

EDUCATION OF EXCLUDED PUPILS

Report By: **MANAGER OF PUPIL, SCHOOL AND PARENT SUPPORT**

Wards Affected

Countywide.

Purpose

1. To provide information about current policy and practice for the placing of pupils in alternative schools following permanent exclusion.

Financial Implications

2. None.

Report

3. The information in this report relates to pupils who have experienced **one** permanent exclusion. Pupils who have had a second permanent exclusion are not placed immediately in secondary schools, but continue – and often finish – the statutory phase of their education in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) for KS3 (ages 11-13) or KS4 (ages 14-16).
4. It is rare for a pupil to be permanently excluded twice. In the case of double exclusion in secondary education, students may be admitted to a high school if, after a period in a PRU, they, their parents and the PRU feel it is in the student's best interests to do so.

Primary

5. Herefordshire is fortunate in having a relatively low number of children permanently excluded from primary schools (Appendix 1). The low numbers enable the Herefordshire Education Service to have the following arrangements for KS1 (ages 4-6) and KS2 pupils (ages 7-11):
 - A minimum of 5 hours individual tuition is provided initially, usually at a location that ensures the health and safety of both staff and pupils. This can be the pupil's home if assessed as appropriate, or a neutral setting, for example a room provided at The Brookfield School.
 - After the initial period of individual tuition and assessment, the pupil is then placed, after a period of discussion with the receiving school, in an alternative primary school with a package of support, individually designed to meet the pupil's needs and to provide the additional resources the school may need.

6. The package of support usually includes advice and guidance from a range of specialists, such as funding for a Learning Support Assistant, specialised teaching support from the Medical and Behavioural Support Service (MBSS) or temporary and part-time placement at the Brookfield Intervention Unit.

Secondary

7. The majority of permanent exclusions are from secondary schools (Appendix 1). Usually, permanently excluded students will be placed, as an interim measure, in the Reintegration Support Base (RSB), which is attached to the Aconbury Centre (a Pupil Referral Unit for KS3 pupils). At the RSB, students receive education until an assessment has been made of their needs. The RSB assesses the educational progress and social maturity of each pupil and is then in a position to give advice about the most appropriate next step.
8. The parents of permanently excluded students are given direct advice and support from a specialist Social Inclusion Assistant, who is the named contact for the family. The Social Inclusion Assistant usually makes home visits to explain the programme of support to the parents and to answer any questions.
9. Most of the students are subsequently placed, via the cluster arrangements (see next paragraph and also Appendix 2), in a high school, if this is felt to be appropriate. Reintegration is usually a gradual process, with staff from the RSB maintaining contact with the students at the new schools to offer support, advice and continuity. Some students may transfer from the RSB to a PRU if a secondary school is judged not to be appropriate at that stage, or in the foreseeable future.
10. The high school cluster system aims to balance the number of excluded students to be placed in any particular school. All secondary aged students (except those excluded after Christmas in their Year 10) are placed in schools around the County through this system. The cluster system takes into account a range of factors about schools in the relevant geographical sector of the County. Such factors include:
 - the size of the school;
 - the length of time since each school had admitted a permanently excluded student;
 - how many students the school itself has permanently excluded;
 - specific details – for example, the adverse effect the student may have in a particular year group at the receiving school.
11. The present system aims to be as fair as possible given the reservations and concern most schools will feel when asked to admit excluded pupils. The system was reviewed and agreed in the Spring of 2003 by a group of Headteachers and Education Directorate staff. For most schools, it has worked well and Headteachers recognise that the most effective long-term answer is for schools to manage the social inclusion and special needs programme in their own school, so as to limit the number of students they themselves exclude permanently.
12. Those students permanently excluded from school after Christmas in Year 10 are usually placed directly into 1 of the 2 Key Stage 4 Pupil Referral Units. The Education Service is presently reviewing this particular policy.

13. In the revised Behaviour Support Plan, one of the identified strategies will be to develop and publish a protocol to state clearly the policy and practice for placing permanently excluded pupils in schools. The protocol aims to cast light on the processes and procedures so that all parties are aware and clear of their role. A draft copy of the protocol is included at Appendix 3, but has yet to be subject to wider consultation.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee note the report and identify any aspects of the current arrangements needing further explanation or development.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- The Behaviour Support Plan
- SEN Policy