

Using fixed term exclusions as an opportunity for change

When a child or young person is in receipt of a fixed term exclusion from school, it is important that this is formally recorded as soon as possible, and that this period of time is seen as an opportunity for school staff and parents to make plans around how things will be different when the child returns to school.

If no alternative plans are made and the situation remains exactly the same as before the fixed term exclusion was issued, then it is unlikely that the child's return to school will be successful.

The following list aims to make some suggestions about the types of questions it may be helpful to consider during a fixed term exclusion:

- How long is this exclusion? Have we made provision for this child to access full time education on the 6th day, if the exclusion lasts this long?
- Has something happened recently in this child's life that may contribute to understanding their actions? If so, how can we understand and provide the additional support that the child may be demonstrating that they need at this time?
- Are we confident that we have a clear picture of this child's strengths and weaknesses academically? If not, how could we establish what skills the child has which are secure?
- Are we confident that we have the child's views about what has been happening in school? If not, which adult in school would the child feel most comfortable expressing their views to? Can we plan to involve the child more in setting targets for themselves in future?
- How can we best involve the child and his/her parent(s) in planning how to support the child differently in the future?
- Which parts of the school day/week seem to be most positive for this child (no matter how small)? What makes these situations more positive? Can we provide more of these situations, especially as the child transitions back into school?
- Do we understand this child's views of how relationships work? Is there anything we know about their background that might help us understand what they might be trying to communicate about what they need from adults?

- How many staff are involved with this child on a daily basis? Is there a way that we could reduce the number of different adults involved?
- Do transition times seem to present a particular problem for this child? If so, are there any ways in which the number of transitions could be reduced each day? The return to school will be an additional transition for this child, so how do we manage this effectively?
- Are reasonable adjustments in place throughout the school day, which recognise and address this child's additional needs? If not, what changes need to be made upon the child's return?
- Are there things we feel we don't fully understand about what this child needs from us? If so, are there any agencies we need to involve to help us be able to meet this child's needs more effectively (Specialist Teacher, EP, Paediatrician etc.)?
- Are we prioritising the most important areas within the support we are currently providing? Are we focussing our efforts upon those areas creating the greatest barriers for this child and difficulties for those around him/her at this time?
- If this child has a EHC plan, should we call a review meeting as soon as possible?
- How will we ensure that this child is supported to catch up on any work they have missed during the exclusion, so that we do not compound any difficulties further?
- What will this child's first day back in school look like? How can we plan it to give the greatest chance of it being positive and successful?
- What will this child's first week back in school look like? Which situations/activities/tasks/environments/durations of task are most likely to result in success? How can we focus more heavily upon these during this transition period? In the future, how can we ensure that all types of learning (social, emotional, academic) start at the point at which the child is secure – with what they *can* do, to increase success?