

THE EXCLUSION OF AUTISTIC PUPILS FROM SCHOOLS

Current data shows that **autistic pupils are twice as likely to be excluded from school** as those who do not have SEND. This data does not tell the whole story though, the Autism Centre for Education and Research (ACER) conducted research on exclusion and found that at least **25% of parents** reported unofficial or illegal exclusions of their children¹.



WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

Department for Education data states that the reasons for fixed-term exclusions primarily centre on pupil's behaviour.

Our research found that exclusion of autistic pupils is as a result of:

- A failure of staff to make reasonable adjustments
- Inadequate systems and policies
- Budgets being cut in the areas of essential support



WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF EXCLUSION?

Exclusions have economic, lifelong and profound impacts on autistic pupils and their families.



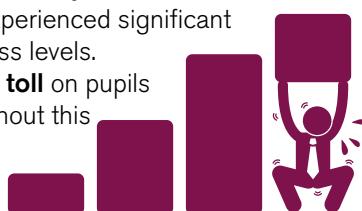
ECONOMIC

- **76%** of parents took time off work and **47%** had financial issues.
- A large portion of the annual UK economic costs (**£3.1 billion per year** in childhood²) is down to loss of parental productivity.
- Eligibility for free school meals is **11%** higher for autistic pupils than the general population.



LIFELONG AND PROFOUND

- For pupils, exclusion impacts on **self-esteem, leads to isolation from friends, and leaves them feeling let down by education.**
- **97% of parents** experienced significant impact on their stress levels.
- The **mental health toll** on pupils and families throughout this period is clear.



A CALL FOR ACTION

- The SEND Review needs to address many of the concerns raised in this report.
- Schools need to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with autism to prevent exclusions and schools need to reduce informal and illegal exclusions.
- Government and schools need to ensure adjustments are made to ensure parental employment is not impacted.
- Schools must improve communication with families at every stage of the exclusion process.



REFERENCES

1. Guldberg, K., Wallace, S., Bradley, R., Perepa, P., Ellis, L and MacLeod, A. (2021) Investigation into the causes and implications of exclusion for autistic children and young people. <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/acer/index.aspx>
2. Buescher, A.V.S., Cidav, Z., Knapp, M., Mandell, D.S. (2014) Costs of Autism Spectrum Disorders in the United Kingdom and the United States. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2014;168(8):721–728.