



**The Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith
Minister for Skills**

Department for Education Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe

22 January 2025

Dear Lord Lucas,

On Monday 9 December 2024, you asked me for the Government's opinion of Devon County Council's proposal to charge schools £21,000 for each pupil whom they permanently exclude. I noted that this issue had not previously been drawn to my attention, but that I would look into it.

I have now discussed this with officials and understand that Devon do not intend to proceed with this proposal. On 27 November 2024 Devon launched its consultation on schools funding arrangements 2025-26 . As part of this, within the '2025-26 Revenue Funding Arrangements for Schools' Devon sought the views of schools on a proposal to accelerate their approach to inclusion, through a charge against school exclusions.

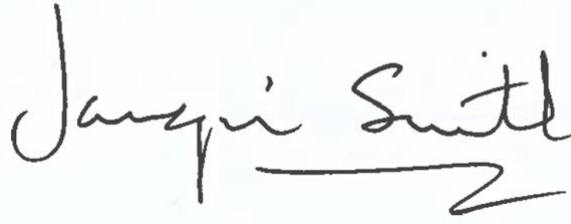
In the last academic year Devon was above national and statistical neighbour figures for permanent exclusions. Suitable full-time education must be arranged by the local authority for pupils who have been permanently excluded before day 6 of the exclusion. Devon estimated that the indicative cost of a permanent exclusion to the LA was £21,000 per exclusion and proposed that this could be charged to schools that permanently excluded a student.

The proposal generated much discussion within Devon, and media interest more widely. DfE officials spoke to officers at Devon, making clear that Devon could only carry through a proposal of this kind with unanimous local support.

As reported by Schools Week , on 13 December 2024 Jack Newton, Deputy Director and Head of Education and Schools at Devon County Council confirmed to headteachers that the plans are "extremely unlikely" to happen, with the final results of the consultation due in January. We expect Devon to confirm that they will not proceed with this proposal following a Schools Forum vote at their scheduled meeting on 22 January 2025.

I will also deposit a copy of this letter in the House of Lords Library.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature reads "Jacqui Smith" in a cursive style, with a horizontal line underneath the name.

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Minister for Skills**