



Department
for Education

A Review of School Exclusion: terms of reference

Following the Prime Minister's announcement that the Government will commission a review of school exclusions, the Secretary of State for Education has asked Edward Timpson to lead this review.

Good discipline in schools is essential to ensure that all pupils can benefit from the opportunities provided by their education. The Government supports head teachers in using exclusion as a sanction where it is warranted. This review will explore how head teachers use exclusion in practice, and why some groups of pupils are more likely to be excluded. It will not seek to examine the powers head teachers have to exclude.

In 2015/16, 0.08% of children were permanently excluded from state funded schools in England but the rates for some children are much higher. The [Ethnicity Facts and Figures website](#), which collates data on how different ethnic groups interact with public services, highlighted that pupils from some ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately more likely to be excluded from school. Black Caribbean pupils, for example, were permanently excluded at three times the rate of White British pupils. White Irish Traveller and Gypsy/Roma pupils had by far the highest rates of both fixed period and permanent exclusions.

All state funded schools in England operate under the same exclusions framework, as set out in legislation and statutory guidance. Despite this, there are differences in exclusion rates between schools, areas of the country, and pupils with different characteristics. This review will examine the factors that drive those differences. It will also explore and evaluate best practice for those areas where the disparities are less significant.

The review will consider the exclusion of groups of pupils that are identified in the national data as more likely to be excluded. For example, those ethnic groups highlighted in the [Ethnicity Facts and Figures website](#); pupils who are eligible for free school meals, or have been eligible for free school meals in the last six years; pupils with special educational needs; looked after children; and children in need.

The terms of reference are to explore:

- Practice in schools in relation to behaviour management and exclusions. This includes identifying effective approaches which improve outcomes, particularly for those groups disproportionately likely to be excluded;
- the exclusions process in schools. The review will explore how head teachers decide when to exclude and the role of governors in reviewing use of exclusion. It will not seek to curb the powers head teachers have to exclude but will examine the ways in which such powers are exercised;
- practice in schools in relation to directing pupils to alternative provision without excluding. This will include whether this is effective and the impact on pupils who are disproportionately likely to be excluded;
- the drivers behind the variation in exclusion rates of pupils of different ethnic groups and other disproportionately represented groups, and the consequences of this;
- the drivers behind geographic variation in exclusion rates, particularly between areas with similar characteristics;
- the drivers behind the variation in exclusion rates between schools with a similar intake;
- best practice in managing exclusions and interventions across local areas, such as the use of managed moves and fair access protocols;
- how current exclusions practice supports effective joint working, including between schools, health services, children's social care and virtual school heads;
- how the parent and pupil experience of exclusion varies and best practice in engaging parents and pupils effectively in the exclusions process;
- the steps taken by schools to ensure that their behaviour and exclusion practices are compliant with duties under the Equality Act 2010; and
- the guidance in place to ensure effective use of exclusion and the safeguards to ensure exclusions do not disproportionately affect certain groups of pupils.

Edward Timpson will be supported by an expert reference group. The group will provide expertise on the school system and perspectives of pupils more likely to be excluded.

The review will aim to report by the end of 2018. The review will launch with a call for evidence, which will run until 6 May. The review will report to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Education.