

# North Devon Conservatives

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## Devon's teachers need more powers to tackle school bullying

*Half of all children bullied, but NO expulsions across Devon*

Official Government figures have revealed that just ninety pupils across the country were expelled last year for school bullying, despite a new survey finding half of all 14-year-old children have been bullied.

Across Devon no pupils were expelled last year from state secondary schools or from any state schools. In common with over two-thirds of local authorities across England, not a single child was expelled for bullying. In Devon, 50 pupils were suspended from state schools – meaning the disruptive students returned to the school where they caused misery for their classmates.

Since 1997, Labour Government rules have deliberately made it more difficult for schools to expel pupils, undermining the authority of head teachers and meaning bullies end up back at the same school as their victims.

Philip Milton, Prospective Member of Parliament for North Devon said:

“Bullying makes far too many children’s lives a misery. But the Government’s own figures show that in the vast majority of cases bullies are returned to the same school as their victims after a short punishment, rather than being expelled.

“The key to tackling bullying is giving Devon’s teachers the powers they need to crack down on bad behaviour. But under Labour, the balance of power in the classroom has shifted too far in favour of disruptive pupils.

“Conservatives would give Devon’s schools the power to take a zero tolerance approach towards serious offences such as bullying. We will give our teachers the tools they need to maintain discipline in the classroom before it spirals out of control.”

### Notes to Editors

Published and promoted by Sir Richard Peek on behalf of the NDCA, The Strand, Barnstaple, N. Devon  
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## PROBLEM OF BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

A new National Centre for Social Research study showed that nearly half of children have suffered from bullying. Overall 47 per cent of 14-year-olds report being bullied, 41 per cent of 15-year-olds and 29 per cent of 16-year-olds. The study also found that, on average, children who were bullied went on to get two grades lower at GCSE than children who were never bullied (NatCen, *Longitudinal Study of Young People in England*, November 2009). <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/study/the-characteristics-of-bullying-victims-in-schools>

Despite this, only 80 bullies were expelled last year from state secondary schools, and only 90 from all state schools. Meanwhile there were 4,870 suspensions for bullying in state secondary schools, and 5,750 in all state schools. This means that 98.5 per cent of bullies returned to the same school after being suspended (90 expulsions out of 5,840 serious punishments).

Head teachers are increasingly having their authority over discipline undermined. Exclusions appeals panels overrule head teachers on expulsions in a quarter of the cases they hear, and 35 per cent of these pupils are then returned to the school from which they were excluded.

## CONSERVATIVE POLICIES

**Good School Discipline:** Good discipline is essential to ensure that all pupils can benefit from the opportunities provided by education, without disruption from others. A Conservative Government will give schools the final say on the exclusion of disruptive pupils, by abolishing the appeals panels which too often overrule them. We will change the law to give teachers unequivocal powers to maintain discipline, including confiscating items such as mobile phones if the school has banned them. We will also make home-school contracts enforceable as requirements of admission and grounds for exclusion. To ensure better provision for those excluded we will make greater use of voluntary and independent providers of remedial education, rather than relying solely on Pupil Referral Units.

**Greater Support for Teachers:** Conservatives will legislate to give teachers greater protection from malicious allegations made by pupils. We will also introduce changes to ensure that when teachers or youth group leaders are faced with charges of negligence as a result of an accident on a sporting or adventure activity, the courts will require a higher burden of proof of negligence. We will introduce the Western Australian concept, whereby ‘reckless disregard’ rather than ordinary ‘negligence’, must be proved.

## LOCAL FIGURES

The table below shows the number of expulsions (‘permanent exclusions’) and suspensions (‘fixed period exclusions’) for bullying in 2007-08.

DCSF, *Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions from Schools in England 2007/08*, 2009, Tables 21 & 22. <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000860/index.shtml>

Key

x = fewer than five exclusions.

‘All state schools’ includes maintained primary, secondary and special schools, City Technology Colleges, academies and non-maintained special schools.

Area	Expulsions for Bullying		Suspensions for Bullying	
	State funded secondary schools	All state schools	State funded secondary schools	All state schools

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	<i>State funded secondary schools</i>	<i>All state schools</i>	<i>State funded secondary schools</i>	<i>All state schools</i>
<b>ENGLAND</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>4,870</b>	<b>5,750</b>
<b>SOUTH WEST</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>520</b>
Bath and North East Somerset	0	0	30	40
Bournemouth	x	x	10	20
Bristol, City of	0	0	30	50
Cornwall	0	0	50	50
Devon	0	0	40	50
Dorset	x	x	30	30
Gloucestershire	0	0	40	50
Isles of Scilly	n/a	0	n/a	0
North Somerset	0	0	10	20
Plymouth	0	0	20	20
Poole	0	0	10	10
Somerset	x	x	50	60
South Gloucestershire	0	0	20	20
Swindon	0	0	10	30
Torbay	0	0	10	20
Wiltshire	x	x	50	60

ENDS