

Other Useful Numbers

Education & Library Boards

Belfast	028 90 564000
North-Eastern	028 25 653333
South-Eastern	028 90 566200
Southern	028 37 512200
Western	028 82 411411

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, Diocesan Offices

Down & Connor	028 90 327875
Armagh	028 87 752116
Clogher	028 66 322709
Derry	028 71 261931
Dromore	028 30 262423



The Children's Law Centre

3rd Floor Philip House

123 - 137 York Street

Belfast BT15 1AB

Tel: 028 9024 5704 Fax: 028 9024 5679

Email: info@childrenslawcentre.org

www.childrenslawcentre.org

CHALKY Freephone Helpline 0808 808 5678

CHALKY Freepost 'CHALKY' BEL3837

Belfast BT15 1BT

Email: chalky@childrenslawcentre.org

Do You Know Your Rights?



Do you know your rights about ...

Suspensions and Exclusions from School ?

Suspensions & Exclusions

- 1 Every school has to have procedures for suspensions and exclusions. You or your parent/carer can ask to see these.
- 2 Always ask your school to put you in contact with an Education Welfare Officer if you are suspended or excluded from school.
- 3 The rules can be slightly different depending on what type of school you attend. Your local Education & Library Board will be able to tell you what type of school you are at and their telephone numbers are at the back of this leaflet.

The Suspension Procedure

- 1 You can only be suspended from school by the Principal.
- 2 You cannot be suspended for more than five days at first.
- 3 The principal can then suspend you for a longer time by getting the Board of Governors to agree.
- 4 You cannot be suspended from school for any more than 45 days in one school year.
- 5 When you are suspended, the Principal must immediately write to your parents/carers.
- 6 At the same time the Principal will also write to the Education and Library Board, the Chairperson of The Board of Governors and in the case of Catholic Council Maintained Schools (CCMS) the local diocesan office and give reasons for your suspension. This notice must be in writing.

- 7 The Principal should invite your parents/carers to the school to discuss the suspension.
- 8 If the Principal decides to suspend you for a longer time s/he must write out again to your parents/carers.
- 9 The school must provide suitable education for you while you are suspended, e.g. they may arrange for collection of school notes/homeworks for you at the school office and you would then have to complete any schoolwork in your own time.
- 10 If you are out of school for a long time, home tuition may be provided through your Education & Library Board.

- 11 There is no right of appeal for either you or your parents/carers against a decision to suspend. If you think you have been suspended unfairly, it is best to contact us for advice.

The Expulsion Procedure

- 1 You must have been suspended at least once before you can be expelled.
- 2 Before an expulsion can take place there must be a MEETING between your parents/carers, the Principal, Chief Executive of the Education and Library Board and Chairperson of The Board of Governors. You can ask to attend this meeting.
- 3 You may still be expelled if your parents/carers do not attend this meeting. They need only be invited to attend.
- 4 The meeting must include discussion about your future education.

- 5 If you attend a Board controlled school, the Principal has to prepare papers and send these to the Suspensions and Expulsions Panel of the Education & Library Board where you go to school.

The papers then get sent to a Committee called the Committee on the Suspension and Expulsion of pupils.

- 6 If you attend a CCMS school, a voluntary school or a grant maintained integrated school, the Board of Governors of your school makes the final decision about whether you will be expelled.

- 7 Once the decision is made, the Principal must write immediately to your parent/carer and tell them about their right of appeal against the decision, the time limit set by the Education & Library Board for lodging an appeal and where the appeal should be lodged.

- 8 An appeal can be made to the Education & Library Board Expulsion of Pupils Appeal Tribunal for the area in which the school from which you have been expelled is located.

- 9 This must be done by your parents/carers unless you are over 18.

- 10 It is important to act quickly as you must usually tell the Education & Library Board that you wish to appeal within 10 days of the date of the letter confirming your expulsion.

- 11 A parent or pupil who wishes to appeal the decision must send the Tribunal the reasons in writing for the appeal being made.

- 13 You can go to the Tribunal and speak at the hearing, if you wish.

- 13 You are allowed to bring a representative to the appeal hearing and it is important that you put forward your views.

- 14 At the hearing of an Appeal, the Expulsions Appeal Tribunal must consider all of the circumstances of the case. In particular the Tribunal will look at the things set out below:

- a. (i) Anything presented in writing to the Tribunal.
(ii) Anything said by you, your parent, your carer, your friend or representative at the hearing
(iii) Anything said by the Education & Library Board and by other people involved in the decision to expel you.

- b. Whether your school's procedures for expulsion were properly followed.

- c. The interests of other pupils and teachers in the school.

- 15 The decision of the Tribunal is sent in writing to you (if you are over 18) or your parents and whoever expelled you as soon as possible after the hearing has taken place.

If you are suspended or excluded from school and you would like more advice contact The Children's Law Centre. Our details are on the back of this leaflet.