to some questions and concerns you have about your child's exclusion
2. it is normal to feel anxious in this situation, try to relax as you have done all you can to prepare
3. you should feel better for having said all you wanted to, **regardless of the outcome** - this is what other parents have told us