

A Staged Intervention Pathway for suspensions and permanent exclusion

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Introduction

This staged intervention pathway for suspensions and exclusions is part of the County Council's Education Inclusion Services development plan to address the increases seen in 2023-24.

The aim of this guidance is to provide a defined pathway for schools, families and all other professionals to support them to set clear expectations about responding to poor behaviour in school, whilst identifying and supporting vulnerable groups ensuring behaviour concerns are addressed at the earliest opportunity.

The model acknowledges the Department for Education's latest guidance on behaviour - [Behaviour in Schools - Advice for headteachers and school staff Feb 2024 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#), and follows the statutory processes as set out in the DfE guidance for suspensions and exclusions - [Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance](#).

When a school suspends or excludes a child from their education it will be expected by the local authority, there is clear evidence to demonstrate the school has followed a graduated response in line with this pathway. Key features of Effective Interventions.



Communication

- With the child, the whole family and their supportive network
- Between all school departments clear, concise and timely.
- Between all the professionals involved with the child and whole family is clear, concise and timely.
- Through clear signposting schools, children and their families have access to appropriate support making full use of voluntary and community sector partners.

Child and whole family centred

- The voice and needs of the child are heard and acted upon.
- Schools and professionals seek to understand the strengths and areas of challenge for the whole family the child and their family are integral to all plans.

Early identification and intervention

- Schools and professionals respond swiftly to early signs of poor behaviour.
- All interventions should seek to tackle the root cause of the behaviour.
- Data analysis is used to identify both individual and groups of children at risk of continued suspensions and exclusion.
- Requests for collaborative working are dealt with in a timely manner by all agencies.
- Be aware of the Childs reading age against predicted reading age (Fisher Family Trust).

High challenge and high support

- Schools and professionals should ensure that parents/carers are aware of the school's behaviour policy.
- The link between behaviours seen in school and safeguarding is clearly understood.
- Where needs are identified schools and other professionals should respond with an appropriate level of support.
- The more severe or frequent the behaviours in school the greater the challenge and support offered to the family should be.
- The county council consistently applies the full range of SEND support available to schools.

Important principles to consider throughout the pathway for children who have or previously have had a social worker.

Level of need:

- Child with a social worker
- Child in local authority care or previously looked after children

Schools are expected to:

- Consider that education is a protective factor for children who have or have had social care involvement.
- Understand experiences that have led to social care involvement can impact on behaviour.
- Make reasonable adjustments to behaviour policies and approaches for children with or who have had a social care involvement.
- Use resources provided by the Virtual school to support children and avoid suspension and exclusion wherever possible.
- Consider SEMH factors when considering additional needs/SEND planning.
- Contact the Virtual School for advice, guidance and/or support at the earliest opportunity and ensure costed provision maps outlining behaviour interventions are attached to PEPs for children in care.
- Ensure effective, ongoing communication and engagement with carers and social workers.
- Provide early intervention and support multi agency working.
- Access training opportunities to develop attachment aware, trauma informed and relational and restorative practices.

The County Council will:

- Promote early involvement of social workers and carers.
- Provide training and development on relational and restorative approaches.
- Work together with schools and other professionals to support for the child.
- Allocate appropriate Virtual school staff – see website for contact details.
- Facilitate solution focused circles and restorative conferencing where appropriate.
- Support additional PEP meetings where the child is looked after.

The Staged Intervention Pathway

School suspension - categories and description

Over a school year,

- Minor Behaviours - Universal strategies and services.
- 1 - 2 suspensions - To address behaviour and effect change.
- 3 suspensions – Concerning – pattern of behaviour is beginning to form, needs assessing and a plan creating. Outside support considered.
- 4 suspensions – Pattern of behaviour is forming, needs assessing and a plan creating. Plan needs to be reviewed and adjusted. Outside support accessed.
- 5 + suspensions – frequency indicates strategies and support are not effective, at risk of permanent exclusion.
- One off serious breach of school behaviour policy.

Minor behaviours

Universal and whole school Approaches

Level of need:

- No immediate needs. Family and child can access and benefit from universal services routinely available to all children and families.
- Family engages with services when needed.

Schools are expected to:

- Have a clear behaviour policy
- Have a clear SEND policy
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture where all staff promote the benefits of good behaviour and celebrate good or improved behaviours and attitudes.
- Have robust pastoral processes that identifies and responds calmly to minor behaviours.
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for behaviour and pastoral support.
- Promote healthy relationships between staff, children, parent/carers.
- Consider carefully the use of appropriate restorative language to promote responses and outcomes.

Parents and Carers:

- Seek support from family, friends and local services for children and young people.

The County Council will:

- Embed the attendance and inclusion improvement plan with its workforce and make behaviour in school a key focus for all children.

All other Partners are asked to:

- Promote use of good social skills and behaviours whilst at school.
- Develop their knowledge and awareness of school requirement around behaviour and how these are shared within your organisation.
- Contribute to the delivery of the local strategic approach to improving behaviour in local schools.
- Support the school in their efforts to address the behaviours.

1 - 2 Suspensions - used to address behaviour and effect change

Low- level, Emerging Needs

Level of need:

- Children, families and carers can gain useful advice and guidance that assists them with finding solutions to situations without the need for referrals to other services.
- Information, advice and guidance could be accessed via the Family Hubs, or universal services.

Schools are expected to:

- Ensure that children understand the requirements of the behaviour policy for them.
- Instigate school-level responses in line with behaviour policy and SEND policy including phone calls, text messages, letters or meetings with parents/carers.
- Provide the child with an opportunity to talk about their behaviour and any difficulties they may be experiencing.
- Explore solutions to support the child and agree a reintegration plan
- Encourage children to change their behaviours through positive reinforcement.

- Senior leaders to ensure and quality assure that there is a consistent approach to managing behaviours across the whole school staff, inc. teachers, TA's, lunchtime supervisors, site staff and school volunteers.
- For children in care, schools should contact the care provider and social worker to work with the child to identify the causes of behaviours and seek to address them collaboratively.
- For children open to other children's services, contact the child's allocated worker to ensure they are aware of the behaviour and work with the child, their allocated worker and family to identify the causes of behaviours and seek to address them collaboratively.
- Ensure that any resources within the school are utilised to support the child and family (e.g. School counsellor, Schools link worker, SEND Co, pastoral lead)
- Schools to work with parents to ensure any interventions are consistent across the home and school environment
- Consider starting the APDR process.
- Ensure a restorative and relational reintegration plan is in place following suspension to offer the child a supportive start and opportunity to understand the clear expectations of the school.
- School to provide appropriate work for the child to undertake whilst suspended from school

Parents and Carers:

- Take time to talk and listen to your child about their behaviours in school and what might be causing this to happen.
- Talk to the school about any concerns you have, or issues you think may be impacting on your child's behaviour.
- Work with the school to support any interventions to ensure they are in line with your parenting approach at home.
- Consider requesting support via school or through the Family hubs referral process
- Discuss any medical or wellbeing concerns with your GP
- Talk to friends and family to gain any support or knowledge of strategies that might help
- Support the school by ensuring that on the suspension days your child is kept indoors and undertakes school-based work in line with the online school platform, supplied homework or timetabled lessons
- If appropriate look at a reward scheme to support good behaviours at school.

The County council will:

- Where already open to the County Council children's workforce we will work collaboratively with the school, family and other professionals already working with the family to support the changes needed.
- The education psychology service offers the educational psychology assessment through teaching (EPATT) - A comprehensive online reading assessment and monitoring tool
- The virtual school education advisors ensures that the pupil premium plus funding is used effectively to support the needs of the child or young person, and additional funding can be accessed to support external services or assessments.
- The virtual school education advisors must ensure social care, schools are aware of the packages that are on offer to children in our care, at no cost to the schools. These may include, entrust behaviour support, educational psychology support.
- Request that family partitioners, social workers or any other county council children's workers attends the reintegration meeting and contributes to the plan.

All other Partners are asked to:

- Ensure their knowledge of schools, SEND and inclusion is up to date so they can signpost effectively to relevant services in the locality.
- Contact the school or parents directly if the child has stated they are struggling at school with some issues, so that these can be discussed with the child.

Suggested resources to support presenting needs:

- Staffordshire Connects and the SEND Local Offer
- Graduated response pathway [Graduated response toolkit - Staffordshire County Council](#)

3 - Suspensions - indicating underlying issues

Early Interventions

Level of need:

- Additional support is required to bring about desired changes to improve behaviour.
- Child/family may be struggling to understand or communicate the causal factors of the continued poor behaviour.

- School have identified a pattern to the behaviours

Schools are expected to:

- Ensure they capture the voice of the child and family, working with them to address any in school triggers or issues
- Consider undertaking a whole family assessment to better understand the strengths of and challenges for the child and family, and potential out of school triggers
- Utilise the child's strengths to build relationships and a sense of belonging in the school community, and how can this be translated in the child's daily school experience.
- Make time to reflect on the interventions used so far and what information you already have or are missing about this child and their family.
- Instigate an Individual Education Plan, Pastoral Support Plan this may include mentoring, careers advice, in school support, referral to external agencies.
- Consider use of a formal meeting or team around the child meeting in school with parent/carer.
- Consider using the check in, check-up and check out model
- Where assessed needs are external to school make a request for early help support or referral to an appropriate agency (e.g. health, YOS, voluntary sector)
- Gain consent from the parent/carer to take to the SEND & Inclusion Hub.
- Discuss with SEND co-ordinator, undertake assessments if needed (e.g. Boxall profile, reading assessment, dyslexia screening, sensory assessment)
- Create a learning support plan from the information provided to begin the APDR process, this may include referral to SALT, reasonable adjustments, SMART targets for the child and family.
- Explore what enrichment activities both inside and outside of the school community that the child could engage with to promote a stronger sense of belonging
- Ensure that the allocated social worker, family practitioner, and virtual school are informed of the suspensions, and this is recorded.
- If eligible the school should use their access to the ENTRUST behaviour support team. If not eligible the primary and high schools can purchase this.
- If possible, discuss with your educational psychologist
- Explore the use of SEDIS support.
- Consider if this child would be suitable for the EAPDR pathway.

Parent and Carer:

- Make time to talk to your child about what is happening at school, explore with them what the triggers to their behaviour might be.
- If appropriate ask your GP what services, you could access to support your child's wellbeing and may be receive some guided support/counselling.
- Request or consent to, a referral to early help children and young people's services.
- Ensure that you acknowledge when your child is doing well at school or makes better choices.
- Is there a family member or adult friend who could offer your child some mentoring. If your child belongs to an activity group (scouts, sports club etc) could you ask them to talk to your child to see if they could identify what is causing the behaviours.

The County Council will:

- Identify children who are open to the virtual school, social workers and family practitioners, whose behaviours have now reached this criterion and then work with schools to promote change.
- Provide information and advice via Entrust behaviour support team telephone line, contracted to all schools.
- Provide the infrastructure for the SEND and Inclusion Hubs
- Ensure that representatives from the council's children's workforce attend the Hubs to offer their advice and guidance.
- Education Inclusion Officers will if requested offer advice, and information and guidance to schools.
- The virtual school can place the child on the high-risk tracker to ensure they are closely supported and monitored.
- The relational and restorative practice team can support schools with interventions for children who had or are open to a social worker.

All other Partners are asked to:

- Implement early help plans informed by an assessment that identifies the root cause of the emerging behaviour issues and considers a whole family approach.
- Act as the lead agency in a team around the family meeting

Suggested resources to support presenting needs:

- Entrust behaviour support - [Staffordshire Connects | Entrust Behaviour Health and Wellbeing Team](#)
- [Staffordshire Connects | Children's mental health support pathway](#)

4 - Suspensions – Pattern of behaviour has formed

Targeted intervention

Level of need:

- Behaviours are now escalating, and patterns of behaviours will be forming.
- Previous school based and early help interventions have been unable to bring about sustained change.
- More formal interventions may be required, including additional assessments and planning.

Schools are expected to:

- Complete an assessment of the child and family to identify the strengths and challenges that exist and then create a plan to focus on improving behaviours by addressing the root causes.
- Invite parents and appropriate agencies to work collaboratively with the school as part of the plan.
- Involve mental health services if appropriate to advise and intervene with any potential emotional or mental health issues.
- Involve other health professionals to address any other medical issues which present as a trigger or barrier to learning for the child.
- Create an Individual Healthcare Plan to address all health-related issues, at this point the school could consider a reduced timetable to support the management of the child's health needs. (Reduced timetable cannot be used to manage behaviours in school)
- Ensure the child has an opportunity to have their voice heard about which lessons they like or dislike (RAG rate them) and ask them to explore the reasoning behind this.
- Allow the child to identify a single point of support for them in school and agree regular check in sessions to offer positive support and an opportunity to review any issues.
- Inform any other agencies working with the child and family of the escalating or increasing frequency of the behaviours and seek their involvement in forming a plan.
- Contribute to multi-agency meetings where applicable and ensure behaviour and participation in learning are addressed through the agencies plan (Early help, CIN, CP (Child Protection Plan), PEP).
- Involve the SEND Co-ordinator to ensure they have assessed if the child has any additional needs. Consider diagnostic testing within the classroom. Action any recommendations.

- If there are suspected or known risks in the community for this child, consider completing a risk factor matrix form and then taking appropriate action.
- If the child has an EHCP consider holding an early review.
- Liaise with the Education Inclusion Officer (EIO) for information, advice and guidance
- Consider the use of a solution circle.
- Ensure that a robust reintegration plan is created for when the child returns from suspension or direction of site, to support a successful return and that this is implemented and reviewed.
- Consider use of direction off site or managed move, as an alternative strategy to suspension.
- Consider accessing short term early intervention support/alternative provision
- Having undertaken APDR, the school could now consider requesting an Enhanced APDR via the SEND and inclusion hub pathway or requesting an EHCNA.

Parents and Carers:

- Attend all meetings set up by school and professionals to discuss and support your child.
- Continue to offer calm and relaxed opportunities for your child to talk with you about what's happening at school.

The County council will:

- Create the opportunity for schools to come together at SEND and Inclusion Hubs in their districts to share information, good practice and learning around managing behaviours in school for individual children.
- Ensure that its children's workforce recognises and prioritises school behaviours and participation in learning within its plans and interventions with children and their families.
- Provide training to schools on restorative and relational practice
- Through the virtual school provide information, advice and guidance regarding children with a social worker, attending meetings in school when possible.
- Provide information to schools about health initiatives which can support children in schools and liaise with health services about gaps in provision.
- Consider an early review of the EHCP (Education, Health, and Care Plan) if one is in place.
- Respond to a request for an EHCNA from the parent or school in a timely manner.
- Commission a range of support e.g. SEDIS teams and early intervention resource bases

- Provide information on alternative provision providers on the SEND Local Offer

All other Partners are asked to:

- Work with schools and other services to formalise support options and contribute to plans informed by an assessment that identifies the root causes of behaviour issues and considers a whole family approach.
- Take an active part in multi-agency plans to support the whole family.
- Consider acting as the lead practitioner or main point of contact for the child and family.
- Bring bespoke and specialist services to the plan.

Suggested resources to support presenting needs:

- Alternative Provision Providers - [Staffordshire Connects | Listings in Alternative provision](#)

5 + suspensions – frequency indicates strategies and support are not effective. At risk of escalating to exclusion

Level of need:

- Child and family need intensive support or challenge to address the escalating or more frequent incidents of unacceptable behaviours in school.
- This will require a multi-agency approach, within a structured framework.
- Issues contributing to behaviours may be complex and possibly be impacting on other aspects of the child and family's life.

Schools are expected to:

- Continue to offer a range of supportive and formal interventions to support the child's needs, keeping clear and concise records in school.
- Consider contacting the Education Inclusion Officer (EIO) via the C.O.P.E pathway for a professional discussion or arrange a meeting.
- Ensure an assessment is in place which identifies the strengths and challenges for the child and family.
- Review the impact of suspension on the wellbeing of the family and child and the impact this may have on them.

- Schools to consider if it's in the best interests of the child to suspend them when considering wider issues within the family e.g. safeguarding, criminal exploitation.
- Ensure all professionals working with the child and family are aware of the more frequent incidents of unacceptable behaviours in school.
- Follow safeguarding policy and process in all cases where the behaviours indicate a safeguarding concern.
- Carry out a review of the child's EHCP.
- Ensure if it stated that the behaviours are related to a health condition that an individual healthcare plan is completed, and the school have confirmation of the medical condition from a health professional.
- Contribute to multi-agency planning, meetings, and interventions.
- Liaise with SEND Co-Ordinator in school to ensure any identified needs are being addressed through reasonable adjustments or additional support.
- Ensure if the child is in the care of the council, the virtual school is actively involved in addressing the cause of the behaviours.
- If required, escalate the child to the Local Management Group (LMG) for further consideration.
- Consider the use of direction off site and alternative provision to improve behaviour.
- Utilise the local PRU's expertise in managing behaviour's and request a consultation / intervention from them.
- Seek the parents' consent to consider a managed move.
- Make a request for the EAPDR pathway if an APDR has already been completed and all other options are exhausted.
- Make a request for an EHCNA if appropriate.

The County council will:

- Ensure their children's workforce prioritises children at risk of exclusion for support and interventions
- Ensure where there are safeguarding concerns or parallel plans in place (CIN, CP, Early Help, PEP) that these plans include and address the behaviours experienced in school.
- Interrogate and share data to raise awareness of children with multiple suspensions from schools with the senior leaders in both schools and Staffordshire County Council children's services.
- Provide the SEND & Inclusion Hubs with review of children at risk of exclusion where interventions are not having an impact on their behaviours and ability to engage in learning.

All other Partners are asked to:

- Priorities children for services who are at risk of exclusion.
- Continue to work with the child and family, wider network, school, lead practitioner and other agencies to proactively address the behaviours seen in school.

One off serious breach of school behaviour policy – considering exclusion

Level of need:

- Child and family need immediate support to understand circumstances that led to behaviour.
- Child is withdrawn from school education.

Schools are expected to:

- Report the exclusion to the county council using the prescribed forms and email address.
- If the child has a social worker inform them of the incident and seek their support in dealing with the consequences and understanding the reasons behind it.
- Follow the statutory exclusion process.
- Contact the EIO for support and guidance.
- Consider if an alternative to an exclusion could be used such as a managed move, direction off site, alternative provision in the community, prevention placement at a pupil referral unit or a restorative conference.
- Explore if an external agency could provide an intervention to address the risks of such behaviour happening again (drugs service, Youth Offending Service, police)
- Understand fully what has led up to the child behaving in such a way and consider if this is mitigating factor in deciding the next steps.
- If the behaviour raises specific concerns this may need referring to Safeguarding service, or a risk factor matrix undertaking.

The County council will:

- Provide information, advice and guidance around alternatives to permanent exclusions.
- Provide its statutory duties in relation to the exclusion
- If open to social care or the virtual school the social worker will attend any meetings called in school as part of the process.

All other Partners are asked to:

- Work collaboratively for the best outcomes for the child and family

Suggested resources to support presenting needs:

- Exclusions and suspensions guidance. [LINK](#)
[Guide for Parents and Carers on Knife Harm - Violence Reduction Alliance](#)