

School Suspensions (Fixed Period)

Information for Parents

My child has been suspended from school for a fixed period. What does this mean?

Your child's Headteacher will notify you immediately, often by telephone and then in writing that your child has been suspended for a fixed period. The letter will state the date when your child should return to school. Your child can be excluded for up to 45 days in a school year.

What happens during the suspension?

Pupils who have been suspended must stay at home for the first 5 days. The school will provide work for your child and this should be completed and returned to the school. During the initial 5 days, you must ensure that your child is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification. Parents will be subject to a prosecution or a fixed penalty notice if they fail to do this. This means no trips to the shops, the cinema or anywhere else that could be considered a public place. Your child must not go back to school or visit another school to meet friends. Your child is not allowed to enter the school premises during this time.

If the suspension is for more than 5 school days, the school is responsible for providing your child with alternative suitable full-time education from the 6th school day of the suspension and your child will be required to attend this provision. The provision could take place at another school.

For primary aged pupils, the Headteacher must arrange to meet with you to discuss your child's reintegration to school. This will take place either at the end or during the period of the suspension.

For secondary aged pupils, the Headteacher must arrange a reintegration interview with parents during or following the end of a fixed period suspension when it is six days or longer.

Do I have the right to look at my child's school records?

Yes. Under Regulation 6 and 7 of the Education (School Records) Regulation 1989, you have the right of access to the school's curricular records and other educational records for your child.

Your request for access to your child's records should be made to the Trust Board. To do this you can write to the Headteacher or Chair of Local Governing Board at the school address.

What if my child is suspended for a fixed period and is due to sit exams during that time?

Arrangements will normally be made for your child to sit the exams. Please contact the school as soon as possible to discuss the matter.

What can I do if I disagree with my child's suspension?

If you do not agree with the Headteacher's decision to suspend your child for a fixed period, you have the right to make representation (i.e. make your case) to the Trust Board Pupil Exclusions Sub-Committee. However, if the suspension is for 5 school days or less, the Trust Board are not legally required to meet with you. If the suspension is for more than 5 days (in total in any one term) or your child may miss a public exam, a meeting of the Trust Board Pupil Exclusions Sub-Committee will be set up to decide whether your child should be reinstated.

If you decide that you wish to put your case to the Trust Board you and your child will be invited to a meeting at which you will be able to state your case.

This meeting will be arranged as soon as practicable but in the case of short, fixed period suspension the pupil will often be back in school before the meeting can take place. If the meeting takes place after your child has gone back this will still give you an opportunity to put your views about the suspension to the Trust Board.

In presenting your case you will need to show that your child has been dealt with unfairly, either because you disagree with the description of the offence(s) or that suspension is too harsh a consequence for what happened. If you want to do so, you can bring someone with you (usually a friend, another family member, an interpreter or signer) to the meeting to help put your view or help keep a record of what happens.

Who will be at the meeting?

There will be representatives from the Trust Board and/or the Local Governing Body, usually no more than three at the meeting. The Headteacher and sometimes other senior members of staff will also attend. Sometimes an Education Welfare Officer, Educational Psychologist, Social Worker or Officer from the Education Department will attend the meeting.

What happens at the meeting?

The Trust Board Pupil Exclusions Sub-Committee will welcome you to the meeting, introduce everyone present and explain what will happen at the meeting and the suspension procedure. The Headteacher, or other appropriate member of staff, will explain why your child was excluded. You will then be able to ask the Headteacher questions about his/her report and be able to put your own case.

The Board may then ask you or your child questions concerning either the Headteacher's report or matters you have raised. When the panel feel able to make a decision, they will close the meeting and everyone will leave except the Trust Board Pupil Exclusions Sub-Committee. You will be notified, in writing, of the decision immediately following the meeting.

For independent advice, you can also contact:

Enfield Parents and Children

Tel. 020 8373 2700

Address: The Ark, Unit 1, Marsh House, 500
Montagu Road, London N9 0UR

Coram Children's Legal Centre

Tel: 0808 802 0008 or www.childrenslegalcentre.com