

## Medway SENDIASS: Supporting a child excluded from school which helped to ensure access to education

### The context

Medway SENDIASS has supported this particular family on several occasions for two children who were both receiving fixed term exclusions regularly. It is important to note that they do not attend the same provision. At the time neither had an EHCP and their schools were finding it difficult to manage the presenting behaviours. This case study focuses on just one of these children.

### The issue

The behaviours displayed at school by this child were not managed well by the school. The parent came to the service for support when child had received a permanent exclusion. There had been no effort by the school to support these behaviours and on occasions, the school's response escalated the problems as opposed to support them.

### The support provided by IASS

SENDIASS supported the parent to prepare for the Governors hearing. By initially listening to the parent why she felt this permanent exclusion was not justified and then working with her to go through the evidence bundle provided by school, highlighting evidence that supported her reasons. SENDIASS also made sure this could also be related back to law, whether that was the Exclusions Guidance, SEND Code of Practice, Equalities Act and highlighting where school, at times, didn't follow their own policies. SENDIASS attended the Governors hearing with the parent and were able to support her getting her views across. As expected, the decision remained. Parent at this time wanted to take this further. She requested an Independent Review Panel (IRP).

There were many hurdles during this process, including a change to staffing at the school, the loss of the request letter and also a new school year for the child to start. SENDIASS supported the parent to re-request the IRP meeting and evidence that this was sent within timeframes but had not been responded to.

Again, SENDIASS supported the parent to understand the process, ensuring she understood the role of the IRP and the role of the SEN Expert, and to again put together her views.

SENDIASS supported the parent again at this meeting, this time she was too anxious to speak. At the point of being able to ask questions of the school, there were some important questions to ask which included – Where is the governor that chaired the previous meeting? Where is the head teacher? Where is the SENCo? And was it true that the chair of the previous meeting was an Executive Head for the Trust?

We then read the parents views for her and ensured that she had said everything she wanted before the end of the meeting.

### The difference made

The outcome of the IRP was a positive one. They quashed the decision on the basis that the process was legally flawed. The school were asked to re-consider re-instatement and they did offer this to the parent. However, the child had thrived in the alternative provision he had been in and whilst there the LA had agreed to issue an EHCP. The evidence from the alternative provision helped with this process and in supporting

mum's request for a smaller provision that was better suited to the child's needs. He is now in a placement that is supportive and where he continues to learn and remain engaged.

The school also reviewed the policies and processes following this IRP and the outcome.

As mentioned earlier, the parent has another child who is receiving regular fixed term exclusions. As a result of the support provided by SENDIASS and the information given to parent throughout this, she feels better equipped to work with the school and to get more support in place sooner to avoid a permanent exclusion.

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