

# Governors' discipline committee meeting – a guide for school



The governors' committee which meets to review exclusions is known as the governors' discipline committee and consists of at least three governors

## The committee and its role

If the exclusion is between six and fifteen days in a term, and the parents request a meeting, then the governors' discipline committee must meet within 50 school days.

The governors' discipline committee must always meet to consider exclusions greater than fifteen school days in a term, and all permanent exclusions. The meeting must take place between the sixth and the fifteenth school day after the governing body has been notified of the exclusion.

The role of the governors' discipline committee is to act as another 'set of eyes' to review the head teacher's decision to exclude. Exclusions are very serious and the governors will review whether the exclusion has been carried out correctly and takes account of the needs of your child. They are not a rubber stamping body.

## Before the meeting

The clerk to the committee will write to you confirming the date and time of the meeting and send you the paperwork which will be considered at the meeting. The paperwork will include your written representation if you have submitted one. Other paperwork that may be included is:

- witness statements and your child's version of events, if appropriate
- a behaviour diary and academic reports
- information on your child's special educational needs
- if there is an individual education plan this will include your child's difficulties, the school's strategies, support and reviews, and information on other services involved
- a pastoral support programme which may include the involvement of other agencies for pupils who have been, or are at risk of being, permanently excluded
- attendance records
- any other relevant documentation

## Who attends the meeting?

The following people will attend the meeting:

- the governors, one of whom will act as Chair of the Committee. The committee must be quorate (this means there must be a minimum of 3 governors present)

- a Clerk to take notes and can advise on procedure
- a Local Authority representative will attend permanent exclusions and exclusions of 16 days or more
- the head teacher and/or a senior member of staff
- the parents or carers: think about taking a friend or advocate/adviser to the meeting with you if the support would be helpful: the Local Authority can put you in touch with Parent Partnership if you think this would be useful
- your child, unless they are very young or there are strong reasons against them attending, it is important that your child is given every opportunity to have their say
- witnesses may be called to give evidence but do not normally remain for the full meeting

## Agenda and procedure

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- What the committee will consider

The governors' discipline committee must consider, on a balance of probability:

- whether your child did what he/she is alleged to have done and what behaviour policies were not followed
- whether the correct procedures were used
- the seriousness of the incident, and the appropriateness of the length of the sanction
- the likelihood of the incident being repeated if your child was allowed to return
- the fairness of the exclusion in relation to any other pupils involved in the same incident
- any relevant previous misbehaviour

- the support provided by the school and for how long it was provided
- any special educational needs and disabilities your child may have
- any mitigating circumstances (for example, being bullied)

## The committee decision

The discipline committee's decision will be to **either**:

1. uphold the exclusion if it agrees with the head teacher's decision, **or**
2. allow your child to return to school\* immediately or on an agreed date  
(This is officially called 'Reinstatement').

## DFE Guidance: A guide to the law

*52. The governing board has a duty to consider parents' representations about an exclusion. The requirements on a governing board to consider an exclusion depend upon a number of factors (these requirements are illustrated by the diagram in Annex A of this guidance, A summary of the governing board's duties to review the head teacher's exclusion decision).*

*53. In the case of a maintained school, the governing board may delegate its functions with respect to the consideration of an exclusion to a designated sub-committee consisting of at least three governors.*

*54. In the case of an academy, the governing board may delegate to a smaller sub-committee if the trust's articles of association allow them to do so.*

## DFE Guidance: You should have a system in place to ensure you are aware of any pupil showing persistent poor behaviour or not responding to low level sanctions.

### Things to consider

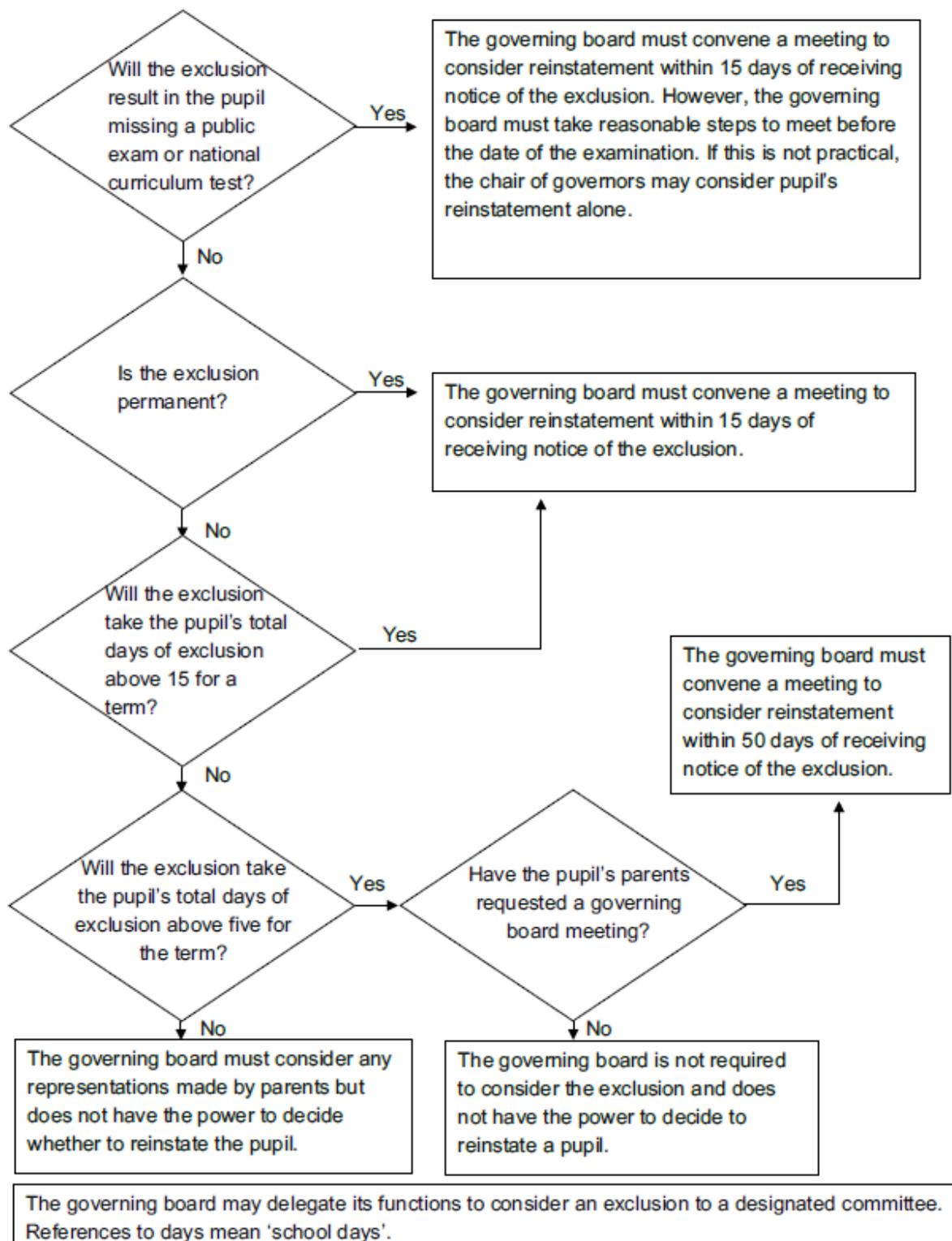
- *Are underlying factors (for example SEND, family issues or bullying) or specific triggers (for example the time of day or specific lessons) affecting behaviour? Are staff working with the pupil aware of any behavioural trigger points, relevant issues and the ways in which they should be managed?*
- *Are staff aware of mechanisms for escalation and referral routes to access external support?*
- *Have I ensured that this pupil's parents are aware of their behaviour issues?*
- *Should I request an special educational needs (SEN) assessment, a multi-agency assessment or external support (e.g. counsellors or alternative provision)?*
- *Did I consider if the pupil was a looked after child? (e.g. did I engage with foster carers or children's home workers, the local authority that looks after the child and the local authority's virtual school head?)*
- *Is the use and effectiveness of any support and sanctions properly recorded and regularly reviewed?*

### Further sources of information

Guidance on the use of alternative provision

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision>

## Annex A – A summary of the governing board’s duties to review the head teacher’s exclusion decision



Full guidance: **September 2017 statutory guidance:** Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England.

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