

Exclusion Handbook Achieving for Children RBWM

2026/27 1.0

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**achieving
for children**

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1. Introduction

This handbook has been created by the Education Inclusion Service for RBWM schools. Before considering a suspension or permanent exclusion, we advise all Head Teachers to use the first section of this handbook as a guide to ensure that all possible support, strategies and interventions have been put in place. Permanent exclusions should be used as a last resort.

The second section of the handbook includes the process once a decision to issue a suspension or permanent exclusion has been made. This handbook includes template letters, relevant forms and key information for the suspension and exclusion process.

This handbook should be read in conjunction with the DfE School Suspension & Exclusion Statutory Guidance July 2026 and can be found here:

[DfE School Suspension & Exclusion Statutory Guidance](#)

Within the first section of the handbook, you will find:

- Details of universal services that are available to all RBWM pupils
- Early Intervention advice and resources that can be delivered by school staff
- Targeted services offered by the local authority and partner agencies
- Support available to pupils at risk of exclusion people who may be at risk of exclusion

Within the second section of the handbook, where the decision to suspend or permanently exclude a young person has been made, you will find:

- Details around the statutory process
- Example letters
- Alternative provision arrangements
- Key contact details
- Role of governors

2. Early Intervention at School

A range of supportive early intervention measures should be considered and put in place where it has been identified that a young person's behaviour has begun to escalate. These interventions may include:

Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) - A PSP should be put in place for any child who may be at risk of exclusion. The plan should be structured and created when a child is not responding to

the school's usual behaviour strategies. A PSP meeting should be attended by the young person (primary age pupil may only attend part of the meeting), parents/carers, school member of staff leading on the PSP and/or a member of staff who the child has a positive relationship with. PSP's are most successful when they are co-produced by the young person.

The PSP should aim to identify if there are any triggers to the child's behaviour and aim to unpick the following:

- Identifying if there is a particular time during the school day that may be a trigger point such as unstructured times, break times, lunch times, after a specific lesson or break time
- Identifying which subjects may be a trigger point
- Identifying if there is a specific pupil/member of staff that triggers the behaviour
- Capturing the child and family's voice
- Understanding the wider contextual factors that may be contributing to the behaviour i.e. unmet SEND needs
- Consider if further assessments are required to support the young person
- Identify a trusted adult within the school
- Identify a safe space within the school
- Set the pupil 'SMART' (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time limited) targets

The types of support that can be explored:

- Mentoring support
- Counselling
- Identifying special educational needs
- Reasonable adjustments to further support the young person
- Head of Year support
- Teaching Assistant support
- Additional support for identified triggers
- Mediation where particular subjects/teachers are an issue
- Team Around the Child meetings including local authority officers, early help workers, social workers and virtual school colleagues
- Alternative Provision (refer to section 10)
- Referral to Early Help Hub
- Referral to Pupils Educationally at Risk Hub
- Referral to Education Psychology Service

The above lists are not exhaustive.

3. Pupils Educationally at Risk Hub

The Education Inclusion Service offers schools the opportunity to refer children and young people to the Pupil Educationally at Risk Hub (PEAR) when a child/young person is considered to be educationally at risk and additional support and/or advice is needed above what is ordinarily available to children and young people in schools.

Prior to a school being able to make a referral to the PEAR hub, the school must request a consultation where the case will be triaged by a Specialist Advisory Teacher, Area Senco, Pupil Inclusion and Support Manager, Inclusion and Access Manager and/or EY school readiness hub. Should the LA Officer consider a PEAR referral to be appropriate (this will be where there is evidence that a range of in-school support has been implemented and reviewed), they will share a link with the school staff member to complete a referral form.

The PEAR hub takes place once a month, and once a referral has been triaged and agreed, schools will be invited to present their referral to a panel which will consist of a range of Education team members alongside members from Early Help, Virtual School, Special Educational Needs, CAMHS, Social Care services.

The outcome of the presentation to PEAR could result in but is not limited to:

- Advice, guidance & signposting
- Access to SEMH Mentoring Service & training
- Additional support from internal and external agencies e.g. Specialist Teacher Service/Early Help/Social Care/Virtual School/Inclusion & Access/Education Welfare Service
- Up to 50% funding towards alternative provision
- Anchor School Readiness Hub (Rec-Year 1 children only)

Further information about PEAR hub can be accessed here:

[Pupils Educationally at Risk Hub](#)

4. Achieving for Children Early Help Offer

The Early Help offer in Windsor & Maidenhead includes a number of services who support young people and their families. It is important to consider the type of support that you feel the young person and/or family would benefit from to prevent behaviour from escalating.

Some of the support you may consider:

- SEMH Service/Behaviour Support Service
- CAMHS
- Counselling
- Educational Psychology Service
- Family Hub Support which includes practitioners specialising in Youth Work, Parenting & Family Resilience
- Pupils Educationally at Risk Hub referral

- DASH Charity
- Well-Being Team
- Substance Misuse Service
- Youth Offending Team

The above list is not exhaustive and full details of what the teams can offer can be found here:

[Early Help Services for Children, Young People and Families in RBWM](#)

5. Special Education Needs

If a pupil's behaviour is related to SEN or a disability, school must use a graduated response to identify and address the underlying cause of the behaviour as well as plan and review the impact of strategies or provision. Examples of action that schools can take include:

- Use the [RBWM Ordinarily Available Provision](#)
- Increase SEN support
- Increase pastoral support
- Seek specialist advice from support services such as, educational psychology, SEMH service, well-being or the specialist teaching service
- Referral to appropriate therapy services such as CAMHS, OT, SALT or Physio
- SEMH service (further information listed below)
- Consider if a request for an EHC needs assessment is appropriate

Schools can also provide parents with supportive resources, these local services provide advice and support, workshops for young people and help and support for parents/carers:

- <https://www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk/support-we-offer/>
- <https://www.gems4health.com/>
- <https://frimley-healthiertogether.nhs.uk/>

If a young person has an Education Health Care Plan, the DfE outlines that Head Teachers should, as far as possible, avoid permanent exclusion for a child with an EHC plan. Where a young person may be at risk of exclusion, the following steps should be taken:

- Work in partnership with others including parents and the local authority
- Consider what additional support may be required
- Considered if alternative provision may support the pupil
- Consider requesting an early/interim review
- If a pupil is permanently excluded from school, the parent/carer can request that an SEN expert attends the independent review panel.

Please contact the child / young person's SEN Assessment Coordinator if it would be helpful to discuss next steps in more detail.

6. SEMH Service

The Timpson review demonstrated that pupils with Social Emotional and Mental Health difficulties are more likely to be excluded from school. Where professionals can identify a young person's needs early, this will help to allow the right support to be put in place for the young person.

The SEMH Service in RBWM can provide the following support to schools:

- Whole school SEMH Training - Creating a Climate for Learning for C&YP with challenging behaviours associated with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties. which aims;
 - To raise awareness of the complex needs of an increasing number of young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties.
 - To empower staff in recognising that positive relationships and the use of language are essential to improve the learning environment for all pupils.
 - Individualised support for schools.
- Application to the SEMH service where a child is at risk of permanent exclusion from
- Where a young person is at risk of permanent exclusion or has high profile SEMH needs, schools can request a consultation by emailing aldasair.whitelaw@achievingforchildren.org.uk or rosie.gossage@achievingforchildren.org.uk
- Regular SEMH Network Meetings for schools to receive information, resources guidance and support.
- Family hubs service provides:
 - Transition group work - Onwards and Upwards to support pupils with school transitions.

7. Restorative Justice Support

Restorative Justice is an exceptionally positive way of repairing harm caused when there has been an event or incident in school. Schools should be encouraged to consider Restorative Justice conversations as an option to resolving conflict and preventing issues from escalating and/or continuing. This type of support can help to prevent further suspensions or exclusions. There are two avenues for schools to receive Restorative Justice Support:

- 1.) **Achieving for Children** Restorative Justice Worker who you can contact on:
01628 683280 or 07907 400578
- 2.) **Thames Valley Police** Judith Baker who manages the Restorative Justice & Youth

Mentoring support on behalf of Thames Valley Police who you can contact on:
01844 202001 or email Judith.baker@hopeafterharm.org.uk

8. Inputs by AfC & Partner Agencies

Achieving for Children and partner agencies offer whole school and target group inputs. The aim is to educate and deliver key messages in relation to a range of topics:

- Healthy relationships
- Knife Crime
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Criminal Exploitation
- Youth Violence

Further details on how to book partner agencies to deliver school inputs can be found here:
[School inputs 2026/27](#)

Thames Valley Police violence reduction unit has also created a range of PSHE resources which can be delivered by the school. The full range of topics and resources can be accessed here: [TVP PSHE Lesson Plans](#)

9. Alternative Provision

Alternative Provision can be explored to prevent exclusions or to re-engage a pupil in their education. Where a pupil is experiencing difficulties in controlling or managing their behaviour in school an alternative provision may further support the young person. RBWM have created a number of documents which will support schools in deciding if alternative provision would be appropriate and supportive for a young person, the types of alternative provision that are available in the local area and a quality assurance document and risk assessment. These documents can be accessed here:

[Alternative Provision Policy](#)

[Alternative Provision Working With List](#)

[Alternative Provision QA & Risk Assessment](#)

10. Managed Moves & Off-site Direction

A Head Teacher may consider a managed move to another mainstream school when a young person would benefit from a fresh start and new education environment. A managed move can help to support a young person's behaviour from escalating and prevent further suspensions or a permanent exclusion. A managed move can be considered prior to a permanent exclusion being implemented. A managed move is facilitated by two schools and parents must agree and consent to the referral.

An off-site direction can be used to support a child to attend another setting temporarily to improve their behaviour. A governing board has the responsibility for arranging suitable off-site direction. This can be used where interventions or targeted support have not been successful in improving a pupil's behaviour on site. Off-site direction is a time limited placement at an alternative provision or another mainstream school.

The documents below will provide support to any head teacher considering an off-site direction or managed move:

[Managed Move Protocol](#)

[Managed Move Notification Form](#)

[Off-site Direction Notification Form](#)

Section 2

11. Reintegration meetings following a suspension

Reintegration meetings are extremely important to restore the relationship between the family and school following the suspension and provide school with the opportunity to draw up a plan to ensure reintegration is as successful as possible and prevent any further suspensions or exclusions from school.

Reintegration meetings following a suspension provide young people, parents and school staff with an opportunity to address what is not working well, what is working well and what needs to happen next.

The DfE Exclusion guidance highlights the importance of a well-designed reintegration strategy that offers the pupil a fresh start; helps them understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others; teaches them to how meet the high expectations of behaviour in line with the school culture; fosters a renewed sense of belonging within the school community; and builds engagement with learning.

Further details can be found on page 18 & 19 of the Exclusion Guidance 2026.

12. RBWM Suspension and Exclusion Letters

All RBWM suspension and exclusion letters templates can be access via the leadership website:

<https://www.leadershipupdate-rbwm.co.uk/exclusions/>

Head Teachers should notify parents/carers of their decision to suspend or exclude a pupil preferably in person or by telephone in the first instance as this provides the parents/carers an opportunity to ask any initial questions or raise concerns directly.

A written letter must also be provided to the parent, clearly outlining the reason for the suspension/exclusion. Details of what the letters must include can be found in the example letters above.

13. Notifying the local authority of a suspension or permanent exclusion

All schools must notify the local authority when a suspension has been issued to a pupil by completing the online google form which can be accessed here: [Suspensions notification 2026/27 - RBWM \(google.com\)](#)

Where a permanent exclusion has been issued, the school must contact the Inclusion & Access Manager immediately. The permanent exclusion form must be completed as soon as the decision to permanently exclude a pupil has been made and sent to Rosie.Gossage@achievingforchildren.org.uk

If a young person attends an RBWM school but resides in a different local authority, the home authority must be notified immediately of the permanent exclusion, as well as notifying RBWM. It is the responsibility of the local authority in which the child resides to arrange alternative provision from the sixth day. Please check the young person's address at

the point of a permanent exclusion to ensure that notification is made in a timely manner. RBWM must be notified of all permanent exclusions issued by RBWM schools.

The permanent exclusion notification form can be accessed here and is named RBWM PEX FORM: <https://www.leadershipupdate-rbwm.co.uk/exclusions/>

Note: Before completing this form for a pupil who resides **outside** of RBWM, please contact the home authority to confirm which paperwork they would like you to complete.

14. Alternative Provision from the sixth day of a suspension or exclusion

All children have the right to an education and for the first five days of a suspension or a permanent exclusion, schools must provide and mark work for the pupil.

Where a young person has been suspended for a period over 5 days, the school must arrange suitable alternative provision from the sixth day of the suspension.

Where a young person has been permanently excluded from school, the local authority will arrange alternative provision from the sixth day of the permanent exclusion.

15. Marking attendance registers following a suspension/exclusion

Code E: If a pupil has been suspended/excluded and are not attending an alternative provision, the register should be marked as code E

Code B: Where alternative provision is arranged and the pupil attends an approved educational activity that does not involve the pupil being registered at any other school, the register should be marked as code B

Code D: Where alternative provision is arranged and the pupil attends a PRU or independent school where the pupil is dual registered, the register should be marked as code D (dual rolled)

Page 51 of the Exclusions Guidance 2026 includes details of when a child's name can lawfully be removed from the register following the conclusion of the exclusion process.

16. The role of the Governors

Role of governors

In certain circumstances, the Governing Board must review the exclusion and consider whether to reinstate the pupil. If the Board's decision is to reinstate the pupil then the exclusion is removed from the child's record. In the case of a permanent exclusion, if the Board declines to reinstate the pupil then the exclusion is upheld and (following a timescale dependent on whether an Independent Review is requested) the Board has a duty to remove the pupil from the school roll.

The requirements, duties and responsibilities relating to the exclusion review process are summarised below:

Notification to the Governing Board:

The statutory guidance states that the Board must be notified without delay of any permanent exclusion or any suspension resulting in that pupil being suspended for more than 5 days in one term (including any suspensions occurring that term in a previous school).

For permanent exclusions and suspensions bringing the total to more than 15 days in one term, an exclusion review meeting must take place within 15 school days.

There is the same 'notification without delay' requirement for any suspension that would result in a pupil potentially missing a public exam or national test (e.g. Year 6 SATS or GCSEs) as all efforts will be made to hold the review meeting before the date of the exam / test.

The Board must also be notified once per term of any other exclusions (ie, those which do not trigger an automatic review meeting, or the requirement to hold one on request). This is typically supplied as statistical data.

The Governing Board's consideration of reinstatement

This is a statutory requirement for all permanent exclusions and suspensions of more than 15 (total) days in a term, regardless of whether or not the parents request it.

For suspensions of 15 (total) days or less in a term, a meeting will only be held if the parents request it and this meeting must be held within 50 school days of the date of exclusion.

For suspensions of 5 (total) days or less in the term, the Board must consider any representations made by the parents but there is no requirement for the parents to be

invited to a meeting and the Board does not have the power to reinstate the pupil. It can ask for its findings to be put on the pupil's educational record.

Panel membership requirements

The chair and clerk to the Board will identify suitable governors to sit on the panel (three is the minimum number for maintained schools; academies should check their articles for sub-committee quoracy requirements.)

The panel's role is to **decide on reinstatement**, based on the information presented at the meeting (including the written submissions in the document pack). Panel members must not have been involved in the exclusion itself and come fresh to the case. Members have a duty to not discuss the exclusion with any party outside the meeting. The clerk will make enquiries of potential panel members, to establish there is no reason their selection could give rise to a perception that the panel is not impartial. Staff governors are not invited to sit on panels, as there could potentially be seen to be a conflict of interest.

At this moment in time, it is not a statutory requirement for governors serving on exclusion panels to have attended exclusions training, however we strongly advise that governors do - for example Governor Services offer exclusion panels training as part of the core offer. As a minimum, all panel members must familiarise themselves with Section 7 of the statutory guidance on Exclusions and Suspensions. Clerks and panel chairs/members can also contact vicky.brand@achievingforchildren.org.uk for bespoke support.

The invitation to the exclusion review meeting

The panel (through the clerk) will invite the headteacher and the parents to the meeting and will advise the parents that they are entitled to bring a friend and/or representative. The clerk will ask whether any reasonable adjustments are required to support the parents' participation, for example relating to accessibility or translation services.

The Board has a duty to identify the steps it will take enable and encourage the excluded pupil to attend the meeting and speak on their own behalf (such as providing accessible information or allowing them to bring a friend), taking into account the pupil's age and understanding; or how the excluded pupil may feed in their views by other means if attending the exclusion meeting is not possible.

For maintained schools, the Local Authority is invited to attend and an invitation should be sent to Rosie.Gossage@achievingforchildren.org.uk and, if the pupil lives outside RBWM the home authority is also invited to attend. For academies, the LA(s) are only invited if the parents request it (they often do.)

If the pupil has a social worker or if the pupil is looked-after, the social worker and/or VSH are invited to attend in order to share information.

If either the school or parents wish to call witnesses, they should let the clerk know as soon as possible. Where a person under 18 is requested as a witness, this would require parental consent and the parent(s) would be invited to accompany them.

For transparency reasons, the clerk circulates to all parties before the meeting the names of the panel members and all invited parties, and keeps all parties informed as to who has indicated they will be attending. If the parents do not advise they will be attending, it must be presumed that they may still attend (right up to the start time of the meeting.)

Written submissions - the documentation 'pack'

The Board has the duty to ask for any written submissions, and to circulate these (the documentation pack) at least 5 school days before the meeting. All invited parties and the panel members receive the same documentation pack. Typically, the clerk puts together the pack, so will need to receive the school's documentation to go in the pack in good time before the 5-day-deadline. The clerk may also receive submissions from the parents / pupil and other parties, such as social worker and/or Virtual School Head, and will collate, redact where appropriate, photocopy and arrange for the pack to be collected/hand delivered or posted (via a 'signed for' service for evidence of receipt.)

It is at the discretion of the panel whether to accept any late (post 5-day) submissions of additional documentation; but panels will take all reasonable steps to accept a late submission. Late submissions must also be circulated to all invited parties.

The exclusion review meeting

All parties enter the meeting room at the same time, so that no party gains the perception that one of the other parties has had a 'pre-meeting' with the panel. The room should be arranged to encourage equal contribution, and to promote a non-adversarial atmosphere. The clerk will be present to take the notes of the meeting.

The panel chair will welcome all and then invite each party in turn to make their representations, starting with the headteacher presenting his/her case for the exclusion and followed by the parental / pupil representations. Each of the parties will be invited to ask questions of the party making its case, and the panel will also ask questions. Witnesses may be called at the appropriate time. All parties will have received the written submissions (document pack) in advance, so these can be referred to during the meeting.

During the summing up, the parents and pupil have the last word and then all parties leave the meeting. The panel will reach its decision and will communicate this decision in writing

without delay. The letter is addressed to the parents and is copied to the headteacher, social worker and/or Virtual School Head Teacher (where relevant) and Local Authority(s).

There are two template letters available for panel members and clerks to use on Leadership Update: <https://www.leadershipupdate-rbwm.co.uk/exclusions/>

The notes from the (hearing part of the) meeting are converted into a set of (Part II confidential) minutes and approved as a true record of the meeting by the panel members. These minutes are available to all parties on request.

The next steps will depend on the outcome of the meeting ie the governors' decision:

Outcome: the decision is to reinstate the pupil

If the panel has decided to reinstate the pupil, the parent will be notified via letter, as above and the school will arrange for the pupil's reintegration as per section 12. The exclusion will be removed from the pupil's educational record. The panel can choose to direct reinstatement to occur immediately, or on a particular date and will liaise with the school to communicate this.

Outcome: The decision is to decline to reinstate the pupil

The parents will be notified via letter, as above; and this letter will contain the next steps including that the parents have the right to appeal to an Independent Review Panel. The letter will outline the process to follow if they wish to do this, including the statutory deadline for lodging their appeal and their right to require the school/trust to appoint a SEN Expert to advise the Independent Review Panel.

Governing Board's duty regarding the school roll:

Where a pupil has been permanently excluded and the Board has declined to reinstate the pupil, the Board does not immediately commission the school to remove the pupil's name from the attendance register. The following criteria must first be met

- the application deadline for appeal to IRP has passed with no appeal forthcoming or
- the parents have notified in writing that they will not be applying for Independent Review or

if the parents do apply for an IRP

- the IRP has been (formally) abandoned or
- the IRP has been determined with no out-going recommendation or direction that the Governing Board reconsiders (ie the IRP upholds the Board's decision) or

if the IRP recommended or directed the Governing Board reconsider

- the Board has completed its reconsideration (must be inside 10 school days of the IRP's decision) and has upheld its original decision to decline to reinstate

The school must also complete a return to RBWM as soon as (and no later than) the grounds for deletion are met using the following form: <https://www.leadershipupdate-rbwm.co.uk/pupil-mid-term-leavers-andor-new-starters-form/>

Record keeping

The statutory guidance says: the governing board should note the outcome of its consideration on the pupil's educational record, along with copies of relevant papers for future reference.

If there is an Independent Review, the documentation considered at the exclusion review meeting together with the minutes of the meeting will form the documentation pack for the review (together with any further submissions sent to the clerk to the IRP.)

The statutory guidance notes "Claims of discrimination to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability), in relation to disability, or County Court, for all other forms of discrimination, can be made up to six months after the discrimination is alleged to have occurred. Where practicable, schools should retain records and evidence relating to an exclusion for at least six months in case such a claim is made."