

School Leaders have no doubt been keeping a close eye on DfE guidance relating to COVID-19 over recent weeks and months. If you've missed the latest update relating to Behaviour and Exclusions, we've shared the key information for you here. We aim to produce more of these bulletins over the next few months to provide support, information and guidance as we all work to find a new 'normal' going forward so stay alert! If you'd like any specific advice or support relating to behaviour, inclusion and exclusions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Guidance

Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing>

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Should pupils be punished if they deliberately disobey rules on protective measures?

It is important for schools to be calm and disciplined environments, where everyone follows the rules. Consider updating your behaviour policy to reflect any new protective measures, rules and routines you feel are necessary to keep pupils, staff and visitors safe. The disciplinary powers that schools currently have, including exclusion, remain in place. The current situation is having an impact on everyone's mental health and wellbeing, not least our children and young people; it is inevitable that this will affect their behaviour. DfE guidance on [mental health and behaviour in schools](#) sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state and how these can be addressed and pupils supported. Our own [Ladder of Intervention](#) document also contains some useful advice and support.

What adjustments should be made to promote inclusion?

Some children will return to school having been exposed to a range of adversity including bereavement and long term anxiety. This may lead to an increase in social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) concerns. Where children have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), their provision may have been disrupted during the partial school closure. All of this will likely impact on behaviour and some children will need additional support to understand and adapt to new norms and routines, particularly around protective measures and personal hygiene.

Can head teachers exclude pupils?

As ever, permanent exclusion should only be used as a last resort, in response to a serious breach, or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy, and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school. As before, the Local Authority will arrange 6th Day Provision at an alternative educational setting upon notification of permanent exclusion.

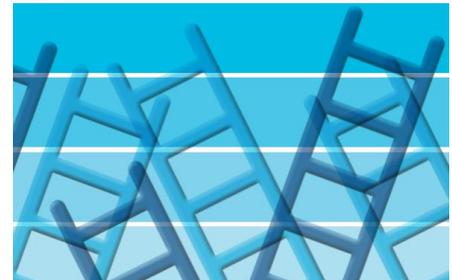
What is the effect of coronavirus on governing boards' duties to consider reinstatement of excluded pupils, and the process for IRPs?

Although it may not be possible to meet the timeframes set out in the regulations, Pupil Discipline Committee meetings and panel hearings must still go ahead, even if the relevant deadline has been missed. It is for each governing board to decide whether the meeting has to be delayed or alternative technology (such as telephone or videoconference facilities) may be used.



Ladder of Intervention

Supporting children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental health difficulties in schools
September 2019



How can schools promote inclusion and support pupil wellbeing, post-lockdown?

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*The NYCC **Ladder of Intervention** gives schools guidance on a staged response to identifying and meeting social, emotional and mental health needs. There is a strong correlation between poor attendance and academic achievement, poor mental health and life chances and between mental health and exclusion.*

In the current climate, exclusion is likely to exacerbate emotional distress so is something that school leaders – in partnership with the Inclusion Service – should try to avoid if at all possible.

