

Exclusion from school in Northumberland

Children and young people who attend schools in Northumberland can be **excluded** (or **expelled**) from school in response to breaches of the school's **behaviour policy**. Exclusions can be either **permanent exclusions** (where, subject to certain review procedures, the pupil is not expected to resume attendance at the school) or **fixed period (temporary) exclusions** (also sometimes referred to as **suspensions**), where the exclusion is for a specified number of days and the pupil will return to school at the end of the exclusion period.

Exclusion is one of a range of strategies for managing behaviour in schools and all schools must have policies (behaviour or **discipline policies**) in place to promote good and discourage poor behaviour. Pupils, parents and school staff should all be aware of these policies, the standards of expected behaviour they set out and the sanctions and support mechanisms which will be used if these standards are not met.

Permanent exclusion

Permanent exclusion from school is a very serious event in a young person's life and so the decision to exclude permanently is always a very serious one for a headteacher. In many cases, it is a 'last resort' after a range of other disciplinary strategies have been used with the pupil concerned.

A decision to permanently exclude should only be taken in response to serious or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy AND where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

Procedures following a permanent exclusion

During the first five school days of a permanent exclusion the school/PRU (Pupil Referral Unit) should send work home for the pupil to complete. During these initial five school days of exclusion parents must ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification: if they do not, they could be subject to a fixed penalty fine.

From the sixth school day of a permanent exclusion, the Local Authority (Northumberland County Council) is statutorily responsible for ensuring that suitable full-time education is provided to pupils of compulsory school age.

Unofficial exclusion

If a pupil is sent home from school for reasons related to a breach of the school's behaviour policy, then they should be formally excluded (either on a fixed term basis, or permanently). There is no basis in law for sending a pupil home, in these circumstances, other than through formal exclusion. This means that:

1. Parents should be formally notified of the exclusion, in writing
2. Child protection issues are taken into consideration e.g. depending on the age/vulnerability of the child; they should not be placed at risk by, for example being left to wander the streets
3. Work is sent home or alternative provision is arranged.

Fixed period exclusions

The school must continue to provide education during periods of fixed period of exclusion and parents are expected to cooperate with schools in the arrangements that are made for this. Pupils can be excluded on a fixed term basis for up to 45 days in any academic year.

Procedures following a fixed period exclusion

During the first five school days of a fixed exclusion the school/PRU should send work home for the pupil to complete. During these initial five school days of exclusion parents must ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification: if they do not, they could be subject to a fixed penalty fine.

Where a pupil is given a fixed term exclusion for a duration of six days or longer, the school has a duty to arrange suitable full-time educational provision from and including the sixth school day of the exclusion: this does not apply to pupils of non-compulsory school age.

The exclusion procedure operated by Northumberland County Council is based on guidance issued by the Department for Education, 'Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England'. This guidance can be found at <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00210521/statutory-guidance-regs-2012>

For more information and the answers to frequently asked questions (see below) please consult the attached document.

For independent advice on the exclusion process, please contact the Coram Children's Legal Centre: www.childrenslegalcentre.com or contact them on 08088020008.

[F.A.Q for Exclusions](#)