coram

Unfair results

Pupil and parent views on school exclusion

Acknowledgements

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Limitations of this study

The parent survey was promoted to users of the Child Law Advice Service with an excluded child. It contains data from a self-selected sample of parents who may not be representative of all parents with excluded children. In addition, schools participating in the general pupil survey were recruited through Coram networks from three regions. The survey findings are therefore not nationally representative.

Comments made by parents and pupils are examples of experiences and do not necessarily represent the views of all participants in this research.

Full report can be found at **https://www.coram.org.uk/resource/unfair-results**

If you need legal information or advice about school exclusions and/or other educational law in England, you can contact the Child Law Advice Service:

Telephone: **0300 330 5485** (Monday – Friday 8am to 6pm)
Online form: **https://childlawadvice.org.uk/email-advice-education/**

Advice for schools can be found at:
https://childlawadvice.org.uk/schools-information-guides/

Legal casework advice
If you need legal casework advice and assistance on education law issues, such as special educational needs provision, and want to check if you are eligible for legal aid, contact Civil Legal Advice : **www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice**

Telephone: **0345 345 4345** (Monday – Friday 9am to 8pm, Saturdays 9am – 12.30pm)

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Pupils

94% of pupils have heard of exclusion

85% of pupils reported knowing someone who had been excluded (including themselves)
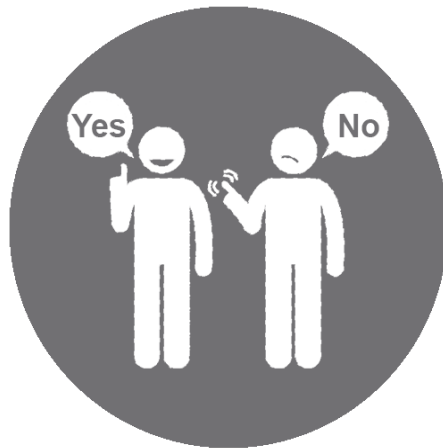
87% of pupils are aware of what behaviour is expected at school

43% of pupils said that it is very clear what behaviour will lead to an exclusion

44% of pupils said exclusion is always or usually done fairly

39% of pupils do not know if exclusion is done fairly

- 318 surveys were completed between 20 July - 19 October 2018, by pupils from mainstream primary and secondary schools

Parents whose child had been excluded or who were advised their child would be excluded:

30% of parents are unaware of their child's school exclusion policy

47% of parents said they had received an unclear explanation for their child's exclusion

38% of parents felt the school's communication with them during the exclusion process was very poor

51% of parents felt the school's communication with their child during the exclusion process was very poor

56% of parents felt that support preparing for their child's return to school after temporary exclusion was very poor

58% of parents felt that support finding an alternative school place after permanent exclusion was very poor

• 124 online surveys were completed between 9 July - 29 September 2018, by parents whose child has been temporarily or permanently excluded or were advised their child would be excluded

Executive Summary

Call for change

Over the last five years there has been an increase in the rate of permanent school exclusions, when previously this was slowly decreasing.

The latest Department for Education (DfE) figures show that across all state-funded primary, secondary and special schools, the number of permanent exclusions increased 15% between 2015/16 and 2016/17. This is a worrying trend that must be addressed by government, schools and parents as a matter of urgency given the enormous costs to both society and the students themselves of exclusion from school.

When looking further at the data, the permanent exclusion rates for secondary schools appear to be the driver behind the increase. Over the past five years the rate of secondary school permanent exclusions has increased from 0.12% to 0.20%, whereas it has remained fairly steady for both primary and special schools.

The temporary exclusion rate has also increased over the past five years, for both secondary and primary schools, whereas rates for special schools have fallen slightly.

All state schools in England follow the same exclusions framework, yet there are differences in rates of exclusions between schools, type of pupils and areas of the country. Similarly, access to education is a right for all children and all local authorities have the same legal duty to ensure that every child fulfils his or her educational potential.

Exclusions disproportionately affect certain groups of young people. This includes those most vulnerable, such as pupils with a special educational need (SEN) who have high rates of permanent exclusion in mainstream (rather than special) schools.

In 2016/17, pupils with SEN support had the highest exclusion rate - six times higher than the rate of pupils with no SEN (0.35% versus 0.06%). A large number of pupils with SEN are being excluded permanently from mainstream schools.

There is a rate of 0.67% pupils with SEN support being excluded from mainstream secondary schools compared to a rate of 0.14% for pupils without SEN in these schools.

An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is made for children who need more support than is available through special educational needs support. Over a quarter of pupils (7%) with an EHCP or statement of SEN have autistic spectrum disorder as their primary presenting need. Recognised levels of autism are increasing, with more school children with autism in the school population. These children have different requirements and place different demands upon schools, which some struggle to meet effectively.

In addition, pupils from some ethnic groups are also more likely to be excluded. Black Caribbean pupils had an exclusion rate nearly three times higher (0.28%) than that of the

whole school population (0.1%). This difference is starker when factoring in gender; for example black Caribbean boys are three times more likely to be permanently excluded than white British boys (a rate of 0.45% vs 0.15%).

The socio-economic background of pupils also plays a role in exclusion. Pupils eligible for free school meals are four times more likely to be excluded than pupils not eligible (a rate 0.28% vs 0.07%).

Although the overall number of pupils affected by exclusion remains small, these trends lead to cause for concern, especially given the insufficiency of out of school educational provision. As recorded in the Supreme Court judgement of A v Essex County Council (2010), two boxes of educational toys are 'not acceptable education.'[1]

Home schooled

Every child has the right to an education. Yet children who have been permanently excluded can be out of education for months, even years. In February 2019, the Office of the Children's Commissioner published data indicating significant increases in home schooling. One suggestion in this report was for the government to introduce a compulsory register for all home-educated children.

The relationship of home education to school exclusion has yet to be fully explored since it encompasses a group of children and young people who may be outside of registered educational provision, sometimes for many years, for a range of different reasons.

Government review of school exclusions

Against this worrying backdrop, in March 2018 the government announced a review of school exclusions to examine these trends.

The review seeks to better understand how exclusions are used by schools, what the causes of exclusion are and why certain groups of young people appear to be affected more than others. If we can understand the reasons for geographic variation in exclusion rates, particularly between areas with similar characteristics we can drive policy recommendations that reduce this and ensure consistent practice across the country.

The call for evidence closed in May 2018 when it was clear that there were extensive submissions from parents and professionals, but there was little direct contribution from children and young people.

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[1] A v Essex County Council (2010) UKSC 33. Accessed at: https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2009-0065-judgment.pdf

Coram research

Despite official data on school exclusion being available, Coram considered that the process and impact on families and children was under researched, with the views of children (with the exception of those in alternative provision) unexamined. Coram has previously undertaken a literature review for the Children's Commissioner for England on the wellbeing of young people excluded from school. It explored what pupils were saying about their experiences of exclusion (both permanent and temporary) and alternative provision.[2]

In light of this and the government review call for evidence, Coram undertook research with young people to gather their views on school behaviour and exclusions, and with parents on their personal experiences of their child's exclusion.

Research approach

Between July and October 2018 Coram conducted research with parents and pupils to understand their views and experiences on exclusion. This included a survey of parents: 124 online surveys were completed by parents who had been in contact with Coram's Child Law Advice Service (CLAS). The survey was open to parents who had a child temporarily or permanently excluded, or who had been advised that their child would be excluded.

Pupils from mainstream schools were invited to participate in a pupil survey. This was open to all pupils; experience of exclusion was not required. Pupils could complete the survey online or on paper. Surveys were completed by 318 pupils from five mainstream primary and secondary schools.

In addition nine interviews with pupils who had experience of exclusion or had been on the edge of exclusion were undertaken. Pupils were from mainstream primary and secondary schools.

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[2] The literature review can be accessed here: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CCO-Childrens-Voices-Excluded-from-schools-and-alt-provision.pdf

Key findings of parent and pupil views of educational exclusion

Pupils had a good knowledge of behaviour expectations, often despite not having seen anything written about what would lead to exclusion

- Pupils in general knew rather little about exclusions unless directly affected. They felt that exclusion was justified for violent or disruptive behaviour.
- There was no clear suggestion from pupils that schools were either too quick or too slow to exclude.
- Pupils saw it as unfair when pupils were not treated consistently and the full circumstances were not considered.
- Both pupils and parents felt that schools did not work with pupils to avoid exclusion. For those that did receive help, this tended to be in the form of education/behaviour support plans.

Parents were often unaware of the school's exclusion procedure and sometimes found it inaccessible. They were generally unhappy with the way schools communicated information about exclusion with them

- Parents reported receiving unclear and inconsistent explanations for their child's exclusion, as well as a lack of communication about the process.
- Parents felt unsupported by either schools or local authorities during the exclusion period. This included poor communication from the school during this time, and patchy help with learning while excluded.
- Parents also mentioned minimal support with preparing to return to school or with finding an alternative school when the exclusion was permanent.
- Parents tended to report that exclusions were unfair and did not take sufficient account of their child's circumstances and needs.
- Exclusion had a significant impact on pupils with parents reporting that their children suffered a loss of confidence and self-esteem, and their education and mental health was adversely affected.
- Pupils also felt that exclusion negatively impacted on school work.
- The stress of the exclusion was reported to have taken its toll on parents, including on their work and relationships with other family members.

Our recommendations are based upon the research undertaken and are informed by the practice of the wider Coram group, including data from helplines and legal practice cases.

Recommendations

Messages for Schools

At Coram we believe that all parties need to work together on the basis of clear processes, procedures and communication to ensure that every child has the education to which they are entitled. The following recommendations address these issues.

- Schools can and must improve communications and process in order to ensure that partnership between schools, parents and children works to secure children's futures.
- Schools and colleges should inform all parents as to their, and their child's, rights in regards to exclusion at the point at which their child enrols in primary school and secondary school and post 16 education.
- If a child is temporarily excluded for a second time there should be a requirement to review a pupil's behaviour plan to prevent further exclusions.
- Additionally, on the first occasion that any child faces permanent exclusion, a full assessment of needs should be undertaken.
- There should be a requirement to assess a child's health and support needs and vulnerabilities and to explore if these could feasibly be met before making the decision to permanently exclude.
- Schools should have reliable access to swift and expert professional advice that enables the child's identified needs to be met either in that school or in a setting that better meet those needs.
- Further guidance for parents and carers should highlight that, if a school is unable to meet the child's needs, parents and carers can request an assessment of, and support for, their child's SEN directly from the local authority without needing to go through the school first. Guidance should include details of charitable organisations that can advise on this such as Coram Children's Legal Centre.

Recommendations for parents and pupils

- All parents would benefit from familiarising themselves with the behaviour policy and the process for exclusion at their child's school. Parents can advise schools when this unclear or not readily accessible.
- When a child has been excluded, parents may benefit from obtaining specialist advice. An example is Coram's Child Law Advice Service, which provides free legal information and advice on exclusion and education law.
- Pupils need to be aware of their school's behaviour policy and understand what behaviour is likely to result in exclusion.

Recommendations for policy

- No child should be out of school any longer than the start of the term following that in which they were permanently excluded.
- Government should also require local authorities to supply information on the number of teaching days between a permanent exclusion being made and the date that a subsequent school place is offered and accepted.
- National guidance on exclusion written with and for children and young people should be provided both by central government and by schools and local authorities explaining local arrangements.
- A government commitment to ensuring that local advice about the exclusion process, what to expect and how to challenge decisions is provided to all parents and pupils - especially when children have been subject to, or are at risk of, school exclusion. This should be backed up by access to legal advice so that any challenges that take place do so on the basis of appropriate guidance and representation.
- A duty on local authorities to provide an 'active offer' of advocacy to ensure that all children and parents are always offered advocacy support in relation to school exclusions.
- We also support the Children's Commissioner's Office in their call for a mandatory local authority register of all children receiving home education.

Introduction

Background

The practice of school exclusions has received much attention lately. Not only has there been an increase in the number and rate of exclusions, but data shows that certain groups of vulnerable young people are much more likely to be excluded.

The latest Department for Education (DfE) figures show that across all state-funded primary, secondary and special schools, the number of permanent exclusions has increased 15% between 2015/16 to 2016/17. Temporary (fixed-term) exclusions have also increased by 13% during the same period.

What is concerning is that pupils with identified special educational needs (SEN) account for nearly half of all permanent and temporary exclusions. Indeed pupils with SEN support are six times more likely to be permanently excluded than pupils with no SEN. Adding to this, pupils receiving free schools meals and from certain ethnic groups are also more likely to be excluded.

Against this backdrop, in March 2018 the government announced there would be an externally-led review of school exclusions. This review is being led by the former Children's Minister Edward Timpson. It seeks to understand how exclusions are being used and why certain groups are disproportionally affected.

To coincide with this review Coram, the children's charity, has undertaken research with young people and parents to gather their views on school behaviour and exclusions. A survey and interviews with school pupils was carried out, as well as an online survey of parents whose child has been excluded or is facing exclusion. We wanted to hear from young people and parents what they think of the exclusions process: is it fair and how did the school communicate it? What has the impact been and were alternatives explored?

Methodology

This research consisted of an online survey with parents, a pupil survey and a small number of interviews with pupils with exclusion experience. An overview of the current national government data was also undertaken.

A total of 124 surveys were completed by parents between July and September 2018. The survey was hosted on the Child Law Advice Service (CLAS) website and was open to parents who had a child temporarily or permanently excluded, or were advised that their child would be excluded.

The pupil survey fieldwork took place between July and October 2018. Surveys were completed by 318 pupils from five mainstream primary and secondary schools. The survey

was open to all pupils; experience of exclusion was not required. Pupils could complete the survey online or on paper.

In addition nine interviews with pupils who had experience of exclusion or had been on the edge of exclusion were undertaken. Pupils were from mainstream primary and secondary schools.

Full details of the survey methodology can be found in the appendix.

This report

This report will provide an overview of what school exclusions are: who is getting excluded and why this practice is currently receiving greater scrutiny now. We will look the prevalence of exclusions and identify alternatives that are being used.

The report will analyse the parent survey data, pupil survey data and pupil interviews, followed by our policy recommendations that draw upon this evidence.

Limitations

The parent survey was promoted on the CLAS website and by CLAS advisors if they spoke to parents about exclusion. As such it contains data from a small sample of parents who may not be representative of all parents. It is likely that parents contacting CLAS for advice may have been facing issues with their school and therefore have a negative view of the school exclusion process.

In addition schools participating in the pupil survey were recruited through Coram networks from three regions. The survey findings are therefore not nationally representative.

Anonymous comments made by parents and pupils in the surveys and interviews have also been included in this report with gender and age where applicable. These provide examples of their experience and do not necessarily represent the views of all participants in this research.

School exclusions: context

What is exclusion?

There are two types of exclusion: fixed term and permanent.

Fixed term exclusion[3] is when a pupil is temporarily removed from the school for a specific period of time. A pupil can be excluded one or more times, but only for a total of up to 45 school days in an academic year.

A **permanent exclusion** is when a pupil is removed from the school roll (sometimes referred to as expelled). Once the child is permanently excluded, the local council has to arrange alternative full time education for the pupil.

In this report permanent exclusions will referred to as 'permanent exclusions' and fixed term exclusions will be referred to as 'temporary exclusions'.

Why are we interested in school exclusions?

The UK government and national media have recently shown more interest in exclusions because of its steady increase over the last five years. The number of pupils permanently excluded from state primary, secondary and special schools in England rose from 6,685 to 7,720 between the academic years 2015/16 and 2016/17[4]. This means that on average 40 pupils a day were excluded.

However, the proportion of pupils affected by permanent exclusion has remained very low. Only 0.1% of pupils were excluded in 2016/17, up from 0.06% in 2012/13. Figure 2.1 shows the rates of permanent exclusion by type of school. Rates of exclusion in secondary schools in particular have increased over time, from 0.12% in 2012/2013 to 0.2% in 2016/17 of pupil enrolments.

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[3] Full definitions can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions

Figure 2.1: Permanent exclusion rate by school type
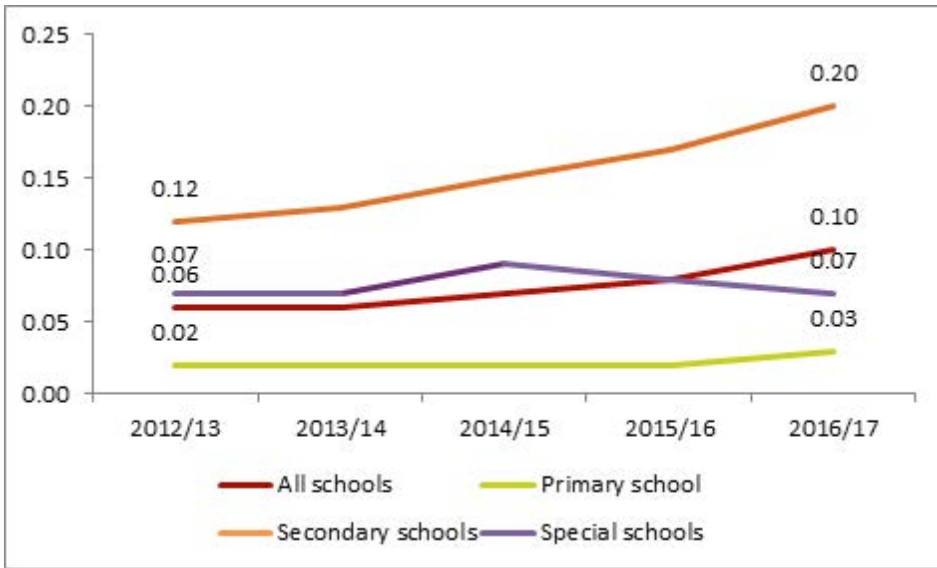
Source: Department for Education

Temporary exclusions have also steadily increased since 2012, from 267,520 in 2012/13 to 381,865 in 2016/17. Nearly half (47%) of all temporary exclusions were for only one day and the average length of time was two days. Figure 2.2 shows the temporary exclusion rate by school type for the past five years.

Figure 2.2: Temporary exclusion rate by school type
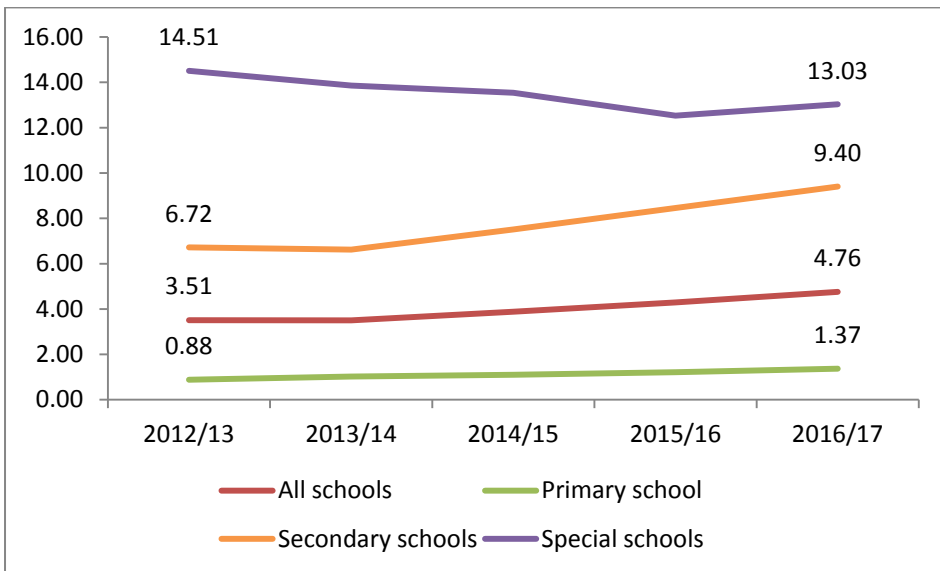
Source: Department for Education

All data reported on above was retrieved from the DfE national tables for Permanent and fixed period exclusions in England: 2016 to 2017.[5]

At Coram we believe every child has a right to an education. Education not only provides a route into employment and economic security but builds resilience and increases social connectedness. For the young people that Coram supports, who have often faced significant challenges at home, education is vital in helping them to succeed.

Coram undertook this research into school exclusions to support the work we do with young people to better inform our practice and support wider policy-making in the sector.

Why are pupils excluded?

A pupil can only be excluded from school on disciplinary grounds. This covers repeated failure to follow academic instruction, not completing a behavioural sanction (for example a detention) and breaches of the school's behaviour policy. This might include bringing in illegal drugs to school or violence against pupils and staff. Pupils can also be excluded for their behaviour outside of school.

DfE guidance states a decision to exclude a pupil permanently should only be taken:

- 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.

Pupils cannot be excluded for poor academic attainment or because they have additional needs or a disability that the school is unable to make provision for. In addition pupils cannot be excluded due to the action of their parents, or if they did not meet specific conditions before they are reinstated (after a temporary exclusion), for example attending a reintegration meeting.

The most common reason for both forms of exclusion in 2016/17 was "persistent disruptive behaviour". This accounted for 36% of permanent exclusions and 28% of temporary exclusions. In special schools the most common reason for exclusion was physical assault against an adult (38% of all permanent exclusions and 28% of all temporary exclusions).[6]

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[5] Found here: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2016-to-2017 (accessed 15 November 2018).
[6] Data retrieved from the DfE national tables for Permanent and fixed period exclusions in England: 2016 to 2017 (accessed 15 November 2018).

Process for exclusions

The DfE provides statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies and Pupil Referral Units in England in relation to exclusions. This states the decision to exclude a pupil must be:

- lawful
- rational
- reasonable
- fair
- proportionate.

When the school decides to exclude a pupil, the head teacher or teacher must notify the child's parent or carer immediately. This is usually done by telephone, followed by a letter.

Parents must be told:

- if the exclusion is permanent or temporary
- if a temporary exclusion, the period of the exclusion
- the reason for the exclusion
- their right to make representations about the exclusion to the school's governing board, and how they might be involved in this
- how representations should be made, and, where there is a legal requirement for the governing board to consider the exclusion, that parents have a right to attend a meeting, to be represented at that meeting (at their own expense and to bring a friend
- their right to see copies of their child's school record (for schools run by the local authority)
- the arrangements for their child to continue their education during the first five days of the exclusion
- when their child will be provided with alternative suitable education.

The school governing board is also notified at the same time and they reconvene to approve or overturn the exclusion. A parent can dispute the decision of the governing body not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil which can be heard by an Independent Review Panel.

The process for permanent and temporary exclusions is different; flowcharts detailing the full process for exclusions and temporary exclusions can be found in the appendix.

Who is excluded?

According to the latest official figures, boys, black Caribbean children, pupils with SEN and pupils eligible for free school meals are more likely to be excluded than other pupils.

The section below looks at these characteristics and others by rates of exclusion (both permanent and temporary) in more detail. The data is gathered from DfE national tables on permanent and fixed period exclusions in England 2016-17, reporting on pupils at state secondary, primary and special schools.

Gender

Boys are far more likely to be excluded from school than girls. Over three quarters (78%) of pupils excluded in 2016/17 were boys. In particular black Caribbean boys are three times more likely to be permanently excluded than white British boys (rate 0.45 vs 0.15).

Age

In 2016/17, over half of pupils who received a permanent or temporary exclusion were in Year 9 or above (57% and 53% respectively). Pupils aged 14 accounted for a quarter (25%) of permanent exclusions and also had the highest number of temporary exclusions.

As shown in figure 2.3, the rate of permanent exclusion steadily increases the older the school year group. Although not shown, it is a similar pattern for the rate of temporary exclusions.

Figure 2.3: Rate of permanent exclusion by national curriculum year group (state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools)
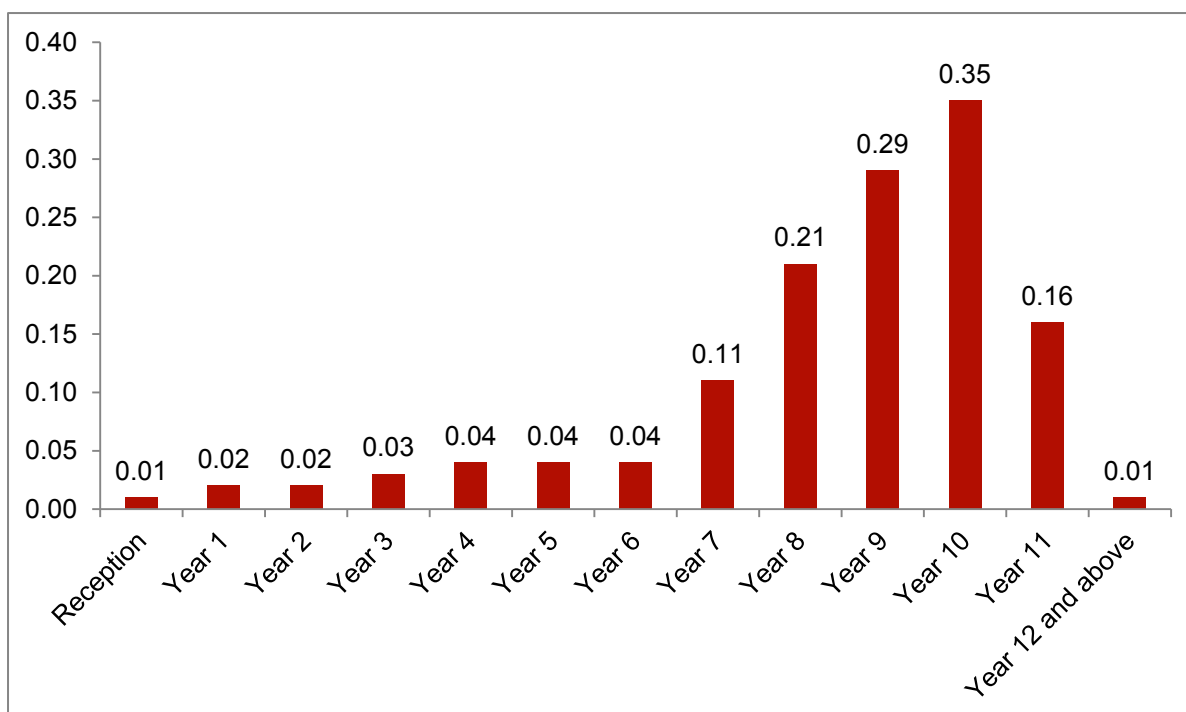
Source: Department for Education

SEN

Forty-seven per cent of all pupils that were permanently excluded in 2016/17 had a SEN.[7] Pupils with SEN support also had the highest exclusion rate - six times higher than the rate of pupils with no SEN (0.35% versus 0.06%). SEN pupils also accounted for 45% of all temporary exclusions

As shown in table 2.1, sixty-one per cent of permanently excluded children with SEN had a social, emotional and mental health need.

Table 2.1: Permanent and fixed period exclusions by type of SEN[8]

Type of SEN	Number of pupils	Permanent exclusions		Fixed period exclusions	
		Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Social, emotional and mental health	186,795	2,030	1.09	86,560	46.34
Other difficulty/disability	54,340	130	0.24	6,075	11.18
Specific learning difficulty	146,875	295	0.20	15,070	10.26
Moderate learning difficulty	259,715	465	0.18	27,210	10.48
Visual impairment	11,890	15	0.13	635	5.33
Autistic spectrum disorder	108,405	125	0.12	10,365	9.56
Hearing impairment	21,165	25	0.11	1,155	5.46
Speech, language and communications needs	234,075	200	0.08	12,070	5.16
Severe learning difficulty	32,340	15	0.05	825	2.54
Profound & multiple learning difficulty	10,980	5	0.04	105	0.97
Physical disability	33,685	15	0.04	915	2.71
Multi-sensory impairment	2,720	x	x	90	3.27
Total SEN with recorded primary need	**1,102,980**	**3,325**	**0.30**	**161,070**	**14.60**

Source: Department for Education

Other sources have suggested that the number of pupils with autism excluded from schools is much higher. The charity Ambitious about Autism has reported that the number of children with autism being excluded from English schools has increased by 60 per cent since 2011 (2,831 in 2011/12 to 4,485 in 2015/16).[9] However these figures should be used with caution as we do not know the data source or methodology.

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[7] Either a pupil with a SEN statement/ EHC plan or with SEN support at school.
[8] Figures are for pupils with a Statement of SEN, Education, Health and Care plan or SEN support and recorded primary need.
[9] Can be found here: https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/understanding-autism/exclusions-of-pupils-with-autism-rocket-in-england-new-data-shows

Looked after children

In 2016, 0.10% of looked after children were permanently excluded, compared to 0.08% of all pupil enrolments. However, more looked after children received temporary exclusions than the general population (11.44% of looked after children compared to 2.11% of all pupils).[10] Currently the government does not collect data on adopted children in education.

In November 2018, Adoption UK published research which found that adopted children are twenty times more likely to be permanently excluded than other children. We do not agree with this finding and query the robustness of the research.

Ethnic minorities

Twenty-seven per cent of pupils excluded were from minority ethnic backgrounds. Black Caribbean pupils had an exclusion rate that was nearly three times higher (0.28%) than the whole school population (0.1%). Pupils from an Asian ethnic background had the lowest rate of exclusion.

The difference of exclusion rates between some ethnic minorities can be seen more starkly when comparing boys to girls. For example, Black Caribbean boys are four times more likely to be permanently excluded than black Caribbean girls (exclusion rate 0.45% compared to 0.11%).

Free school meals

Forty per cent of those permanently excluded were eligible for free school meals. Their exclusion rate was four times higher than those who were not eligible (0.28% compared to 0.07%).

Alternatives to exclusion

A school may choose to explore other options before a pupil is excluded. These options include:

- an additional in-school resource such as sessions with specialist staff (for example counsellors)
- alternative in-school provision for example a behaviour or SEN facility
- alternative out-of-school provision such as a vocational placement or attendance at a short term specialist behaviour centre

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[10] DfE national tables on outcomes for looked after children SFR20 /2018. Found at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/outcomes-for-children-looked-after-by-las-31-march-2017 (accessed 15 November 2018).

- exclusion to a seclusion or isolation area within school
- a managed move to another school.

Other forms of education are offered to a pupil once they have been excluded if another school is not suitable or a place not found. This is commonly referred to as alternative provision. Alternative provision includes colleges, workplaces, charities and Pupil Referral Units. Pupil Referral Units are the main type of out-of-school alternative provision. They are maintained by the local authority and cater for a wide range of students. Many young people who are referred to alternative provision and Pupil Referral Units come from the most deprived backgrounds.[11]

Home schooled

Children who have been permanently excluded can be out of education for months, even years. In February 2019, the Office of the Children's Commissioner published data indicating significant increases in home schooling. One suggestion in this report was for the government to introduce a compulsory register for all home-educated children.

The relationship to school exclusion remains to be explored since it encompasses a group of children and young people who may be outside of registered educational provision, sometimes for many years, for a range of different reasons such as:

- Choice of parents, including the exercise of religious preferences and sometimes involving the use of unregistered schools
- Education withdrawal by young people themselves as a result of their negative experience in school (often without educational support)
- Transitional/long term home schooling where the local authority has not allocated a school placement within a reasonable timescale, also and often without educational support.

Coram literature review

The research in this report builds on previous secondary research conducted by Coram. In 2017 Coram performed a literature review for the Children's Commissioner for England on the wellbeing of young people excluded from school.[12] The report, *Children's Voices: a review of the evidence on the subjective wellbeing of children excluded from school and in alternative provision*, explored what pupils were saying about their experiences of exclusion

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[11] Taylor, C. (2012). Improving alternative provision. Department for Education. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180581/DFE-00035-2012.pdf (accessed 14 November 2018)
[12] The literature review and full references can be accessed here: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CCO-Childrens-Voices-Excluded-from-schools-and-alt-provision.pdf

(both permanent and temporary). The review found 15 studies about young people's experiences which had been written between 2007 and 2017.

The review highlighted that students who had been excluded, or were at risk of exclusion, often believed that they had been labelled as "bad" or "naughty".

"I come to the [Pupil Referral Unit] because I got expelled …
'cos I was a very bad girl."

Despite these negative labels the young people still had belief in their capabilities.

Some young people understood how their behaviour had contributed to their exclusion but others felt they had been treated unfairly by teachers. Pupils said they felt singled out, ignored and not understood by teachers. They wanted more say in what happened when they got into trouble at school. Pupils appreciated teachers who were calm and fair.

There were young people who said that they wanted to be excluded from mainstream school so that they could attend alternative provision because they thought it would be easier.

When pupils had been excluded they were generally positive about the alternative provision that they then attended. They found the different environment calmer which helped their learning. Pupils had a different experience of the alternative provision curriculum compared with mainstream school. Young people were offered a more vocational, activity based curriculum in alternative provision. Some pupils found the work at the alternative provision too easy but others welcomed the chance to learn about subjects that were different to traditional lessons. Pupils thought that alternative provision gave them more choice and ownership over their actions (for example being able to leave the lesson for a break) and this improved their behaviour.

Young people thought that the teachers in alternative provision were more caring and encouraging. As a result, pupil's self-esteem improved. Young people said that they felt more confident and more enthusiastic about learning. They were happier too, and the increased self-esteem helped counteract some of the negative labels they had been given in the past.

"I've been learning how to say long words, I've been spelling good. It feels like I don't have dyslexia anymore. I kept asking people how to spell this, how to spell that, now I can spell it out in my head and I can do it. The teachers helped me."

Young people viewed temporary exclusion as a chance to relax and spend time with friends.

The young people in the studies had experienced a lot of challenges in their home lives. Some linked these experiences to the behaviour that they displayed at school. Difficulties

that young people had faced included experiences of domestic violence and living with family members with mental health issues.

Some pupils talked of their hopes about the future while others said that their prospects were bleak. The young people were worried about leaving school without any qualifications and a few were concerned about more significant negative outcomes, such as not being able to find a job or going to prison.

Throughout the literature young people reported feeling angry. Pupils felt out of control at times. Anger levels were reduced when they went to alternative provision. Young people felt better and calmer when they could choose what and how they learned.

Parent survey

Overview

This chapter will present the findings of the online parent survey. A total of 124 surveys were completed by parents. The survey asked parents about their child's exclusion, including how well the school communicated the reason for exclusion and what the process would be, as well as the impact of the exclusion on their child and family.

Demographics

Parents were asked to provide demographic details about their child who has been, or may be, excluded. Surveys were completed by parents of children aged 4 to 17 years old. The mean age was 12 and the median age was 13 years old. For the purposes of this report, children with reported ages of 4 to 11 years old were categorised as primary school pupils, and those age 12 to 17 as secondary school pupils.

As shown in table 3.1 the majority of children were male (74%), which is unsurprising given boys are more likely than girls to receive permanent and fixed term exclusions. Over half of parents (54%) completing the survey were from the south of England. This compares to 42% of pupils attending any type of school in the south of England.[13]

Table 3.1: Demographic information for excluded children (1)

Demographic	Number of children (identified by parents)	% of children (identified by parents)
Gender		
Male	90	74%
Female	30	25%
Prefer not to say	2	2%
Age		
Primary (4-11 years)	29	24%
Secondary (12-17 years)	94	76%
Region		
North West	11	9%
North East	4	3%
Yorkshire and the Humber	7	6%
West Midlands	14	11%
East Midlands	5	4%
South West	19	15%
East of England	8	7%
South East	28	23%

[13] Data is for pupils attending all types of schools in the South East, South West and Greater London. Data retrieved from the DfE local authority England tables for Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2018 (accessed 30 November 2018).

Greater London	20	16%
Wales	4	3%
Scotland	1	1%
Northern Ireland	-	-
Other	3	2%

Base: gender 122, age 123, region 124 parents

As the survey progressed, SEN was increasingly identified as an issue in responses from parents. As a result the survey was modified to capture data on this more explicitly. In total 43 of the 124 respondents were asked if their child had a SEN. The ethnicity question was also introduced at this stage.

Of the 43 parents who were asked, 56% said their child has a SEN (figure 3.2). This is notable because pupils with SEN are six times more likely to be permanently excluded than pupils with no SEN. Although not all parents were asked in the survey to identify their child's SEN, comments provided indicate many children have autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Table 3.2: Demographic information for excluded children (2)

Demographic	Number of children (as identified by parents)	% of children (as identified by parents)
Ethnicity		
White	38	88%
Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups	1	2%
Asian/ Asian British	2	5%
Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British	2	5%
Other ethnic group	-	-
Special educational need (SEN)		
Child has SEN	24	56%

Base: 43 parents

The same group of parents were also asked to indicate if their child received any support from professionals or services, both inside and outside of school (table 3.3 and table 3.4). Of these, nearly a quarter (21%) reported their child had been receiving support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS) and/or had a social worker/ family support worker (also 21%). A further 16% reported their child had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place. Other parents noted that their child is currently waiting to be assessed or on the waiting list for services, including CAHMS. Again this is significant because Department for Education (DfE) data shows that pupils with an EHCP or a statement of SEN have the highest fixed period exclusion rate at 16%, which is over five times higher than pupils with no SEN (3%).

Table 3.3: Support received from professionals / services <u>outside</u> of school

Type of support	Number of children (as identified by parents)	% of children (as identified by parents)
CAMHS	9	21%
Social worker / family support worker	9	21%
Therapist	5	12%
Other	5	12%
No support identified	20	47%

Base: 43 parents

Table 3.4: Support received from professionals / services <u>inside</u> school

Type of support	Number of children (as identified by parents)	% of children (as identified by parents)
EHCP	7	16%
Speech and language therapy	1	2%
Educational psychologist	3	7%
Additional help with school work / lessons	7	16%
Other	5	12%
No support identified	28	65%

Base: 43 parents

Of the 28 children for whom no support inside of school was identified, 13 of them were reported by their parents as having a SEN. For those children not receiving support outside of school (20), 8 of them were identified as having a SEN.

A total of four children identified as having a SEN by their parents were reported to not be receiving any support outside or inside of school.

Awareness of exclusions and policy

Schools must have a behaviour policy. All maintained schools are required to publish the behaviour policy on the school website and publicise it in writing at least once a year. Academies must make the behaviour policy available to parents on request and while they are not required by law to publish their behaviour policy on their website, they are encouraged to do so.

Parents displayed mixed awareness of their child's school exclusion policy. Over half of parents (55%) were aware of this policy, but of them only 44% reported that they had read it. A quarter of parents (30%) reported they were not aware of the policy, and a further 15% were not sure.

Figure 3.1: Awareness of school's exclusion policy
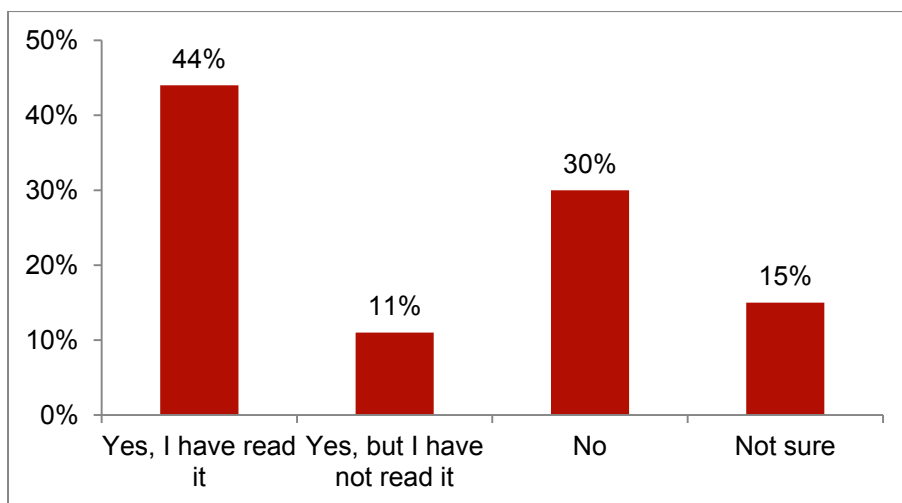
Base: All parents (124)

Parents who were aware or not sure of the school exclusion policy had mixed views on how easy it was to find on the school's website. As shown in figure 3.2, 44% found it very easy or quite easy to find, but a similar proportion (40%) said it was not very easy or not at all easy to find. The remaining 16% of parents had not tried to find the school's policy on their website.

Figure 3.2: How easy it is to find school exclusion policy on website
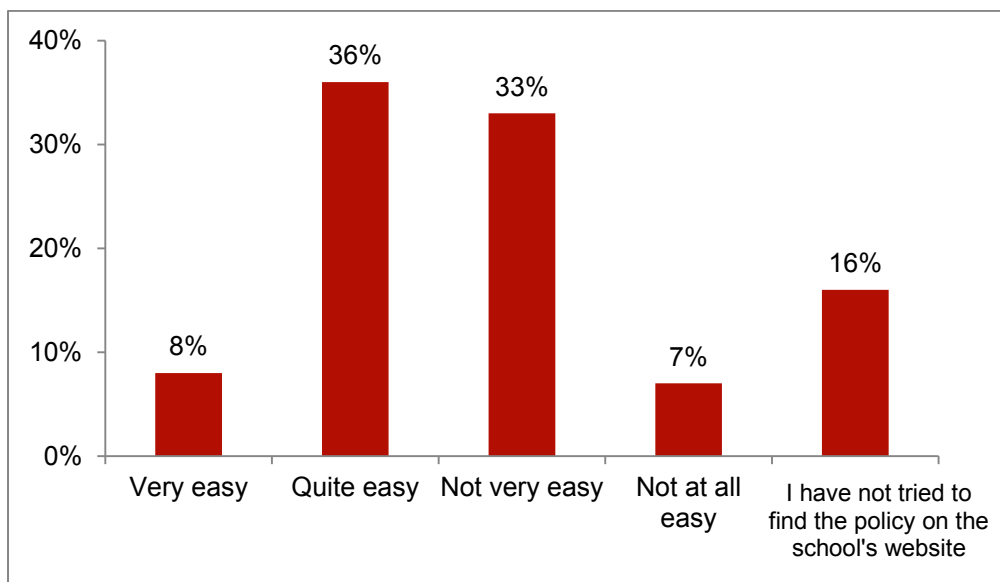
Base: Parents who had seen the school exclusion policy or were not sure if they had seen it (87)

In addition to a lack of awareness of the school's exclusion policy, only a quarter of parents (24%) knew the legal process a school must follow when they exclude a pupil, *before* they spoke to the CLAS or visited their website. Three-quarters of parents (76%) did not know the legal process. This suggests parents are not fully aware of the legality of exclusions.

Communication with parents about exclusions

Legally a school must notify parents immediately when their child has been excluded: how long for and the reasons for it. Parents must also be provided in writing with the reasons for the exclusion, period of the exclusion (if temporary) and details of the right to appeal the decision to the school governing board. It is also assumed that schools involve parents in discussions about their child's behaviour before they are actually excluded, or that warnings were given. Exclusion should not be a surprise.

Parents reported mixed experiences when asked if the school had clearly explained the reasons for their child's exclusion. Nearly half of parents (48%) felt that an unclear explanation had been given, but a similar number said they were given a clear explanation (47%). a further six per cent of parents reported they were not told why their child has been or may be excluded. As shown in figure 3.3, the proportion of parents who felt a clear or unclear explanation was given was similar across the different types of exclusion their child received.

Figure 3.3: If reasons for the exclusion were clearly explained by the school
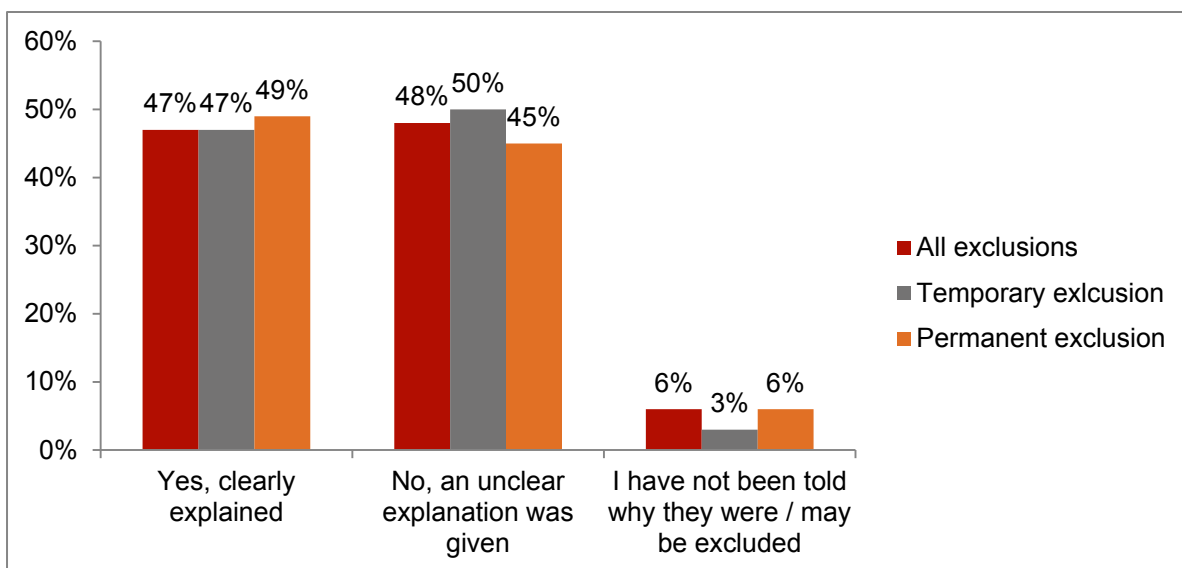
Base: All parents (124)

Parents were asked to rate their experience of communication with the school during the exclusion process. Only 10% of parents felt that the communication from the school to themselves was very good or good, with over a third (38%) reporting communication was very poor (figure 3.4).

Parents were no more positive when rating the communication the school had with their child during the process. Half of parents (51%) said that the school's communication with their child was very poor, with only three per cent reporting the communication was very good or good.

Figure 3.4: Communication from school to parent and child during exclusion process
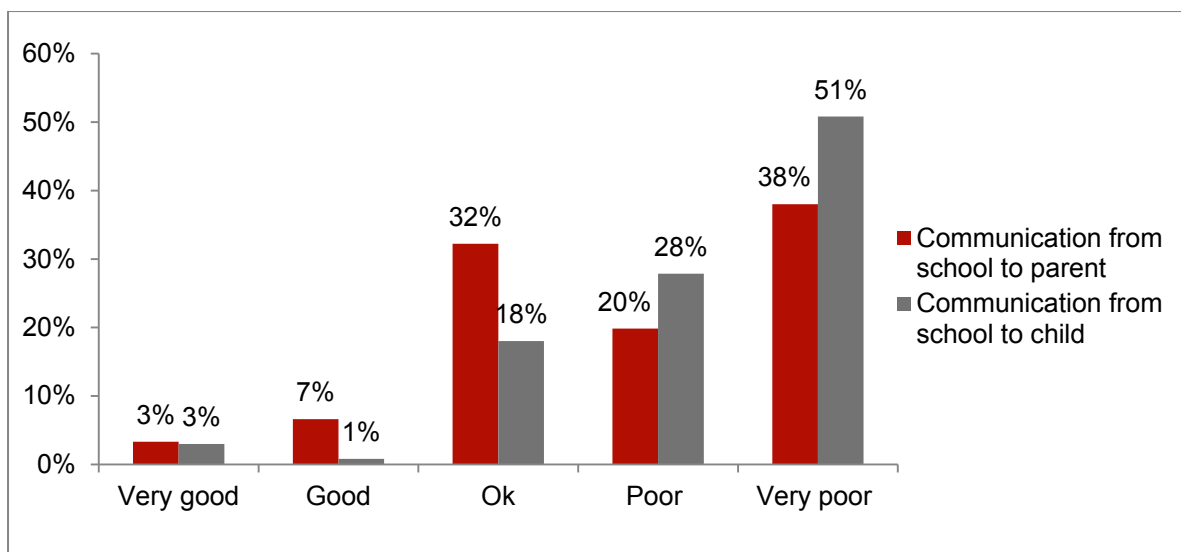
Base: All parents (Communication to parent 121; Communication to child 122)

Information provided to parents

Parents were asked to provide feedback about whether the school clearly explained what would happen following exclusion and what information they were provided. Those who provided feedback had mixed views on the school response.

Parents who felt the school clearly explained the process reported that they were contacted by the school by phone and received letters from the school explaining the reasons for the exclusion. These letters included information about the school's behavioural policy, what their child should do during the exclusion period (for example homework) and the process for appealing the decision. Parents whose child had been temporarily excluded were also invited to a re-integration meeting following the suspension period end.

> *"The school explained he would be sent to a [Pupil Referral Unit] after a week and the governors would hear the case and we had the right to make representations. If we thought disability was factor we could go to tribunal on a claim of disability discrimination."* Parent

> *"They explained that when my child returned to school he would have a reintegration interview with his head of learning."* Parent

Despite agreeing the process was clear, some parents commented that they received mixed messages about the reason for the exclusion, and felt the communication they had did not address relevant issues.

> *"Yes letter explained everything but reason for exclusion was different to what headmistress told me via telephone conversation."* Parent

> *"A letter explaining a 3 day exclusion. A integration meeting first day back in ... No information on addressing how to support his behaviour/anxiety/SEN needs differently."* Parent

Parents also suggested they were discouraged from taking an interest or lodging an appeal.

"They informed me that I did not need to attend the hearing with the governors and if the governors had said that he should be re-instated the school said that they do not have to have him back. So I shouldn't bother as it is a very long process." Parent

"Yes they did but the process is one sided, board of governors are only rubber stamping the school decision. Very difficult for the parent to have representation." Parent

Other parents were unsatisfied with the school's explanation about what would happen next for their child following the exclusion. When parents had received a letter about their child's exclusion, these were perceived to be generic, containing incorrect or contradictory information, or lacking in detail and guidance on appealing the decision. Some parents reported to receiving these letters after a delay but others did not appear to have received a letter (in this instances they had been verbally notified of the exclusion).

"They did not provide very much information. I had to look up most of the information online." Parent

"No, I was told my daughter had been excluded and they gave me a reason for this, I was then left a voicemail and was told the reason she was excluded wasn't true and hadn't happened, but she was still excluded anyway and gave another reason for this." Parent

"No information about the process, in the letter that I finally got it simply stated that if I wasn't happy then I could write the clerk of governors. However, the name and contact details for the clerk was incorrect and was only corrected when I pointed it out." Parent

The lack of contact with schools once they were notified of the exclusion (either by phone or letter) was also raised. Parents struggled to get in contact with the school to discuss the exclusion and meetings were not always granted. In some instances the parents were contacted by the local authority to notify them of the next-steps for their child's education (when permanently excluded).

"This was all explained in a letter as the head teacher would not speak to us." Parent

"I was completely ignored. All requests I made for them to contact me asking for a meeting to discuss what had gone on were unanswered. The only time I was contacted was to tell me that there was a meeting at the school to tell me the schools decision on whether my child was going to be expelled or not." Parent

Avoiding exclusions

The majority of parents (83%) reported the school did not work with their child to explore alternatives to exclusion. Where schools had tried to avoid exclusion, a behaviour support plan or contract was often put in place. Some parents noted these had limited success.

"They put a support plan in place that when my child got anxious or upset they could access the support hub. However it wasn't enough and an EHC plan should have been applied for." Parent

"They put a support plan in place but repeatedly let my daughter down by not upholding their part in the plan." Parent

"Support plan. Took away his time out card and when he asked for it back they shouted at him. When he got angry they excluded him. When I complained they just said well you signed it!" Parent

Other alternatives to exclusions used included isolation and managed moves. Adjustments such as a reduced timetable and teaching assistant support were also implemented.

"Tried to talk her down and put in isolation internally. There is behaviour support plan but is out of date." Parent

"Lots of TA support, reasonable adjustments, revised timetable." Parent

Support after exclusion

The support for children returning to school after a temporary exclusion was rated poorly by parents. For parents whose child had been temporarily excluded, the majority (75%) felt the help they received was poor or very poor. This compares to 21% who said it was ok, and only four per cent felt it was very good or good.

Figure 3.5: Help with preparing for child's return to school after temporary exclusion
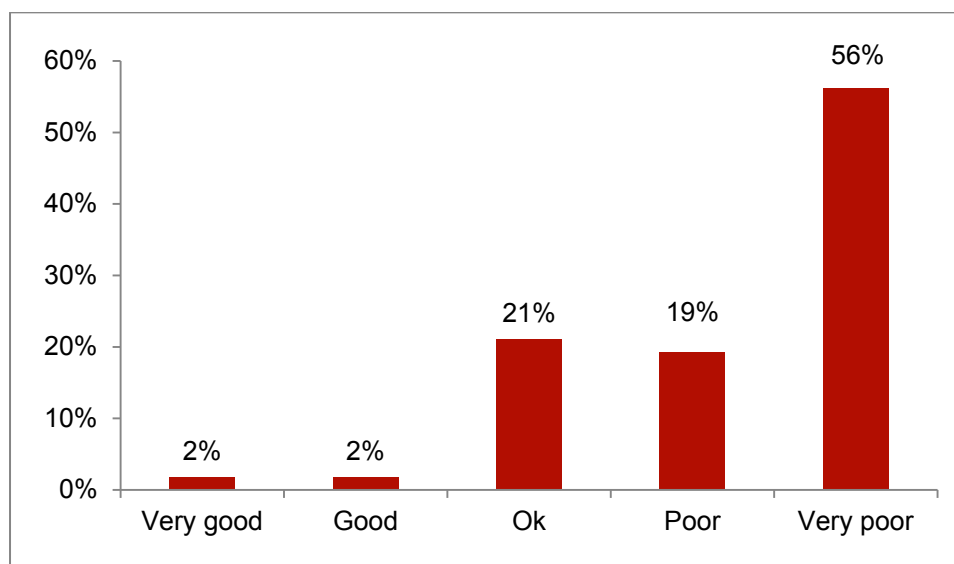
Base: All parents with child temporarily excluded (57)

Similarly, parents said that help with finding an alternative school place for their child after permanent exclusion was poor. The majority of parents (81%) felt the help they received

with finding an alternative place as very poor or poor. Only seven per cent said the help received was very good or good, and 12% thought it was ok.

Figure 3.6: Help with finding an alternative school place after permanent exclusion
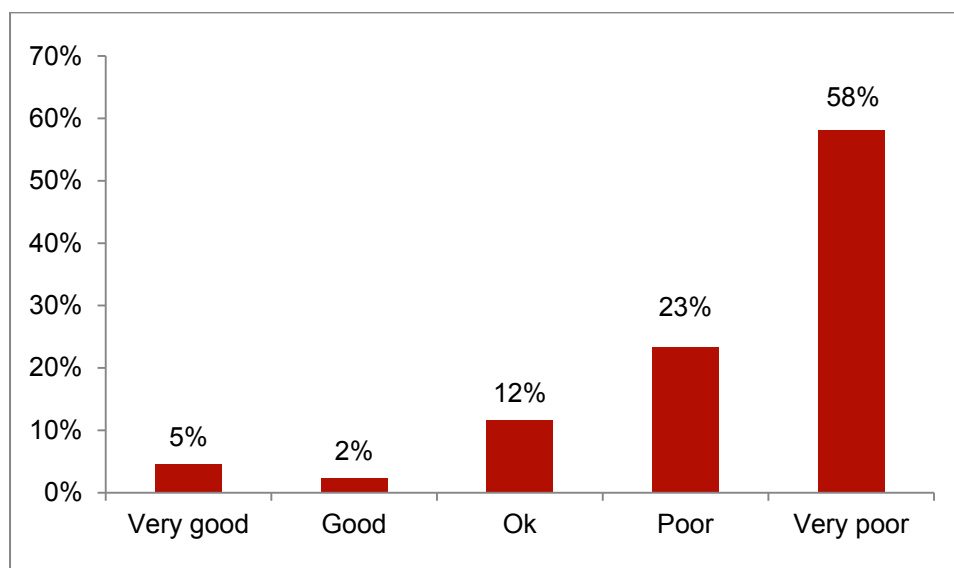
Base: All parents with child permanently excluded (43)

Impact of exclusion

The majority of parents (82%) did not think that the school's exclusion process was fair. Only one per cent of parents believed it was, and 18% were not sure. This was reflected in the responses by parents when asked about the impact of the exclusion on their child.

Impact on child

The impact on the child's mental health was mentioned by parents. Anxiety and depression was common among these young people, and some parents noted their child reported suicidal feelings. For some children these were pre-existing mental health conditions, but exacerbated by the stress of the exclusion. Parents also felt their child's SEN was not taken into account by the school when making the decision to exclude.

> *"It's affected his mental health and well being. Increased anxiety poor self esteem and lost his confidence."* Parent

> *"He is diagnosed with OCD and this was not taken into consideration. He was offered no SEN provision. The decline in his mental health is hugely apparent… He has become very reclusive and has only left the house 4 or 5 times in the past 4 weeks."* Parent

Reported alongside mental health issues was a loss of confidence and lower self-esteem among young people after being excluded. Parents stated their child was anxious to return to school and not confident with their school work. It was also said they have been 'labelled' as a consequence of the exclusion which upset the young people.

"My daughter was predicted very good grades and now she thinks she's not gunna do well and as self doubt when she does finally get back into education she's gunna be too far behind to catch back up which will effect her grades and confidence." Parent, identified their child as having a SEN

"Damaged self-esteem and enhanced feelings of rejection have affected his relationship with education." Parent, identified their child as having a SEN

"Unsupported and reluctant to return in fear of no support and getting labelled the naughty one". Parent*, identified their child as having a SEN*

The detrimental impact to their child's education was also mentioned by parents. Not only were young people missing school for the duration of the exclusion, but some were not set homework (even when requested), and others had a drop in their formal teaching hours on return to school. Parents feared their children were falling behind with their education and there were concerns about their ability to sit exams. This was particularly the case for children who had been permanently excluded and were required to find a new school. For some the change of school appeared to be working well, but for others there were delays in enrolling at the new school. Parents had opted to home-school their children as an alternative to sending their child to a Pupil Referral Unit.

"He feels that he would of done better revising for exams in school as he couldn't get motivated for this at home." Parent

*"My son was doing 9 GCSEs is now only doing 5.
At home full time doing online learning."* Parent

"He has been out of school for over a year and still has not been able to start an alternative school." Parent

It was also commented that young people were distancing themselves from school and education. The excluded young people now had a negative view of school and felt rejected, angry and upset at the situation they were in. Not all children fully understood why they were excluded and felt the school did not listen to them. They did not want to return to school, and sometimes their behaviour deteriorated on their return.

"Doesn't want to return, feels no one understands him." Parent*, identified their child as having a SEN*

"He is withdrawn now from learning. His math level went down from P6 to P1. He hates school (he used to love school and math in particular)." Parent

"He developed an attachment to me and feels that he isn't wanted at school and so his behaviour gets worse so that they exclude him again." Parent*, identified their child as having a SEN*

According to parents, young people's relationships with their peers were affected by them missing school. It was feared they were missing out on socialising with other young people

and losing friendships. Parents also noted they themselves had a strained relationship with their child.

> *"Withdrawing from family… My child is worried about his last year of GCSE as he will have to do it in a different setting. My child is worried he will need to make new friends new surroundings which he will not only find challenging but difficult."* Parent

Parents also highlighted the effect of exclusion on adopted children. Adoptive parents reported the schools did not always take their child's adoptive status into consideration and were not adequately dealing with behavioural issues arising from it. The perceived rejection from the school was described as hitting the children very hard.

> *"He is a previously LAC child who has now missed 6 months of mainstream education (home schooled) because the only alternative given was a [Pupil Referral Unit] where the children are locked in."* Parent

> *"He is an adopted child…. His fairly minor behavioural issues nosedived hugely with poor handling of a situation by teachers resulting in the issuing of a temporary exclusion, against the school behaviour policy. The permanent exclusion was the final straw … he just became a complete mess, with zero self-esteem, zero sense of positive identity, lost all and any social confidence he had".* Parent

On the other hand, some parents thought the exclusion did not have any impact on their child. Young people were 'not bothered'. Temporary exclusion was not always considered an effective deterrent for poor behaviour and children thought not going to school was positive good thing.

> *"I think she see it as a holiday even though she has been grounded and has her phone and tablet confiscated. She didn't realise that exclusion would be the outcome for her actions."* Parent

Impact on parent and other family members

Parents were also asked if the exclusion impacted them or any of their family members. Parents said the family dynamic had been affected. They were questioning their parenting ability, and noted how relationships between family members had changed.

> *"All members of the family, myself, my wife and our daughter - the family has been totally destroyed, we will be strong together but our happy, well mannered, thoughtful son is totally lost, his sister who is at the same school now despises them now which is causing more problems."* Parent

> *"Has affected us a parents because we aren't totally sure why the excluded has happened instead of trying something else."* Parent

> *"It's affected his siblings as he's taken more of my time away from them."* Parent

> *"This has affected us as a parent, our child does not have a school to attend, the school has called social workers on us and they nearly took our child from us."* Parent

Stress among parents was noted, as was the impact to their mental health. This included being anxious about phone calls with the school and taking anti-depressants (although it is not clear if the mental health issues reported were pre-existing). Parents were worried about their child and the future.

> *"This has been one of the worst times of my life, this has caused me stress and anxiety and sleepless nights."* Parent

Parents also described the impact on their jobs. Parents needed to take time off work, reduce their hours, take unpaid leave or leave their jobs. This was due to the stress of the exclusion and so they could accommodate the new circumstances of their child's education (both temporary and permanent exclusions).

> *"My children's schooling and decline in behaviour last year caused such stress that I lost the resilience and focus that I needed to carry out my job."* Parent

> *"We have had 7 fixed term exclusions in the last 2 years. My husband and I have lost significant work days and salary as a result. As a family we are at breaking point."* Parent

Summary

- There was a lack of awareness among parents of exclusion policy and the legal process that schools must follow when excluding a pupil.
- Nearly half of parents received an unclear explanation for their child's exclusion. Information about the exclusion from the school was reported to have been inconsistent and lacked detail.
- In addition communication with schools during the exclusion process between parents and their children was poor. Parents cited unhelpful letters and difficulties speaking with the school. Parents reported to feeling ignored and some felt the school discouraged them from appealing the decision.
- Support with preparing their child for returning to school (if temporary exclusion) or with finding an alternative school place (if permanent exclusion) was reported to be poor.
- Parents felt schools that did not work with their child to explore alternatives to exclusion. For those that did receive help, this tended to be in the form of education/behaviour support plans.
- The excluded child and their family found the impact of exclusion distressing. Children were reported to have suffered a loss of confidence and self-esteem, their education and mental health adversely affected. For their families, the stress of the exclusion had taken its toll on work and relationships between other family members.

- The prevalence of vulnerable groups of child being excluded was also noticeable in this research. Parents identified children with SEN or receiving SEN support, and adopted children were also commented on. The severe impact of the exclusion on these children was often noted.

Pupil's voice: survey and interviews

Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the pupil survey alongside the key themes from the pupil interviews.

The pupil survey gathered pupils' views on how well behaviour expectations are communicated and managed by schools, as well as their opinion on the fairness and implementation of exclusions. A total of 318 surveys were completed by pupils from five state primary and secondary schools in Greater London, South East England and Yorkshire and the Humber regions. Although pupils did not require prior experience of exclusion to complete the survey, 12% of pupils (39) completing the survey reported that they had been excluded from school at some point.

In addition, nine interviews were conducted with pupils who have experience of exclusions. Pupils were asked about their experience of exclusion, including what they thought about the process, what the impact was on them and if anything changed for them following the exclusion.

Behaviour at school

Pupils were asked a series of questions about the behaviour of pupils in their school. Pupils were positive about their peers, with two-thirds (63%) reporting either all/almost all or most pupils in their school are friendly. A further 30% thought some pupils were friendly, and only seven per cent reported pupils in their school were not friendly.

Figure 4.1: Are pupils friendly at school
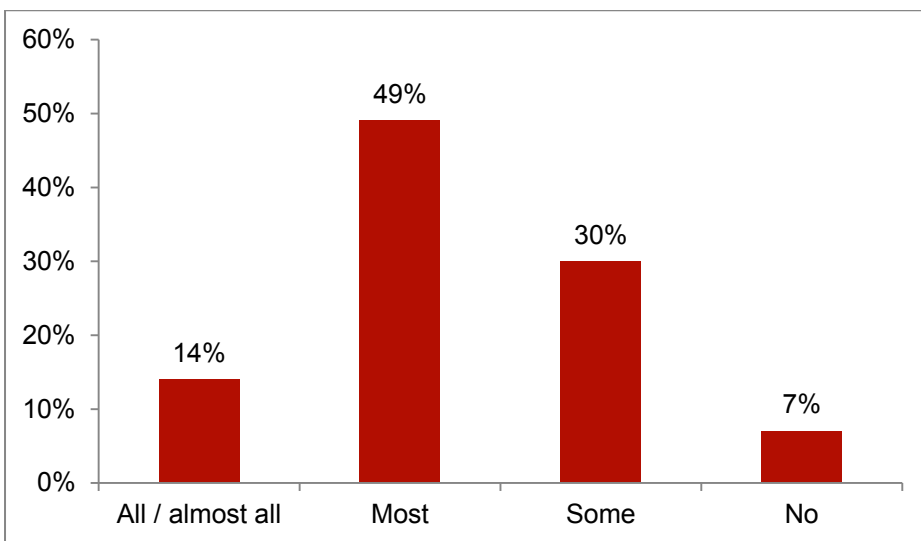
Base: All pupils (316)

Similarly, pupils tended to agree that other pupils in their school treat each other well. Three quarters (76%) reported that pupils treat others well most or some of the time. Only 18% reported pupils did not treat other pupils well.

Figure 4.2: Do pupils at school generally treat each other well
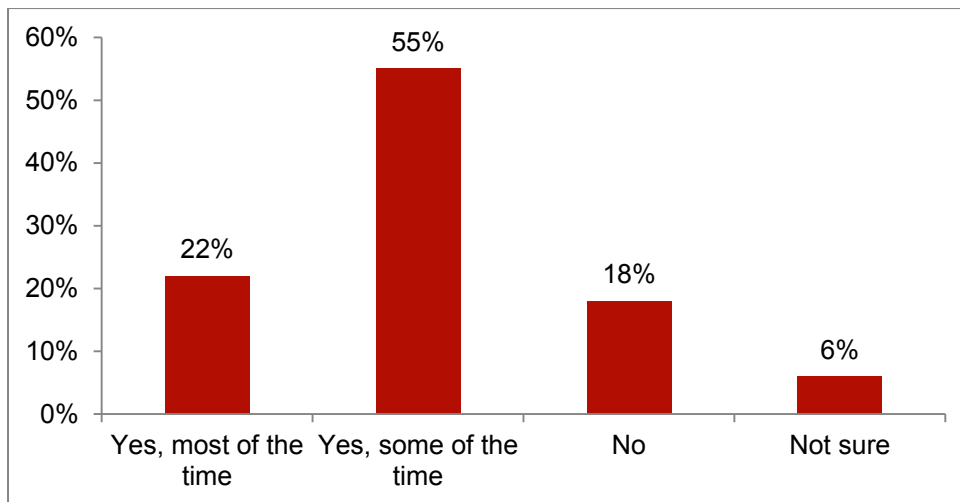
Base: All pupils (317)

Pupils were asked if other pupils at their school ever behaved very badly (thinking about if they were violent or very disruptive). As shown in figure 4.3, nearly all pupils (96%) agree that bad behaviour did occur at their school, but there were mixed views on how good teachers were at resolving it. Over half of pupils (57%) thought that their teachers were really good or good at resolving bad behaviour. On the other hand, nearly a third of pupils (29%) stated that teachers are not good at resolving bad behaviour, and 10% of pupils felt their teachers do nothing about bad behaviour when it happened.

Figure 4.3: Do pupils at school ever behave very badly
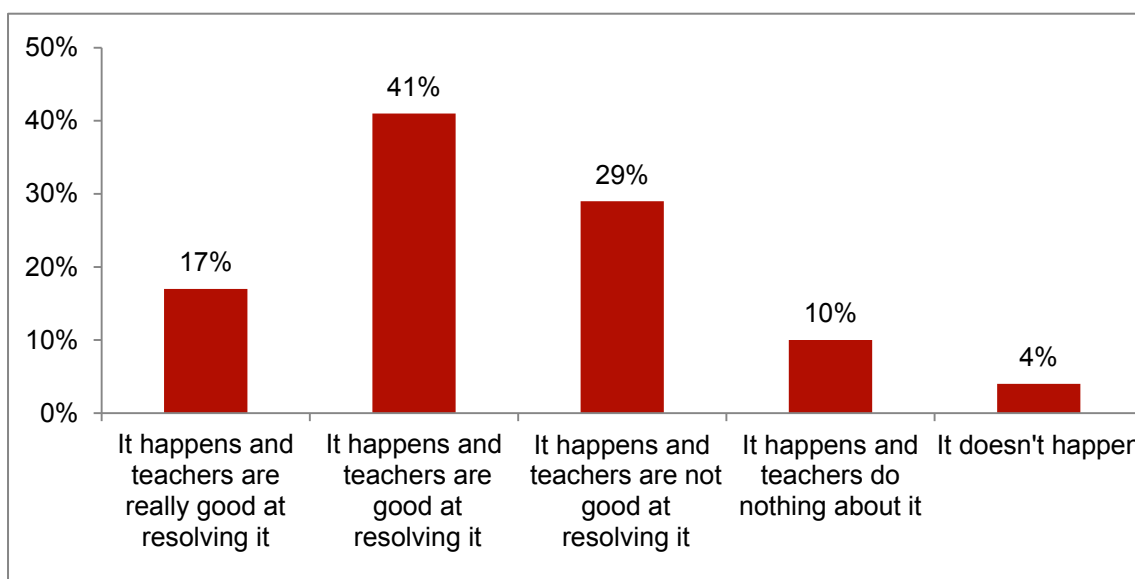
Base: All pupils (315)

It is important for pupils to feel that there is someone in the school that they can turn to if something happens which makes them feel uncomfortable. The majority of pupils (70%) agreed that there was someone they could turn to. However, 15% of pupils said there was no one to turn to and the same proportion were not sure (15%).

Expected behaviour at school

Pupils were asked if they were aware of what behaviour is expected at school and what will get them into trouble. The majority of pupils (87%) were aware of behaviour expectations at school, compared to six per cent who were not. A further seven per cent were not sure how they were expected to behave at school.

Figure 4.4: What behaviour is expected at school
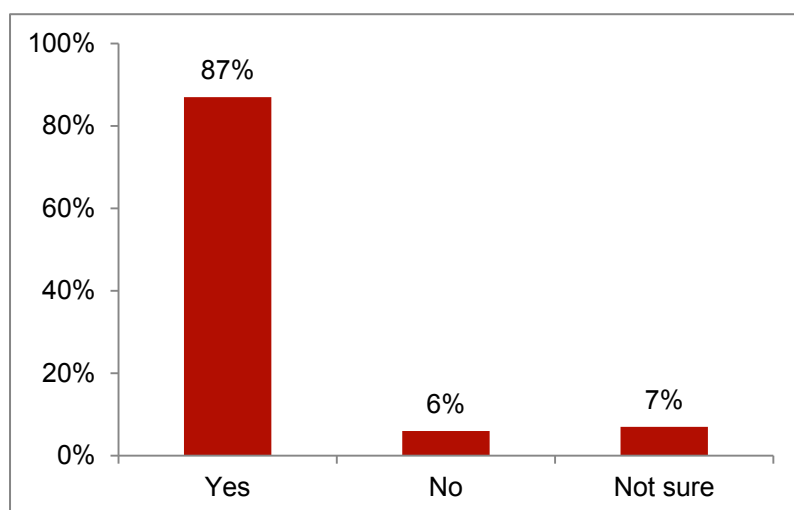
Base: All pupils (313)

Pupils were clear about which behaviours would lead to exclusion. As shown in figure 4.5, 43% of pupils reported it was very clear, and a third (34%) felt it was mostly clear which behaviours would lead to them being excluded. Only eight per cent of pupils said it is mostly not clear or not clear at all which behaviours would lead to exclusion.

Figure 4.5: Is it clear what behaviour will lead to pupils leaving school (a temporary exclusion or a permanent exclusion)
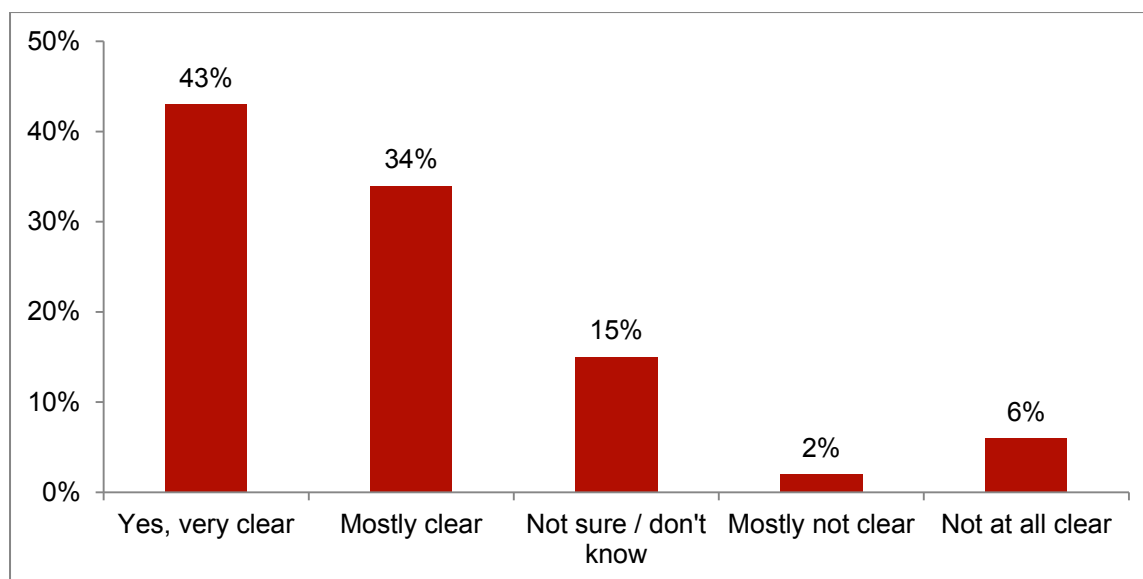
Base: All pupils (316)

All schools are required to have behaviour policies which set out the appropriate and expected behaviour pupils should demonstrate at school, as well as having a clear process for exclusions. The survey asked pupils if they have ever seen anything written down that says when pupils will be excluded. Over half of pupils (57%) reported that they had not seen anything, and a quarter of pupils (25%) were not sure.

Of the 18% of pupils who said they had seen something, half (52%) reported it was easy to understand, but 22% said it was not. A quarter of pupils (26%) were not sure.

Pupil awareness of exclusions

Almost all pupils (94%) surveyed had heard of exclusions. The majority of pupils (85%) also reported knowing someone who had been excluded; this included 12% of pupils who reported that they themselves had been excluded (figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6: Do pupils know anyone who has ever been excluded
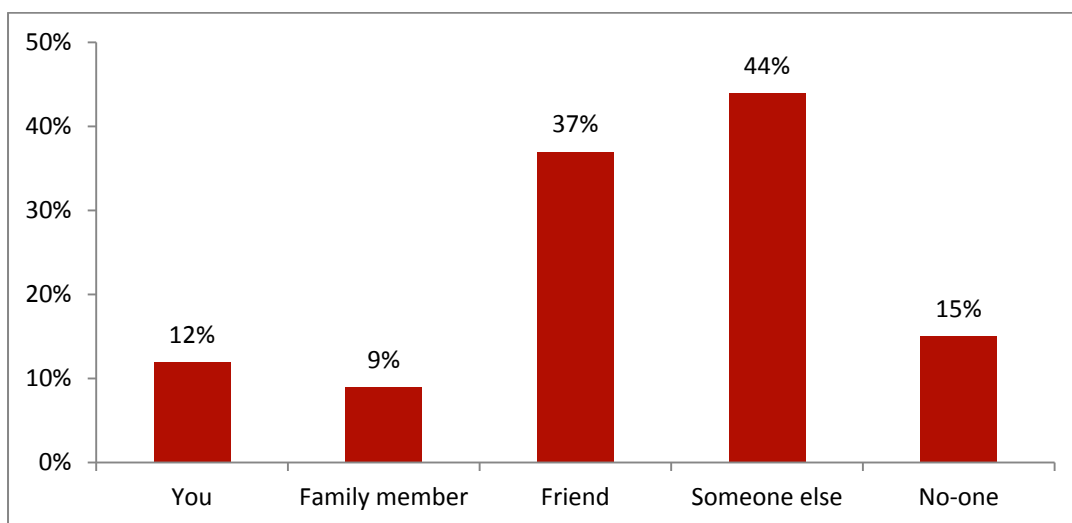
Base: All pupils (318)

The pupils with experience of exclusion that were interviewed were mostly clear on the reasons why they had been excluded. This included physical contact with a teacher, being verbally abusive towards teachers and other pupils, fighting with other pupils and being involved in a weapon-related incident. However, some pupils were not clear on the reason for their exclusion, but thought it was something to do with general 'naughty' and disruptive behaviour.

Pupil views on exclusion

Pupils were asked if they thought the decision to exclude the person they knew/themselves was the right thing to do. Overall, pupils tended to think it was the right thing (44%), but other pupils disagreed (28%) or were not sure (28%).

Figure 4.7: Do pupils think excluding them was the right thing to do
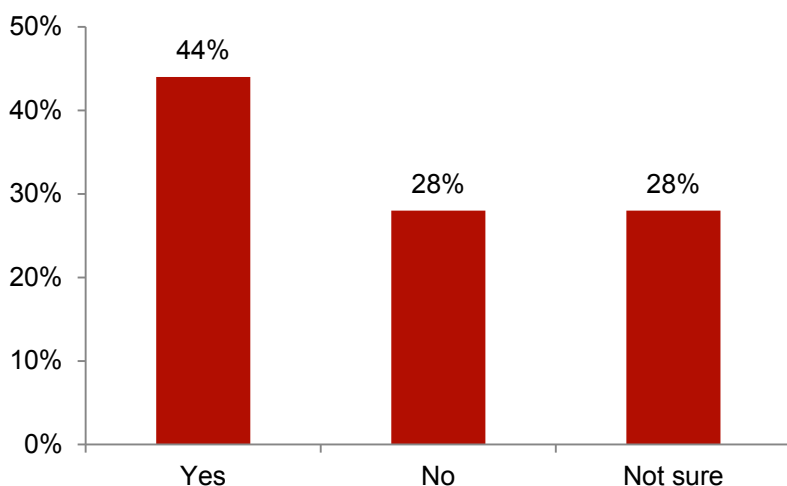
Base: All pupils who have been excluded or know someone excluded (264)

Of the pupils who felt it was right to exclude the person they knew/themselves, they recognised that a young person had committed a serious behavioural breach and broken school rules. Examples provided by pupils in the survey included bringing a knife into school and being violent towards other pupils. It was felt that exclusion was appropriate discipline in these circumstances and "excluding them will teach [them] not to do bad things or [they] will get excluded again" (Pupil male, aged 13). Pupils also commented that the exclusions were right when the person was engaging in disruptive behaviour, which was unfair on other pupils in the class.

"People don't have to sacrifice their learning time because of someone else's actions." Pupil, aged 13

On the other hand, some pupils disagreed with the exclusion. It was suggested that exclusions can sometimes aggravate the situation, for example if the young person is unhappy with the decision and acts out. The impact of being negatively labelled by exclusion was noted. Pupils thought missing school and lesson time was not beneficial to young people.

"Because then they will get angry and their behaviour will get worse." Female pupil, aged 12

"It just makes them become more bad as they are being labelled". Female pupil, aged 15

"They will miss important lessons and it will also affect their attendance." Female pupil, aged 14

Pupils remarked in the survey that they thought the situation leading to the exclusion was a misunderstanding, or that the exclusion was too severe a punishment. There was also the perception that the excluded person they knew was treated unfairly compared to other people, or that the school did not consider why they had acted in that way.

"Because he was sticking up for himself." Male pupil, aged 10

"He was very annoying and wanted fights so he deserved it, but not to the point of permanent." Pupil, aged 12

"Many people do the same as that person but doesn't get expelled. NOT FAIR!!!!!" Male pupil, aged 12

"It was not right because he had behaving problem." Male pupil, aged 11

Of the pupils who reported they had been excluded (in the survey), there was a sense of injustice and it was implied that they felt their behaviour did not warrant exclusion. It was suggested they were excluded without the school gathering all the evidence or hearing their side of the story.

"I threw a chair when no one was there." Male pupil, aged 15

"Said I done something without any prove." Male pupil, aged 14

"A statement wasn't taken before deciding to exclude me." Female pupil, aged 15

In contrast, some pupils recognised that they had breached school rules or done "the wrong thing" and exclusion was appropriate. It also gave a pupil "time to think of what [they had] done".

Fairness of exclusions

Pupils surveyed were largely unsure of the fairness of exclusions. When asked if exclusions were done fairly, 44% felt that they were usually or always fair but 18% felt that they are usually or always unfair. In addition 39% of pupils said they did not know.

Figure 4.8: When exclusion happens is it done fairly
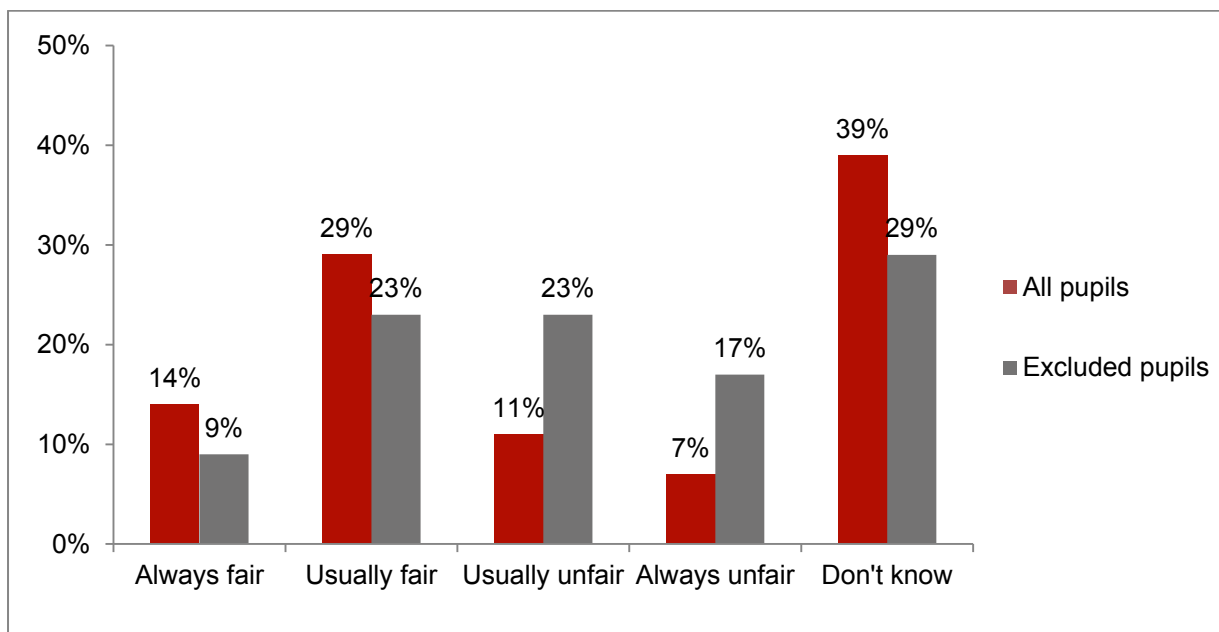
Base: All pupils (309), excluded pupils (35)

As shown in figure 4.8, of the pupils who reported they had been excluded, a greater proportion (40%) felt that exclusions were usually or always unfair compared to all pupils. Nearly a third of excluded pupils (31%) reported they were usually or always fair, and a similar number (29%) were not sure if exclusions are fair or not.

The pupils we interviewed with experience of exclusion tended to agree that their own exclusion was fair. The pupils accepted that they had broken the school rules and could understand why they were excluded. They conceded they should have listened to the teachers, and did not challenge the decision as "can't argue with it".

Despite accepting their temporary exclusions, pupils interviewed were unsure if other pupils were treated in the same way and had a sense of injustice about this. Where the pupil was involved in a fight, they were not sure what had happened to the other pupils involved (due to confidentiality reasons) and were unsure if all pupils involved had been treated the same. And when the issue leading to the exclusion continued after the exclusion (for example bullying), pupils felt the school had taken no action and saw this as unfair.

When exclusions should be used

Pupils commented on when they think exclusion is for the best. Exclusion was considered appropriate when there had been instances of violence (against pupils and teachers), aggression and general 'bad' behaviour. Bringing in dangerous weapons or drugs also justified exclusion.

Pupils thought bullying and disruptive behaviour in lessons were valid reasons for exclusion.

> *"when people interrupt lessons and there swearing at students or teachers for no reasons or there hair colour."* Female pupil, aged 13

> *"when a student has hit or is bullying a student and has had a really bad negative impact to their lives".* Pupil aged 15

Exclusion was also considered the best option when a young person had ignored repeated warnings from the school and other discipline methods had failed to improve their behaviour.

> *"when people are constantly unaffected by regular school sanctions."*
> Male pupil, aged 12

> *"when someone gets constant chances to behave, but continues to disobey".*
> Female pupil, aged 13

In addition, it was noted that exclusions can offer young people the opportunity "to reflect on what they have done" and "learn from their mistakes and improve". However, some pupils commented that exclusions were "never ideal", arguing the excluded pupil would end up missing learning time.

Pupils also argued that behaviour outside of school should not be dealt with by schools. This is in contrast to many school exclusion policies, which commonly set out when a pupil's behaviour outside of school may lead to disciplinary sanctions. This suggests pupils may not be aware of this aspect of the exclusion policy.

> *"something that happened OUTSIDE of school shouldn't be resolved by school teachers. That's the police's job not school".* Female pupil, aged 13

The survey also asked pupils about which specific activities should result in either a temporary or permanent exclusion. As shown in figure 4.9, the majority of pupils were in agreement that selling drugs, using drugs, having alcohol and smoking at school should always or usually result in a pupil being excluded, either temporarily or permanently.

Figure 4.9: Which of the following should <u>always</u> or <u>usually</u> result in a pupil being excluded from school
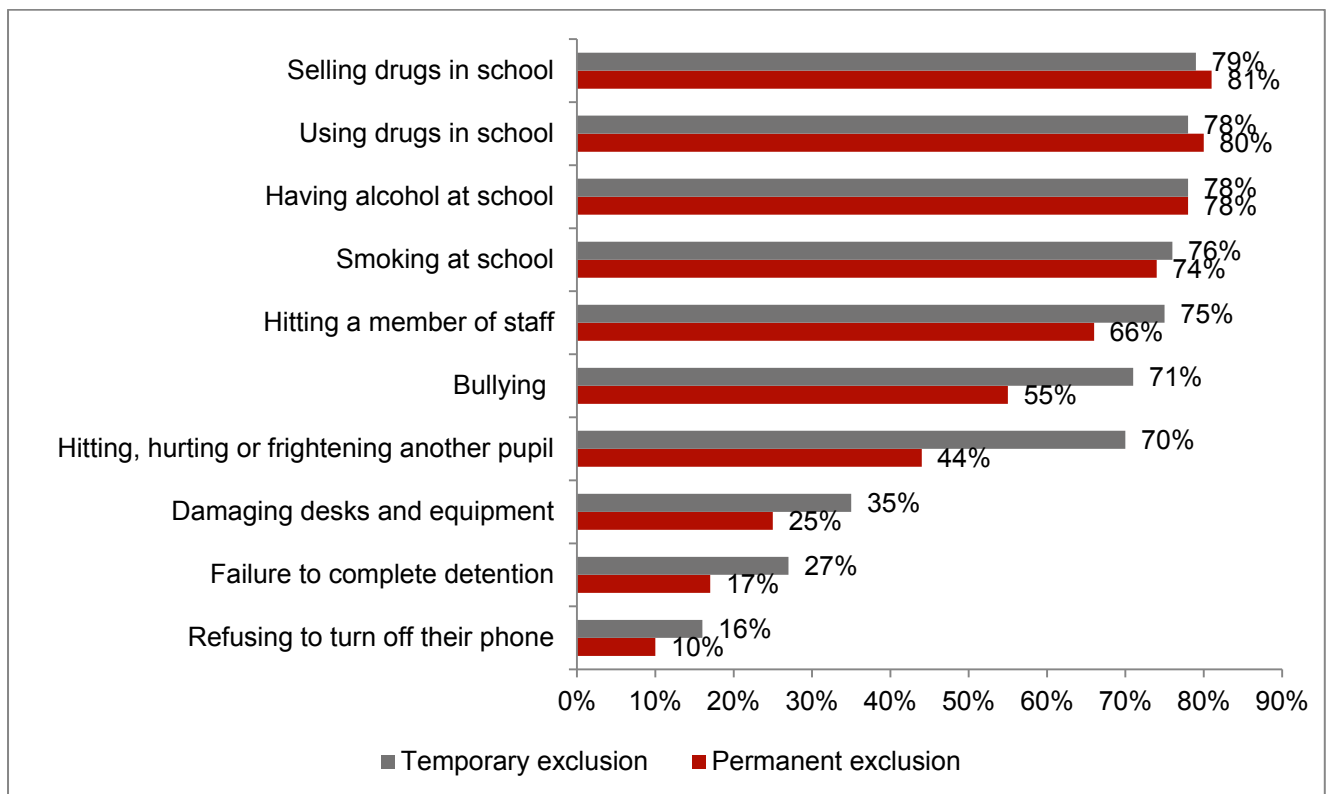
Base: All pupils (294-308)

Pupil opinion on what should always or usually warrant a temporary or permanent exclusion differed with hitting a member of staff. Three quarters of pupils (75%) reported this should always/usually lead to a temporary exclusion, compared to 66% who said the pupil should always/usually be permanently excluded. More pupils reported that bullying and hitting, hurting or frightening another pupil should result in a temporary exclusion (71% and 70%) than a permanent exclusion (55% and 44%). As shown in figure 4.10, fewer pupils reported bullying should result in a permanent exclusion (39%). This suggests that pupils can recognise when some poor behavior necessitates a temporary exclusion, but view the behavior as not serious enough for a permanent exclusion.

Figure 4.10: Which of the following should <u>never</u> or <u>rarely</u> result in a pupil being excluded from school
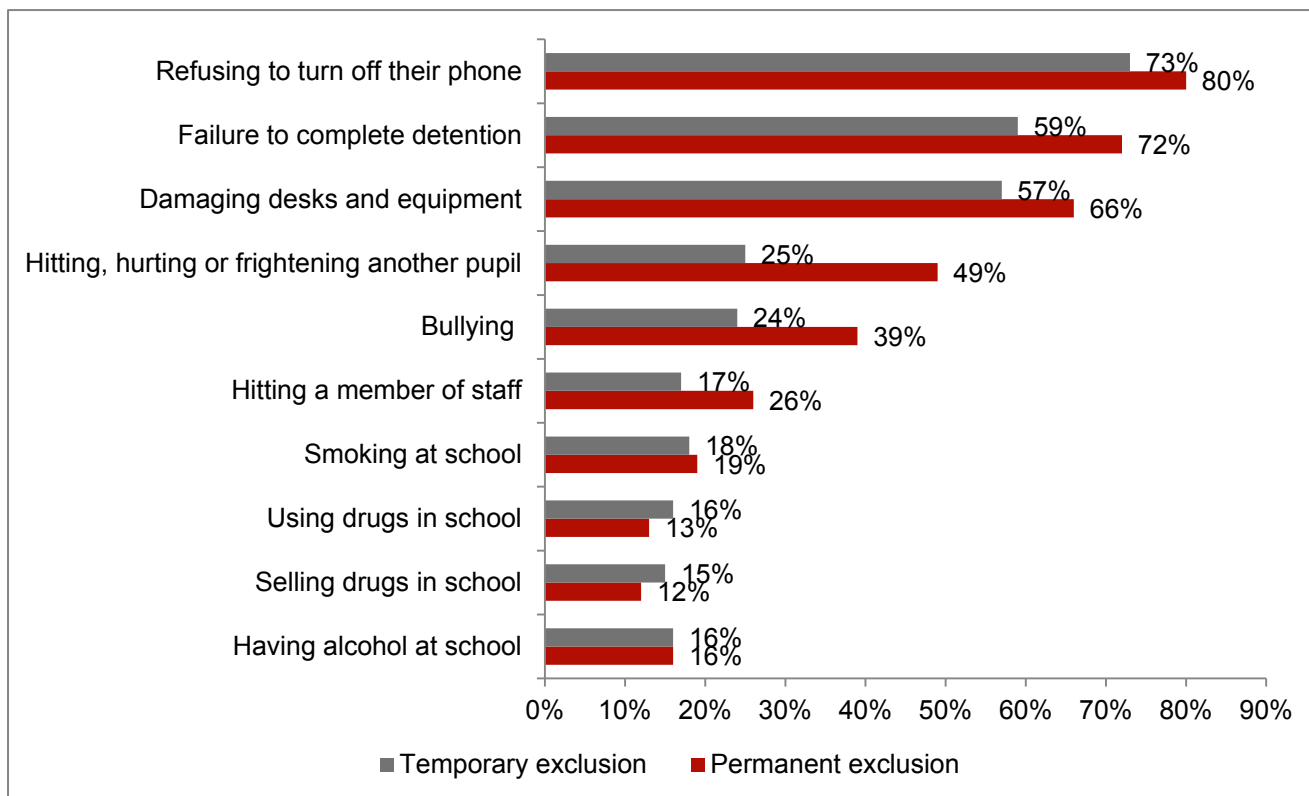
Base: All pupils (294-308)

Few pupils thought refusing to turn off a phone was grounds for exclusion; 80% reported this should rarely or never result in permanent exclusion, and 73% reported the same for temporary exclusion.

Pupils also provided other examples of poor behavior which could result in exclusion. It was suggested temporary and/or permanent exclusion could be a suitable sanction for walking out of school, bringing in weapons and swearing/violent language.

Exclusions in their school

Rates of exclusion vary greatly across different schools, but pupils were asked to think about the number of pupils excluded by their school. Just under a third (30%) felt that the number of pupils excluded was 'about right', compared to 16% who reported it was 'too many' and 15% who said it was 'not enough'. However, nearly four in ten pupils (39%) were not sure, suggesting the practice of exclusion is not widely known except by pupils with experience/know of someone with experience of exclusion.

Pupils who reported not enough people had been excluded from their school referred to instances where they thought poor behaviour was "let off" by the school. Those who thought too many pupils had been excluded felt the young people were missing out on lesson time and the punishment was too severe.

Pupils were asked if they thought schools should help pupils with their problems more instead of excluding them. Nearly two-thirds of pupils (63%) agreed and only 13% disagreed. A quarter of pupils (24%) however were unsure, suggesting that not all pupils are aware of the support that schools provide in supporting those with additional behavioural needs.

Exclusion: a deterrent?

In the interviews with pupils who have experienced exclusion, some had been excluded several times. When asked if anything had changed for them since their exclusion, improvements in behaviour were reported. Pupils said their attendance and behaviour had improved and they were focusing on their education and lesson time. In contrast, others felt that little had changed; pupil-teacher relationships had deteriorated in some cases, and another pupil said "being excluded does not bother me" as it is "not a punishment".

Summary

- Pupils were positive about other pupils in their school. They thought they were friendly and treat each other well. Pupils reported bad behaviour does occur in their school, but teachers tended to be good at resolving it.
- Pupils were clear about what behaviour is expected of them and what may lead to exclusion. However, many had not seen anything that explains this policy.
- Awareness of exclusion is high; nearly all pupils knew of someone who had been excluded. Some pupils also reported to having been excluded themselves.
- Pupils were largely unsure about the fairness of exclusion; it tended to depend on individual circumstances. Pupils could see exclusions as fair when school rules where broken, but unfair when they felt pupils were not treated consistently.
- However, pupils could recognise when behaviour breached school policy and merited exclusion. Violent and disruptive behaviour were key reasons cited by pupils, but they also thought that persistent violations of school rules justified exclusion.
- Although pupils agreed that exclusions were sometimes necessary, it was argued exclusion negatively impacted on young people and their education.

Conclusions

This research found that families lacked support from schools through the exclusion process. Parents tended to be unhappy with way the school communicated information about the exclusion. They reported receiving unclear and inconsistent explanations for their child's exclusion, as well as a lack of information about the actual process. This was compounded by parents largely being unaware of the school's exclusion policy. In contrast, pupils were clear about the behaviour expected of them at school, despite often being unable to point to explicit guidance.

Furthermore parents felt unsupported during the exclusion process. This included a lack of contact with the school during this time, and minimal support to parents and pupils with preparing to return to school or finding an alternative school.

Additionally parents felt that schools did not work with pupils to avoid exclusion. For those that did receive help, this tended to be in the form of education/behaviour support plans.

There were mixed views from both parents and pupils on the fairness of exclusion. Parents tended to report these were unfair, however when pupils recognised violent or disruptive behaviour they felt exclusion was justified. Pupils saw it as unfair when they felt pupils were not treated consistently and the full circumstances were not considered.

From this research it was also clear that exclusion had significant impact on pupils and their families. Parents reported that their children suffered a loss of confidence and self-esteem, and that their education and mental health was adversely affected. The stress of the exclusion had also taken its toll on parents, including on their work and relationships with other family members. In addition, pupils felt that exclusion negatively impacted on school work.

Recommendations

School can be a positive place for children, providing security and support alongside opportunities to learn. If a child's needs cannot be met in any particular educational setting or they change, children and families must be able to rely on transparent process with clear advice, effective assessment and timely planning to secure educational entitlement.

Our recommendations are based upon the research undertaken and are informed by the practice of the wider Coram group, including data from helplines and legal practice cases.

Recommendations for schools

- Schools can and must improve communications and process in order to ensure that partnership between schools, parents and children works to secure children's futures.

- Schools and colleges should inform all parents as to their, and their child's, rights in regards to exclusion at the point at which their child enrols in primary school and secondary school and post 16 education.
- If a child is temporarily excluded for a second time there should be a requirement to review a pupil's behaviour plan to prevent further exclusions.
- Additionally, on the first occasion that any child faces permanent exclusion. a full assessment of needs should be undertaken.
- There should be a requirement to assess a child's health and support needs and vulnerabilities and to explore if these could feasibly be met before making the decision to permanently exclude.
- Schools should have reliable access to swift and expert professional advice that enables the child's identified needs to be met either in that school or in a setting that better meet those needs.
- Further guidance for parents and carers should highlight that, if a school is unable to meet the child's needs, parents and carers can request an assessment of, and support for, their child's SEN directly from the local authority without needing to go through the school first. Guidance should include details of charitable organisations that can advise on this such as Coram Children's Legal Centre.

Recommendations for parents and pupils

- All parents would benefit from familiarising themselves with the behaviour policy and the process for exclusion at their child's school. Parents can advise schools when this unclear or not readily accessible.
- When a child has been excluded, parents may benefit from obtaining specialist advice. An example is Coram's Child Law Advice Service, which provides free legal information and advice on exclusion and education law.
- Pupils need to be aware of their school's behaviour policy and understand what behaviour is likely to result in exclusion.

Recommendations for policy

- No child should be out of school any longer than the start of the term following that in which they were permanently excluded.
- Government should also require local authorities to supply information on the number of teaching days between a permanent exclusion being made and the date that a subsequent school place is offered and accepted.
- National guidance on exclusion written with and for children and young people should be provided both by central government and by schools and local authorities explaining local arrangements.
- A government commitment to ensuring that local advice about the exclusion process, what to expect and how to challenge decisions is provided to all parents and pupils - especially when children have been subject to, or are at risk of, school exclusion. This should be backed up by access to legal advice so that any challenges that take place do so on the basis of appropriate guidance and representation.

- A duty on local authorities to provide an 'active offer' of advocacy to ensure that all children and parents are always offered advocacy support in relation to school exclusions.
- We support the Children's Commissioner's Office in their call for a mandatory local authority register of all children receiving home education.

Next steps for research

- There is a need to better understand the factors and vulnerabilities that increase the likelihood of a child being excluded and if there are particular combinations of risk factors that can be used for effective targeting of support that can avoid the need to consider exclusion.
- The survey findings showed that pupils viewed other pupils in their school positively. Coram's 2017 literature review for the Children's Commissioner for England found that excluded children had experienced bullying. Given these contrasting findings research could be undertaken to investigate the link between bullying and exclusion and whether bullying should be considered in our proposed assessment of needs.
- Our research is not representative of those children disproportionately affected by exclusion (black Caribbean pupils, boys, children eligible for free school meals and children with SEN). A further, targeted piece of research would be useful to understand the experiences of these children.

Appendix 1: Methodology

This research consisted primarily of online surveys with parents and school pupils, with a small number of interviews completed with school pupils. An overview of the current data was also undertaken.

Parent survey

The parent survey was open between 9 July and 29 September 2018, during which time a total of 124 surveys were completed by parents. The online survey was hosted on the Child Law Advice Service (CLAS) website, and was open to all parents of children who have been permanently or temporarily excluded, as well as those who have been advised their child would be excluded.

Parents were signposted to the survey on the CLAS website and by CLAS advisors if they used the telephone consultation service. CLAS provides legal advice on family and education law. In the past year (April 2017 to March 2018), CLAS dealt with 561 calls relating to school exclusions and received 69,166 website views to its exclusions guidance information pages.[14]

The survey asked parents about their child's exclusion, including how well the school communicated the reason for exclusion and what the process would be, as well as the impact of the exclusion on their child and family.

A short screener was included at the start of the survey to ensure only the target group of parents completed the survey. Parents were asked to confirm the status of their child's exclusion; the majority of the parents answering the survey had a child who had been temporarily excluded. Twenty-four parents were screened out at this stage.

Table 1.1: Exclusion status of children, identified by parents completing the online survey

	Number of children	% of sample
Child has temporarily been excluded	62	50%
Child has been permanently excluded	47	38%
Child has been advised but not (yet) excluded	15	12%

Base: 124 parents

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[14] Coram submission to Exclusions Review: Call for Evidence, May 2018. Found here: www.childrenslegalcentre.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Coram_School-Exclusions_May2018.pdf

It should be noted that the profile of respondents was not representative of the general population and the results are un-weighted.

Pupil Survey

Pupils in secondary schools or primary school (Year 6 only) were invited to complete the survey. The survey gathered pupils' views on how well behaviour expectations are communicated and managed by schools, as well as their opinion on the fairness and implementation of exclusions. Pupils did not require prior experience of exclusion to complete the survey.

The pupil survey fieldwork was conducted from 20 July to 19 October 2018 (with a break over the school summer holidays). Overall 318 surveys were completed by pupils, the majority from mainstream secondary school pupils (85%). Schools were recruited through Coram networks and stakeholders, and were asked to administer the survey to their pupils. Schools were given the option for their pupils to complete the survey online or on paper, which was administered to pupils during school hours. The majority of schools completed the survey online.

As shown in table 1.2, over half of pupils completing the survey were male (53%) and a third female (36%). The mean and median ages of pupils were both 13 years old.

Table 1.2: Profile of school pupils completed the survey

Demographic	Number of children	% of children
Gender		
Male	163	53%
Female	111	36%
Other	13	4%
Prefer not to say	19	6%
School type		
Primary	47	15%
Secondary	271	85%
Age		
10 years old	2	1%
11 years old	49	16%
12 years old	71	24%
13 years old	45	15%
14 years old	77	26%
15 years old	41	14%
16 years old	11	4%
17 years and older	3	1%

Base: All who provided information. Gender (306), School type (318), Age (306).

Pupils from five state primary and secondary schools in Greater London, South East England and Yorkshire and the Humber regions completed surveys. This included local authority maintained schools, an academy and special needs school. It should be noted that the profile of respondents was not representative of the general school population and the results are un-weighted.

Pupil interviews

Schools were also invited to participate in the second part of the pupil research; interviews with pupils who had experience of exclusions or had been on the edge of exclusion. Schools identified pupils with previous experience of temporary exclusion, and with their consent they took part in a short in-depth interview at the school with a Coram researcher. Pupils were asked about their experience of exclusion, including what they thought about the process, what the impact was on them and if anything changed for them following the exclusion.

A total of nine interviews from primary and secondary school pupils were conducted in July 2018. The breakdown of pupil gender, school type and age is shown in table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Profile of school pupils participated in school interviews

Demographic	Number of children
Gender	
Male	6
Female	3
School type	
Primary	2
Secondary	7
Age	
11 years old	2
12 years old	1
13 years old	1
14 years old	2
15 years old	3

Appendix 2: Parent survey (full version)

Parents' View of School Exclusion

Thank you for agreeing to complete this short questionnaire about pupil school exclusions and your experience of it.

Coram is looking to gather evidence on the views of parents and would like you to complete a short survey about your experiences of pupil exclusion. The survey will take approximately 8 minutes to complete. Your responses will be anonymous: we do not collect any personal information. We will use what you tell us to feed into the government's review of school exclusions in England. More information about this can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/school-exclusions-review-call-for-evidence.

If you are happy to participate in the survey, please continue.

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1. How did you first hear about the Child Law Advice Service?
   - Internet search
   - From the school
   - From a friend / family member
   - From another organisation
   - Other (please specify)

2. Why did you get in touch with CLAS / visit the CLAS website?
   - For family and child law advice CLOSE SURVEY
   - For school exclusions advice GO TO Q3
   - For other education law advice CLOSE SURVEY
----

3. Is your child currently permanently or temporarily excluded, or been advised that they may be excluded from school?
   - Yes, temporary exclusion GO TO Q4
   - Yes, permanent exclusion GO TO Q4
   - Yes, advised but not (yet) excluded GO TO Q4
   - No CLOSE SURVEY

4. Were the reasons for your child's exclusion clearly explained to you by the school?
   - Yes, clearly explained
   - No, an unclear explanation was given
   - I haven't been told why they were/ may be excluded
----

5. Are you aware of the school's exclusion policy?
   - Yes, I have read it GO TO Q6
   - Yes, but I haven't read it GO TO Q6
   - No GO TO Q7
   - Not sure GO TO Q6

6. How easy is it to find the school's exclusion policy on their website?
    - Very easy
    - Quite easy
    - Not very easy
    - Not at all easy
    - I haven't tried to find the policy on the school's website

7. Did you know the legal process that the school must follow when they exclude a pupil <u>before</u> you spoke to the Child Law Advice Service / visited the website?
    - Yes (please provide further information)
    - No

----

8. When your child was excluded, did the school clearly explain what would happen next? Please explain below.
    - Open text box

----

9. What information has the school provided you and your child with about the exclusion process? Please explain below.
    - Open text box

----

10. Do you feel the school had worked with your child to try and avoid exclusion?
    - Yes, they tried something else before - GO TO Q12
    - No, alternatives to exclusion were not explored GO TO Q13

11. What did they do to try to avoid exclusion? (e.g. put in behaviour support or a plan). Please explain below.
    - Open text box

----

12. Please rate your experience of the following aspects of the exclusion process:
    - Communication from the school to me
    - How the school communicated with my child
    - The length of time it took for the decision on exclusion to be made
    - Help with finding an alternative school place
    - Preparing for my child's return to school

Very good / Good / Ok / Poor / Very poor / Not applicable

----

13. Do you think the school's exclusion process is fair?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Not sure

----

14. What has the impact of the exclusion been on your child? Please explain below.

- Open text box

15. Has this affected yourself or other family members? Please explain below.
   - Open text box

About Your Child

The following questions are about your child who has been excluded/ is facing exclusion.

16. Your child's age
   - Open text box

17. Your child's gender
   - Male
   - Female
   - Other
   - Prefer not to say

18. Region in which you live
   - Greater London
   - South East
   - South West
   - West Midlands
   - North West
   - North East
   - Yorkshire and the Humber
   - East Midlands
   - East of England
   - Wales
   - Scotland
   - Northern Ireland
   - Other

----

19. What is your child's ethnic group? Choose one option that best describes your child's ethnic group or background

White
1. English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
2. Irish
3. Gypsy or Irish Traveller
4. Any other White background, please describe

Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups
5. White and Black Caribbean
6. White and Black African
7. White and Asian
8. Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background, please describe

Asian/Asian British

9. Indian
10. Pakistani
11. Bangladeshi
12. Chinese
13. Any other Asian background, please describe

Black/ African/Caribbean/Black British

14. African
15. Caribbean
16. Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, please describe

Other ethnic group

17. Arab
18. Any other ethnic group, please describe

----

20. Does your child have a disability or a special educational need?
   - No
   - Prefer not to say
   - Yes (please specify)

----

21. Is your child currently receiving support from any services or professionals <u>outside of school</u>?
   - CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
   - Social worker / family support worker
   - Therapist
   - Other (please specify)

22. Is your child currently receiving support from any services or professionals <u>inside school</u>?
   - Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
   - Speech and Language therapy
   - Educational psychologist
   - Additional help with school work / lessons
   - Other (please specify)

SURVEY CLOSE.

Thank you for completing the survey and taking the time to share your experiences with us. The survey has now finished, please click 'submit' for your answers to be saved.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact: Olivia.Michelmore@coram.org.uk

Appendix 3: Pupil online survey

Views on School Behaviour

This is an anonymous survey of how young people view behaviour at school. You will not be identified and no personal data will be collected or retained. This survey should take less than eight minutes to complete. Please direct any questions about it to Jeff.Mesie@coram.org.uk.

Pupils in Your School

Q1 Are pupils in your school friendly?

- All/ almost all
- Most
- Some
- No

Q2 Do pupils in your school generally treat each other well?

- Yes, most of the time
- Yes, some of the time
- No
- Not sure

Q3 Do pupils at your school ever behave very badly (e.g. are violent or are very disruptive)?

- It doesn't happen
- It happens and teachers are really good at resolving it
- It happens and teachers are good at resolving it
- It happens and teachers are not good at resolving it
- It happens and teachers do nothing about it

Q4 Do you know who to turn to at school if something happens which makes you uncomfortable?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Expected Behaviour

Q5 Do you know what behaviour is expected at school and what will get you into trouble at school?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Q6 Is it clear what behaviour will lead you to having to leave school? This could be a temporary exclusion (for a few days) or a permanent exclusion (forever)?

- Yes, very clear
- Mostly clear
- Not sure/don't know
- Mostly not clear
- Not at all clear

Q7 Have you heard of the phrase 'excluded' or 'expelled' from school?

- Yes
- No

Q8 Have you seen anything written down that says when pupils will be excluded?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Q8a Was it easy to understand?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Q9 Do you know anyone who has ever been excluded? (tick as many as relevant)

- You
- Family member
- Friend
- Someone else
- No-one

Q9a Do you think excluding them was the right thing to do?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Please explain

Q10 I think the number of pupils excluded by my school is ..

- Too many
- About right
- Not enough
- Not sure
- Please explain

Q11 When is exclusion for the best?

[Open-ended text box]

Q12 When exclusion happens is it done fairly?

- Always fair
- Usually fair
- Don't know
- Usually unfair
- Always unfair

Q13 Which of the following **should** result in a pupil being temporarily excluded from the school <u>for a few days</u>?

- Refusing to turn off their phone
- Hitting, hurting or frightening another pupil
- Hitting a member of staff
- Damaging desks and equipment
- Using drugs in school
- Selling drugs in school
- Having alcohol at school
- Smoking at school
- Bullying
- Failure to complete detention
- Anything else? [Open-ended text]

Always / Usually / Rarely / Never / Don't know

Q14 Which of the following **should** result in a pupil being permanently excluded from the school <u>forever</u>?

- Refusing to turn off their phone
- Hitting, hurting or frightening another pupil
- Hitting a member of staff
- Damaging desks and equipment
- Using drugs in school
- Selling drugs in school
- Having alcohol at school
- Smoking at school
- Bullying
- Failure to complete detention
- Anything else? [Open-ended text]

Always / Usually / Rarely / Never / Don't know

Q15 Do you think that schools should help pupils with their problems more instead of excluding them?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Q16 Is there anything else you want to say about exclusion?

[Open-ended text]

About You

Q17 Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Q18 Your age in years

[Open-ended text]

Q19 Name of your school

[Open-ended text]

Q20 Region in which you live

- Greater London
- South East
- South West
- West Midlands
- North West
- North East
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- East Midlands
- East of England
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- Other

Thank you for sharing your views. Press 'submit' to complete the questionnaire.

Appendix 4: Pupil interviews topic guide

Pupil interviews discussion guide

Discussion guide	Timings
1. Introduction	**3 minutes**

- *Introduce yourself, Coram and the evaluation*
- *Allow them to read the information sheet for pupils*
- *Reassure about anonymity but use of quotes*
- *Check if happy to have the interview audio recorded*
- *Record child age and gender:*

Age:		Gender:	

2. Introduction	**3 minutes**

Please can you tell me a bit about yourself e.g. hobbies

How long have you been attending this school?

3. Their experience of exclusion	**10 minutes**

<u>**Primary pupils only**</u>
Do you know how you are meant to behave at school?
- What have teachers/parents told you?
- Can you give me some examples of what good behaviour at school is?
- And any examples of bad behaviour?

<u>**Secondary pupils only**</u>
Do you know if you school has a behaviour policy?
- Is the school's behaviour policy clear?
- Do you understand what behaviour is expected of you?
- How is this communicated?

<u>**All pupils**</u>
What do you think being excluded from school means?
- Length of time
- Types of behaviour

Have you ever been excluded (or sent home) from school?
- Once, more than once?
- When was it; this month, last year?
- How long were you excluded for? (Half a day, a day, more?)

If never excluded/sent home: **Have you ever been warned about being excluded or sent home?**

What happened in the lead up to getting excluded (or nearly excluded)?

- Was it just you or a group of pupils?

What were the reasons given why you were excluded?
- Do you think these were right?

Do you think this was fair? Why / why not?

How do you think the school could have handled it better?
- Communication, warning, notice, homework, help with finding a place at another school

Did the school do anything well?

Has your exclusion changed anything for you?
- Friends, travel, how the school treats you?
- Has your behaviour changed now back in school? Why is this – anything to do with the exclusion?

4. Wrap up	2 minutes

- *Check if any questions.*
- *Thank pupil for speaking with you*

Appendix 5: Permanent exclusion process

```
[Decision made to make a permanent exclusion] ⇒ [Notify parents immediately] ⇒ [Notify governing body (GB) and local authority (LA) immediately]
                                                                                                    ⇓
[GB to notify parents, head teachers, & LA of their decision] ⇐ [GB legally required to convene a meeting to consider reinstatement within 15 days]
        ⇓                                                              ⇓
[Decision to exclude upheld]                              [Decision to exclude not upheld]
        ⇓                                                              ⇓
[Outcome recorded on student's educational record]        [GB directs reinstatement of pupil immediately or on a particular date]
        ⇓                                                        END
[Parents have right to request their decision is reviewed by an Independent Review Panel within 15 school days]
        ⇓                        ⇓
[They don't]              [They do]
        ⇓                        ⇓
```

Head teacher removes pupil's name from school admissions register 15 days after notification if there is no application made for an IRP, or immediately if parent tells school they will not file an application

END

Independent Review Panel appointed by LA (maintained schools) or academy trust (academies) and conduct hearing ⇒ [Decision to exclude upheld] ⇒ [Panel notifies all parties] END

⇓

[Decision to exclude **not** upheld]

⇓

[Panel directs GB to reconsider]

⇓

[GB reconvene within 10 days]

⇓ ⇓

[GB offers to reinstate student within 10 days. All parties notified]

END

[GB does not offer to reinstate student. LA may make adjustment to school's budget or require payment of £4000, to be paid within 28 days. All parties notified]

END

Appendix 6: Temporary (fixed-term) exclusion process

Decision made to make a temporary exclusion

↓

Notify parents immediately → **Total number of days is less than 5 in a term**

Total number of days is more than 15 and/or if exclusion will result in pupil missing public examination or national curriculum test

Total number of days is between 5 and 15

GB consider any representations made by parents, but it cannot direct reinstatement nor is required to meet with parents

↓

GB legally required to convene a meeting to consider reinstatement within 15 days

Notify GB and LA immediately

School do not need to notify GB and LA immediately, but should notify them at least once a term of any exclusion they are not already aware of

END

↓

GB to notify parents, head teachers, & LA of their decision

Parents request reconsideration

Pupil's parents do not request reconsideration

END

GB legally required to convene a meeting to consider reinstatement within 50 days

Decision to exclude not upheld

Decision to exclude upheld

↓

GB directs reinstatement of pupil immediately or on a particular date

END

Outcome recorded on student's educational record

END

GB = Governing Board
LA = Local Authority

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for children
since 1739

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