

## **BPP School Exclusions Project**

**Has your child been permanently excluded from school?**

**We may be able to provide you with effective free representation at your child's exclusion appeal.**

### **WHAT IS THE BPP SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS PROJECT?**

The project operates through BPP Law School's Pro Bono Centre, which matches law students with opportunities to volunteer their legal skills and knowledge to assist the community. In this project, BPP Law Students, supervised by barristers from Doughty Street Chambers, volunteer to represent families at school exclusion hearings for free.

### **WHAT DO WE DO?**

We represent families of children who have been permanently excluded. Our objective is to ensure families have high quality representation at school exclusions hearings. We provide parents with representation at the Governing Body's Disciplinary Committee (GDC) and at Independent Appeal Panel hearings (IAP).

### **WHO WILL BE YOUR REPRESENTATIVE?**

You will be represented by a law student who has received specialist training by a barrister who has expertise in the area of exclusion law. Your representative will also be mentored by a qualified barrister who is experienced in exclusion law.

### **HOW WILL YOUR REPRESENTATIVE HELP YOU?**

Your representative will provide the hearing with a written submission outlining your child's case and will represent you at the hearing. After the hearing your representative will consider the decision of the GDC or IAP, advise on next steps and if required refer you to other specialist agencies with the expertise to assist you.

**CONTACT** the project by email at [schoolexclusions@bpplaw.co.uk](mailto:schoolexclusions@bpplaw.co.uk). Please note that we may not have the capacity to provide representation for all cases. If we are unable to provide representation we will inform you promptly and try to help you find representation elsewhere. Priority will be given to cases being heard at the IAP and to cases which are considered to be urgent in some way.

## **How to appeal a permanent exclusion**

### **STAGE ONE: A GDC MEETING.**

The GDC is the first stage where a pupil's permanent exclusion can be overturned. When a pupil is permanently excluded the GDC must meet to review the exclusion. The GDC comprises of a panel of the school's governors. The GDC can decide to:-

- uphold the exclusion; or
- overturn the exclusion and reinstate your child at the school.

### **STAGE TWO: AN IAP HEARING.**

After the GDC has made its decision, a parent is able to appeal to an IAP. The Panel at that hearing will assess the evidence and reconsider the pupil's exclusion. The IAP consists of three people who are independent from the excluding school and the Local Authority. Two of the three panel members will have experience in the field of education.

The IAP can decide to:-

- uphold the exclusion;
- overturn the exclusion and reinstate your child at the school; or
- overturn the permanent exclusion but not reinstate your child at the school.

**THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES ARE NOT QUALIFIED LAWYERS AND CANNOT GIVE LEGAL ADVICE. REPRESENTATIVES WILL REFER PARENTS ON TO SPECIALIST SOLICITORS IF LEGAL ADVICE IS REQUIRED. REPRESENTATION BY STUDENTS ON THIS PROJECT IS PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE, ALTHOUGH EXPENSES MAY NEED TO BE AGREED IN ADVANCE OF ANY REPRESENTATION. PARENTS WHO WISH TO CONSULT A SPECIALIST SOLICITOR ARE LIKELY TO HAVE TO PAY FOR THIS SERVICE UNLESS THEY QUALIFY FOR LEGAL HELP. THIS PROJECT IS CURRENTLY IN A PILOT PHASE AND WHILE WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO IDENTIFY A STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE FOR YOU, REPRESENTATION CANNOT BE GUARANTEED FOR ANY PARTICULAR APPEAL.**