

CEN CASE STUDY



CASE: PERMANENT EXCLUSION (PEX)

A student of African heritage in year 8 recently relocated from an inner London to outer London school, was to be permanently excluded (PEX) as a result of being involved in a fight.

Notification from the school was a standard (permanent exclusion) letter. However, English was a second language for the family who were alarmed, confused and did not understand that they had a right to be represented.

The fighting incident appeared to be serious according to the school whose notes advised that it involved several students. The student's family believed that past incidences at the school indicated discrimination. The family requested but did not receive pastoral care support for their child.

A CEN advocate was appointed, who drafted a letter on behalf of the student's family to the school appealing the PEX. Throughout the process the school was entirely unhelpful initially refusing to allow remote attendance and failing to fulfil the family's subject access request (SAR).

The advocate advised the family that as the incident referred to in the PEX appeared to be very serious it was unlikely that their exclusion could be overturned. The advocate believed that it was likely that something triggered the student's behaviour, and eventually the student confided to their family about racist bullying they had suffered since attending the school.

OUTCOME:

One day before the trustee (Governors) meeting, the exclusion was withdrawn, and the advocate was advised that the family had accepted a place at another school. The advocate was delighted to have the exclusion removed from the student's record. However, there was a need to advise the family that what they had accepted was in fact a managed move to avoid an exclusion which they were content with. Consequently, the advocate considered it to be a positive result for the family and the student.

The importance of students confiding in their families about any issues (racism in this case) endured at school cannot be overstated. Families should also consider supervising exposure to social media as this was the medium in which the student was abused.