

Exclusions & Suspensions: Your Appeal Toolkit

What to do in the first days, and what to raise in your appeal · UK · Permanent exclusions, fixed-period exclusions (suspensions) and PRU places

Black children in England are disproportionately excluded, and their SEND needs are often missed first. If your child has been excluded or suspended, act quickly — some windows are as short as a few days. Nothing here requires a lawyer.

In the first 48 hours

- Ask the school for everything in writing: the letter of exclusion, your child's behaviour record, and any witness statements.
- Ask whether your child has SEND, an EHCP or an assessment in progress — if so, the exclusion review is different and stronger.
- Do not sign anything yet, and do not accept a managed move on the spot.

Checklist for your appeal letter

- Dates, incident reports and anything that contradicts the school's account
- Evidence of unmet SEND needs: reports, letters, missed assessments, refused adjustments
- Patterns: previous exclusions, detentions, records where communication or sensory needs were treated as defiance
- What your child says happened, in their own words
- What support would prevent this happening again (adjustments, assessment, reintegration plan)

Questions to raise with the school

- Was my child's SEND need considered before the sanction? Show me the evidence.
- What reasonable adjustments were in place at the time of the incident?
- What is the school doing about the pattern in my child's record?
- Who decided on the exclusion, and what was the process?

Key rights

- Suspensions of five days or more (or 15+ days in a term) mean the school must arrange full-time education and the governing board must consider your representations.
- For permanent exclusions, you can put your case to the governors' discipline committee and then to an independent review panel.
- The SEND Tribunal hears appeals when the LA changes or refuses an EHCP, including in some exclusion situations — check your decision letter for deadline details.

You are not alone. Free, confidential advocacy support for Black families: pzadi2012@gmail.com · 07432693735. This is guidance, not legal advice.