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Submitted to School Exclusion Reform - Call for Evidence
Submitted on 2026-10-23 09:38:43

Introduction

Part 1: About You

1 What is your name? Please insert below.

Please include your full name.:
Lucy Kennerley

2 Do you consent for the Department for Education to contact you via email about your response? Please select one item below:

Yes

If yes, please provide your email address:

3 Would you like us to keep your responses confidential?

No

Reason for confidentiality:

4 In what capacity are your responding?

On behalf of a representative body

If other, please specify::

Part 1: About You - Questions for Academics and Other Organisations

8 What is the name of your organisation/representative body?

Comment below, alternatively, select one box below:
Parent Carer Forum Cheshire West and Chester

9 Which region of England does your response relate to?

Which region of England does your response relate to:
North West

Part 2: Questions for Academics and Other Organisations - On-site removal and internal suspension

24 What evidence is there on the use, implementation and impact of on-site removal practices and internal suspension in schools?

Evidence on the use, implementation and impact of on-site removal and internal suspension:

This response draws on our 2026 SEND survey. 701 parent carers took part between December 2025 and February 2026. 292 said their child has an EHCP, 169 said their child gets SEN support and 49 were going through EHCP assessment.
We do not hold formal data. This is what parents of children with SEND told us.
• Labels do not match reality. One parent describes time in what the school calls the 'inclusion' room, which she equates with 'isolation'. Her child's attendance is recorded at 54%, and that figure includes a disproportionate amount of time out of class in that room.
• Sanctions stack up and are linked to disability. Parents describe 'daily sanctions and detentions (sometimes up to 3 detentions a day!) for behaviours that are directly linked to disability and neurodivergence', and behaviour point systems they call antiquated. One parent reports 45 suspensions in under two years, plus numerous isolations and detentions.
• Impact on attendance and trust. One parent says the school 'continues to threaten exclusion, to isolate' and her child continues to 'struggle to attend through fear of being isolated'. Another says their child has 'lost all trust in teachers'. Parents also link punitive responses to emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) and worsening mental health.
• Behaviour is treated as the problem, not unmet need. One parent says children with neurodivergent needs 'are classed as poorly behaved children rather than looking at their sensory needs'.
• Records can hide the picture. Attendance figures can include time spent out of class, so a child can look present when they are not in lessons.

25 What evidence is there on the most and least effective approaches to on-site removal practices, and where are the most significant evidence gaps?

Evidence on the most and least effective approaches to on-site removal, and any gaps:

Approaches parents link to poorer outcomes:
• Sanctions applied without first considering unmet need, including repeated detentions and isolation.
• Reduced or part-time timetables after behaviour incidents. One parent describes a child 'thrown out of school everytime he has a meltdown' and then 'put on a reduced timetable when all he needs is support'. Another describes daily phone calls to collect their child and a 9 to 12 timetable. The Call for Evidence glossary says part-time timetables should not be used to manage behaviour, but parents describe them used this way.
• Informal sending home. Parents describe being called to collect their child, which may not be recorded as any kind of removal.
Approaches parents link to better outcomes:
• Making reasonable adjustments instead of punishing, rather than 'framing as behaviour issue where the issues are unmet needs'.
• Early identification of need and being listened to.
• A setting that meets need. One parent whose child was always excluded in mainstream says he has 'achieved so much' since moving to a SEN school.
• Virtual school stepping in for a child who was out of school for several months.
We think the main evidence gaps are: recording of informal removals, collections and part-time timetables; whether schools act on the SEND need behind the behaviour; outcomes for children with SEND specifically.

26 What evidence can you provide on the understanding and distinction between internal suspension and other on-site removal practices?

Evidence on the understanding and distinction between internal suspension and on-site removal:

We have no formal evidence on terminology. Parents describe what happens to their child, whatever the school calls it: 'inclusion' rooms, isolation, removal from class. They do not experience a difference between the terms.
What matters to families is why it happened, how long it lasts, who supervises, what education the child gets, how SEND needs are met and how the child returns to lessons.
We think a clear definition and time limit would help, but only alongside recording of every instance, telling parents each time, a check on whether SEND needs are driving the behaviour, and education continuing throughout.

27 What evidence is there on how the use or impact of on-site removal or internal suspension differs for groups of pupils?

Evidence on the impact of on-site removal on pupil pupils:

Our evidence relates to pupils with SEND. We have no evidence on other groups.
• Parents describe sanctions for behaviour 'directly linked to disability and neurodivergence', applied 'without updating and considering his needs'.
• One parent says 'an autistic and ADHD student should not nearly reach the threshold for suspensions in one year without local authority intervention'.
• Needs are often recognised late. One parent says it took exclusions from several schools before their son's needs were met. Another says it took an exclusion before anyone listened and assessments began.
• One child was repeatedly excluded in mainstream, then moved to a SEN school where he has done well.
• One family had a managed move, then an exclusion from the second school, and paid privately for a year of education while waiting for an EHCP.
• One parent complained about an unlawful exclusion from primary school and gave up because it 'wasn't ever going to get anywhere'.
• Parents describe being told that suspensions could affect college places.

Part 2: Questions for Academics and Other Organisations - Reintegration after Suspension

31 What evidence is there on the effectiveness and impact of different reintegration approaches following suspension on:

Evidence of the effectiveness and impact of reintegration approaches after a suspension:

Our survey did not ask about reintegration meetings or plans, so we cannot say how often they happen or how well. In open comments:
• Support after exclusion is described as absent or late. One parent says the school said their child was at risk of permanent exclusion, so they asked for a referral for support, and it 'never happened'. Another says there is '0 support network for parents and students'.
• Reintegration fails if the cause is not addressed. Parents describe children returning to the same sanctions, isolation and unmet need, with fear of school and falling attendance. One parent describes a suspended child 'treated badly and feeling rejected just for being "different"'.
• Thresholds block help. One family was told they were not 'high need' despite their child being excluded for three weeks and serious strain on the family.
• Where reintegration worked, it was because a setting changed or someone stepped in. Virtual school supported a child who was out of school for months, and moves to a SEN school helped.
We believe a reintegration plan for a child with SEND should check whether needs are identified and met, link to the SENCo, EHCP review and other services where relevant, and have a named contact and a date to review.

32 What evidence is there on the most effective reintegration approaches for vulnerable pupils or families?

Most effective reintegration approaches for vulnerable pupils:

Our evidence relates to pupils with SEND and their families. Our survey did not test approaches, so this is our view based on what parents tell us.
• Look at need first. After a suspension of a child with SEND, the school should ask what need was not being met, and trigger an SEN or EHCP review where appropriate.
• Treat parents as partners. Many parents say they are not listened to. Meetings should be at flexible times, with a written plan shared with the family.
• Keep phased returns short and reviewed, so they do not turn into long part-time timetables.
• Involve the local authority early where mainstream may not be able to meet need, rather than repeating suspensions.
• Think about families facing barriers. Parents tell us they take unpaid leave or give up work when children are out of school or on reduced timetables, so rigid meeting times exclude them. Others report schools and services not replying to emails.

Part 2: Questions for Academics and Other Organisations - Provision of Schoolwork during the first 5 days of an exclusion

38 What evidence is there on the impact of providing schoolwork during the first 5 school days of suspension and permanent exclusion on a pupil's education and engagement?

What evidence is there on the impact of providing schoolwork during the first 5 school days of suspension and permanent exclusion on a pupil's education and engagement:

Our survey did not ask about the first five days specifically. Some comments below relate to children out of school for other reasons, such as being unable to attend, but they show what happens when work is not provided.
• One parent says their child 'feels forgotten about and left behind', with 'no work is sent home when she can't attend' and 'significant gaps in her learning'.
• One family says their child had no education for over four months and the school sent home two pieces of work in that time, which were not marked.
• A child excluded from school was out of school for several months when SEND staffing was short, until virtual school stepped in.
• One parent had to push for online learning themselves, and said the school did not support it.
We would welcome the expectation that work is set from day one. In practice, families tell us the bigger risk is what happens after day five.

39 What evidence is there on factors that influence pupils' participation in and completion of work during their suspension or permanent exclusion?

What evidence is there on factors that influence pupils' participation in and completion of work during their suspension or permanent exclusion:

From parent comments, plus our own view where we say 'we think':
• Reliance on an app. One parent asks for schoolwork 'not being solely dependent on an app'.
• Work that is not marked or followed up, so children do not know if it is right.
• Mental health and unmet need. Children who are anxious or overwhelmed cannot complete work without support.
• Parent availability. We think some parents have to work and cannot supervise.
• Contact from school. Parents describe little communication while children are out of school.
• We think work not adapted to the child's needs is a barrier.
We think work should be accessible and adapted for SEND, available in more than one format, marked, with a named contact at school.

40 What evidence is there on how access to schoolwork, participation in the work provided, and educational outcomes vary for different groups of pupils during the first 5 school days?

What evidence is there on how access to schoolwork, participation in the work provided, and educational outcomes vary for different groups of pupils during the first 5 school days:

Our evidence relates to pupils with SEND. Parents describe children left without education for months, including after exclusion when staffing or placement problems follow, and EHCPs not being delivered. We have no evidence on other groups.
We think that for pupils with an EHCP, the plan should be followed during any exclusion, with the school and local authority clear who is responsible from day six onwards. Data should be reported by SEND status.