


School exclusions guidance: Managed moves between schools

 26 October 2023

Since the Department for Education (DfE) explained managed moves for the first time in the Exclusions and Suspension Statutory Guidance last year, we've received many questions about how managed moves should operate in practice.

Whilst updated Exclusions and Suspension Statutory Guidance came into effect on 1 September 2023, the DfE didn't take the opportunity to change the previous provisions on managed moves, and so it still does not cover the mechanics of how a managed move should operate.

What the Statutory Guidance does say is that a managed move should only be used where it is in the pupil's best interests and where initial interventions have been put in place prior to considering a managed move. Information sharing is required too (including on attainment and risk management) so that the new school is able to support pupils from day one.

Trial periods and dual registration

There is nothing in the Statutory Guidance that prevents the use of a dual registration period (sometimes erroneously referred to as a 'trial period'). Whilst the intention of a managed move is a permanent transfer of a pupil from one school to another, this is described as a "process" in the Statutory Guidance and schools need to understand the limits of a period of dual registration.

If a young person is attending a school and receiving education, then they will be caught by the relatively wide definition of 'pupil' and they will need to be put on the roll of the school. Whenever a pupil is put on a school's roll, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 apply.

These Regulations provide specific requirements on pupil registration and also the circumstances in which a pupil can be deleted from the roll. If a child is dual registered, then the requirements apply to both schools.

Terminating a dual registered placement

There is one specific ground for deletion from the roll that applies to dual registered pupils. This ground would apply where a dual registered child has ceased to attend one of the schools; it is not a permanent exclusion and is where the other dual registered school has consented to the removal.

The recent DfE interpretation of these Regulations was that on a managed move, if the new school wanted to terminate the placement due to behaviour during a period of dual registration, they would need to follow the permanent exclusion process in the normal way, with all the relevant rights offered. There is no other ground to remove a child from a roll due to behaviour.

That means that whilst a short dual registration period (e.g. four weeks) can be used to ensure that the child is settling in well, it is not akin to a probationary period for an employee – you still need to go through the usual [exclusion process](#) if the proposed reason for the removal from the roll is due to behaviour. That does mean that if both schools wish to remove the pupil from each of their rolls due to behaviour, both have to follow the permanent exclusion process.

Lack of guidance

Whilst this isn't a change resulting from the Statutory Guidance and has been the position for some time, the wording introduced last year on managed moves has raised questions about how these should operate given the previous complete lack of guidance. In our experience, different local areas had very different practices and that continues to be the case now. It does also make managed moves potentially less attractive and places a much greater emphasis on schools sharing information before the new school makes a decision on the managed move.

Reciprocity is the key

Managed moves have always operated on the basis of each school taking its share of moves to give pupils a fresh start. As there is no requirement to accept a managed move, reciprocity is the key to it working.

Schools that decide not to accept managed moves given the inability to easily end the arrangement due to behaviour, will likely find that other schools don't want to offer their students moves in the future.

The DfE did promise a wider look at pupil moves between schools and we hope that such a review considers how managed moves fit into the wider admissions process as well as with the Pupil Registration Regulations.

Available support

Earlier this year we delivered a webinar on the updated Exclusions and Suspension Statutory Guidance, which you can [watch on demand](#). We offer a range of advice and support relating to [pupil behaviour and exclusions](#), including a [popular support pack](#) of resources to effectively manage the whole exclusions process. For more bespoke support and advice please get in touch.

Contact



Philip Wood
Senior Associate

philip.wood@brownejacobson.com

+44 (0)330 045 2274

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