

A parent's guide to:

Fixed Term Exclusions

Special Educational Needs
and Disability Information,
Advice & Support Service



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Fixed Term Exclusions

It is a worrying time for you as a parent if your child is excluded from school.

Many parents are not sure what will happen and wonder about their child's future.

In this leaflet we want to tell you about the law as it stands, and what education should be provided for your child whilst they are excluded.

NB. All children have to go to school between the ages of 5-16 years and it is illegal if a school asks you to keep your child away from school without issuing an official letter.

Sent home but not excluded?

Sometimes a school may ask you to take your child home because of their behaviour. It might be for the lunchtime or in the afternoon as a temporary measure. You may feel that going home at lunch time is better for your child or will help them get over a difficult patch and may agree with the suggestion, and you might want to co-operate with the school in this way.

A lunch-time exclusion counts as a half-day exclusion in the law and without a letter from the school, this is an unofficial exclusion.

Sometimes these temporary arrangements go on too long, and then you as a parent are not sure what to do.

The best thing to do is to ask the Headteacher to have your child back on a full-time basis or make it official and give you an exclusion letter. You may worry that this will now go on your child's record, but in the long run, it is much worse for your child to miss some of their education and get further behind.

A Fixed Term (F/T) Exclusion

Fixed term exclusion means your child has been excluded from school for a specified period with a date given for their return to school.

A fixed term exclusion can last between a half day and 15 days in any one term, (45 days in a year). Most often a f/t exclusion will last for between 1-5 days

How am I told that my child has been excluded?

If your child has been excluded from school for a fixed period, the Headteacher should notify you immediately, ideally by telephone and then followed by a letter. The exclusion will normally begin on the next school day. The letter will tell you the date and time that the exclusion begins and the date it will end.

It will also explain:

- why the Headteacher decided to exclude your child (this should include details of the incident which led to the exclusion and refer to the school's published discipline policy)
- the steps taken by the school to try to avoid the exclusion
- the arrangements which have been made to set and mark work for your child.

During the exclusion

- It is your responsibility to make sure your child remains at home and is not present in a public place during school hours while they are excluded
- Only school days count as excluded days, not weekends or holidays
- During the first 5 school days of a fixed term exclusion the school should arrange for relevant school work to be sent home and should mark it for your child
- If the fixed term exclusion is longer than 5 days, the school is responsible for providing suitable full time education for your child.

At the end of the exclusion

The school will usually ask you to bring your child in for a re-integration interview before they start back at school. The meeting gives you and the school the opportunity to discuss and plan for your child's successful return.

If your child has **Special Educational Needs** it might be helpful for the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) to be at the meeting.

Your child will be at the meeting, their views are important. You may not feel it is a good idea for them to stay for the whole meeting, so you can ask for them to be there for just part of the meeting to allow you to discuss things more openly and honestly.

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Give you the chance to work with school
- Identify and address any concerns
- Explore wider issues and circumstances that may be affecting your child's behaviour
- Agree the best way to continue your child's education and identify what support is needed to avoid further exclusions.

Meeting with the Governors?

If the fixed term exclusion is longer than 5 days, between 6-15 days in any one term, then you as the parent can ask for the Governors to meet and review the decision of the Headteacher.

You can ask for this meeting if the total number of excluded days comes to 6 or more, for instance, 12 days of lunch time exclusions. The days do not have to be all in one block.

This meeting may be called a Governors' Disciplinary Meeting (GDC), you can attend and give your point of view about what happened.

If your child has **Special Educational Needs**, you may feel that the school should have provided more support which might have averted some of the difficulties, or that the school is discriminating against your child and excluding them because of their disability or that the disability was a contributing factor.

These meetings can be a very difficult time for parents and you can take someone you know to support you at the meeting, or if your child has **Special Educational Needs**, ask Sendiass Oxfordshire to try to find a Volunteer Independent Parental Supporter to support you.

Contact 01865 810516, text 07786 524294.

E-mail: sendiass@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Sendiass Oxfordshire can offer:

- A telephone helpline: **01865 810516**
- Information, advice and support on matters to do with your child's SEN
- Help with communication between you and the Local Authority
- Trained volunteer Independent Parental Supporters and Independent Supporters
- Advice about preventing and resolving disagreements
- Training events for parents and groups – see SENDIASS website
- An informal Drop In SEN Advice session, 'Talking Points', – see website for dates

**Contact us on: 01865 810516 or
text 07786 524294
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www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sendiass**

Confidentiality Code:

Everything you tell us will be treated in strict confidence. We will not disclose our records to, or discuss the case with, a third party outside SENDIASS Oxfordshire without your consent, except if we suspect a child is at risk.