

Exclusion - in English schools

A report for Erasmus ACEs project 2020

All maintained schools and academies in England must have a behaviour policy. Advice for school leaders and staff is set out in the government document **Behaviour and Discipline in Schools** which can be found here [Behaviour and Discipline in Schools - A guide for headteachers and school staff final draft.docx \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#). This guide acts as a starting point for schools to develop their own behaviour policy within the guidance given by the government.

The advice lists the range of disciplinary measures a school might take, including in extreme cases temporary or permanent exclusion:

When poor behaviour is identified, sanctions should be implemented consistently and fairly in line with the behaviour policy. Good schools will have a range of disciplinary measures clearly communicated to school staff, pupils and parents. These can include:

- *A verbal reprimand.*
- *Extra work or repeating unsatisfactory work until it meets the required standard.*
- *The setting of written tasks as punishments, such as writing lines or an essay.*
- *Loss of privileges – for instance the loss of a prized responsibility or not being able to participate in a non-uniform day (sometimes referred to as ‘mufti’ days).*
- *Missing break time.*
- *Detention including during lunch-time, after school and at weekends.*
- *School based community service or imposition of a task – such as picking up litter or weeding school grounds; tidying a classroom; helping clear up the dining hall after meal times; or removing graffiti.*
- *Regular reporting including early morning reporting; scheduled uniform and other behaviour checks; or being placed “on report” for behaviour monitoring.*
- *In more extreme cases schools may use temporary or permanent exclusion*

Statutory guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion in English maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units states:

Good discipline in schools is essential to ensure that all pupils can benefit from the opportunities provided by education. The Government supports head teachers in using exclusion as a sanction where it is warranted. However, permanent exclusion should only be used as a last resort, in response to a serious breach 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.

The decision to exclude a pupil must be lawful, reasonable and fair. Schools have a statutory duty not to discriminate against pupils on the basis of protected characteristics, such as disability or race. Schools should give particular consideration to the fair treatment of pupils from groups who are vulnerable to exclusion.

Disruptive behaviour can be an indication of unmet needs. Where a school has concerns about a pupil's behaviour, it should try to identify whether there are any causal factors and intervene early in order to reduce the need for a subsequent exclusion. In this situation, schools should consider whether a multi-agency assessment that goes beyond the pupil's educational needs is required.

Schools should have a strategy for reintegrating a pupil who returns to school following a fixed-period exclusion and for managing their future behaviour.

All children have a right to education. Schools should take reasonable steps to set and mark work for pupils during the first five school days of an exclusion; and alternative provision must be arranged from the sixth day. There are obvious benefits in arranging alternative provision to begin as soon as possible after an exclusion.

There are two types of exclusion in English maintained schools Fixed Term (to be known as Suspension from August 2021) **and Permanent** (to be known as Expulsion from August 2021). **The DFE guidance states:**

Only the head teacher of a school can exclude a pupil and this must be on disciplinary grounds. A pupil may be excluded for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year, or permanently.

The full document can be found here: [Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/90222/exclusion-from-maintained-schools-academies-and-pupil-referral-units-in-england.pdf)

The reasons a school can state for an exclusion can be found here: [Find a school census code - Complete the school census - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/find-a-school-census-code-complete-the-school-census)

Data relating to the numbers of fixed term and permanent exclusions in England can be found here:

[Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England, Academic Year 2018/19 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics/2018-19/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england)

Devon County Council initiatives to reduce the risk of exclusion

Like all local authorities in England Devon an Education Inclusion Service that provides a statutory, but impartial service regarding inclusion, reintegration and exclusion

The Devon County Council Protocol for supporting children/young people in schools states:

Children/Young People in Care in Devon and those who have been in Care and have been adopted or placed under a Special Guardianship Order or a Child Arrangements Order should expect to benefit from a safe, happy and successful education so that they can reach their

The Alex Timpson Trust has partnered with the Rees Centre at Oxford University on this initiative and The Rees Centre will be responsible for evaluating the project across all Local Authorities that are involved.

Being a part of this project is an excellent way of developing the professional skills and knowledge of school staff and importantly, it supports the transferring of this knowledge into practical change to directly support those children and young people who need it most.

This project involves free whole school training to staff on the subject of attachment and the impact of developmental trauma, delivered by Babcock LDP Educational Psychology Service and the Social, Emotional Mental Health Advisory Teaching Team. On top of the initial training, participating schools will then receive ongoing support from the training team to embed the learning into practice. This will be a bespoke package that is designed with senior leaders and aims to support schools with their specific requirements. For example, this could involve working with senior leaders in relation to reviewing pastoral support systems, whole-school behaviour management policies or exploring the identification and support of mental health difficulties in the school. Additional support approaches can be agreed between senior leaders and the training team, for example to include ongoing CPD opportunities, coaching or supervision.

The Virtual School has also commissioned the Educational Psychology Service and the SEMH Team to develop support materials for schools on the development of behaviour policies based on a relational approach, rather than the commonly used 'Ready to Learn' system. This is now complete and on the website. A number of schools will be trialling the use of the materials with support from the Educational Psychology Service.

Reducing Exclusions in Devon Schools (REDS) Programme and the Protocol for Supporting Children in Care (and those previously in Care)

This work to reduce exclusions for Children in Care, commissioned by the Virtual School, has been particularly successful. REDS (Reducing Exclusions in Devon Schools) is an intervention process designed and delivered by Babcock LDP Educational Psychology Service. The REDS process works by promoting empathy and inclusive practice in response to challenging or trauma-related behaviours. It is specifically for Children in Care at risk of exclusion and involves a package of Educational Psychologist support to develop a needs-led understanding of challenging behaviour, that informs a comprehensive support plan.

Reducing Exclusions in Devon's Schools (REDS)

Following a successful trial period during 2017-18 and subsequent year of implementation in 2018-19, the Reducing Exclusion in Devon Schools (REDS) intervention continued into 2019-20 with modifications made in line with evaluative feedback received. This report provides information and evaluative data regarding the REDS process for 2019-20.

The risk of exclusion had reduced in 90% of situations where the REDS process had been fully completed and reviewed. Risk of exclusion increased in 5% of cases and remained the same in 5% of cases.

Headline Information

- The REDS Team received 34 referrals for REDS support from Area Learning Advocates during the period, a 62% increase on 2018-19;
- 22 of these students were Secondary age and 12 Primary age;
- 25 of these students were male and 9 female;
- 14 (41%) of these could not be completed fully and on these occasions, the EP has followed up the student in the new setting or offered support to the new setting which has been positive. This happened for the following reasons:
 - A change of school placement prior to REDS meeting, e.g. managed move or started at WAVE / alternative provision (7 students);
 - Attendance was extremely low, and it was felt a different avenue of support was more appropriate (2 students);
 - Child was out of County (1 student);
 - On further discussion and consideration, another avenue of support was deemed more appropriate, e.g. SEMH team support, EP therapeutic sessions (2 students);
 - Insufficient referral information and no response to request for more detail (1 student);
 - No consent gained from Social Worker and no response regarding this (1 student).
- The Educational Psychologist chairs a multi-professional meeting to establish the background and context of the pupil's behaviour. This initial meeting gathers background information and ensures there is a shared understanding of the child's history and factors linked to exclusion;
- The Educational Psychologist meets or observes the child and elicits their views and perspective;
- A second meeting is then held (approximately one week after stage 1) to explore, in depth, what the function of the defined behaviours are and to identify the unmet needs. This is achieved through completion of a Needs Analysis, incorporating information from previous steps. This leads to a shared and agreed plan of support; and
- Reviewing the implementation of the plan after approximately six weeks.

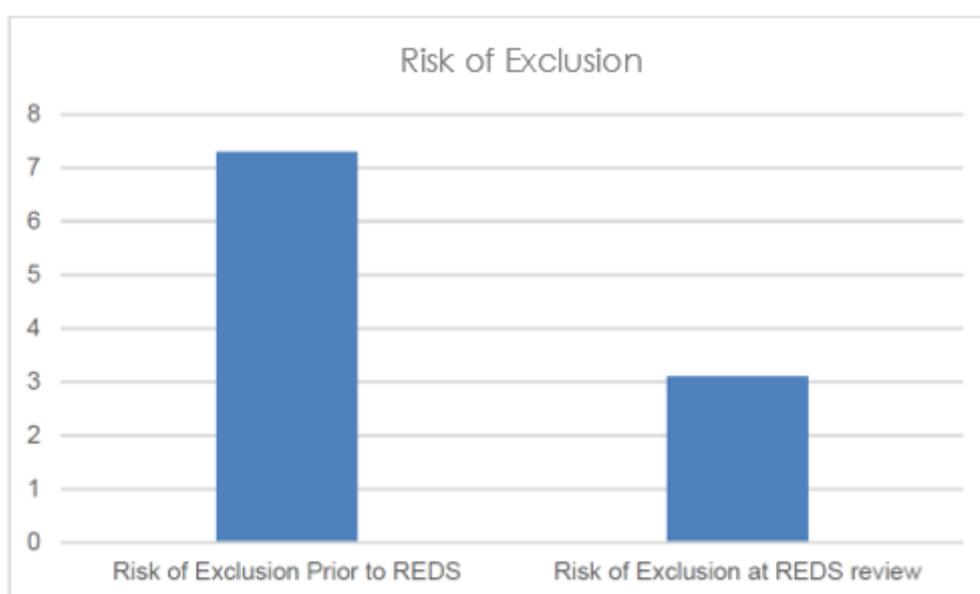
The evaluation of academic year 2018/19 showed:

Impact measure 1: Risk of Exclusion

Risk of exclusion measure was taken at the beginning of the process and again at the end, measured through school staff rating of the likelihood of the student being permanently excluded (1= very low risk, 10= very high risk).

Impact Measure 1: Risk of Exclusion

- The average risk of permanent exclusion at the initial REDS meeting was 7.3;
- The average risk of permanent exclusion at review meeting was 3.1.



Impact Measure 2: School Placement Stability

- Analysis of school placement indicates that 86% of students had the same school placement between the referral / start of the REDS process and the review meeting (6 weeks later). Considering the high rate of exclusion risk, this is very positive.
- Additional monitoring of placement in June 2020 indicates that this placement stability is typically maintained in the longer term, with 81% still in the same placement. This includes REDS referrals that were between 3 and 12 months old.

Impact Measure 3: Feedback from Staff and Carers

Staff reported positive changes in the following areas:

- Knowledge of the child and the reasons behind challenging behaviours;
- A greater understanding of why typical approaches were not being successful;

- Quality of relationships between the adults in school and young person, also relationships between the young person and their peers;
- School attitude towards the young person;
- Improved behaviours and the child spending more time engaged with learning and being at less risk of exclusion.

Comments about the impact of REDS

"REDS has really changed the way staff feel about him"

"he has been doing really well, things have turned 180 degrees since the REDS referral was made and it seems like he is in a good place"

"since the REDS, this young man is having a much-improved school experience"

"The REDS has had a very big impact"

"The changes made after REDS have had a very big impact... he has worked solidly for a double lesson and produced this outstanding work"

["They never give up on you" - School Exclusions - YouTube](#)

[School exclusion challenge facing London | ITV News - YouTube](#)

[Know The Law - School Exclusions - YouTube](#)

[Types of Exclusion | Understanding School Exclusions: UCL CAJ - YouTube](#)

[Inclusion - YouTube](#)