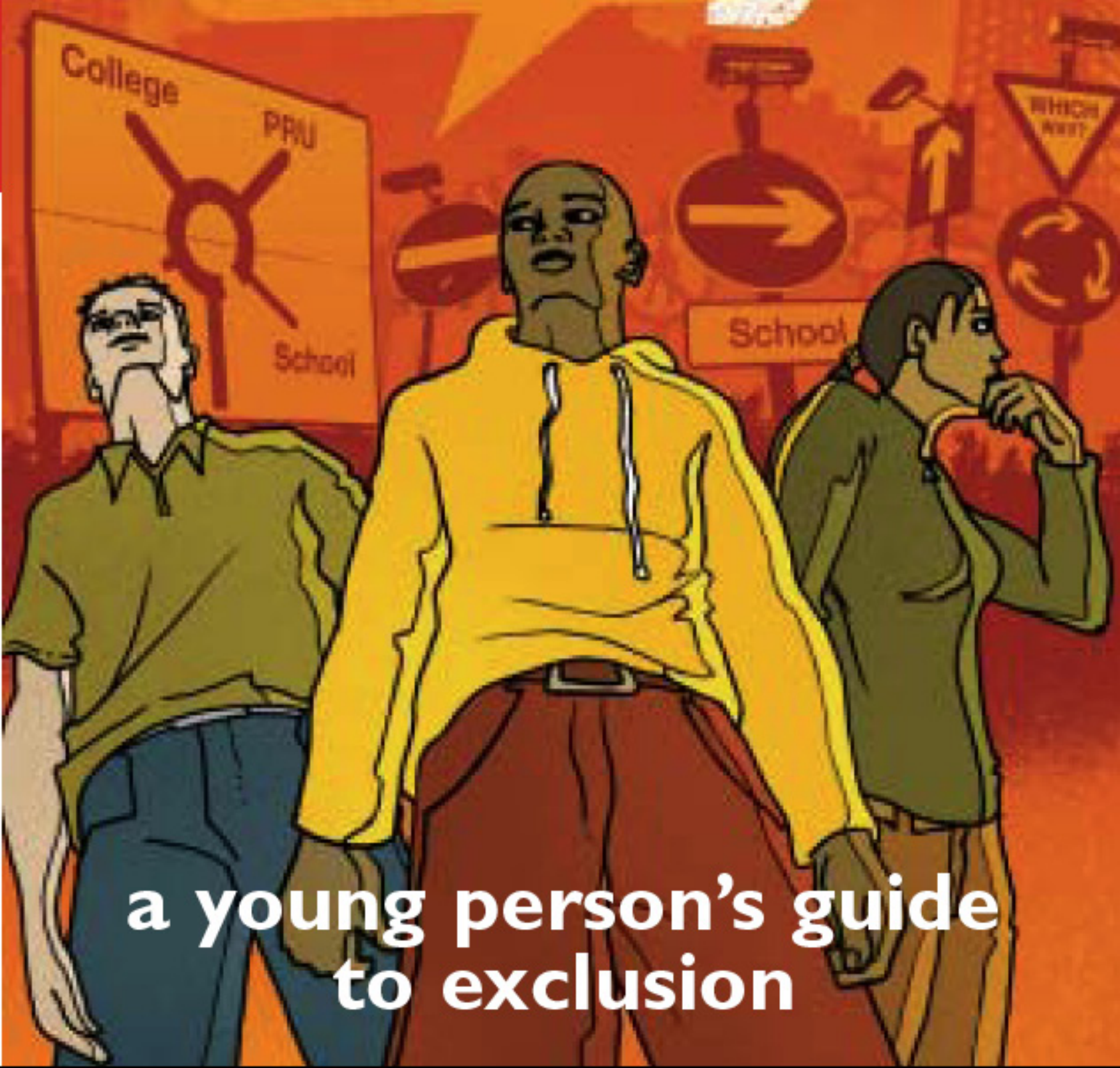


having a say



a young person's guide
to exclusion

Who can help?

- Your parent or carer can phone the **Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)** for a pack on how to appeal, and advice about putting your case and what happens after exclusion (Free pack: 020 7704 9822; freephone advice: 0808 800 0327).
- Excluded because of drugs? The **National Drugs Helpline** (0800 776600) or **Release** (020 7729 9904) can help or may signpost you to local services.
- Some difficult behaviour comes from having a disability: if your exclusion is for this reason then the **Disability Rights Commission** (08457 622 633) and the **Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal** (0870 606 5750) can help with advice.
- Your local education authority's **parent partnership service** may help with an appeal if you have special educational needs. Your Town Hall, local library or local education authority website should be able to direct you.
- **Education welfare officers** or **inclusion officers** at the local education authority may help with explaining your options and the appeal.

Help!

I've been excluded

Exclusion probably means missing your friends, feeling stressed at home and being worried about your future.

This is a difficult time but help is out there so you make the right choices for your future.

“I feel really out of it”

“My mum keeps getting on at me about what happened”

“I was in the middle of coursework: what happens to my exams?”

“I'm worried I'll end up knowing nothing”

What happens now?

If you have been permanently excluded from school this means you cannot go back to your school unless the school governors or an independent appeal panel allow you back.

Can I go to the governors' meeting?

Yes, if the governors and your parent/carer agree. You do not have to attend but it is your chance to put your side. The governors' meeting to look at your exclusion will take place whether you go or not. Young people often say they feel better if they have had a say.

If you do want to go, decide beforehand if you want to stay for the whole meeting and if you are happy to answer questions. Your parent/carer can explain that you will come in just to make a statement if you wish.

After the meeting

If the governors think the exclusion was unfair or too severe, they can reinstate you. This means you can go back to school on a date they say.

If the governors think the exclusion was fair they will not reinstate you.

If you have been permanently excluded, there is a right of appeal.

The Independent Appeal Panel

Your parent or carer can appeal for you and, if they agree and the panel gives permission, you can go to the hearing. If you are 'in care' anyone who has care of you, including a relative, foster parent or social worker can appeal. You don't have a right of appeal yourself.

If your parent or carer wants to appeal they should write quickly to ask for this. They cannot appeal if they miss the deadline of 15 school days.

The panel can do three things:

- agree with the exclusion – in which case you can't go back to your school.
- disagree with the exclusion and allow you back to school.
- decide the exclusion was wrong but not allow you back to school. This may be because it's not practical (for example, if you have gone to another school or left school) or if bad feeling between you and the teachers or other pupils means the panel thinks it's better if you don't go back to that school.

Dos and don'ts for putting your case

- ✓ Be clear ... make a list in order of what happened and why.
- ✓ Write down what you want to say to read out at the meeting.
- ✓ Focus on the incident ... don't muddle it up with other incidents.
- ✓ Blamed for something you didn't do? ... Try to show it was a mistake rather than screaming they're out to get me!
- ✓ Say sorry ... even if you were only partly in the wrong. Offer to put it right or say how you would avoid further trouble.
- ✓ Say how things could be different if you are allowed back to school.

TIP It is important if you want to go back to the same school to show that you can get on with your teachers and other pupils. Give examples of getting on with teachers and other pupils or how you have sorted out problems well.

Going back to school

If you are reinstated your school may ask you to come to a reintegration meeting to talk about your return. They will probably say what they expect of you when you come back.

It is also a chance for you to tell the school about any problems you may have and what they can do to help.



Permanently excluded and not reinstated?

If you have lost your appeal, or the panel decides not to reinstate even if they decide the exclusion was wrong, or your parents/carers decide not to appeal, what happens then?

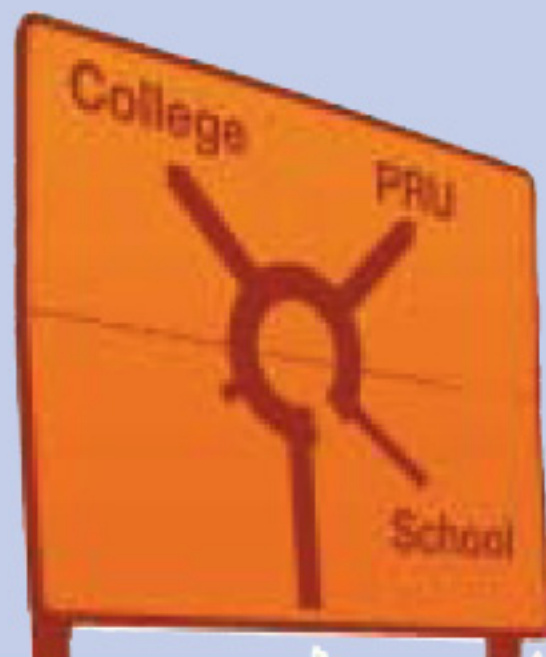
First the bad news: you won't be able to go back to your school and you are not allowed on school premises.

Then the good news: you should be offered full time education at least 15 school days after the exclusion.

This is the time to think about your future.

You may have choices but this will depend on where you live.

We suggest a few on the following pages.



New school?

Your parent or carer can apply for a place in as many different schools as they want. The local education authority may help find a new school for you.

It can be very hard – but not impossible – to get a new school place if you are in Years 10 or 11. If you are turned down your parent or carer can appeal as long as you haven't been permanently excluded twice with the last exclusion in the last two years.



What help can schools give?

If you have special educational needs you should have an individual education plan which says what help the school will give and involve you in setting targets for your learning.

If you don't have special educational needs, the school could set up a pastoral support programme. This could include:

- study support
- a learning mentor
- a 'buddy' to help you settle in better
- fewer or different subjects to study.



Who else can help?

You should also get help from outside school if you need it. This could include advice from:

- a Connexions personal adviser who can help with courses, training, what to do next (see page 12)
- a social worker who can help with family problems
- a youth worker who can help with friendships, personal difficulties
- a community group that may offer practical advice, eg, about housing or benefits
- specialist services for bereavement or alcohol or drugs dependency.

Ask the local education authority, your school or social worker if you need this help and haven't already been put in touch with services.

Other options

Sometimes you may be offered a different education from what you had in school. It could include one or more of the following:

- work experience
- a place in a further education college usually doing a vocational course
- a place at a PRU
- a place on a scheme run by a charity in your area.

Your parent or carer can make their own arrangements which they would pay for.

For example, they could:

- teach you at home, although this would mean a lot of commitment from both of you
- enrol you on a correspondence course
- find you a place in a private school or tutorial college.

Who can help?

- A **Connexions** personal adviser can help you with local choices about what to do next. Your local Connexions Service should be listed in the telephone directory or you can find it online at: www.connexions.gov.uk/partnerships/
- **Learndirect** (freephone 0800 100 900)
This helpline gives general advice about courses. You can also search online at www.learndirect.co.uk
- **Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities** has information and advice on further and higher education for young people and adults over 16 years of age with any kind of disability. Freephone 0800 328 5050. www.skill.org.uk

“I’ve heard lots of naughty kids go there”

Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)

Many pupils excluded in Years 10 or 11 are given places in pupil referral units (PRUs). This is because it can be hard to fit into a new school where other pupils are part way through their exam courses. You don't have to take a place in a PRU if you get a place at a school. In some areas you may be offered a part-time place at a PRU along with a part-time place at school or college. PRUs usually offer a mixture of GCSEs and vocational courses. But you may not be able to take all the courses you were studying at school.

“I think it will be quite rough because some of the kids have done lots of really violent things”

“I’ve never been in trouble before but I’ll have to go to the PRU because of one mistake”

exams?

coursework?

Most young people are nervous about going to a PRU. But some say that being at the PRU is much better than school. Keep an open mind: many PRUs give more individual or small group help and in some cases can help you do exams. Ask to look round the PRU with your parent or carer to decide if it is right for you. Write a list of all the points that worry you and ask about them when you visit.

bullying?

no friends?

Frequently asked questions

Is it right that a school can refuse places to pupils who have difficult behaviour?

Only schools which already have a lot of similar pupils and where inspectors say the school is not doing well can turn a pupil away for this reason if they are not full. However, you can be refused a place in a school if this is your second permanent exclusion.

I'll miss my SATs. Does this matter?

Schools have other ways of working out what level you're working at and the tests don't affect your long term future.

Will I be able to take my exams?

If you are very near your exams your school may allow you back to take them or the PRU may arrange for you to take them at the Unit. The PRU will also help transfer any coursework you did at school.

Does this mean the end of my education?

No, even if you miss out on exams at 16 a local further education college should be able to offer you a place on a course. You may have to study a course at a simpler level to start with if you have no exam passes.

Courses at further education colleges include:

- Work-related courses, eg courses that lead to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)
- General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs).
 - A foundation course is equivalent to four GCSEs grades D to G.
 - An intermediate course is equivalent to four GCSEs grades A* to C.
 - An advanced course is equivalent to two A levels.
- BTEC National Diploma
- Access courses
- Academic courses up to A level standard, including GCSEs
- Basic skills courses and courses that do not necessarily lead to a particular qualification.

Will the exclusion affect my reference for a job or university place?

The exclusion will be on your school record so your school may mention the exclusion in a reference. You need references to apply to university but these can be from a college and you need not ask your school for one.

If you need a reference for a job you can ask all sorts of people for a reference instead of your school, for example, your GP, youth worker or work experience employer.

I am 16. Can't I just get a job?

You must continue in full time education until the last Friday in June in the school year in which you turn 16. If you are keen to get to work ask your school, the PRU staff or your Connexions personal adviser if they can help you arrange work experience. This must be tied in with some vocational study.

It's important to move on after the exclusion. Don't allow it to screw up your life. Many excluded pupils go on to make a success of their lives – some are famous poets, successful businessmen and respected sportsmen and women. Most go into more ordinary jobs and put the exclusion behind them.

having a say

Further copies of this guide
are available from the
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www.ace-ed.org.uk



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