



Terms of Reference for Suspensions & Exclusions Review Panel 2026-2027

Establishment of the Suspensions & Exclusions Review Panel

In order to support the effective operation of the academies within the PCLC Trust, the trust board has established a committee to consider representations regarding excluded pupils. This committee will be referred to in this document as the 'Suspensions & Exclusions Review Panel'.

The trustees shall review annually the membership and terms of reference of the Suspensions & Exclusions Review Panel'.

Membership

- The Suspensions & Exclusions Review Panel shall consist of at least three local governors/trustees from within the PCLC Trust. Local governors from any PCLC school can be members of the Panel, as long as the number of local governors does not exceed the number of trustees. Local governors and trustees who are also the CEO, principal or headteacher of any PCLC school cannot be members of the panel.
- If any governor/trustee has a connection with the pupil, or knowledge of the incident that led to the exclusion that could affect their ability to act impartially, they should step down.
- The chair has the casting vote in all cases where an even number of governors/trustees are considering the case.
- The chair shall be appointed by the Panel on an ad hoc basis.
- The clerk shall be the Clerk to the Trustees or Clerk to the local governing body of the school concerned.

Remit and responsibilities of the Suspensions & Exclusions Review Panel

The Panel will meet as necessary in the following circumstances:

- To consider representations from parent(s)/carer(s) in the case of exclusions of 5 days or fewer. The Panel cannot direct reinstatement and is not required to arrange a meeting with parents.
- To consider representations from parent(s)/carer(s) in the case of exclusions where the total is more than 5 but not more than 15 school days in one term. The Panel must consider and decide within 50 school days of receiving the notice of suspension whether the suspended pupil should be reinstated. In the absence of any representations from the parents, the Panel is not required to meet and cannot direct the reinstatement of the pupil.

The Panel must meet to consider the reinstatement of an excluded pupil by convening a meeting within 15 school days after receiving notice of exclusion* if:

- it is a permanent exclusion
- it is a suspension which would bring the pupil's total number of school days out of school to more than 15 in a term; or

**An exclusion should be taken as having 'occurred' on the first day of the exclusion (not the date when the decision to exclude was made or communicated).*

- it would result in a pupil missing a public examination / national curriculum test. The Panel must, so far as is reasonably practicable, consider and decide on the suspension or permanent exclusion before the date of the examination or test. **Two trustees** may consider reinstatement if the Panel is unable to meet before the date of the examination.

The Panel must ensure:

- the parent(s)/carer(s), principal / headteacher, social worker (if the pupil has one) and VSH if the child is LAC are invited to a meeting at a time and place convenient to all parties, in accordance with statutory time frames and consider what reasonable adjustments should be made to support the attendance and contribution of parties at the meeting.
- they accommodate a parent(s)/carer's request for the meeting to be held via the use of remote access provided certain criteria are satisfied (see Section 11 and Annex A of *Suspension & Permanent Exclusion Guidance*, DfE May 2023 publication).
- social workers and VSHs must be allowed to join a meeting via the use of remote access, regardless of the format chosen, as long as the Panel are satisfied that they will be able to participate effectively, they can hear and be heard (and see and be seen if participating by video) throughout the meeting, and their remote participation will not prevent the meeting being fair and transparent.
- It is not mandatory for a representative from the LA to attend a Suspensions & Exclusions Review Panel meeting in an academy. However, the parent may invite a representative of the local authority to attend a meeting of an academy's Suspensions & Exclusions Review Panel as an observer. That representative may only make representations with the Panel's consent.
- subject to age and understanding, the pupil or their parents should also be made aware of their right to attend and participate in the Panel meeting and make a representation on their own behalf if they wish to do so.
- the parent(s)/carer(s) will be allowed to bring one friend or legal representative between them if they wish. Any additional parties may only attend the meeting at the discretion of the Panel.
- it is made clear in advance of the meeting whether the friend or representative is attending as an observer, or if they are requesting to make an additional representation to the Panel. Only the parent(s)/carer, principal /headteacher, pupil's social worker and VSH have the right to make representations. All other representations may only be made with the Panel's consent.
- any written statements, including witness statements, the list of all those who will be attending the meeting, and other relevant information held by the school, such as that relating to a pupil's SEND, are submitted and received by the Panel in advance of the meeting. This information will be circulated to all parties, with as much notice as possible, preferably at least 5 school days in advance of the meeting.
- that the guidance contained in the 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement' document is complied with.

Proceedings of the Suspensions & Exclusions Review Panel

The meeting will be conducted according to the following order of proceedings:

- The chair will ensure that the meeting is carried out with regard to the confidential nature of the discussions.
- The chair will introduce everyone present.
- The chair will explain the purpose of the meeting, explaining that the papers circulated for the meeting

should be returned to the clerk at the end to be destroyed; the original set will be kept on the child's record in a confidential file. The parent(s)/carer(s), VSH, social worker and LA representative (if present), may keep their copies.

- The chair will remind everyone that information must only be given in the presence of all parties.
- The chair will explain the procedure to be followed:
- The principal/headteacher will give the school's case for excluding the pupil;
- The parent(s)/carer(s) and Panel have the opportunity to ask questions of the principal/headteacher;
- The parent(s)/carer(s) put their case;
- The Panel and principal/headteacher have the opportunity to ask questions of the parent(s)/carer(s);
- Other representations from the VSH and / or social worker (if present);
- Statement from the LA representative (if present);
- Summing up by the principal/headteacher and the parent(s)/carer(s).
- All parties will then be asked to leave, as the Panel members must make the decision on their own. The clerk may stay to help by referring to notes of the meeting and with the wording of the decision letter.
- The decision of the Panel will be communicated to all parties in writing within one school day, in accordance with DfE guide lines. It is the duty of the Panel to inform the parent(s)/carer(s) of a pupil who has been permanently excluded of their right to ask for their case to be considered by an independent review panel.

The minutes of the meeting will remain confidential, and a copy signed by the Panel chair will be held in the pupil's file. A copy of the minutes will be available to all parties on request. The outcome of the meeting will be communicated verbally as a confidential item to the local governing body of the excluding school and the trustees at their next meetings, once the case is resolved.

This document has been approved by the trustees at their meeting on **13th July 2026** and comes into effect on the **2nd September 2026**. It will be reviewed annually thereafter in each academic year and may be subject to amendment by them.