



Tips on how to give your views on and challenge on your child's suspension (fixed period exclusion) and permanent exclusion:

What this information sheet is for:

This will help you:

- Understand what to challenge about your child's suspension (fixed number of days) or permanent exclusion
- Organise your thoughts
- Write your views to the school governors or panel

Before you start

Please read our Suspension and permanent exclusion webpage for important information. These questions are based on the government's guidance on suspensions and exclusions, which applies to children and young people in:

- state schools (maintained schools)
- academies (including free schools)
- pupil referral units (PRUs)
- school sixth forms

You can use **Part 1** to make notes and **Part 2** to turn your notes into a letter.

It does not apply to independent (private) schools or further education (FE) colleges.

Part 1:

Use this checklist to:

- Understand what happened
- Identify anything that may not have been done properly
- Make notes you can use in your letter
- Write short notes as you go.
- You will use these in Part 2.

A school can only suspend or permanently exclude a child for disciplinary reasons, such as:

- a repeated breach of the school's behaviour policy
- a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy, where keeping the child in school would seriously affect the safety or wellbeing of others

1 Did you receive a letter about the exclusion?	Your Notes
Were you given a written letter within 3 school days? Did it explain: • why was your child excluded? • how long for? • your right to give your views?	If no, use this in your letter: "I was not given the letter within 3 school days.." "I did not receive a clear written explanation..." "The letter did not explain my right to make representations..."

2 Do you understand the reason for the exclusion?	Your Notes
Were the reasons clearly explained (breach of school behaviour policy)? Do you agree your child breached the behaviour policy?	Use this in your letter: “The reasons for the exclusion are unclear...” “I do not agree the behaviour justified the suspension/ exclusion
3 Were you told about your rights?	Your Notes
Did the letter explain that you can give your views to governors? Did it explain how your child can share their views?	Use this in your letter: “I was not given information about my right to share my views...”
4 Did the school gather all the information?	Your Notes
• Were witness statements taken? • Was your child asked what happened? • Was their version of events recorded? • Was CCTV checked (if relevant)? • Is there a record of previous behaviour concerns (if relevant)?	Use this in your letter: “The decision appears to have been made without a full investigation...” “My child’s version of events was not properly considered...”

If you answered “no” to any of the questions above

This may mean the suspension/exclusion was not carried out properly and could be **unfair or unlawful**.

Make sure you include these points in your letter, (see Part 2 for a letter template) to the governors or Independent Review Panel (IRP).

Even if the correct process was followed, you may still feel the suspension/ exclusion was unfair especially if your child’s behaviour is linked to their SEND rather than a breach of the behaviour policy.

Use this section to explain your child’s needs and whether they were properly supported:

- Make notes as you go
- You will use these in your letter

1 What are your child’s needs?	Your Notes
• What are your child’s SEND or additional needs? • Does the school recognise these needs? • Have professionals (e.g. Educational Psychologist, CAMHS, other) been involved? • Has the school received reports and followed recommendations?	Use this in your letter: “My child has SEND needs, including...” “These needs were known to the school...” “Professional advice was provided but not fully followed...”

2 What support has the school put in place?	Your Notes
• What support or strategies has your child received? (e.g. SEN support plan, TA support, behaviour plan) • Do you have SEN records (IEPs, pupil passport)? • Has the school tried to reduce difficulties or behaviour?	If yes, use this in your letter: “The support in place included...” “Appropriate support was not consistently in place...” Do you have any SEN support records, also known as Individual support plans (IEPs) or Pupil Passports you can attach to your letter?
3 Has the support been reviewed and increased if needed?	Your Notes
• Has support been reviewed regularly (usually termly)? • Was more support put in place when things were getting worse? • If there were repeated suspensions, did the school take further action around the support?	Use this in your letter: “Support was not regularly reviewed or updated...” “Despite increasing concerns, additional support was not put in place...”
4 Is the exclusion linked to your child’s SEND?	Your Notes
• Do you think the behaviour is linked to your child’s needs? • Could this have been prevented with the right support?	Use this in your letter: “My child’s behaviour should be understood in the context of their SEND...” “With the right support, this incident could have been prevented...”
5 If your child has an Education, Health, and Care Plan	Your Notes
• Is your child receiving the support in Section F? • Should an early annual review have taken place or did it? • Were concerns shared with you and the local authority (EHC Coordinator) before the suspension/exclusion?	Use this in your letter: “The provision in my child’s EHC Plan was not fully in place...” “An early review should have taken place before the exclusion...”

Part 2: Template - Writing your views

Use your answers from Part 1 to complete this letter

You do not need to include everything - focus on the most important points.

Dear Chair of Governors,

Re: **[Child's name]** - Suspension / Permanent Exclusion

I am writing to give my views on my child's exclusion and explain why I do not agree with this decision.
[Describe what happened]

(Use your answers from Part 1 – process section)

- "On **[date]**, my child was suspended/permanently excluded following..."
- "The school's view is that..."
- "My child's understanding of what happened is..."
- "There were issues leading up to the incident, including..."

Why I believe the process was not followed properly

(Links directly to your checklist questions about letters, rights, investigation)

- "I did not receive a clear written explanation..."
- "I was not given information about my right to make representations..."
- "My child was not given an opportunity to share their version of events..."
- "The decision appears to have been made without a full investigation..."

Why the exclusion was not fair or appropriate

(Your general challenge – proportionality, last resort)

- "I do not believe the exclusion was a last resort..."
- "Other strategies could have been used..."
- "The exclusion was disproportionate to what happened..."
- "Other pupils involved were treated differently..."

SEND - understanding my child's needs (all children)

- "My child has SEND needs, including..."
- "These needs were known to the school..."
- "My child's behaviour should be understood in the context of their needs..."
- "This situation reflects unmet needs rather than intentional behaviour..."

SEN Support (school based support) - support, planning and early help

(Links to: support / review / escalation / professional advice sections)

- "The school did not fully understand how my child's needs affect their behaviour..."
- "Support strategies were not consistently put in place..."
- "There was limited evidence of a clear plan being reviewed or updated..."
- "Concerns had already been raised before the exclusion..."
- "Additional support was not put in place despite increasing concerns..."
- "Recommendations from professionals were not fully followed..."

EHC Plan - provision and review

(Only include if child has EHCP – clearly separated)

- *"My child has an EHCP which sets out their needs and provision..."*
- *"The provision in Section F was not consistently delivered..."*
- *"Support outlined in the EHCP was not in place at the time..."*
- *"My child's needs had been escalating prior to the exclusion..."*
- *"An early review should have taken place..."*

Other contributing factors

(Links to: bullying, mental health, etc.)

- *"There were additional factors that contributed to this incident, including..."*
- *"These were not fully considered by the school..."*

Impact on my child

- *"This exclusion has had a significant impact on my child's wellbeing..."*
- *"My child has experienced increased anxiety/distress..."*
- *"The exclusion has disrupted their education..."*

What should have happened instead

- *"The school could have taken a different approach, such as..."*
- *"A review of support and needs should have taken place..."*
- *"Additional support or reasonable adjustments should have been considered..."*

What I am asking for

- *"I am asking the panel to reconsider this decision..."*
- *"I would like the suspension/exclusion to be reviewed..."*
- *"I am requesting a school meeting to review my child's support and next steps..."*

Yours sincerely,
[Your full name]

Further help and examples: You can find more guidance and example letters here:

National Autistic Society (NAS): guidance on exclusions and writing to governors [Advice and Guidance on exclusions and writing to governors](#)

Coram Children's Legal Centre [School Exclusions Hub](#)

These resources include examples and templates that can help you write your own letter.

Part 3: Preparing for a Governors' meeting to discuss your child's suspension/exclusion

This part explains:

- how to prepare for the governors' meeting
- what to expect during the meeting
- what you can do if you disagree with the decision

Before the Governors' Meeting	Checklist
• Ask the school for your child's records and any reports • Read the reports and highlight: • your child's needs • support that was missed • Write down the key points you want to say (use Part 2) • Prepare 2-3 main points you want the panel to understand • Send your written views to the clerk (ideally 5 school days before) You can take someone with you (friend, family member or supporter)	✓ I have read my child's reports and school records. ✓ I have written my views (using Part 2). ✓ I have picked 2–3 key points I want to focus on. ✓ I have sent my written views to the clerk (if possible). ✓ I have prepared a few questions to ask the school. ✓ I have arranged for someone to come with me (if I want support).
At the Governors' Meeting	Checklist
• Ask if you don't understand something - it's OK • Use your notes to stay focused • Clearly explain why you think the exclusion is unfair • Ask simple, clear questions (yes/no questions can help) • Make sure you have said everything you wanted to The governors must listen to your views and consider your child's situation. If the meeting feels unfair, you can say so and ask for it to be noted.	✓ I have my notes or letter with me. ✓ I explain clearly why I think the exclusion is unfair. ✓ I link my points to: • what happened • my child's needs • support that was missing ✓ I ask questions if something is unclear. ✓ I ask questions about what could have been done differently. ✓ I make sure I have said my main points. If needed: ✓ I say if I feel the meeting is not fair. ✓ I ask for concerns to be recorded in the minutes.

After the Governors' Meeting	Checklist
• You will receive the decision in writing • You can ask for a copy of the meeting notes If you still disagree with the decision You may be able to: • Request an Independent Review Panel (IRP) (for permanent exclusions) • Make a claim to the SEND Tribunal if you feel the exclusion is linked to your child's disability (disability discrimination) This is called the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Tribunal	✓ I receive the decision in writing. ✓ I ask for a copy of the meeting notes (if needed). If I still disagree: ✓ I consider requesting an Independent Review Panel (IRP) (permanent exclusions). ✓ I consider a SEND Tribunal claim if I believe it is linked to disability.