



SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

School Exclusions – A Guide for Parents and Carers

What is an exclusion?

An exclusion means that a child or young person is not allowed to attend school for a set period of time. This usually happens after a serious incident in school. It is a last resort and only used when other ways of supporting the child have not worked or if continuing at school would be unsafe.

When can a child or young person be excluded?

A child or young person can only be excluded if:

1. **Their attendance would seriously harm** their own learning or wellbeing, or that of others.
2. **Their behaviour seriously breaks** the school's code of conduct.

Exclusion is not used as a punishment. It is only used when necessary to keep everyone safe and supported.

What happens if my child is excluded?

- You will receive a **phone call** and a **letter** or **email** explaining why your child has been excluded.
- The letter will tell you how long the exclusion will last and what support will be in place.
- A meeting will be arranged — called a **Return to School meeting** — to plan for your child's return and agree any supports needed.

What support will be in place?

During the exclusion, the school must:

- Provide learning activities or access to lessons.
- Keep any existing supports (e.g. counselling or therapeutic work) in place.
- Check in regularly to see how your child is doing.

How will my child return to school?

Before returning to school, you and your child will be invited to a **Return to School meeting**. This meeting will:

- Look at what led to the exclusion.
- Agree any changes or help your child needs.
- Plan for a safe and positive return to learning.

What if my child has additional needs or is care experienced?

If your child:

- Has **additional support needs**
- Is **care experienced**
- Is on the **Child Protection Register**

... the school must take extra steps. This includes **speaking with other professionals** before making any exclusion decision and ensuring the right support is in place.

Will my child's views be listened to?

Yes. If your child is aged **12 or over**, they have the legal right to express their views and be involved in decisions about them — including decisions about exclusion. Younger children will also be supported to have their voice heard wherever possible.

Can I appeal?

Yes. You have the right to **appeal an exclusion**. The letter you receive will explain how to do this. You can also speak to the school or the Education team for advice.

Where can I get support?

- **Your child's school** – speak to the Headteacher or Pupil Support/Guidance staff.
- **Enquire** – the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning (www.enquire.org.uk)
- **Parentline Scotland** – support for any parenting concern (08000 28 22 33)

Our commitment

Scottish Borders Council is committed to making sure that exclusion is used only when necessary, and that every child is supported to feel **safe, respected and included** at school.

If you have concerns or want to talk about any part of this process, please get in touch. We're here to help.