THE MERCIAN TRUST

Increasing Opportunities | Improving Outcomes

What Happens if My Child is Suspended or Excluded?

A Guide for Parents and Carers

This guide explains the process step by step, in plain English. It is based on The Mercian Trust's Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy (July 2026).

Before you read on

This guide covers two situations: suspension (sent home for a fixed number of days) and permanent exclusion (no longer permitted to attend the school).
Permanent exclusion is always a last resort. Before any exclusion, the school must have tried earlier interventions and considered your child's individual needs, including any special educational needs.

IF YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN SUSPENDED

1 STEP

You receive written notification

The headteacher must contact you without delay. The written notification must tell you:

- The reason for the suspension
- The length of the suspension
- Your right to make representations (put your views in writing or request a meeting)
- Your right to request the meeting is held by video call (remote access)

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2 STEP

Education during the suspension

Days 1 to 5: The school must set work for your child to complete at home.

Day 6 onwards: If the suspension lasts more than 5 school days, the Local Authority or trust must arrange full-time education from the sixth school day.

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3 STEP

Does a panel hearing take place?

This depends on the total number of days your child has been suspended this term:

Total suspension	Panel?	When?
5 days or fewer this term	Not automatically — you may request one in writing	If held: within 50 school days of your request
More than 5 but no more than 15 days this term	Yes — if you request it in writing	Within 50 school days of your request
More than 15 days this term	Yes — the panel must take place	Within 15 school days

4 STEP

Your hearing bundle

Before the hearing, you will receive a bundle — the set of documents the panel will read. Read it carefully before the hearing.

The bundle should contain:

- An index (list of all documents with page numbers)
- The exclusion letter and the school's evidence and statements
- Relevant policies: Behaviour, Exclusion, SEND
- If your child has SEN: their EHCP, support plan, or pupil profile
- Your written representations (if submitted)

Your rights: You may submit your own documents

You have the right to submit documents for the panel to consider — these will be included as your section of the bundle.
Examples: your written representations | letters from professionals (CAMHS, doctors, support workers) | relevant correspondence with the school | any other evidence relevant to your child's case.
If you are unsure what to include, your local authority or a parent support service may be able to help.

5 STEP

The Resolution Team Panel

The Mercian Trust's Resolution Team will hear your representations.

- You may attend in person or request a remote (video call) meeting.
- You may bring someone with you for support.

The panel will decide one of three things:

- Uphold the suspension — your child remains excluded for the period stated
- Direct immediate reinstatement — your child returns to school
- Direct reinstatement on a specified date

The decision will be given to you in writing.

6 STEP

Returning to school after suspension

When your child returns, a reintegration meeting will take place. This is an opportunity to discuss what support is in place and what will help your child going forward. You are encouraged to attend.

IF YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN PERMANENTLY EXCLUDED

7 STEP

You receive written notification

The headteacher must contact you without delay. The written notification will explain the reason and your rights. A Resolution Team panel MUST take place within 15 school days of the headteacher notifying you.

Your rights: Before the panel

Submit your written representations to the school.
Request a remote (video call) meeting if you cannot attend in person.
You may bring someone for support.
Prepare your section of the bundle — see Step 8 below.

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8 STEP

Your hearing bundle for a permanent exclusion

The same bundle standards apply as for a suspension (see Step 4). For permanent exclusions, also check that the bundle includes:

- A full investigation report or headteacher's statement
- All relevant behaviour records and any previous exclusions
- Complete SEN documentation if applicable (EHCP, ISP, pupil profile)
- Any risk assessment or reintegration plan

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9 STEP

The Resolution Team Panel

The panel considers whether to reinstate your child. It will decide one of three things:

- Reinstate your child — immediately or on a specified date
- Uphold the permanent exclusion

The decision will be given to you in writing without delay.

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10 STEP

If the permanent exclusion is upheld — your further right

You have the right to request an Independent Review Panel (IRP) — an entirely separate, independent panel arranged by the trust.

Your rights: Requesting an IRP

You must make your request within 15 school days of receiving the Resolution Team's written decision.
The IRP can: uphold the decision | recommend the trust reconsiders | direct the trust to reconsider.
For the IRP, the bundle is divided into four sections — see below.

IRP bundle structure:

Section	Contents	Notes
A	Exclusion Pack for the Resolution Team Panel	All evidence that was before the panel
B	Resolution Team decision letter and panel minutes	The formal written decision
C	School's documents for the IRP	Including school's written representations
D	Parent's documents for the IRP	Including parental written representations

Read the Resolution Team's decision letter (Section B) carefully before preparing your written representations for the IRP.

If you need further help

Your Local Authority's SEND team or IASS (Information, Advice and Support Service) can provide free, independent advice.

If you believe the exclusion was unlawful or procedures were not followed correctly, you may raise a formal complaint with the trust.

If you need this guide in a different language or format, please contact your child's academy directly.