Milton Keynes City Council

Exclusion guidance for parents 2026-2027.

September 2026

Purpose

Education is a fundamental right for every child. This guide helps parents and carers to understand why a school may suspend (fixed term exclusion) or permanently exclude a child. It explains your rights and how to prepare for a Governing Board review meeting (also known as a Pupil Disciplinary Committee meeting).

When will a Governing Board review an exclusion?
The Governing Board must review all permanent exclusions. It must also review some suspensions, depending on the number of school days involved.

You will be invited to a review meeting if:

- your child has been **permanently excluded**; or
- your child has been suspended for more than **15 school days in a single term**

You can also request a review meeting if:

- your child has been suspended for between **6 and 15 school days in a single term,** and you wish to make representations to the Governing Board.

If your child has been suspended for 5 school days or fewer in a term, you can make written representations to the Governing Board, although they are not required to hold a meeting.

The timescale for a Governing Board review depends on the type and length of the exclusion.

The statutory guidance states that schools should, as far as possible, avoid permanently excluding pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and children who are looked after by a local authority.

For a permanent exclusion, the headteacher must be satisfied that:

- there has been a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and
- allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others

Suggested questions to ask at a Governing Board review meeting

1) Why was my child excluded?

- How did my child break the behaviour policy?
- Does the policy explain what counts as a serious breach?
- How would keeping my child in school harm others?
- Can you explain how my child's behaviour affected other pupils' learning or safety?

2) **What evidence was used to support the decision?**
   - Were witness statements obtained?
   - Was CCTV reviewed where available?
   - Was my child given an opportunity to give their account?
   - Was the decision based on the balance of probabilities?

3) **What support was considered before exclusion?**
   - What support was put in place to help my child succeed in school?
   - What alternatives to exclusion were considered and why were they not appropriate?

   If your child has SEND, the governing board should consider:

   - Whether the SENCO was involved.
   - Whether SEND contributed to the behaviour.
   - Whether **reasonable adjustments** were made.
   - Whether specialist advice was sought.
   - Whether an EHCP review was considered, where applicable.

   Examples of reasonable adjustments may include:

   - Providing a quiet or safe space
   - Movement or sensory breaks
   - Visual timetables
   - Additional processing time
   - Behaviour support plans
   - Pastoral or mentoring support
   - Seating arrangements that reduce anxiety or distractions
   - Adapting sanctions
   - Specialist professional advice

   You may also wish to ask:

   - What reasonable adjustments were in place before the incident?
   - Were these adjustments reviewed and updated?
   - What specialist advice was sought?
   - If adjustments were not made, why not?

4) **Were there any circumstances that may have contributed to the incident?**
   Examples may include:
   - Bullying;
   - Bereavement;
   - Mental health difficulties;
   - Family circumstances;
   - Unidentified SEND needs.

5) What happens next for my child?

- How will exclusion affect their education and wellbeing?
- What plans are in place to support their reintegration?

Education must be arranged from day 6 of a suspension or immediately following a permanent exclusion.

Independent Review Panel (IRP)

If the governing board upholds a permanent exclusion, you may request an Independent Review Panel within **15 school days** of receiving the governing board's decision letter. You may also request the attendance of an SEN expert if your child has SEND.

At an IRP, the panel will consider whether the Governing Board's decision was lawful, reasonable and fair based on the evidence, process, support provided, and whether statutory guidance was followed.

Tips for Parents

- Ask for all exclusion paperwork in advance
- Read the school's behaviour policy before the meeting
- Prepare any written evidence you wish governors to consider
- Prepare a written statement if you find meetings difficult
- Bring a friend, advocate or representative if permitted
- Request an SEN expert if your child has SEND
- Seek support from your allocated worker if there is social care involvement
- Speak with the Virtual School if your child was previously looked after
- Take notes during the meeting

Where to get to help

- MKSENDIAS or email: contact@mksendias.org.uk
- Coram: 0300 330 5485 (Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm) or visit childlawadvice.org.uk
- The School Exclusion Hub by Just for Kids Law
- (IPSEA) Independent Provider of Special Education Advice
- Virtual School | MKCC
- MK Inclusion Partnership The right support at the right time, in the right place.

Further guidance:

- DfE Guidance on School Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions (26 July 2026)
- Behaviour in schools guide


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