

Appealing Against Permanent Exclusion

This can be a very upsetting and worrying time for you and your child. The ACE practical guide gives useful information regarding parents' legal rights, but 'putting your case together' can be a very daunting task particularly when you are so emotionally involved.

Staffordshire Parent Partnership Service has two Behaviour and Exclusions Officers who can support you. This checklist has been put together to help take you through the order of compiling your case.

- **School records**

Ask for a copy of your child's school records from the school (a minimal photocopying fee may be charged). Also ask for copies of the school's behaviour policy and any other relevant policies, e.g. anti bullying policy, SEN policy (these should be free of charge).

Go through your child's records.

- Are there any incidents you were unaware of?
- Are there positive comments you can use in your evidence?

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- **Start positively**

If you want your child to be reinstated, good communication and a positive relationship is vital. We always suggest parents begin their case on a positive note.

- State why they want their child to return to school
- The positive things that have happened
- What the child likes/is good at etc.

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- **History**

The governing body will not normally know anything about your child. Give some background history.

- Include anything that has happened in their life that you think has or could have affected their behaviour either at home or in school.
- Describe how they are at home, (including good points)
- Any hobbies/interests they have.

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- **Incident/reason for exclusion.**

Talk to your child about the incident.

- Find out exactly what happened,
- Were statements taken from those involved, including your child?
- Were there any witnesses? Did they make statements?
- If other children were involved, were their punishments in line with your child's?

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- **Strategies used**

Your letter from school telling you about the exclusion will have given a list of strategies which school say they used to prevent the exclusion.

Work through the list below and comment on each strategy.

- Did it work? If not, why not?
- Are there any strategies you feel could have been tried?
- Have the appropriate support agencies been involved, such as; Behaviour Support, Education Welfare Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Connexions, Autism Outreach Team?
- Has your child had a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP)? If so were the targets realistic?
- Were you and your child involved with writing the PSP?

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- **Statement from your child**

Guidance states that your child should be encouraged to attend the hearing. However it can be difficult for a young person to sit and listen to often negative comments from the school.

If you feel your child could cope.

- They should be encouraged to attend, as their views are important.

If not

- Ask your child to write or dictate to you their feelings
- Try to encourage them to start positively;
 - ❖ why they want to return
 - ❖ how they will try to change their behaviour
 - ❖ what help they feel they need
 - ❖ what they will do differently

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- **Your Summary**

At the end of the hearing you will be asked to summarise your case.

- briefly repeat important points you want to make
- End with what you fear will happen to your child if the exclusion is upheld.

The ACE Guidance on Exclusion booklet has a model as an example of how you may wish to write your summary. You could use this to help you write your own, picking out the sentences which apply.

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- **Character References**

Are there any people you could ask to provide character references for your child, for example, from outside clubs etc?

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