



Brent Inclusion Support Team Partnership Framework 2026/27

June 2026

Review Date: June 2027

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How to use this document

This document sets out the partnership approach between schools and the Inclusion Support Team (IST), with a focus on early intervention, escalation, and preventative work.

It should be used when:

- You are seeking support for a pupil at risk of exclusion
- You are working through the **graduated response**
- You want to understand expectations for **early intervention and partnership working**

How this document fits with other guidance

This framework is part of a wider set of documents supporting exclusion practice in Brent:

- **Brent Exclusions Toolkit for Headteachers and Governors**
Provides practical guidance on decision-making, including when exclusion is being considered
- **Brent Exclusions Protocol**
Sets out the statutory and legal requirements for suspension and permanent exclusion

Moving between documents

As concerns escalate, you may need to move between documents:

- Where you are considering permanent exclusion, refer to:
→ **Section 2 of the Exclusions Toolkit (Decision Making)**
- Where an exclusion is taking place, refer to:
→ **Exclusions Toolkit (process guidance)** and
→ **Exclusions Protocol (legal requirements)**

This document supports work before exclusion becomes necessary.

Section 1: Introduction and Purpose

1.1 Purpose of this Framework

This Partnership Framework sets out how schools and the Inclusion Support Team (IST) work together to support children and young people at risk of suspension, permanent exclusion, or placement breakdown.

It is designed to provide:

- Clarity about the respective roles and responsibilities of schools and IST
- A shared understanding of how support is accessed and delivered
- Consistency in practice across schools and services
- A transparent basis for challenge, support and decision-making

The framework reflects Brent's commitment to ensuring that all children and young people are supported effectively within their educational setting wherever possible, and that exclusion is used only where it is lawful, proportionate, and appropriate.

1.2 Statutory Context

This framework is underpinned by the Department for Education's statutory guidance [*Suspension and Permanent Exclusion \(July 2026\)*](#).

Statutory guidance is clear that:

- Schools are responsible for maintaining discipline and managing behaviour
- Decisions to suspend or permanently exclude must be **lawful, reasonable and proportionate**
- Exclusion should be used as a **last resort**, following appropriate and reasonable steps to prevent it

Schools and governing boards retain full responsibility for:

- Behaviour management and pastoral support
- Decision-making in relation to suspension, permanent exclusion, and off-site direction
- Ensuring that statutory duties (including those relating to SEND, safeguarding, and equality) are met

This framework does not replace statutory guidance. Where there is any discrepancy, statutory guidance takes precedence.

1.3 Principles of Partnership Working

The work of the Inclusion Support Team is based on a partnership approach with schools. This means:

School-led responsibility

Schools retain responsibility for the pupils on their roll at all times.

IST involvement is intended to **support, strengthen and challenge**, not to replace school leadership, decision-making, or provision.

Early intervention and graduated response

Support is most effective when it is accessed early and builds progressively.

Schools are expected to take appropriate steps to:

- Understand the needs underlying behaviour
- Implement and review strategies
- Adapt provision over time

IST support is structured to align with this graduated approach, providing increasing levels of involvement where need and risk escalate. The effectiveness of support will depend on the extent to which strategies are implemented consistently and reviewed over time.

Clarity of roles and thresholds

Each IST role has a clearly defined purpose and set of responsibilities.

Support is provided where there is a clear rationale, appropriate threshold, and supporting evidence.

This ensures that:

- Support is targeted and proportionate
- Schools access the right support at the right time
- Roles are used effectively and consistently

Evidence-informed practice and accountability

Decisions about support, escalation, and next steps are based on:

- Clear evidence of strategies already implemented
- Review of impact over time
- An understanding of the needs of the child or young person

Both schools and IST are expected to engage in:

- Reflective practice
- Honest review of what is working and what is not
- Shared accountability for outcomes

This should include consideration of how consistently strategies have been applied and whether they have been sustained over time.

Constructive challenge

A key function of IST is to provide appropriate challenge where:

- Evidence of prior intervention is unclear or limited
- Strategies have not been implemented consistently
- Escalation is being considered without a clear rationale

This challenge is intended to:

- Strengthen decision-making
- Ensure alignment with statutory expectations
- Improve outcomes for children and young people

This includes challenge where schools are using placement or attendance arrangements in a way that may not align with statutory guidance, including the use of off-site direction or managed moves.

1.4 Scope of the Framework

This framework applies to all schools engaging with the Inclusion Support Team, across:

- Individual pupil support
- Targeted interventions

- Whole-class, cohort, or whole-school support

It covers:

- The expectations placed on schools when seeking support
- The role of IST in providing advice, intervention and coordination
- How decisions about support, escalation and intervention are made

Further detail on specific roles within IST is provided in the appendices.

1.5 Relationship to Brent's Inclusion and Exclusion System

Brent's approach to exclusions forms part of a wider inclusion system designed to support children and young people at risk of suspension, permanent exclusion, or placement breakdown.

This system is based on a graduated approach that prioritises:

- Early intervention and prevention through strong partnership working
- Clear and evidence-informed decision-making
- Appropriate use of statutory processes where required
- Continuity of education and support for all pupils

The system is set out across four key documents:

- The **Inclusion Support Team Partnership Framework** – which outlines expectations for early intervention, graduated response, and partnership working
- The **Brent Exclusions Protocol** – which sets out statutory duties, legal requirements, and expectations for decision-making
- The **Brent Exclusions Toolkit** – which provides practical guidance, templates, and resources to support implementation of exclusion processes
- The **Parent and Carer Guide to Exclusions** – which explains the process, rights, and support available to families

Together, these documents provide a coherent framework for:

- Preventing exclusion wherever possible
- Ensuring that exclusion is used lawfully and appropriately
- Supporting consistent and effective practice across schools and services

This Partnership Framework focuses on the **early stages of this system**, where support, intervention, and collaboration are critical to preventing escalation. Effective

practice across the system depends on the consistent implementation and review of strategies, alongside clear planning and understanding of need.

Section 2: Statutory Expectations

2.1 Overview

This section sets out the statutory expectations placed on schools and governing boards in relation to behaviour, suspension, permanent exclusion, and the use of alternative provision.

These expectations are derived from [national statutory guidance](#) and represent **non-negotiable duties**. They apply to all schools, regardless of involvement with the Inclusion Support Team.

Nothing in this framework should be interpreted as introducing additional thresholds or requirements for suspension or permanent exclusion beyond those set out in statutory guidance and the Brent Exclusions Protocol.

While this framework sets out expectations regarding early intervention, evidence, and partnership working, the absence of specific interventions or stages within the graduated response does not in itself determine whether the statutory threshold for exclusion has been met.

Decisions about suspension or permanent exclusion must be based on the statutory criteria and the professional judgement of the headteacher in the specific circumstances of each case.

2.2 Responsibility for Behaviour and Provision

Schools are responsible for maintaining good behaviour and providing appropriate support for pupils on roll.

This includes ensuring that:

- Behaviour policies are implemented consistently and fairly
- Appropriate pastoral and educational support is in place
- Reasonable steps are taken to meet pupils' needs within the school setting

IST involvement does not replace or reduce these responsibilities.

2.3 Lawful, Reasonable and Proportionate Decision-Making

Decision-making in relation to behaviour, intervention and exclusion must follow a clear and consistent framework, aligned with statutory guidance.

The Inclusion Support Team supports schools to operate within a graduated response and to determine whether the threshold for suspension or permanent exclusion has been met.

In all cases, decisions must be:

- Lawful
- Reasonable
- Proportionate

In practice, this may involve schools being able to demonstrate:

- A clear understanding of the behaviour and its impact
- Information about strategies that have been implemented, reviewed and adapted over time
- A clear rationale for why escalation is being considered at that point

The absence of particular interventions or stages within the graduated response does not in itself prevent a lawful decision to suspend or permanently exclude where the statutory threshold is met.

The Inclusion Support Team will support and, where appropriate, challenge schools to ensure that:

- Further intervention is explored where appropriate
- Decisions are not made prematurely
- Intervention is not inappropriately extended where the threshold for exclusion has already been met

Off-site direction and managed moves are interventions within the graduated response and should be considered before the threshold for permanent exclusion is reached. They are not alternatives to a lawful exclusion decision once that threshold has been met.

Detailed guidance on applying this framework, including determining whether the threshold for suspension or permanent exclusion has been met, is set out in **Section 2 of the Brent Exclusions Toolkit (Decision Making)**

2.4 Exclusion as a Last Resort

Suspension and permanent exclusion should be used where appropriate in line with statutory guidance. Schools should consider what reasonable steps have been taken to

prevent exclusion, but decisions must be based on the individual circumstances of the case and the statutory criteria.

Schools should be able to demonstrate that:

- Strategies to support the pupil have been implemented
- These strategies have been reviewed over time
- Adjustments and adaptations have been made where appropriate

Where exclusion is being considered, there should be a clear rationale for why alternative approaches have not been sufficient.

2.5 Consideration of SEND, Safeguarding and Equality

Before making decisions about suspension or permanent exclusion, schools must ensure that they have properly considered:

- [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\)](#)
- [Safeguarding responsibilities](#)
- [Equality duties](#), including the potential for discrimination

Schools should take steps to understand whether behaviour may be linked to:

- Unidentified or unmet need
- Disability or additional learning needs
- External or contextual factors

Where a pupil is not attending school, schools must ensure that the reason for non-attendance is clearly identified and that the correct legal framework is applied.

Where non-attendance is due to disciplinary reasons, this must be managed as a suspension or permanent exclusion in line with statutory guidance.

Where non-attendance is due to safeguarding considerations, this must be supported by a clear safeguarding rationale, be time-limited, and subject to regular review. In considering behaviour and escalation, schools should determine whether concerns are primarily safeguarding-related or behavioural. Where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be involved in this consideration.

Schools must not use informal or unclear arrangements to avoid the statutory requirements for suspension or permanent exclusion.

Where behaviour has involved the use of reasonable force, restraint, or seclusion, schools should ensure that incidents have been recorded and reviewed in line with statutory guidance.

This should form part of the wider understanding of the pupil's needs and the context for decision-making.

2.6 Use of Off-Site Directions

Where [alternative provision](#) is used in most cases this will be as an off-site direction, and schools must ensure that this is:

- Lawful and in line with statutory guidance
- Used to support improvement in behaviour
- Time-limited and reviewed regularly
- Part of a clearly planned intervention with defined outcomes

Where a pupil remains on roll at the school, the school retains responsibility for:

- The pupil's education and progress
- Safeguarding
- Funding and oversight of the placement

Where a pupil attends provision at another setting, including alternative provision or a pupil referral unit, and remains on roll at the school, this will normally constitute off-site direction.

Schools must ensure that such arrangements are:

- Clearly recorded and communicated
- Time-limited and subject to regular review
- Part of a structured plan with defined objectives and intended outcomes

Off-site direction must not be used as a long-term placement or as a substitute for either a managed move or to delay or avoid a lawful permanent exclusion where threshold has been met.

2.7 Use of Reduced Timetables

The Inclusion Support Team will support and challenge schools to ensure that reduced or part-time timetables are used appropriately and lawfully.

Where reduced timetables are in place, schools must ensure that they:

- Are clearly planned and time-limited
- Form part of a structured support and reintegration approach
- Are based on identified need rather than used as a default response to behaviour

Reduced timetables must not be used as an alternative to exclusion or as a way of managing behaviour by limiting access to education. Where reduced timetables are in place, schools should consider whether these arrangements form part of the wider context for decision-making and ensure they are not used to delay or avoid a lawful exclusion.

IST will provide challenge where arrangements do not demonstrate:

- Clear rationale
- Evidence of review
- Progression towards full-time provision

2.8 Safeguarding-Based Restriction on Attendance (Separation)

As set out in statutory guidance, there may be circumstances where a pupil's attendance at school is restricted **for safeguarding reasons rather than disciplinary reasons**.

This is referred to as a **safeguarding-based restriction on attendance (“separation”)**.

Expectations of schools

Where schools implement such arrangements, they are expected to:

- Ensure that decisions are **led by safeguarding considerations**, with involvement from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Maintain a **clear and documented safeguarding rationale**
- Ensure arrangements are:
 - **time-limited**
 - **regularly reviewed**
- Provide or secure **suitable education**
- Clearly distinguish this from suspension and permanent exclusion

Schools must not use safeguarding arrangements to:

- Manage behaviour where the threshold for exclusion has been met
- Delay or avoid a lawful exclusion decision

Role of the Inclusion Support Team

IST may:

- Support schools to:
 - Clarify whether concerns are **safeguarding or behavioural**
 - Identify appropriate pathways
- Provide **challenge** where:
 - arrangements appear to function as informal exclusion
 - there is insufficient safeguarding rationale
- Support planning for reintegration and alternative intervention

IST will not:

- Authorise safeguarding-based restriction decisions
- Replace DSL or school safeguarding responsibilities

Shared expectations

Schools and IST should work together to ensure that:

- Pupils are not left without education or support
- Decisions are clearly recorded and evidence-based
- There is a clear pathway forward, including reintegration and alternative lawful process where required

Relationship to the graduated response

Safeguarding separation sits outside the behaviour escalation pathway:

- It is not part of the graduated behaviour response
- It must not be used in place of:
 - targeted intervention
 - off-site direction
 - exclusion

Where behaviour thresholds are met, schools must move to the appropriate statutory process.

2.9 Day 6 Education Following Permanent Exclusion

Where a pupil has been permanently excluded, the local authority is responsible for arranging [suitable full-time education](#) from the **sixth school day** following the exclusion.

Schools must ensure that:

- Relevant information is shared promptly with the local authority
- Transition arrangements support continuity of provision

2.10 Governing Board Oversight

Governing boards are responsible for ensuring that:

- Statutory processes are followed correctly
- Decisions to suspend or permanently exclude are reviewed where required
- The school's behaviour policy and exclusion practices are lawful and applied fairly

In the case of off-site direction, governing boards must ensure that:

- Decisions are properly considered and recorded
- There is a clear plan and review process in place

Governing boards must ensure appropriate oversight and review of off-site direction arrangements, including their impact and ongoing suitability.

2.11 Relationship to IST Support

The statutory responsibilities outlined in this section remain with schools and governing boards at all times.

Access to IST support does not:

- Transfer decision-making authority
- Replace statutory processes

- Remove the need for schools to meet their legal duties

Where statutory expectations are not met, IST may provide:

- Guidance and clarification
- Support to strengthen practice
- Constructive challenge to ensure alignment with statutory requirements

Section 3: Partnership Expectations

3.1 Overview

This section sets out the expectations for how schools and the Inclusion Support Team (IST) work together.

These expectations are not statutory duties. However, they represent the agreed approach for accessing and engaging with IST support.

They are designed to ensure that:

- Support is timely, appropriate and effective
- Roles and responsibilities are clear
- Work is focused on improving outcomes for children and young people

3.2 Expectations of Schools

In order to access and engage effectively with IST support, schools are expected to:

Engage early and appropriately

- Seek advice at an early stage where concerns are emerging
- Use consultation and Tier 1 support to strengthen practice before risk escalates
- Avoid escalation to specialist support without prior exploration of need

Demonstrate a clear understanding of need

- Provide a clear description of the pupil's presentation, including patterns over time
- Identify possible underlying drivers of behaviour (e.g. learning needs, SEMH, contextual factors)
- Move beyond describing behaviour to understanding why it may be occurring

Understanding current provision and response

- Demonstrate what strategies have been implemented
- Provide information on:
 - duration
 - consistency
 - impact

- Show how provision has been adapted over time in response to review

Implement and review agreed actions

- Actively implement strategies and recommendations agreed through IST involvement
- Ensure that agreed strategies are implemented consistently and monitored across staff working with the pupil.
- Participate in review processes and provide updated information on impact

Maintain responsibility for the pupil

- Retain overall responsibility for behaviour, provision and outcomes
- Lead all planning processes (e.g. PSPs or equivalent)
- Ensure that statutory processes are followed where required

Engage with parents and carers

- Ensure that parents/carers are informed and involved appropriately
- Seek to build alignment between home and school approaches
- Obtain consent where required for IST involvement

Participate fully in partnership working

- Attend meetings and reviews as required
- Share relevant and accurate information
- Engage openly in reflection and discussion

3.3 Expectations of the Inclusion Support Team

In working with schools, IST will:

Provide timely and appropriate support

- Respond to requests for support within agreed timescales
- Match support to the level of need and risk
- Ensure that the most appropriate role is involved

Deliver evidence-informed advice and intervention

- Provide guidance rooted in best practice and experience
- Support schools to strengthen understanding, planning and provision

- Deliver targeted and time-limited interventions where appropriate

Support reflection and review

- Work with schools to review strategies and impact over time, including consideration of how consistently strategies have been implemented and whether they are producing the intended outcomes
- Help refine understanding of need
- Identify next steps based on evidence

Maintain clarity of roles and boundaries

- Operate within clearly defined role functions
- Avoid duplication or overlap between roles
- Not replace school-led provision or decision-making

Coordinate and align support where needed

- Facilitate involvement from other IST roles or services where appropriate
- Support coherent planning across interventions
- Contribute to multi-agency working where required

Provide constructive challenge

- Offer professional challenge where:
 - Evidence of prior intervention is limited
 - Strategies have not been implemented consistently
 - Escalation is being considered without clear rationale
- Ensure that advice and recommendations are aligned with statutory expectations and effective practice

3.4 Shared Expectations

Effective partnership working relies on both schools and IST:

- Maintaining a clear focus on the needs of the child or young person
- Working collaboratively and professionally
- Being open to reflection, feedback and challenge
- Using evidence to inform decisions and next steps

- Acting in a timely way to reduce risk and improve outcomes

Where these expectations are met, support is more likely to be:

- Timely
- Proportionate
- Effective

3.5 Where Expectations Are Not Met

Where expectations outlined in this framework are not met, this may impact on:

- The type of support that can be provided
- The level of involvement from IST
- The ability to progress to more specialist or intensive support

In these circumstances, IST will:

- Provide clear feedback on what is required
- Support schools to address gaps in practice or information
- Revisit thresholds and readiness for further support

Section 4: How Preventative Support Is Accessed and Delivered

4.1 Overview

Support from the Inclusion Support Team (IST) is accessed through a structured process designed to ensure that:

- The right level of support is provided at the right time
- Support builds on prior work undertaken by the school
- Interventions are proportionate to the level of need and risk

This process reflects a graduated approach, with increasing levels of IST involvement aligned to need, complexity, and risk of exclusion.

4.2 Accessing Support

Schools access IST support through the Access Gateway.

This provides a single route for:

- Requesting support for individual pupils
- Seeking advice or consultation
- Requesting wider support (e.g. class, cohort or whole-school)

All requests require schools to:

- Provide clear information about the concern
- Outline what has already been tried
- Identify the level of support being requested

Where appropriate, parental consent must be obtained before support is progressed.

4.3 Use of the IST Response Framework

In addition to the processes outlined in this framework, the Inclusion Support Team uses the IST Response Framework to support consistent, evidence-informed decision-making.

The Response Framework helps to:

- Identify the type of case and underlying pattern of behaviour
- Strengthen understanding before intervention is considered
- Improve the quality of professional discussion and challenge

It supports IST to determine:

- Whether the threshold for involvement has been met
- What level of support is appropriate
- What further work may be required prior to intervention

The Response Framework does not replace the Access Gateway or referral processes. It is used alongside them to ensure that decisions are informed, proportionate, and aligned with statutory expectations.

4.4 Levels of Support (Tiered Approach)

IST support is structured across three levels. These are not fixed pathways but reflect increasing levels of need, risk and complexity.

Tier 1 – Universal (Advice and Early Intervention)

Purpose:

To support early identification, strengthen practice, and prevent escalation.

Typical support includes:

- Consultation and advice
- Classroom, cohort or whole-school support (e.g. Advisory Teacher)
- Signposting to appropriate resources or services

School expectations at this stage:

- Engage early where concerns are emerging
- Reflect on current practice
- Implement advice and review impact

Tier 2 – Targeted (Time-Limited Intervention)

Purpose:

To provide more focused support where concerns persist and risk is increasing.

Typical support includes:

- Structured planning and review (e.g. PSP or equivalent)
- Targeted intervention (e.g. Behaviour Specialist, SEMH Casework, Parent Support Advisor)
- Continued advisory support

Threshold for support:

Threshold for support may include consideration of:

- Understanding of the pupil's needs
- Strategies that have been implemented
- The level of ongoing risk

School expectations at this stage:

- Provide clear evidence of prior intervention
- Lead and implement structured planning
- Work in partnership with IST to deliver and review interventions

Tier 3 – Specialist (Intensive / Coordinated Support)

Purpose:

To support cases where risk of permanent exclusion or placement breakdown is high, and complexity requires coordinated or specialist input.

Typical support includes:

- Enhanced coordination (e.g. ISO oversight)
- Specialist intervention and review
- Multi-agency involvement
- Consideration of longer-term planning, including alternative provision (where appropriate and lawful)

Threshold for support:

- Targeted intervention has been implemented and reviewed
- Evidence of ongoing risk despite intervention
- Increased complexity (e.g. SEND, SEMH, safeguarding factors)

School expectations at this stage:

- Provide robust evidence of prior work and review

- Continue to lead planning and decision-making
- Engage fully with coordinated and multi-agency working

4.5 Matching Support to Need

IST will consider the level and type of support required based on:

- The information provided by the school
- The stage of the graduated response
- The level of risk and urgency
- The needs of the child or young person

This may include:

- Confirming the requested level of support
- Recommending an alternative level or type of support
- Signposting to other services where appropriate

4.6 Role of the Inclusion Support Officer (ISO)

For individual pupil cases, the Inclusion Support Officer (ISO) will typically act as the main point of coordination.

The ISO will:

- Review referral information and clarify next steps
- Support schools to reflect on current provision and practice
- Ensure that support aligns with thresholds and statutory expectations
- Coordinate involvement from other IST roles where appropriate

The ISO does not:

- Take over responsibility for the case
- Lead school-led planning processes
- Make decisions on exclusion, placement or statutory routes

4.7 Planning, Delivery and Review

IST involvement follows a cyclical process:

Planning

- Identification of needs and priorities
- Agreement of actions and intervention
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities

Delivery

- Implementation of agreed strategies and interventions
- Ongoing communication between school and IST
- Monitoring of engagement and progress

Review

- Evaluation of impact over time
- Consideration of next steps
- Adjustment of support as required

Progression between tiers is based on:

- Evidence of implementation
- Review of impact
- Level of ongoing risk

This should include evaluation of the effectiveness of strategies, whether they have been implemented consistently, and what adaptations are required.

4.8 Timescales and Responsiveness

IST aims to provide timely support aligned to need and risk.

This includes:

- Acknowledging and reviewing requests promptly
- Prioritising cases based on urgency (e.g. risk of exclusion)
- Agreeing realistic timescales for intervention and review

Schools are expected to:

- Respond to requests for information in a timely way
- Engage within agreed timescales
- Maintain communication where there are changes in risk or circumstance

4.9 Relationship to Statutory Processes

IST support works alongside, but does not replace, statutory processes.

Where appropriate, schools must:

- Follow exclusion procedures
- Engage SEND processes (including EHCP review or request)
- Consider safeguarding responsibilities

IST may support by:

- Providing advice and challenge
- Contributing to understanding and evidence
- Supporting coordination alongside statutory routes

This includes ensuring that:

- Temporary placements are correctly identified and managed as off-site direction
- Permanent transfers are managed through lawful processes, including managed moves or admission routes

Managed moves must be permanent and voluntary and must not be used as trial placements.

All placement and movement decisions must be consistent with admissions requirements and must not be used to avoid or influence fair access processes.

Where a decision to suspend or permanently exclude is being considered or has been made, schools should refer to the **Brent Exclusions Toolkit** (for practical guidance) and the **Brent Exclusions Protocol** (for statutory requirements).

4.10 Pre-PEX Consultation (Threshold Review)

The following stage applies where concerns have escalated and a school is approaching the threshold for permanent exclusion.

As part of a graduated and collaborative approach to inclusion, schools are encouraged to engage with the Inclusion Support Team where they are actively considering permanent exclusion. This discussion is referred to as a Pre-PEX Consultation (Threshold Review).

A Pre-PEX Consultation provides an opportunity for the school and IST to work together to ensure that:

- The threshold for permanent exclusion is clearly understood and appropriately applied
- The presenting concerns are correctly identified as:
 - safeguarding
 - behaviour requiring further intervention
 - or behaviour where the threshold for exclusion has been met
- The most appropriate and lawful pathway is followed

This supports consistent decision-making and helps ensure that exclusions, where used, are lawful, proportionate, and based on a clear rationale. This should be considered alongside the decision-making framework set out in **Section 2 of the Brent Exclusions Toolkit**.

When this should take place

A Pre-PEX Consultation should take place where a headteacher is:

- Reviewing a situation where **permanent exclusion is being considered**, and
- Has not yet made or communicated a final decision

It forms part of the final stage of escalation, following earlier intervention and support.

Partnership approach

These discussions are an important part of working in partnership and are intended to:

- Support clarity and confidence in decision-making
- Ensure a shared understanding of statutory expectations
- Provide an opportunity to reflect on the appropriate pathway, including whether:
 - further intervention remains appropriate, or
 - the threshold for permanent exclusion has been reached

Role of the Inclusion Support Team

IST will:

- Contribute professional insight to support threshold clarity
- Assist in distinguishing between:
 - safeguarding and behavioural concerns
 - pre-threshold and post-threshold decision-making
- Support schools to identify the next appropriate step within the wider system, including:
 - reintegration planning where relevant
 - early planning for next steps where exclusion is likely

The responsibility for the decision to permanently exclude **remains with the headteacher.**

Position within the Brent Inclusion System

The Pre-PEX Consultation sits within the wider graduated response:

- Early intervention and support
- Targeted intervention (including off-site direction or managed move, where appropriate)
- Pre-PEX Consultation (Threshold Review)
- Permanent exclusion, where the statutory threshold is met

This ensures that decisions at the point of potential exclusion are made with clarity, consistency, and a shared understanding of expectations.

Section 5: Roles and Boundaries Across the Inclusion Support Team

5.1 Overview

The Inclusion Support Team (IST) is made up of a range of roles with distinct but complementary functions.

Each role contributes to a different stage of support, aligned to a graduated approach. Clarity about these roles ensures that:

- Support is targeted and proportionate
- Schools access the most appropriate support
- Responsibilities are shared effectively
- Duplication and drift are avoided

Further detail about each role is provided in the appendices.

5.2 Core Principles of IST Roles

Across all roles within IST, the following principles apply:

Distinct and defined functions

Each role has a clearly defined purpose and area of focus.

Roles are not interchangeable and should not be used outside of their intended function.

Aligned to a graduated approach

IST roles are typically engaged at different stages:

- **Advisory roles** support early understanding and planning
- **Intervention roles** support implementation and review
- **Coordination roles** support oversight, alignment and challenge
- **Placement coordination roles** support lawful implementation of provision following decision-making

This ensures that support builds over time and reflects the level of need and risk.

Time-limited and outcome-focused

IST involvement is designed to:

- Build capacity within schools
- Support improvements in practice
- Contribute to evidence for next steps

IST roles do not provide open-ended or indefinite support.

School-led responsibility

Schools retain responsibility for:

- The pupil
- Behaviour and provision
- Planning and decision-making

IST roles support, advise and challenge—but do not replace school leadership or accountability.

5.3 Summary of Roles Across the System

The roles within IST can be understood broadly as follows:

Advisory Teacher

- Supports schools to **understand behaviour and improve practice** at classroom, cohort and whole-school level
- Focuses on teaching approaches, environment, routines and systems
- Typically involved at earlier stages where understanding is still developing

Inclusion Support Officer (ISO)

- Provides **coordination, oversight and challenge** for individual pupil cases
- Supports reflection on provision, planning and alignment with expectations
- Acts as a link between the school and wider IST support

Behaviour Specialist

- Delivers **targeted, time-limited intervention** for individual pupils
- Supports consistent implementation of strategies across staff and over time, and contributes to review of their effectiveness.
- Supports review of impact where needs are already understood

SEMH Casework Officer

- Provides **targeted SEMH-focused intervention**, particularly for pupils with identified or complex needs
- Supports emotional regulation, resilience and wellbeing
- Works alongside schools and multi-agency partners to sustain placement stability

Parent Support Advisor

- Works with families to **strengthen engagement and align home-school approaches**
- Identifies and addresses factors outside of school that may be impacting behaviour
- Supports implementation of agreed strategies with parents and carers

Alternative Provision (AP) Coordinator

- Coordinates and quality-assures the use of **alternative provision where a lawful decision has been made**
- Ensures that placements are appropriate, time-limited and outcome-focused
- Does not determine whether a placement should take place

5.4 Key Boundaries Across All Roles

To ensure clarity and consistency, the following boundaries apply across IST:

IST does not replace school-led provision

IST support:

- Does not take over responsibility for the pupil
- Does not lead school-based planning processes (e.g. PSPs or equivalent)
- Does not substitute for high-quality teaching, pastoral support or SEND provision

IST does not act as a first response in place of assessment and planning

Most IST roles (particularly intervention roles) require:

- Prior assessment and understanding of need
- Evidence of strategies already implemented

- A clear rationale for involvement

IST does not provide long-term or indefinite intervention

Support is:

- Time-limited
- Focused on building capacity and informing next steps
- Regularly reviewed

IST does not make statutory or placement decisions

Decisions relating to:

- Suspension or permanent exclusion
- Off-site direction
- Alternative provision placement
- SEND statutory processes

remain the responsibility of:

- Schools
- Governing boards
- The Local Authority (where applicable under statutory duties)

IST may contribute to:

- Evidence
- Advice
- Understanding of need

...but does not make or authorise these decisions.

IST does not:

- Facilitate or approve placement arrangements that are not aligned with statutory guidance
- Support the use of temporary placements as a means of trialling permanent moves between schools
- Take part in arrangements that may constitute informal exclusion or off-rolling

IST will provide challenge where placement decisions or arrangements do not align with statutory requirements or agreed local processes.

5.5 Relationship Between Roles

IST roles are designed to work together as part of a coherent system.

This means:

- Involvement from different roles may overlap where appropriate
- Support can move between roles as understanding and need develop
- Coordination is maintained to ensure clarity and avoid duplication

The Inclusion Support Officer (ISO) will typically support this coordination for individual pupil cases.

5.6 Role of Appendices

Detailed descriptions of each role, including:

- Specific functions
- Boundaries
- Typical stages of involvement

are provided in the appendices.

These should be used to:

- Inform decisions about the most appropriate support
- Clarify expectations prior to involvement
- Support consistent understanding across schools and IST

Section 6: Service Standards and Timescales

6.1 Overview

This section sets out indicative service standards and timescales for how the Inclusion Support Team (IST) responds to requests for support and works with schools.

These standards are designed to:

- Provide clarity and predictability for schools
- Support consistency of practice across IST
- Enable timely and effective intervention
- Ensure that support is responsive to need and risk

Timescales are intended as a guide and may be adapted where necessary in response to urgency, complexity, or changing circumstances.

6.2 Response and Triage

IST will aim to respond to requests for support within the following timescales:

- All Access Gateway submissions will be **acknowledged within 2 working days**
- Initial triage and consideration of the request will take place within **5 working days**
- Where additional information is required, this will be requested promptly

Cases identified as high risk (e.g. imminent risk of suspension or permanent exclusion) will be prioritised and responded to more quickly where possible.

6.3 Panel Timescales

Where cases are progressed to panel:

- Referrals with parental consent received by **10:00am on Friday** will be considered at the following **Tuesday panel**
- Outcomes from panel will be communicated within **2 working days**

Where a case cannot be heard at the next panel, schools will be informed of expected timescales.

6.4 Planning, Intervention and Review

IST support is time-limited and structured around agreed planning and review cycles.

- Targeted interventions are typically **time-limited (e.g. up to 6 weeks)**
- Review points will be agreed at the outset of involvement
- Progression, continuation or escalation of support will be based on:
 - Evidence of implementation
 - Review of impact
 - Ongoing level of need and risk

Timescales may vary depending on:

- The type of support being provided
- Availability of staff
- The needs and circumstances of the pupil

6.5 Expectations for School Engagement

Effective support relies on active and timely engagement from schools.

Schools are expected to:

- Respond to communication from IST within **5 working days**
- Provide requested information in a timely manner
- Attend and participate in agreed meetings and reviews
- Inform IST where circumstances change or risk increases

Where schools are unable to meet these expectations, clear communication should be maintained.

6.6 Case Review and Closure

IST involvement is dependent on active engagement and progress.

Cases may be reviewed and closed where:

- There is no response to communication over a period of **10 working days**
- Agreed meetings are repeatedly not attended or postponed

- Required information is not provided
- Agreed actions are not being implemented
- The level of need no longer meets the threshold for IST involvement

Prior to closure:

- Schools will be informed of concerns regarding engagement or progress
- Opportunities will be provided to re-engage
- Reasons for closure will be clearly communicated

6.7 Re-engagement and Re-referral

Where a case has been closed:

- Schools may re-engage with IST where circumstances change or where expectations can be met
- Previous information will be retained where possible to avoid duplication
- A new or updated referral may be required depending on the context

6.8 Maintaining Flexibility

While this section provides a framework for expected timescales, IST recognises that:

- Cases vary in complexity and urgency
- Schools may experience capacity challenges
- Circumstances can change rapidly

IST will take a proportionate and flexible approach, ensuring that:

- Urgent cases are prioritised
- Communication remains clear and transparent
- Decisions are made in the best interests of the child or young person

Appendices

Appendix A: Inclusion Support Officer (ISO)

Purpose of the Role

The Inclusion Support Officer (ISO) provides coordination, oversight and challenge to support schools in managing individual pupil cases, particularly where there is a risk of suspension, permanent exclusion or placement breakdown.

What this role does

- Acts as the main point of contact for individual pupil cases
 - Supports schools to reflect on needs, provision and planning
 - Ensures that support aligns with a graduated approach
 - Provides constructive challenge to strengthen decision-making
 - Coordinates involvement from other IST roles where appropriate
 - Supports review of impact and identification of next steps
-

What this role does NOT do

- Take over responsibility for the pupil or the case
 - Lead school-based planning processes (e.g. PSPs or equivalent)
 - Deliver long-term or direct intervention
 - Make decisions regarding exclusion, placement or statutory routes
 - Replace school responsibility for behaviour, provision or outcomes
-

When this role is typically involved

- Across Tier 2 and Tier 3 for individual pupil cases
 - Where coordination, oversight or challenge is required
 - Where multiple services or interventions are involved
 - Where risk of exclusion or placement breakdown is increasing
-

Appendix B: Advisory Teacher

Purpose of the Role

The Advisory Teacher supports schools to understand behaviour and strengthen classroom, cohort and whole-school practice, with a focus on improving teaching, routines and inclusive approaches.

What this role does

- Supports schools to identify patterns and drivers of behaviour
 - Provides advice on teaching, environment and routines
 - Works with staff to improve consistency and practice
 - Delivers training, coaching and modelling
 - Supports development of inclusive, high-quality provision
-

What this role does NOT do

- Provide direct, long-term intervention for individual pupils
 - Act as a follow-on to targeted intervention where needs are already understood
 - Replace school leadership responsibility for behaviour and teaching
 - Be used as a reactive response to isolated incidents
-

When this role is typically involved

- At Tier 1 and early Tier 2
 - Where understanding of behaviour is still developing
 - Where concerns exist at class, cohort or whole-school level
 - As an early stage of support to prevent escalation
-

Appendix C: Behaviour Specialist

Purpose of the Role

The Behaviour Specialist delivers targeted, time-limited intervention for individual pupils where needs are already understood, supporting implementation of strategies and review of impact.

What this role does

- Works directly with pupils and staff to implement strategies
 - Models effective approaches to behaviour and regulation
 - Supports consistent application of strategies across staff
 - Contributes to review of impact and next steps
 - Builds staff confidence and capability
-

What this role does NOT do

- Act as a first response where needs are not yet understood
 - Replace school-led assessment and planning
 - Provide long-term or ongoing intervention
 - “Fix” behaviour without changes to environment or adult practice
 - Make decisions about placement or escalation
-

When this role is typically involved

- At Tier 2 and Tier 3
- Where assessment and planning are already in place
- Where strategies have been implemented but require strengthening
- Where review of impact is needed to inform next steps

Appendix D: SEMH Casework Officer

Purpose of the Role

The SEMH Casework Officer provides targeted support for pupils with identified emotional and mental health needs, particularly where needs are complex, sustained, or linked to risk of exclusion or placement breakdown.

What this role does

- Delivers targeted, time-limited SEMH-focused intervention
 - Supports pupils to develop emotional regulation and resilience
 - Works with schools to align provision with identified SEMH needs (including EHCP outcomes where relevant)
 - Contributes to review of impact and next steps
 - Coordinates with families and multi-agency partners where appropriate
-

What this role does NOT do

- Act as a first response where SEMH need is not yet identified
 - Replace Behaviour Specialist input where behaviour is not linked to SEMH need
 - Substitute for school-led SEND or pastoral provision
 - Provide open-ended or indefinite intervention
 - Be involved without evidence of prior assessment and graduated response
-

When this role is typically involved

- At Tier 2 and Tier 3
 - Where SEMH needs are identified and impacting behaviour
 - Where prior strategies have been implemented with limited impact
 - Where complexity requires more specialist or multi-agency input
-

Appendix E: Parent Support Advisor

Purpose of the Role

The Parent Support Advisor works with families and schools to strengthen engagement, improve communication, and align home–school approaches where family context is impacting behaviour or engagement.

What this role does

- Supports schools to better understand family context
 - Works with parents/carers to strengthen routines and consistency
 - Supports alignment between home and school strategies
 - Delivers targeted, time-limited support with families
 - Contributes to review of impact and next steps
-

What this role does NOT do

- Replace school responsibility for parent communication and engagement
 - Act as a first response without prior school-led engagement
 - Be used to “fix” behaviour without alignment to school strategies
 - Substitute for safeguarding, Early Help or statutory services
 - Provide open-ended or long-term support without review
-

When this role is typically involved

- Across Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 (depending on need)
 - Where family factors are impacting behaviour, attendance or engagement
 - Where there is misalignment between home and school approaches
 - Where targeted support is required to strengthen engagement and routines
-

Appendix F: Alternative Provision (AP) Coordinator

Purpose of the Role

The AP Coordinator ensures that the use of alternative provision is lawful, appropriate, and effectively planned, once a clear decision has been made through the correct statutory or school-led route.

What this role does

- Coordinates and supports access to appropriate alternative provision
 - Ensures placements are time-limited, purposeful and outcome-focused
 - Supports planning for placement, including objectives and review points
 - Monitors attendance, engagement and progress
 - Supports reintegration or transition planning
-

What this role does NOT do

- Decide whether a pupil should be placed in alternative provision
 - Arrange placements where the correct legal route has not been followed
 - Replace school responsibility for pupils on roll
 - Be used as an alternative to earlier intervention (e.g. PSP, targeted support, SEND processes)
 - Facilitate placements that may be inappropriate, unlawful or constitute off-rolling
-

When this role is typically involved

- At Tier 3
- Where a lawful decision has been made (e.g. off-site direction, LA duty following permanent exclusion, SEND-led placement)
- Where there is a clear plan, purpose and review structure for provision
- Where coordination and quality assurance of placement is required