

**An exploration of Black boys' experiences of school exclusion**

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## Abstract

The number of suspensions and permanent exclusions in UK schools has continued to accelerate in recent years, with the exception of the Coronavirus pandemic, which caused national restrictions and impacted recordings in 2020/21. Secondary schools are the main driver for increases and Black boys are one overrepresented group who are disproportionately excluded and more likely to attend a Pupil Referral Unit (DfE, 2023). This longstanding issue, its underlying reasoning and the implications for exclusion are documented in literature from a host of adult perspectives, however there is a lack of existing research established on the views of those who are subject to the phenomenon. Research shows that the experience of exclusion has a negative impact on pupil educational attainment, emotional well-being, future career and health prospects. This research aims to make sense of Black boys' school exclusion experiences as a marginalised, vulnerable group according to Critical Race and Intersectional Theories.

Individual semi-structured interviews were carried out with three boys who had been removed from secondary mainstream school and educated in alternative provision. The data was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to highlight personal lived experience. Analysis of the individual findings led to the construction of the following Group Experiential Themes about exclusion: it is experienced as 'emotionally laborious', 'conflicting and confusing', a 'fight for survival', an 'unfair eventuality' and one where they are 'dependent on people'.

In exploring the experiences of some Black boys excluded from school, this research provides valuable insight into to how this group can be heard, understood within their

intersectional context and better supported by professionals in education and the wider system within which they exist. This research highlights implications for the ongoing need to protect and promote the best interests of Black boys who are at risk of or have been excluded from school.

**Key terms:** Black, mixed-race, boy, school exclusion, alternative provision, pupil experience



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**List of Abbreviations**

AP	Alternative Provision
CASP	Critical Appraisal Skills Programme
CCW	Community Cultural Wealth
CRT	Critical Race Theory
DfE	Department for Education
EP	Educational Psychologist
GET	Group Experiential Theme
LA	Local Authority
LRQ	Literature Review Question
PET	Personal Experiential Theme
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
RQ	Research Question
SEMH	Social Emotional and Mental Health
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

# 1. Introduction

Research into exclusion is important to promote the opposite – inclusion.

## 1.1 Chapter overview

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce and raise awareness of the exclusion experiences of Black boys and provide a rationale for further research into this area. It will outline key terminology and show how Black boys are represented within the national exclusion data. The introduction will provide an overview of relevant exclusion policy, legislation and literature. Theoretical frameworks will be used to make sense of exclusion within the context of race. The researcher's positioning and relevance of the research to the field of Educational Psychology will also be discussed. This will contribute to providing a rationale for the study and declaration of the research objectives.

## 1.2 Key Terminology

Exclusion is defined as the denial of access to a particular school (Blyth & Milner, 2002). The Oxford Dictionary defines exclusion 'as the act of preventing someone or something from entering a place or taking part in something' (Waite, 2012). This research study uses the term 'exclusion' to represent the denial of access to education at a particular school where a pupil cannot study there for a fixed period or permanently.

In the UK, there are two types of lawful exclusion from school:

- A suspension, formerly known as a 'fixed term exclusion', is where a pupil is temporarily removed from a school (for a maximum of up to 45 days, including part of the day, in an academic year) (DfE, 2023c). Educational policies and use of terminology have changed over time, since reforms as part of the Pupil Exclusion and Reviews legislation (School Discipline, 2012). Suspension will be used for the purposes of this study in line with latest guidance (DfE, 2023c).
- A permanent exclusion also called 'expulsion' or to be 'expelled' is when a pupil is no longer allowed to attend a school (unless reinstated by the headteacher) (DfE, 2023c).

There are also processes that can take place prior to a permanent exclusion in an aim to prevent this:

- A 'managed move' is the process which leads to the transfer of a pupil from one mainstream school to another permanently (DfE, 2023c).
- 'Off-site direction' is a disciplinary measure and the temporary placement of a pupil in another educational setting to improve their behaviour when intervention and targeted support have not been successful within the school (DfE, 2023c).
- 'Alternative Provision' covers education arranged by Local Authorities (LAs) for pupils who would not otherwise receive suitable mainstream education because of exclusion, illness or other reasons (DfE, 2013). When pupils are permanently excluded, they may go onto attend a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) as a form of Alternative Provision (AP). There has been a recent (DfE, 2023a) government review of AP which is discussed later in this chapter.

The use of the term 'Black' as a social construct of race is not without critical analysis. Race is an ideological construct, and not a biological marker of difference, which makes up part of social identity (Boakye, 2019; Williams et al., 2015). For the purpose of this study, 'Black' will be used to describe people of African and/or Caribbean heritage, including those of mixed-race ancestry with one biological parent of African-Caribbean descent (Gaine, 2005). Within the UK context, current practice groups people of African descent into categories: Black, Black British, Black Welsh, African or Caribbean, Other Black (ONS, 2021).

### **1.3 Exclusion Statistics**

School exclusions in the UK have been on a steady rise since 2013 and the national picture shows a spiked profile in the last five years (Daniels et al., 2022). Department for Education reports show permanent exclusions remained at around 7,900 between 2016 and 2019, before falling to 6,500 during the post-pandemic academic year 2021 to 2022 (DfE, 2023d). Between 2022 and 2023, there were 9,400 permanent exclusions and 787,000 suspensions, making them the highest annual numbers on record (DfE, 2024d). The statistics are questionable due to the number of unrecorded exclusions (off-rolling) where pupils are removed from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion. National statistics show a longstanding trend for particular groups of children who are more likely to be excluded from school. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are four times more likely to experience exclusion than peers from higher socioeconomic groups (Weale, 2023). Other protected characteristics show significant inequalities in both suspension and exclusion rates. Suspension and exclusion rates peak during secondary school. At



age 14 years, rates are higher among pupils with Special Educational Needs (with and without an Education and Health Care Plan) and boys are excluded nearly three times more than girls (DfE, 2024d). Exclusion rates also vary by ethnicity: Gypsy and Roma pupils have the highest rates of suspensions and exclusions. When ethnicity is broken down further, rates remain high for Black and Black dual heritage, Black and White Caribbean pupils more than two and a half times more likely to be permanently excluded than their White peers (DfE, 2021). 'Persistent disruptive behaviour' continues to be the most common reason for the grounds of exclusion. Despite government initiatives for change, the problem remains and is more prevalent for identifiable groups (Power & Taylor, 2018).

The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic (covid-19) suggests figures for this period need to be interpreted with caution. Between the academic school years of 2019 to 2021, schools were subject to national lockdowns which restricted the access to full-time education for many pupils. This had implications for pupil attendance alongside the reporting of exclusion. According to the Coalition report, there has been a 30% increase in suspensions post-pandemic more sharply for children from disadvantaged backgrounds including those with social workers and SEND (Weale, 2023). Review of school exclusions showed repeat suspensions are a big predictor for future permanent exclusions (Timpson, 2019).

#### **1.4 National Context and UK Legislation**

This section will discuss relevant legislation, guidance and departmental advice regarding school exclusion in the UK. This will include the duty held by schools

around exclusion processes, the importance of non-discriminatory practice and provision of SEND support.

- The Education Act (2002;2011) and Inspections Act (2006) set out the law for steps which are to be taken by a Headteacher when excluding a pupil and making alternative arrangements for their education.
- The Equality Act (2010) sets a legal duty on education providers not to discriminate against pupils on the basis of protected characteristics including race (colour, nationality and ethnic origins).
- Departmental advice for school staff, governing bodies and local authorities charge schools to ensure pupils of all races are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment (DfE, 2014). This includes schools 'imposing stricter disciplinary penalties on African Caribbean boys' compared to children from other backgrounds in similar circumstances as an example of unfair practice.
- The Children and Families Act (2014) sets out reforms for all children and young people to succeed irrespective of their background, history or level of need.
- The SEND Code of Practice (2014) emphasises the duty for organisations to consider the voices of children, young people and their families when making decisions to promote positive educational and developmental outcomes.

Despite legislation and guidance, research has found unofficial exclusions continue to occur as do the creation of policies which discriminate against male pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with SEND (Office of the Children's

Commissioner 2013; 2019). This suggests a widespread disregard of social identity factors such as race in the exclusion of pupils.

The government's SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan (2023a) upholds the existing SEND legal framework to improve outcomes for children and experiences for families and address issues concerning the AP sector. Research shows over 80% of children and young people in AP funded by the state have recognised SEND (DfE, 2023b) which has implications for national and local resource allocation during planning and delivery. Reforms build upon visions set out in The Green Paper (DfHE, 2017) and are embedded throughout the Plan to support pupils to remain in mainstream education and offer alternative provision on a time-limited or transitional basis. Proposals are set for a three-tier model of intervention by 2025, which will include the provision of targeted support for SEMH needs; staff support to address challenging behaviour; and the re-engagement of pupils in education to reduce preventable exclusion.

The Behaviour in Schools (2024) non-statutory guidance states that preventative measures should be considered by headteachers prior to exclusion and this includes off-site outreach support or managed moves based on the understanding to improve behaviour whilst also addressing potential SEND/health needs. Schools are expected to consider contextual contributing factors in response to an incident and adopt a range of systematic strategies involving pastoral staff, parents/carers and mentors and engage with local agencies to address specific underlying challenges (DfE, 2018). Although schools have autonomy in setting behavioural policies, guidance emphasises the importance of establishing a school culture with high

expectations to benefit pupils and staff alike, fostering a safe, calm and supportive environment for optimal learning (DfE, 2013).

National guidance documents show how educational settings are expected to adopt non-discriminatory practices and follow procedures in aid of promoting best outcomes for all children and preventing exclusionary practices. However off-rolling, high rates of exclusion, prolonged duration of alternative provision and low rates of reintegration continue to be prevalent issues suggesting an incongruence between guidance on school practice and pupil experience (Boyd, 2019; Daulby, 2020; Timpson, 2019).

### **1.5 Outcomes and impact of school exclusion**

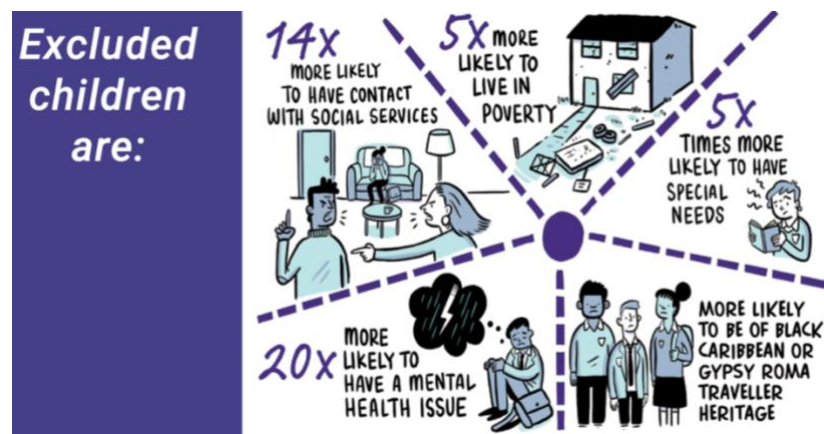
Exclusion from school is associated with negative short- and long-term outcomes from individual to organisational levels. Research shows links to devastating effects on life outcomes for pupils evident in lower attainment (Power & Taylor, 2018), higher likelihood of unemployment and criminal activity involvement (Williams & Papadopoulou, 2012), impaired relationships and poorer mental health (Gill et al., 2017). Associated negative outcomes are recognised by the media reports which document excluded pupils are twice as likely to be known to Children's Social Services, have grown up in poverty and seven to ten times more likely to suffer under-recognised learning or mental health problems (Gill et al., 2017; Weale, 2023). Research indicates they are one of the most complex yet vulnerable groups in society.

Research exploring the views of young people directly regarding their lived experience of school exclusion found damaging impacts on their personhood and relationships with school staff (Murphy, 2022). Findings highlight how exclusion negatively impacts child self-esteem, confidence and development of core relating skills (Bovell, 2022; Caslin, 2021).

From a wider perspective, the exclusion of pupils from school is a taxing experience for families and costly a practice for society. Research has found parents/carers reported experiences of feeling unsupported, misinformed and blamed for their child's exclusion (Children's Commissioner 2019). The cost for each child excluded is predicted around £370,000 over their lifetime including factors such as loss of income, imprisonment, welfare reliance and associated health costs (IPPR, 2023).

### Figure 1

*Contextual experiences of pupils excluded from school (The Difference, 2023 p4).*



### **1.5.1 The historical, educational and societal exclusion of Black boys**

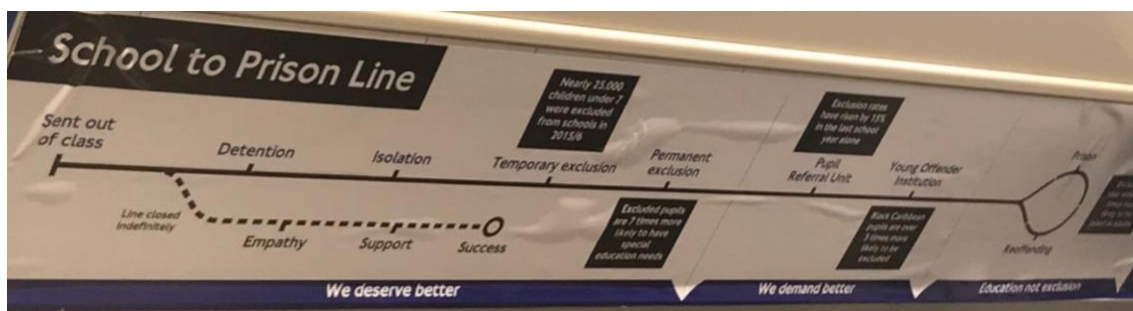
School exclusion is a prevalent issue that has further complex ramifications for Black boys dating back over 40 years in history. The Black Lives Matter movement (2013) raised the issue of publicised deaths of Black people in the United States and made links to how social inequalities affect Black boys in education, who are at greater risk of exclusion from school (Carmicheal-Murphy, 2020). Government responses to investigate and tackle ethnic disparities in education and exclusion have been on the national agenda for many years (DfSE, 2006; DfE, 2019, Stewart-Hall et al., 2023). Literature shows at a national level, Black Caribbean and Mixed-Race boys are one group who are over-represented in exclusion statistics and disproportionately make up PRU populations. Black boys have historically been susceptible to societal and educational exclusion and barriers to achievement (Demie & McClean, 2017; MoJ, 2016). Black boys in London are more likely to be stopped, searched and restrained by police, face imprisonment and higher custodial sentences (DfE, 2024c; HMIP, 2021). Almost five decades after Bernard Coard's (1971) writings on the educational sub-normalisation of West Indian children by the British school system since the early migration of Black Caribbean people, low attainment and dispersion of Black and Asian children across education settings outside of their local area ("bussing") has developed into exclusion from school and placement within APs within contemporary society.

Despite the abolishment of 'Educationally Subnormal Schools' as an official category, by the Education Act 1981, Black pupils continued to be over-represented in the AP sector (Swan Report, 1985). The 'PRU-to-prison pipeline' is a term used to describe the pathway for young people from school exclusion to entry into prison – see figure

2. The image depicts the following sequence of events: sent out of class, detention, isolation, temporary exclusion, permanent exclusion, pupil referral unit, young offender institution, prison and reoffending as a perpetuating cycle. Correlations between exclusion from school and experience of the youth justice system is a disparity for Black and mixed heritage boys within the UK (HMIP, 2021). Research highlights how for many Black, working-class youth in London exclusion from school ends up as a criminalised perception, record and inclusion within the prison system (Perera, 2020).

## Figure 2

*Image of the school-to-prison pipeline pathway illustrated by a student campaign group using a Transport for London tube map (Empathy not Exclusion, 2018).*



Exclusion affects Black pupils from ages four to 16 years old across social class groups (Gillborn & Demack, 2018; Rollock et al., 2014) and exclusion rates for boys being higher than girls suggests intersectional issues of gendered racialisation (DfE, 2024d). Research found exclusion rates were higher in schools where Black pupils were in a small minority compared to when they made up majority of the pupil population (Graham et al., 2019). Rates are seemingly higher in academy schools where Black pupils are excluded at almost double the rate of Black pupils in LA maintained schools (Gillborn & Drew, 2010). This suggests that substantial numbers of Black pupils may not be receiving appropriate targeted support based on the context of their educational setting.

Studies exploring the views of Black African Caribbean pupils who have experienced exclusion concluded themes of perceived unfairness, lack of care and low teacher expectations (Demie, 2022; Okonofua and Eberhardt, 2015). Pupils shared lived examples of feeling under surveillance by teachers and disciplined more harshly than their peers and this suggests that systemic factors like varied school policies and psychodynamic factors like unconscious bias can discriminate against Black pupils (Gilliam, 2016; Stewart-Hall et al., 2023). Although trends show the exclusion gap has somewhat narrowed when overall exclusions have fallen (2006-2011) (DfE, 2017; Timpson 2019), the social inequality gap and racial disparities remain established for Black boys in a way not apparent for any other group.

### **1.6 Theoretical Considerations**

Critical Race Theory (CRT), Intersectionality Theory and social GRRRAACCEEESSS are psychological theories and frameworks offered to explore and make sense of school exclusion within the context of race.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a USA developed framework which explains the role of race and racism in society (Gillborn, 2006). CRT can be applied within the context of British education as a social institution embedded in laws, practices and policies that perpetuate racial inequality (Wright et al., 2016). This can be applied to understand the overrepresentation of Black boys in exclusion statistics, underachievement and alternative provision placement. Theorists argue racism lies beneath the surface of social norm practice, yet only the crudest forms of obvious racism are viewed most problematic (Gillborn, 2015). CRT considers people of Colour as a marginalised



group subject to systemic inequalities challenged by systems of power and oppression. As a marginalised and vulnerable group, CRT encourages the storytelling of people of Colour's lived experiences to challenge dominant narratives about disparities such as exclusion. Within the context of race and education, Black Caribbean boys are often excluded on the grounds of disruptive behaviour, predicted lower academic attainment, and perceptions of them as threatening which reinforces harmful stereotypes and can result in more punitive disciplinary action (Boyd, 2019; Sevon, 2022). CRT disagrees with counter 'colour-blind' approaches and aims to prioritise raising awareness of the experiences of ethnic minority individuals to better understand the role of race in everyday society (Gillborn, 2015; Tate IV, 1997). This links close to Intersectionality Theory by recognition that the multiplicity of social identity shapes understanding of individuals' experiences of oppression and privilege.

Intersectionality Theory stems from a concept first presented by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) in response to the lived experiences of oppression for many individuals, particularly women of African American ethnicity. The framework of intersectionality acknowledges the multiple ways that race and gender oppression can be encountered as double discrimination. Origins in Black feminist critiques can be applied to understand exclusion within the context of Black boys by considering the multidimensional social inequality along axes of gender, race, socioeconomic background, ability etc. (Gross et al., 2016). Empirical research described above shows how pupils of particular social groups are at risk of poor outcomes within and beyond the education system. Intersectionality advances understanding of educational inequalities by exploring the intersect of axes as continuums of individual

identity and how they mutually constitute each other within a wider socio-political context.

The SOCIAL GRACES model (Burnham, 2013) can be used to further explain how aspects of difference are impacted by power. The acronym stands for features of identity (gender, geography, race, religion, age, ability, appearance, class, culture, ethnicity, education, employment, sexuality, sexual orientation, spirituality). The multiplicity of social identities can also vary by how individuals perceive themselves in relation to others and how they are positioned by others/society (Luft & Ingham, 1961). Aspects such as race, age and gender are visible identity markers which have implications for likelihood and experience of school exclusion out of an individual's control.

One way to make sense of Black boys' experiences is to consider the intersect between components of self, such as age and race. The highest rates of exclusion occur during adolescence, which is a key stage within child development where neurological changes occur which affect the formation of identity and social relationships (French et al., 2006). During adolescence risk taking behaviours are the product of high reward seeking, low impulse control and subject to peer influence (Steinberg et al., 2015). Young people can have an underdeveloped cognitive ability to think through the implications of their choices. Secondary schools may be less tolerant towards seemingly deviant behaviours and attitudes by pupils, whilst under organisational pressures to obtain high attainment results with inadequate provision to support adolescent developmental needs (Webster & Blatchford, 2019). Findings indicate the importance in considering the overlap between age and interpretation of

behaviour based on race which can affect a pupils' likelihood or experience of exclusion.

From a systemic lens, intersectionality can also be applied to understanding how Black boys excluded from school exist within and therefore are impacted and influenced by social contexts such as family, the school system and behaviour policies (DfE, 2019). Many pupils exist in schools and academies where they face harsh repercussions for what is termed 'challenging behaviour' in response to zero tolerance behaviour policies (Cassidy & Jackson, 2005; Stewart-Hall et al., 2023; DfE, 2019). Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality help make sense of the multidimensionality of school exclusion as a social justice issue, by contextualising what people are like within the historical, societal and structural processes they exist in.

### **1.7 Research relevance to the Educational Psychology Profession**

The exclusion of Black boys is an under-researched area in the literature and a prevalent issue within the diverse context of UK schooling. Educational Psychologists (EPs) encounter diverse children, young people, their families and school systems as service users for statutory and non-statutory purposes. EPs support children and young people experiencing barriers to their learning using consultation, intervention, assessment, training and research across individual, group and organisational levels. EPs use their knowledge and skills in child development, psychological theory and research to foster positive outcomes for children and young people across developmental areas.

In the context of exclusionary practices, EPs are well placed to promote social justice, anti-discriminatory practice and inclusion for all in education and developmental outcomes (Frederickson & Cline, 2015, HCPC 2023; SEND CoP, 2015). This relates to the need for EPs to be aware of issues related to the overrepresentation of Black boys excluded from school and their worldview of the experience as a form of cultural competence and ethical responsibility (Sakata, 2021). Research exploring Educational Psychologists' views on overrepresentation in exclusion found systemic issues in becoming involved with Black Caribbean boys shortly before they were excluded, witnessing differential treatment in comparison to behaviour management for White Middle Class boys and a theme of unassessed needs (Demie, 2021). This has implications for EPs offering supportive challenge, being a critical friend to discriminatory practice and maintaining curiosity when working with schools who refer Black boys for EP involvement.

### **1.8 Researcher Position**

The researcher's interest in the experiences of Black boys excluded from school is based on an interaction between professional and personal factors. The researcher has previous experience of working in Learning Support Assistant (LSA) roles in schools supporting Black boys who have additional learning and social needs, with complex early childhood and family background histories. Interest in supporting young Black boys in primary education matured when the researcher embarked on the journey to become an Educational Psychologist. This trainee experience gave the researcher what felt like 'permission' to recognise the disparities within the education system, especially regarding Black boys' attainment and overrepresentation in exclusionary practices at secondary school stage. Curiosity

and passion for this topic were also stimulated by a shared aspect of identity – race. The researcher is a Black person who connects with the pain of the negative outcomes for Black boys whilst being driven by a cultural-relational passion to improve outcomes using research. The researcher is aware of the prospect for bias in analysis and interpretation, thus high levels of reflexivity are considered throughout the study.

### **1.9 Local Context**

Suspension and permanent exclusion rates are varied across local authorities and regions. The current study has been conducted within two Inner London Local Authorities. Inner London has the lowest permanent exclusion rate (0.02<sup>1</sup>) (DfE, 2024d). Rates for Black pupils excluded within the local authorities included in this research ranged from 0.02 to 0.05 (permanent) and 1.25 to 3.03 (suspension) (DfE, 2024d). Whilst local rates are lower than the national average, figures are advised to be interpreted with the understanding that ethnic group population sizes vary.

Collectively the LAs have three secondary PRU sites which are commissioned and a number of other AP providers. Provisions associated to this study are of a smaller class size to mainstream schools with increased levels of pastoral and some specialist support. The PRUs share similar referral processes and ethos – Local Authority A aims to work closely with young people to support their development and learning for further education or training and Local Authority B provides assessment,

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<sup>1</sup> The rate indicated in brackets is the number of exclusions as a proportion of an overall school population per 100 pupils. 0.01 is equivalent to 1 exclusion for every 10,000 pupils.

intervention, guidance and support for young people complemented by expertise in SEMH. Both provide alternative education for young people at risk of or permanently excluded and are part of LAs' commitment to working closely with schools to reduce exclusions.

### **1.10 Summary and Research Objectives**

Historically, nationally and locally, Black boys are over-represented in exclusion statistics and are disproportionately represented in PRUs. Therefore this is a social justice issue which continues to need sustained attention - an important area of study. There is a lot of existing information available on representation of Black boys in exclusion statistics, however there is a lack of exploratory research which seeks outcomes through exploration. Due to the impact and disparities evident by the exclusion of Black boys from school, this study will seek to explore and better understand their own experiences. The research will add to current knowledge within the EP profession and has potential application beyond the research context for stakeholders, communities and Black boys themselves.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Chapter Introduction

The previous chapter provided context and rationale for this study. The aim of this chapter is to systematically find, evaluate and synthesize research within the literature concerning the experiences of Black males who have been subject to school exclusion. The process of critically reviewing existing literature will help to build an evaluative argument and identify gaps suggesting the need for further research.

Originally when exploring this area, the scoping review was intended to examine previous research relating to the exclusion experience from children and young people's points of view, however results yielded were too extensive and drifted from the population in question. Then Black males specifically were considered, however too few results were yielded. Removing the context of school indicated less educational and age relevance in the findings. As a result, the search was extended to include all Black students (boys and girls) and kept race as a driving, specified term. The process of identifying search terms and making adaptations was informed by the Richardson et al., (1995) Population Intervention/exposure Concern Context (PICOC) framework and is illustrated in table 1 below:

**Table 1***Search term selection*

<b>Question scope</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Concern</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Scope search outcome</b>
<b>1</b>	Young people	experience	exclusion	school	Too wide
<b>2</b>	Black boys	experience	exclusion	school	Too narrow
<b>3</b>	Black boys	experience	exclusion	-	Less relevance
<b>4</b>	Black	experience	exclusion	school	Details to follow

The Literature Review Question (LRQ) posed: **‘What does the literature say about Black children and young people’s experiences of school exclusion?’**. The review aims to understand the views of young people based on their experiences of exclusion. Results from the LRQ enabled the development of the research question for this study which has potential to strengthen existing knowledge and provide new learnings for the network of educational professionals and service users. Further information about the methods, findings and conclusion is provided in the subsequent sections.

## **2.2 Search Strategy**

A comprehensive search to locate evidence was conducted on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 using Web of Science (WoS) and EBSCO host online tools. The following databases: Web of Science Core Collection, KCI-Korean Journal Database, MEDLINE, Preprint Citation Index, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Citation Index, SciELO Citation Index, APA Psych Info, ERIC, Education Source and Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection were selected as relevant.



On April 29<sup>th</sup> 2024, the search was repeated for replicability and review purposes to ensure the most up-to-date publications were considered. No further papers met the requirements for research so were not added to the review. A second hand-search was completed using Google Scholar and a snowballing approach to unearth additional materials and ensure all relevant articles were considered. Searches were completed separately then combined to produce a final selection of papers for systematic review.

Table 2 illustrates the key terms used to conduct the initial search. Individual terms were merged with the Boolean operator “OR” and all terms were combined with operator “AND”. Two to three alternative terms were used within the final search as multiple Boolean operators were observed to disrupt the data results. Quotation marks were used for key phrases such as “Black” to guarantee precise terminology was contained within the search. Asterisks were used to truncate words so that associated words could be found within the search. Terms were searched for in titles or abstracts to narrow the search range and discount irrelevant articles. Equivalent subject searches were also applied.

**Table 2***Literature review search terms*

<b>Search term</b>	<b>Subject mapping term</b>	<b>Key word search terms</b>	<b>Search applied to</b>
1	“Black”	OR African OR Caribbean	Title or abstract
2	“Experience**”	OR perception* OR view*	Title or abstract
3	“Exclusion”	OR exclud* OR suspen* OR expulsion	Title or abstract
4	“School”	OR educat* OR classroom OR learning	Title or abstract

The following searches were run:

Search 1: combined searches 1 to 4 using EBSCO host

Search 2: combined searches 1 to 4 using Web of Science

Search 3: hand search and snowballing techniques reviewing relevant articles reference lists

### **2.2.1 Limiters, Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

The application of limiters and vetting criteria are designed to further funnel research chosen. The limiter rationale is discussed below:

Articles without immediate access to ‘full-text’ were considered after an initial lack of search results. Alternative methods to access records were considered, including contacting the author directly and using library facilities to access original journals. Non-peer reviewed journals were evaluated considering the shortage of findings and potential publication bias. The decision to include peer reviewed journals was based

on the aims to accurately represent young people's voices according to the quality assurance research process. Initial searches limited records to within the last 11 years (2013 – 2024), however the results were few. In order to widen the scope beyond contemporary findings, articles published within the last 21 years (between 2003 and 2024) were screened. The review does not aim to produce an exhaustive list of Black exclusionary material, rather present a relevant and comprehensive account of literature which discovers Black young people's experiences of exclusion. Only studies within the UK were selected because the context of this research is situated within the UK education system.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were used to establish the appropriateness of studies once articles were screened by title, abstract and limiters applied. This is illustrated in table 3 below:

**Table 3***Literature review inclusion and exclusion criteria*

	<b>Inclusion criteria</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>
<b>Type of study</b>	Full text articles Peer reviewed journals	Restricted access to articles Not peer reviewed
<b>Location and time</b>	English language  UK based including Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland  Published 2003 -2024	Not written in English  Based outside of the UK  Published before 2003
<b>Scope</b>	Relevance to school exclusion  Includes experiences of Black students  Focus on pupil experiences  Empirical research (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods)	Lack of relevance to exclusion from education  No reference to pupils in education settings  Centralises views of those not subject to the experience  Studies from which the data of Black participants cannot be extracted  Non-empirical research including theoretical, political and opinion pieces

There were several decision points during the process of including and eliminating research found. Studies were limited to the experiences of children and young people of African-Caribbean heritage. Scoping young people's views without any identity discrepancy deviated away from the topic in question and population of focus. The scoping review suggested that lived experiences needed to be explored

more within actual practice as opposed to existing literature about the phenomenon of exclusion. Several resulting articles excluded described practice out of the UK, namely USA, Canada and South Africa. These were not considered relevant to the UK EP working context, education and associated policies.

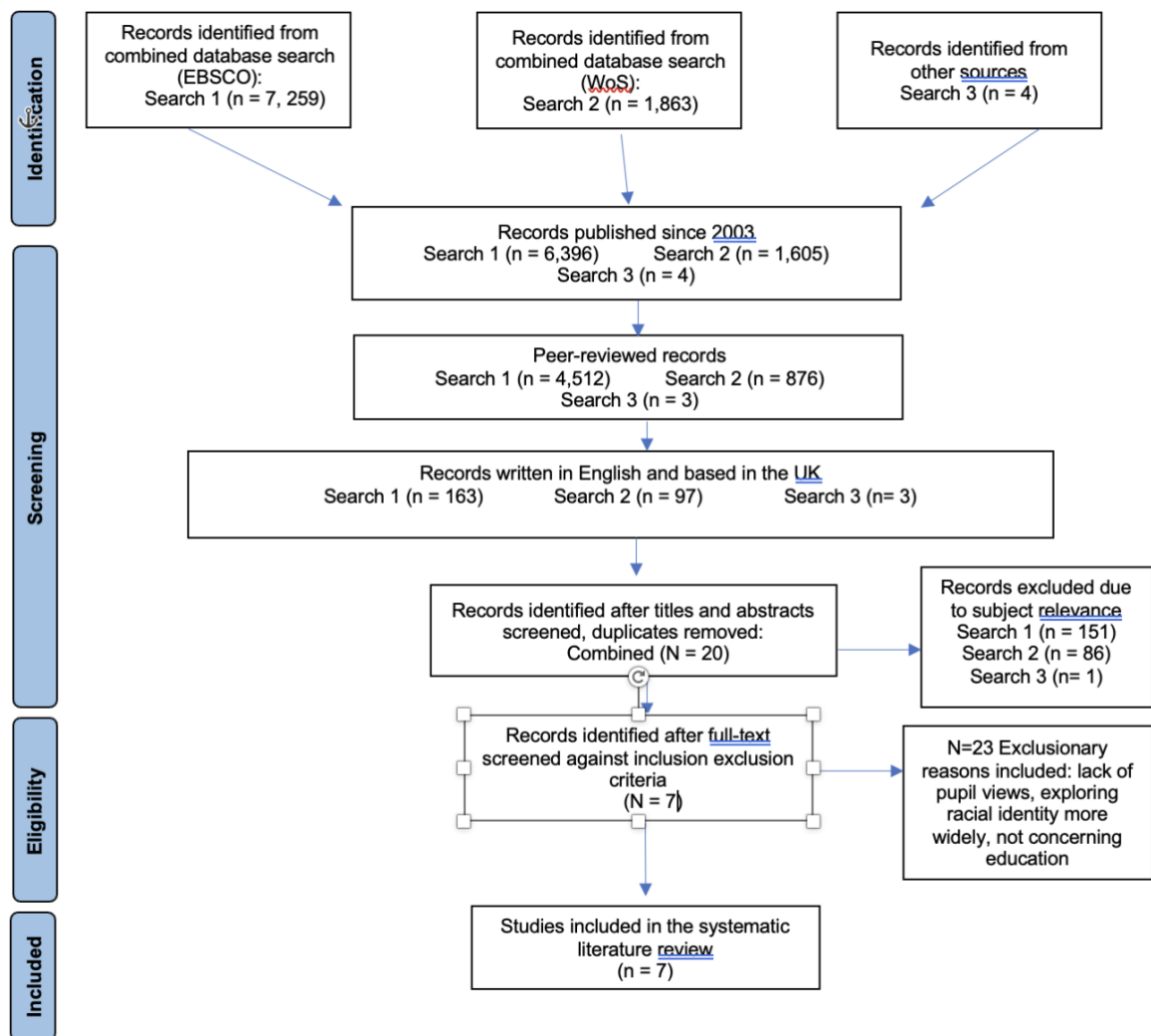
### **2.2.2 Search returns**

The systematic literature search returned a total of 8,126 records (search 1 = 7,259, search 2 = 1863, search 3 = 4). When the publication year was limited to between 2003 and 2023, results reduced to a total of 8,005 (search 1 = 6,396, search 2 = 1,605, search 3 = 4). When 'peer reviewed papers' was applied as a limiter, 5,391 results were yielded (search 1 = 4,152, search 2 = 876, search 3 = 3). Articles were then filtered based on being written in English and based within the UK (including England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), resulting in 263 papers (search 1 = 163, search 2 = 97, search 3 = 3). Individual articles were then sifted through by reviewing the title and abstract for relevance, resulting in 22 papers in total (search 1 = 12, search 2 = 11 search 3 = 2) after duplicates were removed. Seven articles resulted after full-texts were screened using inclusion and exclusion criteria. A final seven records were selected for the systematic review (Bei & Knowler, 2022; Boyd, 2021; Crozier, 2006, Demie, 2021, Howarth, 2004, Wright, 2010, Wright at al., 2016) and the full reference list is available in Appendix A.

The systematic review process was conducted in line with the Preferred Reporting of Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) guidance (Moher et al., 2009) illustrated in Figure 3 below. PRISMA guidance strengthened, supported and streamlined the decision-making process.

Figure 3

PRISMA representation for selected studies



### 2.2.3 Critical Appraisal

Selected studies from the literature review were compared using Microsoft Excel to scope, plot and summarise key information. Studies were also evaluated using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP, 2018) and the Weight of Evidence (Long et al., 2002). These checklists were used to establish the quality and relevance of the research in a replicable and reliable way, with emphasis on meaning, context and depth (Long et al., 2002). Due to the methodological approach adopted by all

studies, these tools were deemed appropriate to match the criterion. The template of questions aided the process of critical analysis. A copy of the checklists, sample of analysis notes and screenshot of Excel spreadsheet are available in Appendix B, C, D.

### **2.3 Overview and analysis of literature**

All the studies in this literature review used qualitative methodologies. The earliest study by Howarth (2004) explored experiences of school inequality for excluded young people and their significant others using an ethnographic approach and found how representations maintain racialized school exclusion patterns. Wright (2010) also adopted an ethnographic approach over two years, which focused on the experiences of Black and mixed heritage YP in the British education system within the context of overrepresentation in school exclusions and attainment underperformance. This research investigated processes which led to the exclusion of secondary school children from school and found teachers' perceptions, constructions and interactions affected educational outcomes and perceived experiences for children. Demie (2021) also investigated the reasons for the demographic overrepresentation of Black Caribbean in exclusion statistics as well as the experiences of exclusion from schools in England. This research found similar reasons for exclusion based on teachers' low expectations, institutional racism, labelling and wider systemic issues of training and lack of diversity within the school workforce.

From a more positive stance, Wright et al., (2016) explored how young Black men despite negative school experiences including exclusion and low attainment,

transform school failure into personal and educational success. Findings showed how young people access different forms of capital (family and organisational agents) to cultivate a 'turnaround narrative' promoting possibility.

Crozier (2005) investigated the experiences of African-Caribbean and mixed-race young people subject to different types of exclusion through parents/carers' perspectives. Findings showed how negative school experiences like exclusion had adverse implications on child motivation, feelings of rejection and were linked to educational underachievement.

Boyd (2021) explored Black boys' experiences of exclusion and reintegration back into mainstream secondary school and found three overarching themes: negative and positive relationships with schools, managing adult perceptions and self-identity and inclusive environments.

Bei & Knowler (2022) explored the experience of 'off-rolling' as a form of exclusionary practice, using counter-storytelling to illuminate the experiences of Black children.

With regards to the type of exclusion experienced by young people in the studies, Bei & Knowler (2022) studied off-rolling also known as dual-registration, Boyd (2021) studied suspension/fixed-term exclusion, Howarth (2004) and Wright et al., (2016) studied permanent exclusion and Crozier (2005) covered internal exclusion from class, a visit or school. However, Demie (2021) and Wright (2010) did not specify which school exclusion findings referred to. This can be critiqued as missing

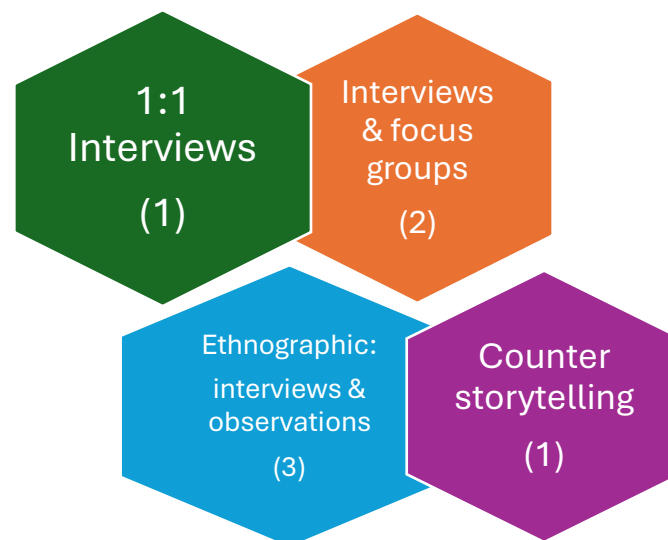


contextual information makes drawing relational themes between research challenging. This can also be considered reflective of the changes in use of terms by DfE guidance over recent years (DfE, 2023) However, overall findings show despite the type or stage of exclusion, connections within and between systems were influential on perceptions of experience.

The diagram below illustrates studies' adoption of qualitative methodologies:

**Figure 4**

*Qualitative methodologies*



The most common qualitative methodology was ethnographic research, which was adopted in slightly different ways. Howarth (2004) and Wright (2010) both used participant observations and interviews to explore the phenomena of exclusion. However, Wright's (2010) research extracted personal accounts and disaggregated data from five schools whilst Howarth (2004) focused on young people and nominated stakeholders (e.g. parents/carers, teachers and siblings). Howarth's (2004) methodology lacked detail on the study duration with more focus on emancipatory aims, whilst Wright's (2010) research lasted two years (1998-2000).

Ethnographic research has strengths in gaining holistic views from the wider network, however broad observations (meetings, classrooms, judicial reviews) can be criticised for observer bias and generalisability (Yourker, 2005).

Review of the literature found one-to-one interviews (Boyd, 2021) and the counter story telling approach (Bei & Knowler, 2022) were the least commonly used method yet captured pupil views most directly. Boyd (2021) used 1:1 interviewing to capture rich detail from the voices of those subject to exclusionary experiences. The study aimed to give a personalised lens to the statistical data. Counter storytelling was chosen to convey marginalised, excluded pupils' perspectives, based on the view that systemic and institutional issues can amplify voices with power and quieten others. The data collection and analysis approach for this method was critiqued in evaluation by the authors (Bei & Knowler, 2022), due to the absence of a sample group and subsequent value of findings given the robustness in exclusion research. The researchers acknowledged the non-traditional approach taken for research enquiry and explained aims to relay themes rather than assign constructions to an individual.

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were used by Demie (2021) and Crozier (2004), with a wider sample group of parents/carers, EPs, educational staff and pupils. More data was collected using combined methods, however findings indicate discourses widened away from experiences of school exclusion to educational experiences of Black children and investigations into reasons for overrepresentation in exclusion data. For example, wider systemic issues including

lack of representation, diversity and inclusion training for EPs and teachers were key findings from Demie's (2021) research.

All studies share qualitative methodology as a thematic similarity, despite variances in how data was collected and whom from. The perspective of the sample group is considered in more detail in the following sub-section.

### **2.3.1 Experiences of exclusion based on the perspectives of: Children, young people and adults**

Despite research statistics documenting Black Caribbean boys as overrepresented in exclusion data, the purpose of this literature review was to seek out experiences of Black pupils as a larger homogenous group. The predominance of male views supports existing research conclusions that they are at greater risk. Boyd (2021) delved into the experiences of 6 males aged between 12 and 15 years old, of African Caribbean (including mixed race) heritage. Wright et al.'s (2016) original study included both males and females, however this paper focused on the experiences of twenty-one 14 to 19 year-old males who experienced permanent exclusion from school. Recruitment used a snowballing approach through community initiatives as the sample group were considered hard to reach.

Bei & Knowler (2022) depicted stories of three students in total and two were Black males. No other ethnic group or age-specific (other than school year) information was captured as the researchers did not feel it was of importance. Authors acknowledged the unsystematic design, opting for an alternative staged approach for sharing sensitive issues which may not have been gathered otherwise. Comments

resemble Boyd's (2021) limitations, as one school and parent did not consent to the research amidst concerns about criteria applicability and Black boys being targeted. Choosing not to have an identifiable sample group does have benefits for the development of constructions based on emerging collective themes rather than individual constructions. All child-focused papers studied Black boys during a key phase of development, 'adolescence', and findings concurred that their sense of self was impacted by school exclusion. All papers mentioned feelings of rejection and not belonging which impacted pupils' sense of self in a negative way, with the exception of Wright et al., (2016) who found males reasserted their identities from failure to successful attributes. Despite smaller sample sizes and lack of generalisability for the 3 studies mentioned, findings across ethnicities and ages indicate that there is much to be said by Black boys about the impact of educational disparity on them as individuals.

### **2.3.2 Experiences of exclusion based on a combination of perspectives**

Four studies explored the experiences of Black pupils alongside views of significant others with caring and teaching responsibilities (Crozier, 2005; Demie, 2021; Howarth, 2004; Wright, 2010). Literature included larger sample groups compared to those focused on child perspectives, ranging from 16 participants (Howarth, 2004) to 114 mixed Black children and teaching staff participants (Wright, 2010). Demie (2021) described views of EPs, SENCOs and other school staff alongside pupils but the explicit sharing of the pupil voice was difficult to detect and distinguish apart from a case study. Crozier (2005) gathered only parents/carers' views, which included a mixture of mothers and fathers, 11 of whom had a child subject to exclusion from either the class, a school visit or the school establishment itself. Despite larger

sample sizes yielding a larger quantity of data in comparison to smaller research, the validity of findings is questionable in relation to the phenomena of exclusion as a lived experience. However, findings highlighted the wider and negative impact of school exclusion on the system for parents/carers and professionals who recounted overall negative patterns of academic underachievement and subsequential feelings of rejection. Details of exclusion were vague and methodological designs lacked detail (see Appendix D). Multiple perspectives thickened the narrative to consider systemic implications such as lack of diversity in the workforce (Demie, 2021), the social influence of teachers' perceptions of Black children (Wright, 2010) and how the UK school culture others minority groups by set educational and social norms (Howarth, 2004). This suggests that perspectives beyond the individual add depth to the narrative about Black pupils but do not account for how individuals feel and think about the act/process of being excluded.

## **2.4 Thematic analysis of literature**

The thematic analysis of literature was undertaken using the steps outlined below:

1. Reading and re-reading the selected papers.
2. Key information relevant to helping the researcher understand the context of the study and begin to answer the research question was highlighted and annotated.
3. The Microsoft Excel spreadsheet in Appendix D was developed to include emerging themes based on individual study findings.
4. A handwritten mind map headed with key emerging themes was created to visually, flexibly and dynamically build on the analysis whilst summarising



educational underachievement revisited' makes explicit reference to the problematic nature of learning outcomes for Black children over time.

Other papers referred to being removed from education within the issue of Black underachievement (Howarth, 2004; Wright et al., 2016). Findings suggest that underachievement is a precursor to individual motivations to learn and subsequent exclusion. Parents/carers in Crozier's (2005) paper reported the undesirable implications of negative classroom experiences on child wellbeing and feelings of inclusion. Links to educational underachievement were also found by Bei & Knowler (2022) in one story whereby a student felt judged and misunderstood as a consequence of unrecognised learning needs which influenced poor levels of attainment. The story conveyed the narrative of a girl (15 years old), who experienced specific literacy difficulties yet found it hard to convey these challenges verbally, alternatively displaying instances of physical aggression. Her concerns were not shared so she was offered anger management as intervention over learning assessment or counselling to address perceived emotional needs as priority. Findings suggest that when learning challenges are not identified, needs are not investigated and SEND goes unrecognised, leaving children more susceptible to exclusion. This is supported by DfE statistics showing children with SEND are amongst the most at risk groups to be excluded (DfE, 2022).

Studies noted that underachievement stems back over 50 years (Demie, 2021; Howarth, 2004) and is associated with negative attitudes held by teaching professionals towards children and adults of colour. Both papers referred to Bernard Coard's (1971) early writing exploring the underperformance of Black males dating

back to the 1960s, when many Black Caribbean boys were labelled and subject to Educationally Subnormal schooling. Parents/carers were misled to think that by sending their children to what was portrayed 'specialist' schools, they were to receive an exceptional education when actually Black children faced 'low teacher expectations which affected the amount of effort expended and ... image of himself and his abilities' (Coard, 1971, p.25). Findings argue that blaming the individual is a barrier to creating effective social change, as well as de-politicizing school exclusion as a culturally and historically rooted practice. EPs and Headteachers in Demie's (2021) research reported occasions where Black Caribbean pupils were sent to PRUs with unrecognised SEND including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Mild to Severe Learning Difficulties (M/SLD). Additional needs were perceived as behavioural problems rather than SEND.

Despite the predominant negative experience associated with lower academic performance in males, interviews with males (14-19 years old) excluded from school revealed how low attainment and exclusion were not a barrier to their pursuit of success (Wright et al., 2016). This shows a minority of individuals can show resilience in the face of exclusionary setbacks. Therefore, patterns indicate how experiences of school exclusion are closely linked with and impacted by educational underachievement - a poorly investigated yet contributing factor. None of the studies provided statistical evidence for low attainment which makes the measure of underachievement challenging and validity questionable. All findings have implications for exclusion widening the underachievement gap and jeopardising learning development for Black children.



### **2.4.2 Relationships**

Relationships were a significant theme throughout the literature for good and bad reasons across individual, group and community levels. Relational factors served to affirm future aspirations and overcome testing times or were detrimental to individual self-concept and connection with others.

#### ***Positive relationships***

Instances of sameness and shared aspects of identity brought young people closer to supporting adults. One young person's PRU experience was enhanced when she discovered cultural commonalities with an East African adult also raised in a European country (Bei & Knowler, 2022). Similarly, Boyd (2021) found how young males felt accepted by male teachers who gave encouraging narratives about their life trajectories. Relationships with peers served to promote an inclusive environment and connections with friends were likened to family support, emulating welcoming feelings for students who reintegrated back into their mainstream school. Familial relationships served both supportive and advocating purposes (Crozier, 2005; Wright, 2016). Parents/carers felt the need to advocate for their children's SEND and reject delinquent, disaffected labels ascribed by the education system. Parental advocacy was rooted in fears of the negative trajectories affecting their children's future (Crozier, 2005). Children and young people also reported how important relationship with, and support provided by their parents/carers was transformative in helping overcome systemic barriers to achievement (Wright et al., 2016).

At a wider level, relationships within the community helped develop alternative representations of Black boys beyond the negative connotations attached to

underachievement and exclusion. Howarth (2004) found Black Supplementary Schools were an example of how Black communities educated their children to challenge discrimination and structural inequalities as well as celebrate and respect historical successes. Localised community programmes such as these fuelled social capital and research found that providing males particularly with access to mentors, advice and training opportunities contributed to improved outcomes (Wright et al., 2016). Participants in Wright et al's (2016) study described a strong sense of engagement and connection with organisations. Local Black community services were a representation of previously coined terms, 'cultural action' (Freire, 1972) and 'cultural community wealth' (Yosso, 2005). This suggests a sense of belonging was helpful for the boys as they navigated the construction of racial-cultural identities whilst trying to transform their educational and personal outcomes. This shows that damaging experiences of exclusion can be addressed through culturally responsive social interactions and group initiatives which impart knowledge, value and worth into young people. The importance of relationships is highlighted as a positive buffer giving excluded pupils an opportunity to co-construct positive self-identities.

Mothers were mentioned in the pupil views suggesting the parental relationship was held in high regard by the boys, acting as a form of support and motivation to continue in education (Wright et al., 2016). Findings from Crozier (2005), Howarth (2004) and Wright et al., (2016), indicated how parents/carers act as key facilitators to educational attainment and inclusion. Organisational and community agents promoted a sense of possibility for the boys. The research by Wright et al., (2016) highlighted how conversations reflected community connections to resilience and encouraged a culture of possibility despite the school exclusion. Males talked about

the role of their families in shaping high expectations, cultural resilience and emotional support using phrases such as they “believed in me” “there for me” “cared and wanted to help”.

### ***Negative relationships***

Relationships between young people and teachers were a prominent theme throughout the literature (Boyd, 2021; Crozier, 2005; Howarth, 2004; Wright, 2010). Research found excluded Black pupils felt under surveillance, accused and rejected (Boyd, 2021) based on interactions with teachers perceived to lack care and investment of time in building relationships (Bei & Knowler, 2022). Experiences of differential treatment linked to lower academic expectations by teachers in comparison to parents/carers (Crozier, 2005). Exclusion from school was seen by parents/carers as a negative repercussion based on misuse of teacher power, which links back to previous thematic links between underachievement and exclusion – low expectations impact practice, teaching and outcomes.

The impact of exclusion for one girl had negative implications on the relationship with her father whom she wanted to do proud (Bei & Knowler, 2022). On a group level, Black girls in Wright’s (2010) study felt singled out by teachers and disciplined differently to their peers. Howarth (2004) similarly found perceived differential treatment by teachers towards Black pupils within the classroom contributed to eventual permanent exclusion. Boyd’s (2021) extended investigation into the process of reintegration for Black males temporarily excluded, found “nothing much changed” regarding teachers’ perceptions suggesting the relationship was ‘damaged beyond repair’ in the eyes of the pupils (Bei & Knowler, 2022; Demie, 2021). In addition to

pupil-teacher relationships, strained parent-teacher interactions were found to exacerbate class-related issues. Crozier's (2005) research found parents/carers felt teachers were unwilling to engage in honest discussions about their child's progress and teachers felt anxious about confrontation with parents/carers.

Aside from school exclusion implications on relationships with individuals and between systems around them, Demie (2021) and Bei & Knowler (2022) highlighted the influence of complex relationships within the wider Black Caribbean community. This research found young people were constantly moving to live with relatives when conflict arose in their personal lives, and this resulted in displacement and lack of belonging beyond the school environment. This suggests disrupted relationships within and outside of the school were detrimental to the feelings of inclusion.

Whilst positive relationships appeared to be a protective factor for preventing or turning around pupils' experiences of school exclusion, negative relationships served to exacerbate conflict, potentially fuelling the likelihood of exclusion for Black pupils. Relational findings are difficult to generalise due to variance in the sample sizes and diversity in relationships.

### **2.4.3 The impact of stereotyping**

Stereotyping is a generalised belief about a particular category of people (Cardwell, 1996). Review of the literature revealed a theme of racial stereotyping based on overgeneralised, fixed and generally undesirable views about pupils from the same race, culture or ethnic group. Stereotype findings were both racial and gendered. Black pupils as a group were perceived as 'threatening' (Demie, 2021; Howarth,

2004; Wright, 2010) and pupils found beliefs hard to challenge because further fear could be induced. This suggests both an awareness by children and young people about power held by teaching staff. Girls were perceived as 'gangs', and described as 'aggressive', 'loud', 'feisty' and 'confrontational' (Bei & Knowler, 2022; Crozier, 2005) whilst boys were labelled as 'aggressive' and 'violent' (Demie, 2021). In addition to behavioural stereotypes, findings showed a theme around generalised views of appearance. Students were described as 'large' or 'big' and 'physically stronger', heightening ideologies and constructions of threat/fear based on judgements of appearance. Black pupils, parents/carers and EPs shared views about the damaging impact of teacher stereotyping on individual identity and behaviour (Crozier, 2005; Demie, 2021) which has harmful implications for future outcomes.

Crozier (2005) raised issues of 'hegemonic whiteness' and the pressure on girls particularly to work hard to confront salient views of femininity as docile and compliant. Males reported changes in behaviour because of perceptions by teachers (Boyd, 2021). Behavioural modifications included going out less and talking quieter leading individuals to question their identity and a need to change, inferring exclusion as a phenomenon is understood within a deficit within-child model. Collectively Black excluded pupils shared feelings of not belonging, experienced rejection and were concerned with adult perceptions despite successes in learning (Bei & Knowler, 2022; Boyd, 2021). Feelings of powerlessness and frustration in turn impacted behaviour, leading Black boys to embody troublemaking narratives and end up excluded (Howarth, 2004). Parents/carers shared fears about their child's 'spirit being broken', signifying the emotional impact on their self-concept, beliefs and

future attitudes (Crozier, 2005). This study showed how teachers' comments and underlying beliefs exemplified the re-representation of Black women (parents) as confrontational and intimidating regardless of their academic ability. These studies showed how teachers' views and underlying beliefs hold central influence and self-prophecy effects on Black pupils. Gaps in literature suggest future research could explore teacher social constructions of threat linked to Black femininity and Black masculinity.

Some studies from the literature found resilience against negative impacts of stereotyping before exclusion. Pupils reported positive experiences from intervention programmes accessed at the PRU (Boyd, 2021). Other males escaped notions of failure and did not internalise negative stereotypes to cause negative self-perceptions (Wright et al., 2016). Engagement and participation in culturally responsive intervention led by Black male staff encouraged boys to "talk about life" and feel an empowered sense of identity (Boyd, 2021). Findings concur with a Learning Mentor's view that Black pupils need to know their history in order to build a sense of identity and develop future aspirations (Demie, 2021). Males' plans to turn negative into positive suggests the stigma and stereotype of excluded males can be overturned to achieve better prospects with relational support.

Aspirational capital was used in Wright et al.'s (2016) study to describe the desire to be highly ambitious in the face of obstacles. Participants in this research referred to gaining good qualifications and decent jobs as ways of accessing such capital and overcoming exclusionary setbacks. The ethnographic nature of this study showed how positive change could be observed when explored over time. However, Howarth

(2004) and Wright (2010) also used ethnographic methods and found perceptions, constructions and interactions with Black children had a negative impact on educational outcomes and likelihood of exclusion. Howarth's (2004) research adopted a critical psychological stance to understand and challenge the prevention of exclusion, whereas Wright et al., (2016) adopted an emancipatory aim, proposing to empower and engage young men in transformative processes which concerned and affected them. Despite similarities in methodologies, differences in findings suggest implications for the varied short- and long-term effects that the act of exclusion can have on young people developing into adulthood.

#### **2.4.4 Institutional racism over time**

The Macpherson report (1999; 2002) defines institutional racism as the 'collective failure of organisations to provide professional and appropriate service to people based on their race, culture or ethnic origin. This can be seen in attitudes, behaviours and processes which discriminate and disadvantage minority ethnic people'. This links to previous findings on the theme of (racial) stereotyping Black pupils. Findings across the literature illustrate how the systemic influence of racism at large plays out in schools and encompasses the exclusionary processes, racialised attitudes and differential treatment which disadvantages Black students compared to their counterparts from other countries (Bei & Knowler, 2022; Boyd, 2021; Demie, 2021; Howarth, 2005; Wright 2010). The discussion to follow will consider articles in chronological order to depict the narrative of institutional racism over time.

Earlier findings by Howarth (2004) concluded that institutionalised discourses permeated school structures and maintained patterns of school exclusion and resistance for Black children. Before exclusion from a setting, Howarth's (2004) findings observed how Black children were excluded on multiple other levels including the Eurocentric curriculum taught, failure to recognise cultural norm differences (eye contact), neglecting cultural identities and the imposition of British education practices on others. Later research by Crozier (2005) found parents/carers felt children were picked on and treated unfairly by teachers which perpetuated a cycle of punishment and resistance by youth in attempts to challenge authority. Five years on, Wright (2010) found female pupil challenges to authority were met with further judgements about undesirable aspects of their character. This indicates how opposing, subdued responses served a protective purpose against institutional racism, whilst also perpetuating relations of power and racialised attitudes at school unknowingly.

Contrary to other research, Wright et al., (2016) focused on dynamic ways in which Black males tackle the exclusionary problem rooted in discourses of underachievement and low expectations which maintain inequality in society. Implications recognised the widening racial-ethnic and gendered gap for unemployment and poverty in Black adults, which has links to systemic school racism. Contemporary research by Boyd (2021), found how Black boys were aware but found it difficult to call out racism, feeling like schools were "trying their hardest to kick us (Black boys) out". This suggests that unconscious bias by teachers impacts how harshly Black boys feel treated in comparison to students of other ethnicities. Differential treatment for same behaviours by children of different backgrounds was



also picked up on in focus group discussion (Demie, 2021). Branding Black boys in school as 'difficult' and White boys as 'having a bad day' in response to challenging behaviour exemplified how wider negative representations by the mass media criminalising Black youth perpetuate educational environments.

Bei & Knowler (2022) continued to highlight the implication of relational injustices related to exclusionary practices for both minoritized and racialised children.

Research aimed to address historical oppressive practices and policies in education which has silenced Black excluded pupils. Counter-story telling methods provoked intentionally reflective and uncomfortable findings, written in third person to amplify marginalised group perspectives, inspire educators of colour to story tell and White educators to develop racial literacy and willingness to work through discomfoting realities. The use of exclusionary accounts can be criticised on ethical grounds, however authors counter-argue that racial justice and the promotion of inclusion for social change calls for the interrogation of dominant institutionalised narratives in such a provoking manner. A Black female pupil expressed experiences of stigma, unbelonging and lies following exclusion and reintegration back into a mainstream setting. Stories highlighted the link between discriminatory practices and unfair policies such as zero-tolerance as a form of 'sophisticated racism' (Showunmi & Tomlin, 2022). This describes processes intended to be supportive yet having the opposite effect on racialised young people. Similar to boys in Boyd's (2021) research, pupils were aware but unable to articulate how the intersection of identity with the stigma of exclusion shaped experiences of return to mainstream settings. The literature reviewed spans over a 20-year period and widespread narratives

indicate institutional racism remains a systemic issue permeating school structures and affecting Black pupils' learning, achievement and experience of exclusion.

## **2.5 Theoretical frameworks**

There were three main theories used as frameworks to structure the research exploring Black pupil experiences of school exclusion: Critical Race Theory (Bell, Freeman & Delgado, 1970), Social Representations Theory (Moscovici, 1998) and Intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1989). All of these argue the need to acknowledge racial identity within the context of exclusion and education. Research will be reviewed under theoretical themes identified:

### **2.5.1 Critical Race Theory (CRT)**

The core concept of CRT is based on the idea that race is a social construct and racism is embedded in legal systems, policies and a consequence of individual prejudice (Delgado, & Stefancic, 2023). Bei & Knowler (2022), Boyd (2021) and Wright et al., (2016) adopted a CRT analytical lens to explore the centrality of racism in everyday school practice. The ranking of racialised people at the bottom of a racial order mirrored findings for Black pupils treated more harshly than their peers. CRT was used to explain individual experiences of low expectation and stereotypes by teachers, negative interactions within the school system and broad levels of underachievement hidden beneath subtle practices. Black pupils reported experiences of discrimination based on their identity but found it difficult to articulate and challenge (Bei & Knowler, 2022; Boyd, 2021). For example, references to

groups of Black girls as 'gangs' raised questions about whether a group of White girls would have also been referred to using such language.

CRT was also used by Wright et al., (2016) to examine how Black communities collectively respond to experiences of racial inequality in education. Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) is a concept within the CRT framework used to explore the ways in which racism affects social structures and practice (Yosso, 2005). CCW conceptualises six forms of capital which communities of colour use to manage micro and macro forms of oppression: aspirational, navigational, social, restraint, familial and linguistic. Wright et al.'s (2016) findings showed how excluded males transformed school failure and exclusion into educational success using aspirational and navigational capital fostered by community provision.

### **2.5.2 Social Representations Theory (SRT)**

Social Representations Theory (SRT) (Moscovici, 1998) is concerned with understanding the ways the world influences action. Within the context of school exclusion, representations are constructed in dialogue and practice, suggesting dominant discourses have more capital to impose power. Howarth (2004) aimed to emancipate and empower excluded young people using ethnographic study through longitudinal participant observation and unstructured interviews. Collaboration with excluded young people and their significant others revealed patterns of exclusion were maintained by representations in discourse and school practice, which is influential in othering minoritized groups. The research explored the ideologies from the perspective of those involved (pupils and significant others) to shift relations of power surrounding oppression. The theory is based on a social constructionist

approach and so used various forms of data collection (interviews, telephone conversations, attendance to meetings) to understand how Black young people experience discrimination at school. Findings provided rich detail about the ways injustice impacts their sense of self and limits their learning potential.

Howarth (2004) and Bei & Knowler's (2022) findings also demonstrated the negative implications of racialised patterns for pupils who embody and conform to representations as aggressive, confrontational and disruptive – leading to exclusion from school. Rejections by young people in Boyd's (2021) and Wright et al.'s (2016) papers also found potential for agency and social change described as a 'turnaround narrative' (Harding, 2010). Though all research in this literature review can be critiqued for lack of generalisability to all Black excluded pupils. Crozier (2005) and Howarth (2004) also acknowledged the impact of being White researchers studying Black pupils and the ethical aim to establish trust in the face of difference.

### **2.5.3 Intersectionality Theory**

Intersectionality refers to the consideration of multiple social positions individuals occupy in a relational and multifaceted way rather than reduction to single categories (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Kimberly Crenshaw (1989) originated theoretical ideas about the complexity between identity and discrimination for marginalized groups. Findings from this literature review increase understanding of how different sets of racial, class and gendered identities impact and disadvantage daily school life for Black pupils at large. Wright (2010) discussed how race, class and gender interpretations combined to influence perceptions held by teachers and subsequent disciplining of Black children and young people. Students felt picked on and negatively labelled,

teachers were concerned about child social influence and Black teachers felt White teachers' constructions of Black children were judged against normative, white, middle-class views of masculinity and femininity (Bei & Knowler, 2022; Boyd, 2021; Crozier, 2005; Wright, 2010). Findings by Wright (2010) concluded issues of Whiteness as a homogenous category between Black pupils' and White teachers' opposing intersectionality principles of difference. Demie (2021) found cultural shortcomings for Black African and Caribbean families who did not have wider familial networks of support educating their children in Britain, which had implications on wider contextual factors such as inadequate housing and poverty (Demie, 2021). This suggests that the concept of Whiteness as a norm has power to affect Black academic outcomes for students. Intersectionality as both a theory and methodology can be critiqued, as ideas are based on incomplete sets of division and differences, implying no set approach for establishing how multiple discriminations interconnect and impact one another.

Later research by Wright and colleagues also explored intersectionality, using theory to describe Black males' use of capital and CCW in a positive way contrary to most research concerning exclusionary issues (Wright et al., 2016). The intersection between race, class and gender was applied to this article using the concept 'embodied intersectionality'. Males used social capital to navigate their way out of social disadvantage into economic success demonstrated by the achievement of education (good grades) and personal goals (good job and confidence). The Wright et al., (2016) paper is commendable for critical analysis of challenging the role of representation in maintaining racialised patterns of exclusion for males, however understanding of female perspectives is missing.

### ***Intersectionality continued within context***

The SOCIAL GRACES model (Burnham, 2012) is a framework for understanding multiple aspects of identity and how they shape lived experience. This model is useful when thinking about how visible, invisible, voiced and unvoiced constructs of identity are considered within the literature reviewed. Whilst some research explicitly named the influence of identity-focused theories (CRT and intersectionality) as discussed above, other studies indirectly mention aspects of identity which are key to understanding experiences and interpreting findings. Race was the key inclusion criterion for the selection of studies and a salient theme throughout the research, however participant samples showed variance. Demie (2021) explored reasons for the overrepresentation of only Black Caribbean students in exclusion data and Wright et al., (2016) sampled males of African-Caribbean heritage using snowballing methods. Boyd (2021) and Wright (2010) interviewed boys of both African and Caribbean heritage including those of mixed-race heritage. Similarly, Crozier (2005) studied African and Caribbean heritage including mixed race perspectives of parents/carers. Howarth (2004) included Black British and mixed heritage samples of young people whilst Bei & Knowler (2022) was the only study to use the term Black and racialised, purposefully withholding detail based on the research aim to illuminate collective experience over minoritized labels/identities. Despite variations in groups sampled, all shared experiences of the negative impact of exclusion on identity and relationships suggesting race is an underpinning factor to explore within research.

Wright et al., (2016) and Bei & Knowler's (2022) methodological approaches alluded to the idea that 'race' as a concept needs to be problematized to help understanding of how identity discourses maintain inequalities in society. Literature did not evaluate findings based on ethnic similarities or differences, though limitations acknowledged that findings cannot be generalised to all Black pupils. Disclosure of researcher race was shared by some studies and not others. Boyd (2021) reflected on how her positioning as a Black African and Caribbean woman impacted her connection to the sample group, whilst Crozier (2005) and Wright (2010) considered their aims to establish trust as White researchers in the face of difference when exploring a sensitive, racialised topic. This shows how both racial sameness and difference are important to acknowledge from an ethical standpoint, from carrying out data collection directly with participants to analysing and interpreting findings.

Beyond race, considering the child-in-context was integral to making sense of exclusionary experiences over time rather than incidents in isolation. The intersection between race, class and gender emerged as a theme and highlights how social constructs cannot effectively be considered in isolation. Wright (2010) looked at both Black boys and girls, finding subtle differences between genders in response to marginalisation. Boys engaged in 'face winning contests' when disciplined by teachers, whereas girls less directly confronted authority and refused instead. Girls expressed feelings of powerlessness and resorted to crying in a secluded room to avoid showing vulnerability in the face of teacher punishment. Findings indicate gendered differences in how Black pupils deal with marginalisation within the classroom environment which have implications for subsequent treatment. Most research explored Black pupils however many of the findings picked up on Black

boys' experiences, potentially highlighting the disparity in their overrepresentation in exclusion data but also highlighting a limitation for the missing voices of Black girls.

Examples of how class, race and gender identities intersected for boys is shown in Bei & Knowler (2022) and Boyd's (2021) studies. One participant story described how a chronic medical condition and change to living circumstances made school a difficult place to attend and thrive despite promising academic potential (Bei & Knowler, 2022). Other participants shared situational factors including: exclusion based on outside school incidents, sibling incarceration, homelessness, parent bereavement and other contextual safeguarding issues (Boyd, 2021). Previous discussion indicated Black masculinity was problematic for teachers and deemed threatening (Crozier, 2005; Howarth, 2004). Findings emphasise how wider societal narratives can infiltrate teacher perceptions, interactions and pupil minds about how they are categorised. This highlights the need to consider the complexity of children and young people's life circumstances when deciding to exclude (DfE, 2018).

Some Black families faced systemic issues related to housing and poverty (Bei & Knowler, 2022; Boyd, 2021; Demie, 2021). Despite this, research has shown that Black students experienced exclusion from independent and state schools (Wright et al., 2016), as well as pupils with parents/carers from a range of social class groups, employment and education statuses (Crozier, 2005). Findings suggest social class privileges did not always facilitate inclusion for Black students and show how socioeconomic status intersects to disadvantage school life. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), access to shelter is a basic psychological need which impacts child development and behaviour. Findings suggest the intersection between



race and class could be explored further to identify the influence of contextual factors on child experiences of learning and likelihood of exclusion.

Religion, culture and ability factors were considered less so throughout the literature. Examples of cultural and religious exclusion within the school environment were identified by Crozier (2005). This research found how Black Somali pupils were disciplined for not using eye contact with adults and Muslim students were disciplined for not using communal areas when preparing for sports activities. Findings suggested a need for schools to recognise cultural and religious norm differences when employing behaviour management strategies within a multicultural, British education system. Findings in relation to SEND were less apparent, yet a significant construct impacting lived realities for Black pupils. A parent was able to prevent exclusion for her 14-year-old son when she appealed on the grounds of SEN (Crozier, 2005). Conversely, one student's specific literacy difficulties were not assessed and felt to be a reason for being misunderstood and isolated from school (Bei & Knowler, 2022). Contrasting findings highlight how recognition of additional needs can serve as a protective factor for students at risk of exclusion, in doing so recognising how the invisibility of dis/ability as a construct can have negative implications.

This literature review has recognised many of the social constructs that make up identity: age, gender, sexual orientation, employment, education, ethnicity, culture, class, appearance, ability, religion and race. However, there are a number of identity parts which have not been discussed: spirituality, sexuality and geography which could be areas of further exploration for future research. Overall findings suggest

that an array of intersecting factors can disadvantage Black excluded pupils and exacerbate their experience of exclusion.

## 2.6 Summary, critique and conclusion

In summary, the LRQ posed 'what are Black pupils' experience of school exclusion?' and the following themes were identified in response:

- **Underachievement** – a historical issue for Black pupils which positively correlates with school exclusion.
- **Negative relationships** have detrimental effects on Black pupils' experiences before exclusion, and positive relationships serve restorative means following exclusion.
- **Institutional racism** – Black pupils and parents/carers feel racialised discourses and practices upkeep racial inequality in schools, increasing chances of being excluded.
- **Stereotyping** – beliefs held by teachers impact interactions with students, behaviour management and pupil constructs of self.
- **Theoretical frameworks** – Critical Race Theory, Intersectionality Theory and Social Representations Theory have been used as analytical lenses to interpret Black youth realities of oppression and resistance at school and in wider society.
- **Intersectionality and context** – Aspects of identity beyond race intersect to disadvantage Black pupils, some are more visible/voiced than others.

Based on the emerging themes on individual and wider experiences, the exclusion of Black pupils from school is still a social justice issue which needs ongoing attention. The lack of relevant literature overall is further indicative of gaps signifying the need for further exploration. This is particularly so for Black boys whose views though limited were more prevalent in the research, highlighting the racial-gender disparity evident in national data. The context of school is also important as a key social agent which influences how children construct and form their identities based on wider views held by adults in positions of power. Strong links have been made between identity and exclusionary experience which warrant further study. The lack of methodological robustness and limited participant information across research have implications for generalisability to Black pupils as a collective. Experiences will likely differ and there are a host of missing voices from Black excluded boys who did not consent or participate within the research for various reasons.

Even when research has explored experiences of all pupils excluded from mainstream school and attending a PRU, findings have noticed all participants were of Black or Mixed heritage background without purposive sampling techniques (Murphy, 2022). Similar resulting themes: negative school experiences, teacher relationship and challenges to authority indicate an overlap with the literature reviewed and strengthen the need for racialised experiences to be explored further. Whilst the exclusion of Black males has been documented for decades, review of literature over time suggests negative experiences continue but manifest in different ways and lack depth in understanding enough to promote change. Whilst themes are identifiable from existing research, more needs to be known about the extent,

similarities and differences between individual cases and how the experience of the issue remains prevalent.

For the reasons mentioned above and the identified gaps in literature, the present study aims to delve deep into the experiences of Black boys who have experienced school exclusion. Arguably research exists but critique could argue more qualitative study is needed to unearth rich and detailed information from this specific homogenous group. The current study offers a unique contribution to the literature pertaining to Black boys' views, by focusing solely on exclusion as opposed to 'reintegration following exclusion' (Boyd, 2021). The complexity and intersectionality of Blackness as a construct needs more critical research (Burrell-Craft, 2020). In order to tackle a social education issue and promote transformative change, topics need to be better understood from the perspectives of underrepresented voices who are impacted – Black boys.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter outlines the aims, purpose and processes of the research study. This includes a declaration of the research question and the associated ontological and epistemological underpinnings. The chosen research design will be described and justified with consideration for other methodological approaches. Selection and recruitment of participants will be explained along with methods of data collection and analysis. The chapter will end with a consideration for ethical issues, explore the quality of research and include reflections on researcher positioning. A summary of the research framework is provided below in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Research Framework Summary*

<b>Ontology</b>	Relativism
<b>Epistemology</b>	Constructivism
<b>Methodology</b>	Qualitative; Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
<b>Data collection</b>	Semi-structured interviews
<b>Participants</b>	Black and Mixed-Race boys aged 12-16 years excluded from mainstream secondary school and attending a Pupil Referral Unit.

#### 3.2 Research Purpose and Aims

This research served an exploratory purpose and aimed to investigate Black boys' lived experiences in relation to exclusion from school. According to a review of the current literature, there is a lack of research considering boys' views directly. The research therefore aimed to develop a sense of 'what it feels like' to experience the phenomenon of 'school exclusion' under investigation. Exploratory research aims to gather information which accounts for how something is experienced as opposed to

evaluating or explaining a phenomenon (Denscombe, 2017). The research aimed to collect information from Black boys, who are disproportionately represented in exclusion statistics, and portray their points of view. A wider aim of the research is to use findings to raise awareness and inform adults around children and young people to better understand and address the longstanding issue of exclusion.

### **Research question**

This piece of exploratory research aimed to develop on knowledge from existing literature and answer the following question:

Overarching question:

- What are the experiences of Black boys who been excluded from school?

Additional question considered:

- What does school exclusion mean for Black boys?

### **3.3 Philosophical Assumptions**

All research is rooted in a paradigm - the belief system that guides the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Understanding philosophical assumptions that underpin the research study is important because they affect the way knowledge is understood and the processes undertaken to investigate it. This section will state the ontological and epistemological stances which underpin the current research.

#### ***Ontology***

Ontology refers to the nature of truth, knowledge and beliefs about reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Ontology is concerned with ‘the study of being’ and assumptions made about the nature of reality (Crotty, 1998; Richards, 2003). Associated questions include ‘what is truth?’ and ‘does a social reality exist beyond human conceptions and interpretations?’ (Ormston et al., 2014). Ontology exists on a continuum from *realist* positions which hold the belief that there is one single truth, to *relativist* positions which propose that there are multiple truths (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The current research takes a relativist position which assumes that there are multiple realities, perspectives and beliefs. Such truths are influenced by context, evolve over time and are based on the subjectivity of experience.

This research draws attention to the realities of young people based on their own truths and meanings shared. The research does not claim quantifiable truths about the experience of school exclusion for all Black boys, but instead aims to understand how it is experienced from some boys’ points of view - multiple realities. The research study aimed to delve into different interpretations and ascribe meanings to such experiences with hopes to bring about more understanding (Willig, 2013).

### ***Epistemology***

Epistemology covers the construction of knowledge and the assumptions made about the nature of knowledge (Richards, 2003). Epistemology is concerned with “how and what we can know”, meaning assumptions made about the way in which the world is interpreted and knowledge is constructed (Willig, 2013). The chosen epistemological stance determines how researchers go about uncovering knowledge to address the research question.

This research is underpinned by a social constructivist epistemological stance. Constructivism refers to the formation of truth and subjectivity through individual meaning-making (Crotty, 1998). Constructionism holds a slightly different view concerned with acquiring knowledge through common understandings of the world which are developed by interactions and shared experiences (Berger & Luckmann, 2011; McCartan & Robson, 2015). Both social constructionism and social constructivism are commonly linked with the relativist ontological stance.

Social constructivist approaches are coherent with the research aims to explore individual boys' meaning making and how they actively make sense of experiences to inform their own beliefs. Constructivism puts more importance on how individuals develop their own meaning based upon cognition, construction of and engagement with the world. This is opposite to positivist principles which believe there is a single, objective truth which can be measured (Robson & McCartan, 2015). This research does not intend to uncover a single, generalisable truth but instead explore the multiplicities of insight based on participants individual, unique perspectives.

### **3.4 Research Design**

This research study adopted a qualitative approach to explore the experiences of Black boys who had been excluded from school. Qualitative methodologies aim to seek detailed, rich explanations of a subject that delve beneath the surface. The researcher did not use a quantitative approach because such a method would not have been appropriate to capture the complexity of human experience. The current



research adopted an exploratory purpose, seeking the amplification of meaning behind language used (Cline et al., 2015).

### **3.5 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was the chosen methodology for this research. IPA was developed by Johnathan Smith and colleagues, originally intended for health psychology use and has since developed into a widely acknowledged qualitative psychological technique (Smith, 2011). IPA is defined as experiential research which is concerned with particular experiences had by individuals and the meaning making in relation to those experiences (Smith et al., 2022). This methodology provides an in-depth view of significant life experiences, allowing researchers to develop understanding through micro analysis.

IPA compliments the relativist and constructivist stance adopted for the chosen study which attempted to explore and understand Black individual boys' personal experiences of exclusion from school, rather than the universal, outer psychological constructs of society. IPA's focus on personal subjects recognises the existence of multiple unique realities of a shared phenomenon and aims to use these to uncover collective, contextual understandings.

IPA is underpinned by three core theoretical ideas: hermeneutics, phenomenology and ideography (Smith et al., 2022). Each concept draws on philosophical principles which influence the analysis of meaning and are discussed in more detail below:

#### ***Hermeneutics***

Hermeneutics relates to the extraction of meaning from verbal and written communication (Smith et al., 2022). Hermeneutics is referred to as a theory of interpretation and is based on a fusion of language by participants and the researcher's interpretation. The term 'double hermeneutic' is used to describe the way the researcher actively engages in interpreting participants' views whilst the participants are attempting to interpret their own realities (Smith et al., 2022). This approach recognises how the researcher brings their own assumptions, preconceived ideas and experiences to their interaction with participants and analysis of the data (Smith & Nizza, 2022). The interpretative element also arises from a 'questioning hermeneutic' whereby the researcher aims to explore what the participant is trying to achieve by investigating what might have been said without intention, to discover information the participants themselves may not be consciously aware of. The hermeneutic circle depicts the overall 'dynamic relationship between the research as a whole and a sum of its parts' (Smith et al., 2022, p29). In the context of research interviews, a single word may influence the meaning of a whole sentence and a whole sentence may influence the entire meaning of one word. Therefore, to understand a participant's individual experience, both parts (words and sentences) amongst a whole account need to be carefully considered.

IPA research requires researcher reflexivity, as the analysis seeks to uncover the interrelating space between the phenomenon, participants and researchers themselves. Early IPA philosophical contributors (Heidegger, Gadamer and Schleiermacher) proposed that individuals' previous preconceptions and experiences greatly influence our interpretations and subjective stances (Heidegger et al., 1962; Husserl, 1982; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Sartre, 1956).

How language is used and understood is a key aspect of IPA, because the meaning made offers researchers insight into subjects' worldviews. The use of language by adolescents living in an inner-city context within which the current research was conducted, may be subject to colloquialisms which serve a particular function different to that of other geographical communities and/or age groups. IPA encourages deliberate attention towards aspects of language pragmatics including use of pronouns, pauses, laughter, repetition and fluency (Smith et al., 2022). This indicates how words can be used in various ways by individuals and convey different meanings than what is recognised by English dictionary definitions. Hermeneutics within IPA recognises the importance of context, researcher perception, interpretation and the function of language as a means of communication to portray thoughts and feelings.

### ***Phenomenology***

Phenomenology is a philosophical approach that studies human experience (Smith & Nizza, 2022). The researcher is trying to understand what the phenomenon is like from the participant point of view. Early contributors proposed that the study of subjective experiences should be prioritised as a scientific account of the world and 'go back to the things themselves' (Husserl, 1859-1938; Smith et al., 2022).

Bracketing off and reintegrating with the data is an essential process for the robustness of an IPA study. Bracketing off refers to the phenomenological reduction of judgements, perceptions and assumptions (Husserl, 1982). The act of suspending judgement on the natural world to focus on the analysis of experience complements the constructivist epistemology which seeks to hear from the voice of the subjects.

The researcher needs to consider their knowledge and experience prior to the study, during, and after interviewing participants. To truly engage and access the reality of individuals lived experiences, it is imperative for the researcher to assume a phenomenological attitude, seeing the world through the subject's lens. The relationship between what is previously known and new information presented by participants needs careful balance and an openness of mind by the researcher (Smith et al., 2022).

Within this study, participants were subject to enquiry based on homogenous intersecting race, age and education factors. Reflexivity by the researcher is highlighted as key in the achievement of effective research. The researcher acts to facilitate participants who may not be familiar with such depth of reflection to engage with the process (Smith et al., 2022).

### ***Idiography***

The idiographic feature of IPA concentrates on the individual. IPA aims to understand the 'particular experiences of particular people within particular situations' (Smith & Nizza, 2022, p 8). Each participant is considered one at a time before comparative patterns across cases are made. An ideographic approach is integral to the chosen research method because IPA is initially focused on obtaining an in-depth of understanding from each individual experience before looking across all participant data in the final analysis stages.

Nomothetic approaches are based on making generalisations from the individual to a larger population size (Smith et al., 2022). They seek to first understand what is

salient to a group and such analysis means individual data must be drawn out from the data as a whole. In comparison, idiographic research, such as IPA, uses non-traditional methods to establish generalisations between case studies, creating possibility for links between findings and existing research and theory. This study sought to understand the specific experiences of Black boys as individuals within a homogenous group and scoped contrasts and comparisons of their experiences within the context of school exclusion.

### **3.6 Methodological Considerations**

The following section discusses critique and justification of the IPA approach chosen for the current study. A selection of alternative methodological approaches are explained in brief with the rationale as to why they were not chosen.

#### **3.6.1 Critique of IPA**

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis can be critiqued for the use of small sample sizes which has implications for poor generalisability. However, Smith et al., (2022) counterargue the importance of the idiographic nature of IPA, explaining research should focus on studying individual experiences in depth. IPA research seeks to understand the participants' perspectives and this matches the study aim to share the views of young people who have experienced exclusion in order to gain a deeper, informed understanding to improve outcomes.

The centrality of language analysis is criticised for its accuracy in conveying the true meaning of what is deemed a complex human experience (Willig, 2013). Whilst the uniqueness of language makes it subjective, it is a central means that humans use to

communicate the understanding of self, others and to convey messages. Language is assumed to reflect people's thoughts and feelings, and this is important to consider in light of the current study exploring the experiences of young adolescents with developing linguistic skills. Nevertheless, IPA is a suitable approach for discovering meaning beneath language used by young people, meaning which they may have not had an opportunity to discover outside of the research space and amidst their lived experience. IPA suits the purposes of the current research to amplify participant views and disseminate knowledge gained back to those concerned in supporting them.

Tuffour (2017) argued the researcher's attempts to make sense of the participants' experience (double hermeneutics) takes away from the interpretative aspect of the personal reality shared. However, Smith et al., (2022) counterargue that all types of qualitative research can lead to unrepresentative analyses of participant experiences and the systematic stages of the IPA analysis process reduces the risk of such bias occurring. The double hermeneutic feature arguably holds value and usefulness, by examining others' experiences to make sense of them in a way they may not be familiar with or conscious of (Langdrige, 2007). The analysis process aims to concentrate on the conceptual components of each individual's experience, and thereby expand descriptiveness, develop interpretation and contribute to existing knowledge and literature.

IPA is also critiqued for reduced researcher engagement with data produced, as phenomenological research is limited to describing rather than explaining causal relationships (Willig, 2013). It can be argued that the description of human

experience is valuable and important (Smith et al., 2022). Within the context of the current research, describing Black boys' experiences of exclusion may serve educational professionals a chance to reflect on the implications of educational provision decisions and childhood outcomes.

### **3.6.2 Reflexive Thematic Analysis**

Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) is a common qualitative approach used to address questions regarding participant views, perceptions and experiences, with aims to collectively uncover themes across cases (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Both IPA and RTA require the researcher to explore their own positioning within the research and how that may influence the process. The idiographic nature of IPA sets it apart from RTA because each individual case is analysed in detail before discovering patterns across cases. Braun & Clarke (2006) acknowledge that RTA offers more descriptive and explanatory functions than IPA which is known for the depth of interpretation. The individuality and uniqueness of experience shared by participants was valued as important for the current research. Existing statistical data links Black boys as a group who are overrepresented in exclusion rates. Existing literature shows there is a lack of personal experiences shared by the individuals who make up the group of young people that experience the phenomenon of exclusion. Therefore, the current research considered IPA more suitable to first examine the richness and subtleties in different experiences of exclusion prior to identifying potential thematic patterns that may arise.

### 3.6.3 Narrative Analysis

Narrative psychology is underpinned by the belief that humans use storytelling to understand and make sense of themselves and life events. Narrative analysis focuses on the content of stories and/or the process of storying (Riessman, 2008). Approaches usually have small sample groups (3-4) of participants who are well placed to illuminate a phenomenon under investigation. Although the current research is interested in the views (including stories) told by young people about a phenomenon which they are well placed to discuss, the research is less concerned with *how* they tell the story of their experience and more interested in the *meaning* made from such experience (Willig, 2013). Even though narrative analysis sits well within exploratory research, it was considered less suitable for the current research because the goal (to provide structure and sequence to fragmented stories) does not fit the research aim (to micro-analyse data by breaking it into smaller sections). Furthermore, narrative approaches tend to use unstructured interviews with little interference from the interviewer, whereas the purpose of the current research involved the researcher asking semi-structured questions to assist the participant on their exploratory sense-making journey.

### 3.6.4 Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory (GT) is concerned with generating a theory inductively from participant data to explain a phenomenon (usually related to social processes) (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The variations of Grounded Theory differ in how emerging data is continually questioned by researchers and structured in comparison to IPA (Smith et al., 2009). Whilst both methodologies share interactive features with the data, GT tends to be based on larger samples and is more explanatory than



exploratory. IPA was rendered more appropriate based on the current study's aims to focus on the specific way individuals experienced a phenomenon in illuminated detail.

### **3.7 Participants**

#### **Participant Sample**

Homogeneity is concerned with ensuring the phenomenon under investigation can be focused on with as few confounding issues as possible. The phenomenon under investigation for this research was the experience of school exclusion for Black boys of secondary school age. IPA requires a purposive, reasonably homogenous sample to enable the specific exploration and identification of similarities and differences based on an experience (Smith et al., 2022). The current study does not assume that all Black boys of secondary school age have had the same experience of exclusion, however similarities in aspects of their racial, cultural and gendered identity united their experience and over-representation in national exclusion statistics. A purposeful, criterion approach was used to select participants who fit the inclusion criteria detailed below.

- Identify as Black, including mixed race heritage (one parent of Afro-Caribbean heritage)
- Male
- Aged between 12-16 years old
- Excluded from a mainstream secondary school on a temporary or permanent basis

- Attending an alternative provision
- Communication skills to be able to participate in an interview

A small sample size was needed to fit the in-depth and explorative nature of the study. Between six and ten interviews are suggested according to IPA guidance and this may include repeated interviews with the same participants (Smith et al., 2022). However, three participants are the stated default sample size and quality over quantity is emphasised given the complexity of studying human phenomena and need to make microanalytic cross comparisons between cases (Smith et al., 2022).

Table 5 includes demographic details for the final three participants recruited:

**Table 5**

*Overview of participant information*

<b>Participant Pseudonym</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Age &amp; year group</b>	<b>Exclusion type</b>	<b>Provision attended</b>
1. Elijah	White British & Black Caribbean	16 years old; Y11	Permanent	Pupil Referral Unit
2. Dantae	White British & Black Caribbean	14 years old; Y9	Permanent	Pupil Referral Unit
3. Pierre	Black British Caribbean	13 years old; Y8	Suspension	Independent Specialist Provision

### **3.7.1 Process of recruitment**

Participants were recruited through alternative provisions including other community settings which supported young people who had been excluded. Initially participants were sought out through the LA in which the researcher was based. Pupil Referral Units were approached by the researcher to share the project aims and requirements. Educational professionals within those environments then identified

potential participants (who fit the criteria shared above) as IPA cases are mostly identified by gatekeepers who know them well (Smith et al., 2022). A recruitment poster (see Appendix E) was shared to introduce the research aims and objectives to potential participants. The researcher met with groups/individuals identified to discuss the research project in more detail. Two boys showed initial interest but declined informed consent. Several boys did not remain in the room throughout the presentation and left prematurely once they understood consent was voluntary. One boy presumed the research topic would be about “drugs or gangs”. Due to the low response rate from initial recruitment, it was agreed through supervision to widen the scope. Smith et al., (2022) advise to widen the inclusion criteria to broaden the scope for participants when recruitment difficulty is experienced.

The pool for recruitment was extended to alternative provisions within other London LAs following an ethical amendment request (see Appendix F). At this time the researcher also contacted local youth groups in community settings which were accessed by some people who have experienced exclusion and are referred to by external agencies. The researcher attended the youth groups to explain the project and scope out potential participants through knowledgeable and experienced professionals based within the setting.

Alternative provisions in other LAs were contacted via email by the researcher or educational professional colleagues. A number of LAs did not respond; others responded but did not follow-up with the identification of potential participants. The parents and carers of young people who showed interest were then contacted by the provisions to obtain consent. This process resulted in a final three participants from

two provisions in two LAs. The research took place in one Pupil Referral Unit (one participant 3) and one Youth club (participants 1 & 2). The flowchart in figure 6 below visually represents the steps followed to sample and recruit participants:

**Figure 6**

*Process of Recruitment*



### 3.7.2 Data collection: Semi-structured interviews

A range of data collection types were considered. Although structured interviews are pre-planned, the limits of existing questions did not facilitate the exploratory approach adopted. Unstructured interviews allow for free flow discussion, however unexpected responses are likely to follow. Focus groups were also considered, however the discussion of experiences in groups carried the risk of socially influencing and losing individual perceptions. The aim of the research was to understand lived experiences by exploring individual views, therefore focus groups were deemed less appropriate due to the interactive approach adopted to collect data.

Semi-structured, one-to-one interviews were chosen to fit the social constructivist epistemology, which focuses on the individual development of knowledge based on experience. Guidance from Smith and colleagues advises that the researcher needs to listen attentively and deeply engage with the participant to gain insight into their construction of reality (Smith et al., 2022). Therefore semi-structured interviews were deemed appropriate to facilitate the balance between researcher flexibility and participant agency to unveil unexpected aspects of life experiences.

Interviews of a semi-structured nature were chosen to allow for the rich collection of data from a relatively small sample. The interview type enabled a conversational style of communication which fit the participant's interactive norm, promoted comfortability and freedom in expressing individuality. Semi-structured interviews tend to be used within IPA because they allow for interaction, exploration and unexpected topics brought about by participants leading a changed course of direction (Eatough & Smith, 2008). This allows for the adaptation to paralinguistics (pace, tone, word/question order) as the interview relationship and content emerges (McCartan & Robson, 2015).

### **3.7.3 Interview schedule**

Six main open-ended questions were used to frame the interview. The non-directive approach taken matched the basis of phenomenological research. The questions were developed using IPA guidance (Smith et al., 2022) and feedback from two pilot interviews conducted beforehand. There was no process of recruitment for the pilot interviews and the interviews were conducted with family members of the researcher (one male and one female) who did not share requirement characteristics of the

participant group at the time. Interviews were conducted virtually and interviewees adopted a role play position, as if they had been subject to an exclusionary experience. One of the interviewees was subject to internal exclusion at a younger age and used that as stimulus for reflection. Undertaking pilot interviews allowed the researcher to develop familiarity and confidence in facilitating the semi-structured conversation and review features including the number, order and flow of questions. Undertaking the pilot interviews with adults allowed the researcher to receive feedback from an outsider perspective and adjust aspects accordingly.

In line with IPA guidance and examples used in the manual, the following question types were included: descriptive (contain detailed information about a term or event), narrative (invites an open response to a story), contrast (queries main differences), evaluative (following an event) and comparative (reflective based on the past, present or future). Appendix G details the final questions used for the interview. The main questions were employed together with prompt and probe questions (e.g. “can you say more?” and “what do you mean by...?”) to elicit further understanding and detail from the participants perspective rather than check agreement with statements (Willig, 2013). Before the interview began, participants were informed that there were no wrong or right answers and given up to 60 minutes to engage in the entire process.

#### **3.7.4 Interview procedure**

The interview was conducted by the researcher. Participants were invited to partake in the interviews in-person following an initial meeting to explain the research and gain informed consent. Participants were given the option for the interview to be

conducted in an educational or community-based setting that they were comfortable and familiar with. Participants were also given the opportunity to have a known, trusted adult nearby for support.

Dantae was interviewed first at a youth club. Elijah was interviewed next at an alternative provision with a nominated trusted adult nearby. Pierre was interviewed at a youth club also. The interviewer drew upon existing, interpersonal and transferable skills as a professional with experience of working with children and young people of varying need to build rapport and set an appropriate context for the interview to be conducted.

Participants were reminded of the requirement to audio record the conversation and rights to withdrawal. Audio recordings produced from the interviews were transcribed verbatim following repeated playbacks for accuracy. Data recordings were stored on a password protected computer in line with the Data Protection Act (2018).

### **3.8 Researcher Reflexivity**

Reflexivity by the researcher is a fundamental aspect of qualitative research (Smith et al., 2022). A number of measures were adopted to observe the impact and effect of the researcher's own identity, previous experiences and biases on the research planning, completion and write up. The following section will shift from third person to first-person narration to convey the researcher's point of view in an idiographic way.

I kept a reflective research journal throughout the research process to observe, process and express my experiences. Extracts from the journal are available in

Appendix H. This included the use of written and visual communication to document thought processes, emotional reactions and links to previous personal/professional experiences.

Research supervision was used as another tool to explore, reflect on and evaluate the bidirectional relationship between the research project and the myself as the researcher. The regularity of supervision provided a containing space to delve into un/conscious biases, hotspots, soft spots, blind spots and multiple layers to my perspective. Relational models of supervision are a valuable tool for raising self-awareness, developing reflexivity and enhancing ones self-in-role as a researcher within the context of this study (Kennedy et al., 2018). Early contracting openly acknowledged the nature of the supervision racial dyad.

The naming of racial differences between supervisee and supervisor helped to address the need and associated impact when discussing race within the context of this research (Boahen, 2023). By highlighting the need to discuss race and acknowledging the impact of power within the supervision dynamic, my supervisor enabled me to feel encouraged and supported to show my personal motivation. This promoted ethical practice on how we were collaboratively, consciously and culturally sensitive throughout the data collection, analysis and write up processes. Conscious awareness and critical analysis facilitated plausibility and coherence throughout the research. This is comparable to the Consultee-Centred Consultation Model (Ingraham, 2000) when reflecting on the multicultural triad between the researcher/supervisee, supervisor and participants (Ingraham, 2000).

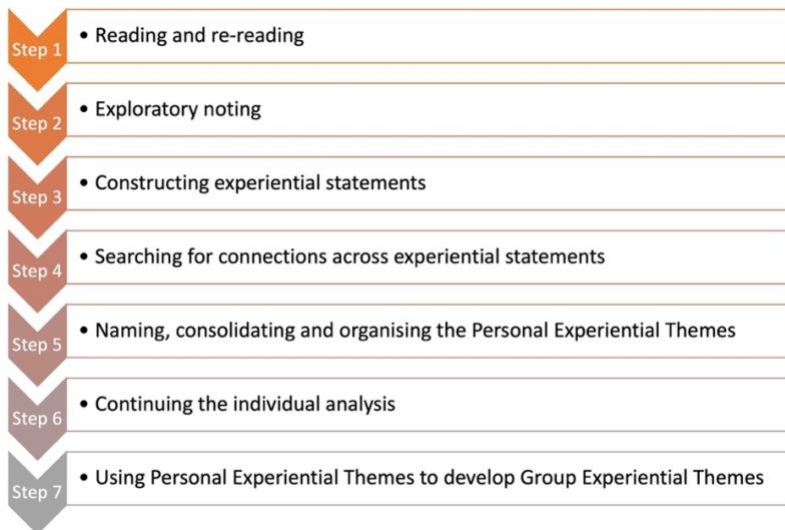


### 3.9 Data Analysis

The data collected from interviews was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Smith et al., (2022) explains that stages can be used in a flexible way as a helpful structure to the researcher. As there is no set allocation, individual interviews were analysed after sequential completion as the interviewer aimed to immerse with the data whilst it was a recent occurrence. The use of a reflective diary and access to supervision facilitated the process of interpretation and consideration of subjective involvement by the researcher. The main steps of IPA are summarised in the figure 7 below. The employment of each stage is then explained in more detail:

**Figure 7**

#### *IPA Stages*



#### ***Stage 1: Reading and Re-Reading***

The initial stage involved listening to the audio recording whilst reading the transcripts to imagine the voice of the participant for a complete analysis. The researcher repeatedly reread the transcripts to deeply engage and immerse with the

data. The data was transcribed into a word processing document. A table column for experiential statements was inserted on the left and a column for exploratory notes was inserted on the right.

### ***Stage 2: Exploratory Noting***

This stage involved investigation of the semantic and linguistic content of the transcripts (Smith et al., 2022). This included noting interesting and significant parts to begin early identification of the ways participants discussed aspects of their experience. Smith et al., (2022) highlight there is no fixed specification for what is commented upon and note three commentary types which lead to different levels of interpretation:

1. **Exploratory/descriptive:** what is said (language) by the participant
2. **Linguistic:** how the participant uses language (pauses, repetition, tone, fluency)
3. **Conceptual:** the identification and question of ideas beyond literal understanding of the text

Identified comments were categorised under the 'exploratory notes' column according to the types mentioned above (see Appendix I). The overlap in comments identified by the researcher was used flexibly to aid the analysis process rather than to act as a fixed coding system.

### ***Stage 3: Constructing Experiential Statements***

The third stage involved an analytical shift from the whole transcript to a focus on the 'exploratory notes' section. This involved the conversion of exploratory notes into comments and experiential statements represented as phrases or short sentences. The purpose of this stage was to concisely summarise important features from the initial notes and decrease the volume, whilst simultaneously maintaining the complexity of the data. The term '*experiential statements*' is chosen to reflect the direct relation to the participants' experience or meaning making from what has happened to them (Smith et al., 2022). This stage involved mindful consideration of the data produced by participants and the researcher's interpretation of such material. The researcher sought out peer supervision in addition to research supervision to share and develop the practice of creating statements. This involved sharing anonymised transcripts, explaining the process of creating experiential statements based on formulated exploratory notes and seeking feedback from others to expand the interpretative process.

#### ***Stage 4: Searching for connections across Experiential Statements***

During this stage experiential statements were grouped together to produce a cluster that conveyed the most salient parts of the participant's account. The search for connections between experiential statements was completed in the following ways (Smith et al., 2022):

- **Abstraction:** putting like-for-like statements together and creating a new name for the cluster of themes
- **Numeration:** recording the number of duplicating statements

- **Contextualisation:** collating statements with shared significant life events or narrative elements
- **Polarisation:** adopting an alternative focus by searching for emergent themes of difference to identify oppositional relationships
- **Subsumption:** classifying emergent themes by subordinate and superordinate status

**Figure 8**

*Photo of experiential statement connections*

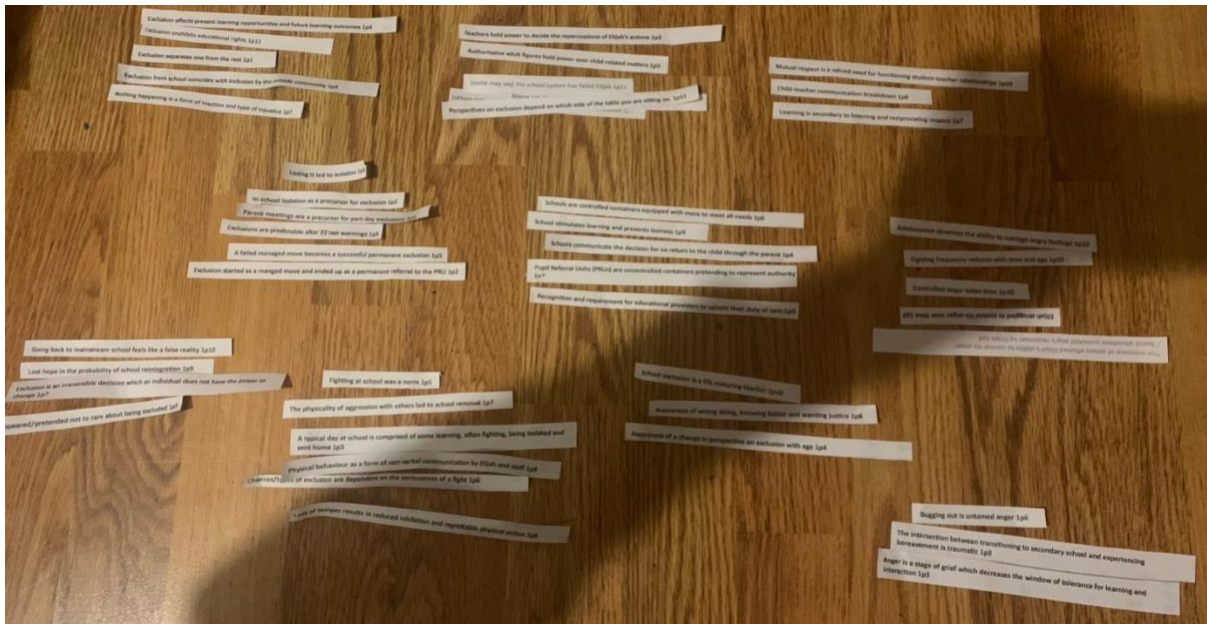


Figure 8 examples how the process was achieved for the current study. Statements were printed out, cut into paper strips, and sorted at random on a flat surface.

Abstracted statements were gathered together and duplicated statements were piled on top of one another. Polarised statements were grouped by mirroring opposing strips with each other. During this stage all experiential statements were not taken forward and some were discarded depending on the importance and relevance to the final analysis. Smith et al., (2022) acknowledge that this is a flaw within the

analysis process, however all contributions are perceived as valuable and researchers are advised to be flexible in the adoption of such approach.

### ***Stage 5: Naming consolidating and organising the Personal Experiential***

#### ***Themes***

This stage involved the clustering of experiential statements based on a title which best described the defining features for each participant – the Personal Experiential Themes (PETs). The PETs were divided into subthemes and organised alongside the experiential statements and illustrative quotes to evidence the process of analysis. The final clusters alongside the original transcript quotes were transferred into a mind map using MindView project management software and exported into a word document – see Appendix J and figures 10-12 in the findings chapter.

### ***Stage 6: Continual Analysis of other cases***

For stage 6, stages 1-5 were repeated separately for each participant as if they were individual case studies, “a complete universe for inquiry” (Smith et al., 2022, p99). IPA guidance acknowledges the risk of the researcher becoming increasingly influenced by the process of re-reading and analysing previous participant transcripts. The process of ‘bracketing off’ as mentioned previously in this chapter acts to mitigate this whilst maintain the idiographic nature of the IPA approach.

### ***Stage 7: Developing Personal Experiential Themes into Group Experiential***

#### ***Themes***

The final stage involved the identification of patterns across PETs developed in stage 5 to generate Group Experiential Themes (GETs). This stage allowed for similarities



### **3.9.1 ICT resources and software**

Interviews were audio recorded on Zoom (online communications platform) with the video camera function disabled. The audio recordings produced from the interview were transcribed verbatim into a Microsoft Word document. The recordings were stored and removed from a password protected laptop once data analysis was complete. MindView Programme management software was used to analyse the data during stage 4 of the analysis process and Freeform (online Sticky Notes application) was used to categorise the Group Experiential Themes during stage 7.

### **3.10 Quality of research**

Qualitative research must be reviewed to ensure high quality, by demonstrating cruciality and mitigation of threats against the integrity of the findings. Yardley's (2000) Quality Criteria will be used as a framework to show how the research was planned to conform to the following principles: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, impact and importance.

#### ***Sensitivity to context***

Qualitative studies demonstrate sensitivity to context by exhibiting awareness of participants' setting, perspectives, the linguistic and sociocultural context of the research, how these together/separately influence what participants share and how this is in turn interpreted by the researcher (Yardley, 2017). Sensitivity to context was considered throughout the research process, from the topic of focus to the recruitment of participants and the analysis of data.

The researcher was aware that the nature of exclusion is a sensitive topic to be explored with vulnerable, marginalised subjects who had experienced a phenomenon outside of their own choosing. The nature of the AP they were in meant they had experienced a change to their provision of education including the setting, staff and peers. The sociocultural context was taken into account because Black and Mixed-Race boys were the target group for recruitment. The researcher was sensitive to recognisable similarities and differences based on visible aspects of race and gender. This was addressed by sharing information based on literature review findings and statistical data to explain the inclusion/exclusion criteria. Discussing nuances of physical and emotional experiences with an unfamiliar adult may be uncomfortable for some young people within the context of exclusion and previous relational experiences. The researcher responded to such awareness by giving the option to participants to have a chosen adult present for the interview. As the researcher also has previous experience in working directly with children and young people in school, community and healthcare settings, transferrable interpersonal skills were sensitively used to build rapport, and this included playing games ahead of beginning the interview.

Sensitivity to the linguistic context was considered during the interview planning, implementation and data analysis stages. Semi-structured interviews were carefully chosen and informed by the guidance of Smith et al., (2022) to invite participants to share their views in a flexible way with less structure. The local context in the introduction chapter and the interview functioned to clarify understandings of exclusion. Colloquial terms used in the interview were clarified during the conversation and participants were encouraged to feel at ease, communicating in



ways they felt easiest. As participants were voluntarily invited, they participated in the research with an understanding and willingness to share such experiences.

### ***Commitment and rigour***

Yardley (2017) highlights that commitment and rigour can be shown through engagement with all aspects of the research, including methods employed, data collection and the detail of analysis.

IPA is a thorough method of analysis which requires the researcher to closely engage with the data and uncover nuanced experiences. Participants are required to engage in ways that do not inhibit the depth of their truth and reality. The researcher is required to adopt interview skills that allow participants to engage with provoking thoughts and feelings related to the phenomenon in ways they may have not consciously considered before. Interview skills were developed by reading about IPA techniques, piloting interviews and accessing research supervision to develop competency skills whilst regularly reflecting on evidence of rigour throughout the entire research process.

The researcher thoroughly immersed themselves in the data by engaging in close and repeated analytical reading in line with IPA specific guidelines (Nizza et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2022). This included focus on language used by the boys' individually then collectively in attempts to develop a robust experiential account based on their shared world view. The researcher persevered with data collection despite the sensitivity of the chosen topic and initial low response rates. A research

journal was kept to track, monitor and express self-reflexivity along the research journey. Supervision was another tool used to review the process of analysis.

### ***Transparency and coherence***

Transparency signifies how clear the stages of research processes are and coherence refers to the clear presentation of an argument (Smith et al., 2009). In IPA, transparency concerns providing details of the process for the selection of participants, construction of the interview (including the schedule) and stages of analysis (Shinebourne, 2011).

The stages of research were shared using information and informed consent sheets given to educational settings, pupils and parents/carers (Appendix L, M, N) to set out the plans for the study. The reasoning for recruitment choices was explained within the information sheet, opportunity for questions were given and the right to withdrawal was clarified. For participants who were within the researcher's LA, conflicts of interest and the potential to see the researcher in a different role allocated to the PRU were addressed. The researcher explained that should the participant meet the researcher again in a different role, involvement with the research would not affect access to EP services or confidentiality.

The researcher was transparent about and sensitive to the potential emotional nature of the interview and put in place safeguards to support the participants' wellbeing should they become emotionally affected. Details of out of hours mental health support services were detailed on the informed consent sheets and verbally explained before/after the interview by the researcher.

The coherence of analysis is documented by the stages described in the data analysis section. Awareness of researcher positionality in terms of identity and role was addressed on an ongoing basis through research supervision and the use of a research journal to consider threats to credibility. Verbatim transcripts, extracts of analysis and reflexive diary entries are included in the appendices. This is not for the purpose of replicability, but for the purpose of providing a clear understanding of the processes to allow for contextual understanding and evaluation by others.

### ***Impact and importance***

Usefulness of research to a reader is a marker of how well a piece of research is conducted (Yardley, 2000). Valid research can generate a hypothesis or offer an interpretation about how the world is thought about. There is a continued need to address the issue of exclusion of young people from school and the disproportionate number of Black boys being subject to the experience. Research is needed to address policy developers and educators in decisions which have crucial impact on the academic, social, emotional trajectories of young people's futures and careers. There is a need to gain a greater understanding of the lived experiences of exclusion for Black boys given the contextual and historical issues associated with their academic outcomes. On an individual level, Black boys are entitled to a research space and a platform to make sense of situations which can have a pivotal effect on how they view the world, themselves and relationships with other people. The discussion chapter demonstrates how the current research contributes to the existing literature on exclusion and discusses the implications for the EP profession who are integral in supporting children and young people facing barriers to learning progress.

### **3.10.1 High-Quality IPA standards**

IPA research has developed specific criteria which act as standards for the categorisation of unacceptable, acceptable and good studies. The criteria match many of Yardley's (2000) principles and contribute an additional three conditions for a study to be considered 'good': enlightening and engaging to the reader, maintaining focus and offering depth and strong data interpretations. Developments by Nizza et al., (2021) highlight four main markers for high quality IPA research:

1. Constructing a compelling, unfolding narrative
2. Developing a vigorous experiential account
3. Close analytic reading of participants' words
4. Attending to convergence and divergence

These four markers were considered throughout the planning, implementation and write up of the current research. The markers are explored further in the discussion chapter to consider strengths and limitations of the chosen IPA methodological approach.

### **3.11 Ethical considerations**

Ethical approval was obtained from the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC) on two occasions. Initial ethical approval was permitted in May 2023 and consecutive permissions were granted in December 2023, following amendments to the recruitment pool. A copy of the Ethical application form and original approval letter is available in Appendix O and P. Approval from the researcher's residing Local Authority and Principal EP was obtained by verbal and

written means. The study was carried out according to the British Psychological Society's Code of Human Ethics (BPS, 2021). Research adherence to core ethical standards throughout the process are discussed below:

### ***Informed consent and right to withdraw***

Informed consent is a key feature of research ethical standards and it is important for those involved to have a clear understanding of their voluntary participation before agreeing to the research process (BPS, 2018). The research aims were shared with provisions educating and caring for the young people, parents and carers and the participants. Provisions were informed of the research aims and criteria for recruitment. Refer back to the recruitment section for information regarding informed consent. Participants were informed and reminded of their right to withdraw at any time up until the point of data analysis. The opportunity for participants to ask questions was provided before, during and after the interview.

### ***Confidentiality and anonymity***

IPA aims to discover detailed accounts of participants lived experiences. Therefore, it is important to protect the confidentiality of sensitive information shared. As a homogenous group with visible aspects of identity (race and education provision), there are implications for identifiability. Anonymity and confidentiality were protected by removing identifiable personal information and substituting where needed (e.g. names of people and places). Pseudonyms were used and participants were made aware of the limits to confidentiality due to the sample size and criteria. Participants were informed of the researcher's responsibility to share information on a need-to-know basis should a safeguarding concern arise which puts them or others safety at

risk. Information (audio and written) collected was handled confidentially and stored securely in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, 2018). Information was stored on a password protected device and audio recordings were deleted once transcribed. Participants were made aware that the data from the research would be written up and included in the form of a thesis, disseminated to professionals and possibly published as a journal article in the future – see Appendix M.

### ***Minimising harm***

The potential for psychological distress to be caused by exploring sensitive topics was considered. The researcher was aware of the possible retriggering of distressing emotions linked to previous negative experiences and intended to protect participants from harm whilst maintaining ethical attunement throughout the process. The development of the interview questions, rapport building beforehand and debrief following completion of the interview were carefully considered to mitigate against potential harm.

The written schedule of questions was shared with the participants at the start of the interview and they were informed of their rights to ask for a break, repetition of questions or to withdraw at any time during the discussion. The researcher explained that, due to the semi-structured nature of the interview, some of the questions were pre-set and others would develop in response to answers provided. Interviews were purposefully structured to allow participants to decide the length and depth of information shared. The researcher explained that there were no right or wrong answers. Interviews were ended when participants confirmed they had no further comments to make. The researcher maintained attunement to signs of discomfort by

the participant and moved on from topics in response. The researcher also signposted how many questions were completed to maintain an informed understanding.

Additional support choices were provided following the end of the interview:

- Participants were asked debrief questions (see interview schedule in Appendix G)
- Participants were offered additional space and time to reflect and discuss unaddressed thoughts or feelings provoked by the interview experience
- A trusted adult was made aware when the participant had completed the interview to check-in on their wellbeing
- The researcher provided a signposted list of internal and external agencies to support with mental health should concerns arise following the interview and researcher departure

### **3.12 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has covered the methodology of this research with rationale for the procedures followed, reasoning and positioning which influenced the nature of the chosen approach. The next chapter will outline the findings of the research based on data collected from interviews and interpretative themes drawn out as a result.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter will present the IPA outcomes from the interviews of three participants in this research study in order to gain insight into their experience of school exclusion and answer the overarching research question:

**What are the experiences of Black boys who have been excluded from school?**

An additional question considered whilst undertaking the analysis was:

- What does school exclusion mean for Black boys?

A summary of contextual information on each participant and their Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) is provided alongside corresponding sub-themes. Individual participant findings are explored in-depth before the development of overarching Group Experiential Themes (GETs). This cross-case analysis helps to understand where meanings converge across groups of participants to get a sense of the range of individual variation (Smith et al., 2022 p.121). A summary of the outcomes will conclude the chapter.

Direct quotes from the interviews are included to provide evidence for the researcher's interpretation of raw participant data and maintain the phenomenological focus of the research. Typographical representations used within the quotes are illustrated in the table below. Participant and page numbers are included so quote origins can be traced to the participant. See Appendix I for



examples of transcripts and see Appendix J for a breakdown of all the quotes linked to each PET and subtheme.

**Table 6**

*Typographic Features*

<b>Typographic Features</b>	
<i>Italic text</i>	Verbatim quotes
...	Pause in speech
[ ]	Contextual information and non-verbal communication
[...]	Quotation has been cut
<b>bolded text</b>	Emphasised words
LETTER(p)NUMBER	Participant initial, page number Referencing style to indicate the participant and transcript page number

## 4.2 Contextual information and individual participant findings

This section will outline relevant information about each participant to support the reader's understanding of the hermeneutic dialogue, the researcher's interpretation and their own meaning-making from the data. To keep to the idiographic nature of the design used, an overview of the PETs are included within each individual participant section. Each analysis is considered in detail before seeing how this may contribute to broader GETs later in the chapter. The order of participant analysis mirrors the order in which the interviews were conducted. Pseudonyms have been used throughout to protect the anonymity of participants.

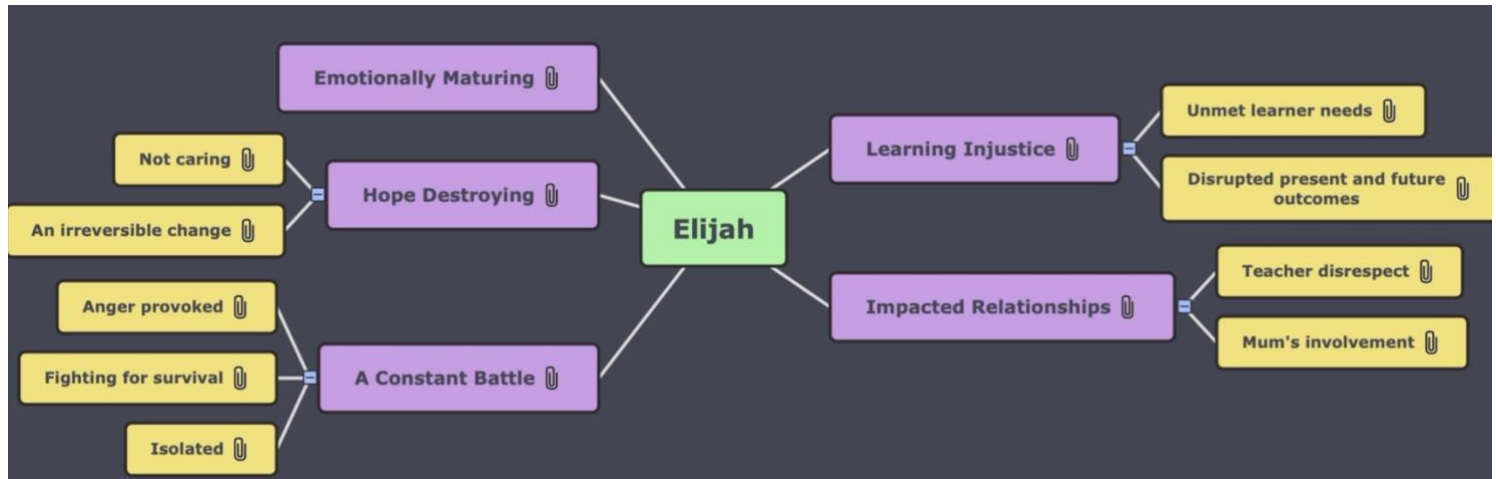
### **4.3 Participant 1: Elijah**

Elijah was managed moved from one secondary school (year 7) in one Local Authority to another school in a nearby Local Authority. In year 9, he was permanently excluded from a PRU within the same Local Authority. At the time of interview, Elijah was on a reduced timetable at the PRU due to a behavioural incident. He was permitted on site at the PRU for 1-2 hours at the end of each the day.

Elijah agreed to be interviewed at a local community youth club that he attended weekly. Elijah was observed to have an endearing relationship with the youth club staff: he enjoyed making use of facilities such as the music studio and volunteered to support club sessions for younger children.

Elijah had been referred to Educational Psychology Services, though there was no involvement during the data collection process. He was also known to the onsite Clinical Psychologist (Child Adolescent Mental Health Service) and was on the pathway for an Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) assessment.

Elijah presented as content and calm throughout the interview. He came across as a mature young person who reflected on the impact of his exclusion on his future. The PETs for Elijah have been summarised in the mind map below and are discussed in turn. Refer to Appendix J for more detail:

**Figure 10***Elijah's PETs*

#### 4.3.1 Personal Experiential Theme 1: A Constant Battle

Elijah spoke about his experiences of being in a constant battle with the school. He made reference to battles in the physical aspect, as fights between him, peers and teachers. He painted the picture of different sides being taken:

*“It depends because some people look at it as I deserve it because it’s my actions that brought me here. Other people look at it as, the school system failed me. It just depends on what side what side of the table you are sitting on.” Ep10*

The element of division is reinforced by his repetition of the word ‘side’ to encapsulate the view that either it was Elijah’s fault (my actions) or a system-related issue (the system failed me). The constancy of the battle is further subdivided into subthemes of fighting for survival, being provoked to feel angry and facing constant isolation.

##### 4.3.1.1 PET 1 – Sub theme 1: Fighting for Survival

Elijah's use of the word 'fight' and description of physical action was a strong theme throughout the interview. Fighting was a regular occurrence which formed his experience of school prior to exclusion.

*"Just getting into loads of fights. From year 7 till like year 8 I didn't go a single week without having a fight in that school" Ep5*

Elijah detailed how fights ranged in severity, as did the consequences given by teachers, suggesting a need for survival in the face of punishment:

*"[...] Its like say I'm tryna fight somebody and a teacher tried to like restrain me, I'd end up trying to fight the teacher" Ep5*

Elijah described how a peer he perceived as a friend ended up being part of his fight for survival in a way that was not anticipated:

*"Then one of one of my friends got hurt and they decided to go to the school with my name in their mouth saying how I attacked them with a cricket bat, they need to go hospital they think their knee is broken this and that. So the next day the school the centre tried to punish **me**" Ep7*

Emphasis on the word 'me' suggests an unfairness in how the situation was dealt with and disappointment that a friend had also betrayed him in battle. Elijah described the physical act of punching that he exhibited and similarly defined the act

of exclusion as being “*kicked out*” (Ep1), which implies a reciprocal metaphorical conflict between him and school.

#### **4.3.1.2 PET 1 – Sub theme 2: Anger Provoked**

Elijah associated fighting with feelings of anger. He reflected on how anger was pre-empted by social situations and a traumatic by-product of grief:

*“Just like too many people being around me. People just talking loads of rubbish, people being childish.”* Ep2

Anger also appeared to be experienced by Elijah as a traumatic by-product of grief:

*“Er outside... when I first started year 7 one of my family members passed away... literally like five days before I started year 7 and then mostly throughout year 7 to year 9 quite a lot of my family members passed away [pause] so that led me to feel a bit more angry than usual”* Ep3

There was a sense of inner conflict with words ‘just’ and ‘too’ used in close succession – an oxymoron of his experience struggling to control his emotions in fragile, provoking environments. The anger Elijah described was amplified by loss but less explicitly expressed in the language used, as ‘quite a lot’ of loss is a stark comparison to ‘a little bit’ more anger.

Once provoked, Elijah lost all sense of control of his anger:

*“[...] I kinda lost it and started punching him up then a couple teachers started to grab me so I started fighting with them as well.” Ep7*

The idea of ‘losing it’ came up several times throughout the interview and explains how a lack of control led to physical action as a mechanism for coping, but also links back to the PET of ‘a constant battle’ which Elijah is losing within himself.

#### **4.3.1.3 PET 1 – Sub theme 3: Isolated**

The subtheme of isolation is implied by Elijah in two ways – the act of being subject to isolation as a form of internal exclusion and the feeling of being isolated consequently.

He softly and fluently described the normality of fighting and being isolated as part of his day-to-day experience:

*“Go in, have my first lesson, have a fight, go in isolation have lunch go home.” Ep3*

The theme of isolation extends out to Elijah’s conceptual meaning for exclusion:

*“Erm separated from general society.” Ep1*

Elijah’s definition suggests his experience of isolation and eventual exclusion from school made him feel outcasted and different from the general society. His use of words ‘separated’ and ‘isolation’ highlight feelings of being othered.

#### **4.3.2 PET 2: Hope Destroying**

Another PET for Elijah was the destruction of hope based on exclusionary experiences which negatively affected his views on the future. The destruction of hope was evident in two ways, one being a dominant presentation of not caring and another being that exclusion was a permanent decision which could not be reversed.

#### **4.3.2.1 PET 2 – Sub theme 1: Not Caring**

Elijah spoke about how negative experiences of school (being isolated) led to initial feelings of not caring about the implications of his actions:

*“But I didn’t really I didn’t really care. Feel like I literally just gotten into year 8 when that happened, I didn’t really care about getting excluded or none of that” Ep5*

*“Cause I was young I didn’t really care, like I just looked at as ah yeah I get off school early” Ep3*

Elijah’s repeated use of the words ‘care’ and ‘didn’t’ contrasted the sense of concern he seemed to actually have. He reflected on how his levels of care were influenced by time, age and experience factors. As he grew up, Elijah viewed exclusion from school as less of an achievement and more of a burden.

#### **4.3.2.2 PET 2 – Sub theme 2: Irreversible Change**

Despite Elijah’s underlying desires to return to mainstream school, the likelihood of that happening following a school exclusion felt low for him:

*“I would like to go back to school, feel like it would do some good for me but it don’t look like its gonna happen.” Ep8*

He makes sense of the exclusion practice as something which cannot be undone.

*“...But then now that I am not there it’s like while I was there I shoulda behaved myself [laughs] but it’s too late now.” Ep8*

Exclusion changed Elijah’s roll status and his perception of authoritative figures at the PRU:

*“Because when you go in there there’s no authoritative figure, even though there’s a headteacher whatever, what they say don’t really get into people’s heads. People are not going to listen to them. Because people would think I have already been kicked out of school what’s the point in this like you’re not gonna change my life around so why am I going to listen to you?” Ep6*

Elijah expressed less hope and belief in the influence of headteachers following being ‘kicked out of school’. This highlights a change in his mindset towards senior staff and the prospect of his life outcomes, which links back to the theme of irreversible change.

Hopelessness weighed heavy for Elijah, as he recognised the difficulty in answering hypothetical questions about if he had the chance to return to school:



*“[looks around the room] that’s a hard question you know. If I was able to go back to a mainstream school or pupil referral unit?” Ep9*

The length of the pause before answering the question and reciprocal reflexivity suggests the impact of exclusion makes the reality of returning to school a hard, unimaginable reality.

### **4.3.3 PET 3: Emotionally Maturing**

Going through the experience of being kicked out from school matured Elijah emotionally. He described how getting older changed his perception of exclusion and shared self-learnings about how being absent from the learning environment jeopardised his abilities. The idea of returning to education generated mixed feelings of regret, renewed appreciation, and growth in his ability to manage anger:

*“If I weren’t excluded... being excluded taught me some things so I feel like if I weren’t excluded, I would still be really childish.” Ep9*

Elijah spoke about exclusion as though it was a metaphorical teacher. Observations of the past, present and future signify the importance of change over time:

*“So now I look at it differently cause if I am not in school I’m just doing dumb stuff out on roads [pause] And that don’t make no sense” “... Yeah nowadays I’d prefer to be in school cause like currently I haven’t had a single lesson for the whole of my time in year 11”. Ep4*

Elijah described how the absence of being stimulated by learning puts him at risk of not using his sense making abilities. 'On the roads' is a slang term which refers to being out in the community engaging in behaviours/activities that are inappropriate or unproductive (Urban Dictionary, 2021). Elijah realises how exclusion has deprived him of learning experiences as he approaches the ending of secondary school education.

#### **4.3.4 PET 4: Impacted Relationships**

Relationships were both impacting and impacted for Elijah throughout his experience of school exclusion. Teachers and his mother were referred to throughout the interview.

When asked about how others would view Elijah's experience of exclusion, he differentiated the perception by teachers and parents, which links back to the theme of a battle made up of opposing sides:

*"I think the parents would see it as the school systems failed me."*

*(teachers) "They'd probably say that its my actions that led me here." Ep10*

He conveys a sense of a stark contrast to explain the basis for his exclusion at an individual and system level, both involving him ('me') at the heart of the experience.

##### **4.3.4.1 PET 4 – Subtheme 1: Mum's Involvement**

Elijah described the close involvement of his mother, who the school contacted to share information regarding the exclusion. Elijah described how his mum would be called into school to discuss his behaviour and send him home:

*“call my mum in, get my mum to come down the school we’d have a meeting and they’d say ah yeah he’s excluded for the rest of the day he has to go home he can come back tomorrow but he will be in isolation.”* Ep5

Meetings with his mother were a dominant and repetitive part of Elijah’s exclusionary experience. His repeated use of the words ‘my mum’ in a monotone, fluent expression highlights the indirect impact on their relationship. He also talks about this in present tense as though it were a common occurrence.

#### **4.3.4.2 PET 4 – Subtheme 2: Teacher disrespect**

Elijah described undesirable interactions with teachers which he perceived as disrespectful and formed a basis for negative relationships. He recognised a need for reciprocated respect and described predominantly unconstructive interactions with teachers. This links to the theme of disrespect as Elijah repeatedly expressed this as a predeterminant for being excluded.

*“[...] the headteacher was rude to me so I started I started getting rude to him, then one of my favourite teachers got me to come outside and just cool down...”* Ep7

*“Like the way I see them talk to other students they try to like shout in their face and that all doing pointing in their face and that just being really rude and disrespectful.”*

Ep10

*“[...] I used to get really ann-, really angry easily then I was having a bad reputation with the teachers and stuff, then the teacher didn’t really like me any little thing that I would do they made it into a big thing” Ep2*

Elijah described his perception of having a bad reputation with teachers which contributed to further misunderstandings and conflict in relating. He described witnessing verbal and non-verbal disrespect shown to other students and his individual struggles to respond without anger. The exception to this was a ‘favourite teacher’ who was implied to be respectful, giving him the opportunity to regulate his emotions.

#### **4.3.5 PET 5: Learning Injustice**

Elijah spoke about his perceptions of unfair treatment by the school system and PRU staff members. He recognised barriers to accessing education meant his needs as a learner were not being met and future outcomes were affected.

##### **4.3.5.1 PET 5 – Sub theme 1: Unmet Learner Needs**

A lack of child needs being met contributed to feelings of unfairness for Elijah. He explained his understanding of school being to provide learning opportunities for all pupils and to uphold a duty of care:

*“You’re supposed to be preventing these things from happening and actually doing stuff about it but you are not, you’re just you’re too comfortable you need to be on your toes... I said to him why why are you letting that go on in your school, in your pupil referral unit when you got a duty of care.” Ep8*

In this extract, Elijah was describing a conversation with the headteacher following an incident involving his cousin who had been hurt. The need to be 'on his toes' implies that there was a lack of vigilance and that comfortability had created a sense of unsafety for Elijah and his cousin. Elijah described PRUs like a "[...] youth centre" Ep6 , giving the impression that exclusion permits freedom into a less controlled, equipped environment. In comparison, he perceived schools as more equipped to meet learner needs:

*"Like there's a lot more staff, there's a lot more funding so the school is more capable of meeting everybody's needs and there's like more time where you are actually in the school learning."* Ep6

#### **4.3.5.2 PET 5 – Sub theme 2: Disrupted Present and Future Outcomes**

The perceived injustices of exclusion disrupted Elijah's current reality and future hopes. He reflected on the extent of his learning gaps due to the longstanding nature of his exclusion and the impact on his aspiration to be a brick layer:

*"I haven't had a single lesson for the whole of my time in year 11 and I'm missing out on loads of learning, and that's gonna mess up my future."* Ep4

*"[...]...really and truly I should still be getting an education, but it's just not happening."* Ep10

Elijah's missed education delays his time for progress (nothing happening). This links back to the disruption of exclusion as a barrier to accessing education, and a previously mentioned theme – the destruction of hope.

#### **4.4 Participant 2: Dantae**

Dantae had experienced several school changes for reasons other than exclusion. He grew up with his mother outside of the LA and first moved schools in primary education due to moving house. Social Care Services became involved with Dantae's family, and he moved to inner London to live with his father. Two failed managed moves from one secondary school resulted in a permanent exclusion to a PRU with mixed provision for primary and secondary students. An Education Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) had been submitted for Dantae due to concerns about his learning progress and behaviour. Dantae was also on a pathway for neurodevelopmental assessment which yielded no further action due to concerns reported in school rather than the home environment.

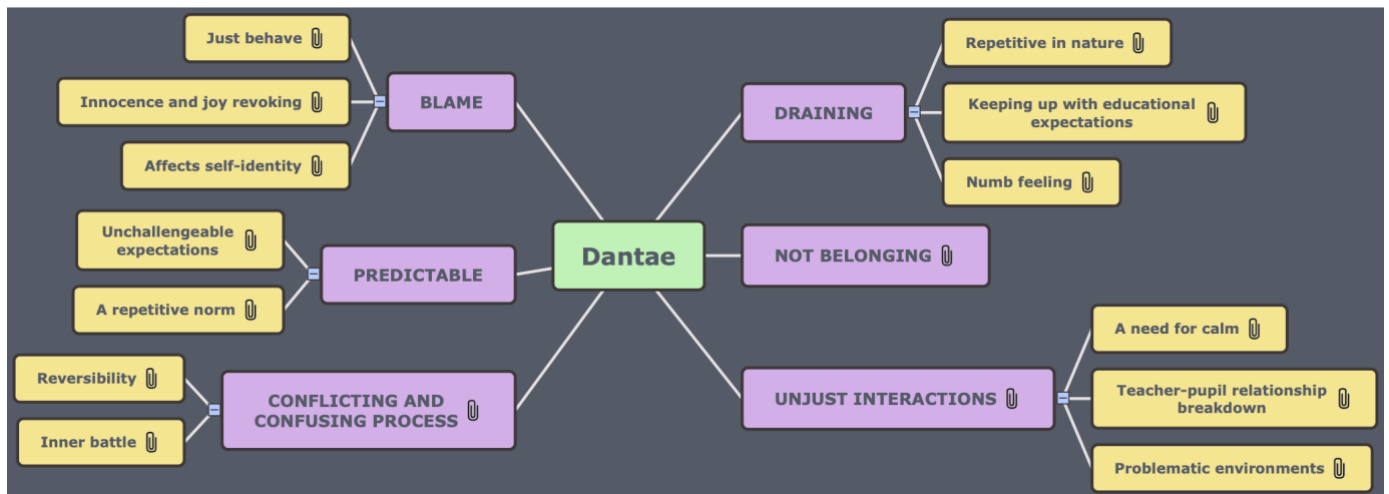
Dantae presented as shy initially and became more relaxed and talkative as the interview progressed. He agreed to participate in the interview with a familiar member of staff nearby. The researcher is aware of potential implications of an additional person present. However, it is important to note from an ethical standpoint that this was deemed helpful by the participant in order to facilitate the process of sharing his experience of exclusion.

Dantae's interview took place at the AP he was attending. He appeared to be content with the provision but weary of how his attendance would be perceived by others.

The PETs for Dantae have been summarised in the mind map below and are discussed in turn:

**Figure 11**

*Dantae's PETs*



#### 4.4.1 PET 1: Draining

The overall experience of school exclusion was draining and hard work for Dantae. The cycle of repeatedly being removed and restarting a new school meant he lost accurate count of how many times he had been excluded. Dantae described the pressure to keep up with educational expectations which caused him to care less and explains the laborious sense of the experience.

##### 4.4.1.1 PET 1 – Subtheme 1: Repetitive in Nature

Dantae explained that he was excluded between 3-4 times during his secondary education experience. He laboriously listed his journey of exclusion when asked to clarify the sequence of school changes:

*“Then I went Petchey...Then Dotch Academy...Then Dotch Academy... Then erm Old Nile”* Dp14. (pseudonyms used for school names)

In between each school name, the interviewer made a written note. Dantae spoke in a monotone voice, using repetition of the word ‘then’ to convey the nature of his ongoing exclusion. He yawned throughout the interview, commenting, “[yawns]. *S’alright. I **try** my best so it’s good.*” Emphasis on the word ‘try’ highlighted how hard he was working to achieve the average standard.

#### **4.4.1.2 PET 1 – Subtheme 2: Keeping up with Educational Expectations**

The repetitive nature of moving schools links closely with the pressure to keep up with a set standard. Dantae shared examples of his lived experience whilst at school where he struggled to cope. He also struggled to convey the hardship in his explanations:

*“There was bare... there was bare classes. I don’t like, when I go back o- in February. I don’t like, I don’t **mind** big classes”* Dp9

Being in a secondary school with ‘bare’ (slang word for loads of/many) seemed to be hard for Dantae (Urban Dictionary, 2024). Under the impression he would return to school after being excluded, he changed his mind mid-sentence to convey the sense that he did not mind big classes even if he actually did.

#### **4.4.1.3 PET 1 – Subtheme 3: Numb Feeling**



The idea of not caring remained a dominant theme and attitude throughout Dantae's narrative. He attempted to make sense of his own experience by justifying his lack of thoughts and feelings about being excluded from school:

*"Okay, cause I don't really care because that's what school is. That's just what you do in school."* Dp4

Dantae described school as a place with set rules which are immovable. Dantae stated he did not care and had no feeling about the exclusion, suggesting it was so complex it developed a sense of numbness. Dantae expressed a sense of emptiness when asked about associated feelings, suggesting the feeling was no longer there or had been removed as a result of the repetitive lived experience of exclusion –

*"Nothing really."* Dp18.

#### **4.4.2 PET 2: Not Belonging**

Dantae's conceptualisation of exclusion lent itself to a feeling of not belonging and being outcast in several ways. He described what it was like for him to find out he was permanently excluded:

*"[...] I thought I was gonna have a day off and then we went to the school one day and they were like ah "we can no longer have you anymore... you're permanently excluded". And like I didn't really feel anyway"* Dp6

Being told by school staff that he could 'no longer be had' contributed to the theme of not belonging. Linking back to the previous theme around not caring, Dantae

described an absence of feeling yet there was underlying shock and confusion due to the assumption that he was having a day off from school and would hopefully return. Dantae expressed a confused understanding of what exclusion meant for him:

*“Nah not yet. You can’t like, I can’t go back to Westow. Erm I don’t know if I can go back to Paxton or not I don’t think so. I can’t go back to Westow, Patxon or Dotchey Academy I’m not in that area anyway. So the other schools are probably like Roach, Halstow, Wind, Seam, Solly Park or Fity erm Fity Academy and I don’t wanna Carla Paul yeah there’s other schools as well.” Dp11*

He flitted between his schooling options and his sense of belonging wavered outside of his control. School options were swiftly listed which presented a contradictory message of choice yet restriction and suggested a sense of displacement for Dantae as he recognised his schooling reputation and rejection. Dantae’s use of the term ‘bottom line’ to refer to the PRU suggested that was his final chance to belong somewhere:

*“Erm and they can’t kick out of this school. Cause there’s nowhere to go this this is like bottom line. You cant go anywhere” Dp13*

#### **4.4.3 PET 3: Unjust Interactions**

Dantae described situations which took place within the school which felt unfair. On one level he spoke about perceived unfairness within friendships *“Like the, there’s like. People, if someone does one thing wrong people, people are always onto the*

*person Dp10*". On another level he spoke about the experience of being targeted and misunderstood by teachers which also felt unfair and led to relationship breakdown. The way Dantae spoke about the learning environments also implied a sense of unfair/unsuitable provision to meet his needs.

#### **4.4.3.1 PET 3 – Subtheme 1: A Need for Calm**

Dantae's repeated use of the word 'calm' was made sense of in multiple ways. One function of the term was to categorise teachers as either possessing the quality or not. Dantae used the term as a slang word which means something is ok/good/nice or chilled – an adjective which ranges from acceptable to great (Urban Dictionary, 2024). This can be applied to his perception of others as good/nice, understanding, reasonable and patient amongst a host of other positive and relatable attributes.

Dantae defined calm as:

*"Like they just, they just, they don't shout at you, they just ty- they just warn you and then like and then if you ignore then they're gonna ask you what are the... do the sanctions, they'll do it calmly they wont just shout every five seconds"* Dp5

In defining calm, Dantae clarifies the opposite based on his negative experience of being shouted at what feels like repeatedly (every five seconds). He went on to speak about his need for calm adults taking him out of the classroom for a break to help regulate his own anger so he too could regain calm. The recognition of a need for more 'calm' highlights how Dantae's perception that interactions with teachers were not promoting his psychological safety.

#### **4.4.3.2 PET 3 – Subtheme 2: Teacher-pupil Relationship Breakdown**

Negative interactions with teachers made up a lot of Dantae's experience and often led to relationship breakdown. He perceived teachers as annoying, and felt targeted and judged as troublesome by them. Small instances of misbehaviour led to big reactions by school which made Dantae feel even more out of control:

*"They were just bare talking like the- when I'm doing my work, I just have a teacher **right there** [gestures hand close to face] standing next to me when I'm getting on my work annoying and every time like if I did one thing wrong they're always on my case." Dp8*

Dantae's use of verbal and non-verbal communication indicated how much he felt othered by teachers in ways they verbally/non-verbally communicated with him. He continued to use the word 'just' throughout the interview suggesting how disproportionate he felt his actions were in comparison to the sanctions he received. This links back to the previous subtheme on calm and how a disrupted relationships can impact school experiences.

#### **4.4.3.3 PET 3 – Subtheme 3: Problematic Environments**

Dantae spoke about the learning environment being a problematic part of his exclusionary experience to varying degrees. He made comparisons between the problems in the mainstream secondary school and the PRU and linked his feelings of not caring about being excluded to the size of the building.

*“There's not many people in the same class. They have 2 classes so there's not much people in the in this, like down here. Everyone's friends with each other and there is barely any problems erm I was gonna say quiet but I know its not, erm [yawns] that's probably it” Dp8*

*“erm.. mmm. Less teachers erm Less problems [pause] No, no, no, no there's more problems in mainstream erm... that's probably it.”Dp9*

*“... Cause they are all bad schools... well not bad schools I just didn't like the schools.” Dp15*

Environmental issues were apparent for Dantae in both places but more so in mainstream school. The number of peers and the associated noise within the classroom appeared to be a sensory issue for Dantae. His negative association with schools was amplified by their inability to meet his needs. Repeated use of the phrase ‘that's probably it’ is suggestive of the opposite that there was an increased likelihood Dantae had more to say.

#### **4.4.1 PET 4: Confusing and Conflicting Process**

Dantae spoke about his experience of exclusion with both surety and uncertainty. He was confident about returning to school yet confused when told he could no longer return. At times Dantae found it hard to talk about his exclusion or unexpectedly changed his mind. There was a contrasting sense of how easy and aware Dantae felt in talking about his experience.

#### 4.4.1.1 PET 4 – Subtheme 1: Reversibility

Dantae perceived school exclusion as a temporary occurrence which could be reversed. He defined exclusion as, *“You’re getting, like you’re leaving the school for a a short period of time and then coming back”* Dp1.

Dante described how he found out about his exclusion and the shift between initially being temporarily suspended to permanently excluded:

*“Erm I got put like- sent in another school or whatever and then they suspended me in the last week where it summer was where were breaking up for summer so I didn’t have school for a long time.”* Dp6

Being suspended before the end of term added to Dantae’s sense of confusion because there was a long summer break before school restarted which gave him time to forget the suspension which occurred. Dantae reflected that if he had not been excluded then he would have been in school (not a PRU) learning – suggesting exclusion takes the learning and presence in school away. He spoke about there being nowhere else to go beyond exclusion to the PRU and the reason for his exclusion being based on an irreversible decision made by school that he could not return:

*“I’ve changed. No, no, no, no, it’s ‘cause they’ve decided I’m not coming back. Like they just said we can’t have you anymore.”* Dp13

#### 4.4.1.2 PET 4 – Subtheme 2: Internal Battle

Dantae seemed to be at war with himself about the experience of school exclusion. His ease in talking about what happened and how he felt varied throughout the interview. The sense of confusion stemmed from his lack of knowledge and openness to talk about it. Dantae occasionally answered 'I don't know' to some questions which suggested he literally was not knowledgeable about his personal circumstance and/or lacked a conscious awareness to be able to convey the complexity of his experience.

*"Hmm. I don't know I don't think so. " " I I wont talk?" Dp6*

He spoke about not talking when using examples for the interview and was hesitant to talk in the actual interview, yet went on to talk at speed. This links back to the theme of inner battle suggesting a double-mindedness which made the experience conflicting and confusing for him.

#### **4.4.5 PET 5: Predictable**

Dantae anticipated being subject to school exclusion before it happened. Dantae described how events were predictable based on previous experiences of being targeted and internal exclusion. He felt as though the expectations set by school were out of his control and could not be challenged. The experience of being sent out of class and being moved between schools became a predictable, repetitive norm for him over time.

#### **4.4.5.1 PET 5 – Subtheme 1: Unchallengeable Expectations**

According to Dantae, exclusion was something that was inevitable and to be accepted:

*“[...]I knew this was going to happen, so I’m like o-ok.” Dp6*

Dantae described how he found out he was excluded and concluded by saying he did not care because he knew it was coming based on his behaviour. He spoke powerlessly about how there was nothing he could do to change the rules or how the system worked:

*“you’re in there for two hours or however long a detention was. But If you go in there and you have a double period, like, if you have double Maths and went in there for the double Maths. But yet if you have one period you’re only there for the period and then you leave, but if you get another one then you’re there for the whole day.” Dp12*

In the quote above, Dantae explains the stages within a behaviour management procedure in his previous secondary school. Detentions were unchallengeable and increased in line with incidences of misbehaviour. The more time Dantae spent in detention, the less he felt he could challenge the thought of returning to class.

#### **4.4.5.2 PET 5 – Subtheme 2: A Repetitive Norm**

Being excluded to the PRU was unsurprising for Dantae. A normal part of his school experience prior to being excluded was being repeatedly sent out of class and into the internal exclusion room. When he tried to recount the number of times he had



been excluded, Dantae lost count and settled for the approximation of between 3 and 4 times.

*“I got sent to [internal exclusion room] and whatever and then when I went. Back to lesson after lunch I got sent again so that was twice in a day And that's just what happened. For the ... For the **whole** time I was there.”* Dp2

Emphasis on the ‘whole’ time highlights how repetitive and predictable being excluded from class and into the [internal exclusion room] became for Dantae.

#### **4.4.6 PET 6: Blame**

The sense of blame was apparent as a theme for Dantae’s experience of school exclusion. Dantae spoke about the underlying reason for his exclusion being rooted in his bad behaviour. He described how exclusion changed his self-perception and decreased his sense of happiness and innocence within the learning environment.

##### **4.4.6.1 PET 6 – Subtheme 1: Just Behave**

Dantae’s frequent use of the words ‘behave/behaviour’ highlighted exclusion as a response to pupils who do not comply with set expectations of how to act. His narrative also appeared to be influenced by family members who emphasised the need for him to behave in order to avoid exclusion, get good grades and please others. However, it appeared that repeated instances of misbehaviour were not something Dantae could fix, inhibit or control to change the exclusionary outcome:

*“Well erm [yawns] my mum would be like ar why are you doing this? You need to behave and stuff like that. My my older sister she is always on my case as well cause she’s like you need to behave or you won’t get a good, good, grade or whatever. Then my dads just, I don’t even know what my dad’s like because he just sick of it now.” Dp17*

#### **4.4.6.2 PET 6 – Subtheme 2: Innocence and Joy Revoking**

Dantae spoke about his own desire to behave, learn and feel happy at school. He also spoke about how being excluded meant he was no longer seen as a ‘good’ boy and his lifestyle outside of school became more subdued to claim his innocence.

*“Good. Because I don’t want people to look at me being like aw he goes \*Old Stanton, And he’s a bad boy.” Dp10*

*“Just getting on with my work and everything.... Happy (quieter tone of voice).” Dp16*

*“... all I did outside of school was is have detention or whatever, go get food from the chicken shop and go home.” Dp6*

Dantae expressed a desire to feel happy at school in a noticeably quieter tone of voice, suggesting his experiences of school and exclusion were not satisfying. Similarly, he felt people judged him differently, as bad and suspicious, suggesting there was something negative to blame him for.

#### **4.4.6.3 PET 6 – Subtheme 3: Affects Self-Identity**

Narratives and perceptions held by others about Dantae's exclusion impacted his sense of self negatively. Dantae explained how he tried to adjust his personality to be more accepted, less judged and to increase his chances of career success:

*“Like cause I used to be like all loud but now I'm just I'm just quiet I try to be quiet.”*

Dp16

Dantae's reference to past and present tense shows how over time his identity has been affected by the exclusion and resultantly quietened him as a person. This links back to how the experience of exclusion attributed the problem within Dantae based on his behaviour.

#### **4.5 Participant 3: Pierre**

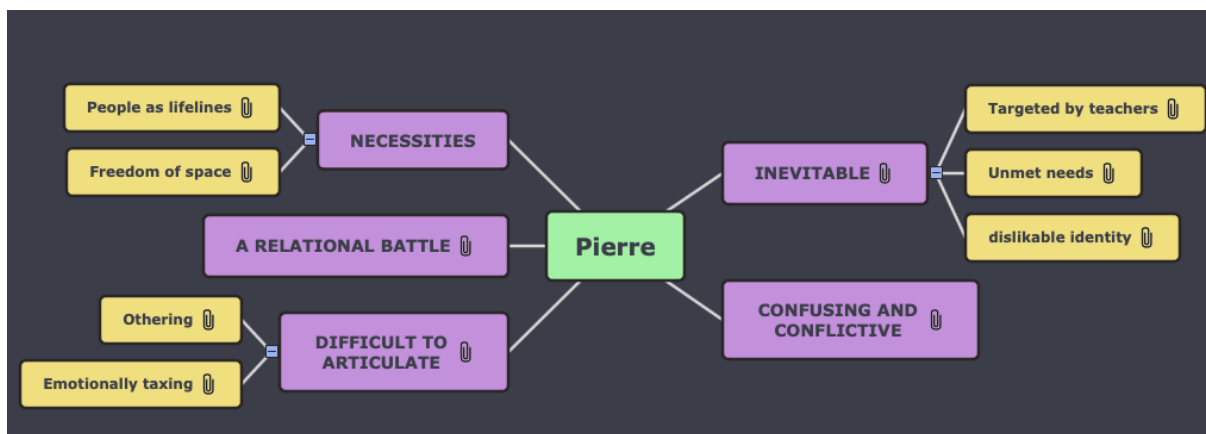
Pierre's experiences of suspension started in primary school (year 4). Pierre was diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in year 5 and had a medical history of conditions which impacted his health and behaviour. Pierre attended a secondary school with a specialist base as he had an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). He was internally excluded within the school grounds for weeks at a time and then excluded for periods of half days. As a result of the placement breaking down, Pierre was temporarily moved to an alternative provision for 2-3 months during an EHCP tribunal process, where his mother appealed for a more suitable educational placement. During this time, he experienced family bereavements, and his social emotional mental health was negatively impacted.

At the time of interview, Pierre had moved to a specialist independent day school for pupils with high functioning autism (as described by the school setting). He agreed to be interviewed at a local youth club which he attended once a week on average.

Pierre participated in the interview with focus and interest, appearing more motivated yet frustrated at the situation as the conversation progressed. The PETs for Pierre have been summarised in the mind map below and are discussed in turn:

**Figure 11**

*Pierre's PETs*



#### 4.5.1 PET 1: Inevitable

Pierre anticipated being excluded from school before it happened. He spoke about how his experience of exclusion ('being kicked out') was inevitable based on three factors: constantly being targeted by teachers, struggling to keep up with learning challenges and perceptions of dislike by others.

##### 4.5.1.1 PET 1 – Subtheme 1: Targeted by Teachers

Pierre described social situations which brought on feelings of anger due to how peer conflicts were dealt with by teachers. He expressed annoyance at feeling picked on:

*“And then the teachers would either go for the one who has a friend group with them. Who who Mm so either the person who is always like, apparently causing trouble when they are not, you know, and then like someone tries to fight you and then they started it and then you ended it and then you get in trouble but they don't.” Pp3*

Sometimes Pierre spoke in third person, giving the sense that he was distancing himself from what was a difficult personal experience for him. He held a self-concept of being less popular and troublesome based on his interactions with teachers.

#### **4.5.1.2 PET 1 – Subtheme 2: Unmet Needs**

Another theme which emerged within inevitability was the sense that Pierre’s learning needs were not being met, which appeared to be influenced by his mother’s views. Pierre spoke about how his mum pre-empted the exclusion from school:

*“Even worse because I didn't really want to be there. My mum didn't want me to be there anyways.” Pp10*

Pierre shared feelings of displeasure about a school he was in based on the perception that the work/practice was not appropriate for his level of need. Pierre’s mother not wanting him to be at the school seemed to intensify his feelings of not belonging there. He spoke about the work being too hard.

#### **4.5.1.3 PET 1 – Subtheme 3: Dislikeable Identity**

Pierre's use of the word 'like' served multiple purposes. He used 'like' in a metaphorical way to make comparisons and in the literal sense to rationalise dislike and differential treatment by teachers.

*"[...] teachers would take the side of someone who has like a friend group or something or like against the person but like against the person that they don't like like"* Pp4

*"Apparently I'm just annoying all the time and stuff."* Pp13

Pierre's use of 'annoying all the time' suggests he felt unliked constantly and this links back to his own feelings of annoyance mentioned earlier within this PET. Whilst the situation could change, Pierre perceived his likeability or popularity to be immovable from the perspective of teachers which led him to be in continual trouble.

#### **4.5.2 PET 2: Confusing and Conflictive**

The process of exclusion was confusing and conflictive for Pierre.

*"I was excluded but I was still part of the school."* Pp1

Pierre spoke about being present in meetings with his mum and inside the school building, yet this created a stark contrast with not being included in decision making processes or feeling a part of the school.

*“No. It was kind of, I mean, it wasn't the way they were talking stuff, it's like they were talking stuff right next to me to my mum about me and yeah”. Pp7*

As well as being excluded from school, within school Pierre felt excluded from his peer group, which fostered further feelings of isolation and confusion. Differences with social communication and interaction could also explain the lens through which he was viewing the social aspect of the exclusion experience in school, as a boy with Autism.

*“[...]there would be like a problem and then fighting and stuff... They was like either including me or not including me. Just people that are at school that I know or just don't know.” Pp3*

Based on his experience prior to and during exclusion practices, Pierre experienced mixed feelings when he was officially no longer part of the school – adding to the sense of confusion and internal conflict.

*“Annoyed but then relieved because I don't have to go back there again.” Pp1*

### **4.5.3 PET 3: Difficult to Articulate**

Despite Pierre's consent and willingness to speak about his experience of exclusion, it was not easy for him. Pierre found it difficult to articulate his feelings into words and sometimes opted for non-verbal language (nodding) or closed-mouth sounds ("mm hm") to indicate his agreement. He confirmed his experience of classwork as difficult and described feeling upset about others' perceptions of him as annoying. Pierre found it difficult to articulate his feelings of being othered and found the experience emotionally taxing.

#### **4.5.3.1 PET 3 – Subtheme 1: Othering**

Pierre felt a sense of difference before he was excluded from school based on the way he was spoken about in school meetings he attended.

*"Because like, the way they were talking, I just felt it. The way they were talking and stuff." Pp7*

Pierre felt as though he did not fit in based on his experience of multiple exclusions which came across as difficult to articulate when he lost count.

*"That they kept excluding me and stuff... Yeah, not a lot but like a couple times yeah." Pp11*

*"I'd say like go away and stuff [quieter tone]." Pp10*



Pierre's use and frequency of the word 'stuff' gave the sense that there were 'other' things he found challenging to say amidst his experience of being othered.

#### **4.5.3.2 PET 3 – Subtheme 2: Emotionally Taxing**

Pierre was hesitant in his response to questions about feelings asked in the interview. When he did respond, he found it hard to recall events and took pauses before describing more negative feelings:

*“Ermm [long pause] a bit sad. Erm ...No ... Depends on the situation.”* Pp4

The experience of exclusion seemed emotionally taxing for Pierre. He described feelings of nervousness about starting new schools and an emptiness (nothing) after finding out he was permanently excluded which is suggestive of an emotional rollercoaster. He bluntly responded 'nothing' to a question about how he felt at the end of the meeting confirming his exclusion:

*“Nothing. Like literally nothing.”* Pp8

#### **4.5.4 PET 4: A Relational Battle**

Pierre's experience of exclusion was consumed by relational conflicts with teachers and peers. The theme of relational battles is exemplified by Pierre's description of the fights which broke out at breaktime and conflictive experiences in response to perceptions of challenging work.

*“Going to school... err finding the work hard and then like at break times and stuff there would be like a problem and then fighting and stuff.” Pp3*

Pierre spoke about the reason why he was excluded being based on the views of teachers who could no longer tolerate him. He felt as though they would be relieved once he was gone:

*“Relieved... Yeah. That they wouldn’t have to deal with someone like me.” Pp13*

The idea of returning to a school he had previously been excluded from gave rise to feelings of annoyance and a sense of defence and refusal by Pierre. He categorised all the teachers as against him and unfair in their ways of handling conflict, except for one headteacher who he had a fond memory of, suggesting a positive relational experience.

*“Err the headteacher. I didn’t really see him much but we were cool. Err [pause] can’t remember now.” Pp6*

#### **4.5.5 PET 5: Necessities**

Relationships and environments were fundamental protective factors within Pierre’s experience of exclusion from mainstream school. He spoke about his mum and the headteacher (previously mentioned) as necessary, helpful people and the importance of being in surroundings where he felt a sense of autonomy.

##### **4.5.5.1 PET 5 – Subtheme 1: People as Lifelines**

The headteacher and his mother were two key people who positively influenced Pierre and helped him to cope at school. Pierre spoke about not seeing a particular headteacher often yet feeling as though their relationship was “cool”. The term cool was made sense of in a positive, relatable way which helped him feel safe and calm. Pierre’s mum was also a necessary person who acted as a lifeline at times of crisis:

*“Like I hate the teacher and left the class and stuff. And then... And... And then if they kept annoying me, then I'd have to call my mum and I'd like... It depends what they done to be honest.” Pp5*

Being able to access his mum by phone exemplified Pierre’s need for support from trusted others to help manage overwhelming feelings. Talking to his mum helped Pierre to stay in school.

*“[...] Like talk to her about the situation.” Pp5*

#### **4.5.5.2 PET 5 – Subtheme 2: Freedom of Space**

The right people and the right environment were important for Pierre. He described having a more desirable experience at home or in alternative specialist provision in comparison to mainstream school:

*“The teachers are nicer and you don’t have to say miss or mister, you can just say that by their first name. And the teachers are calmer and then, like free food and stuff.” Pp8*

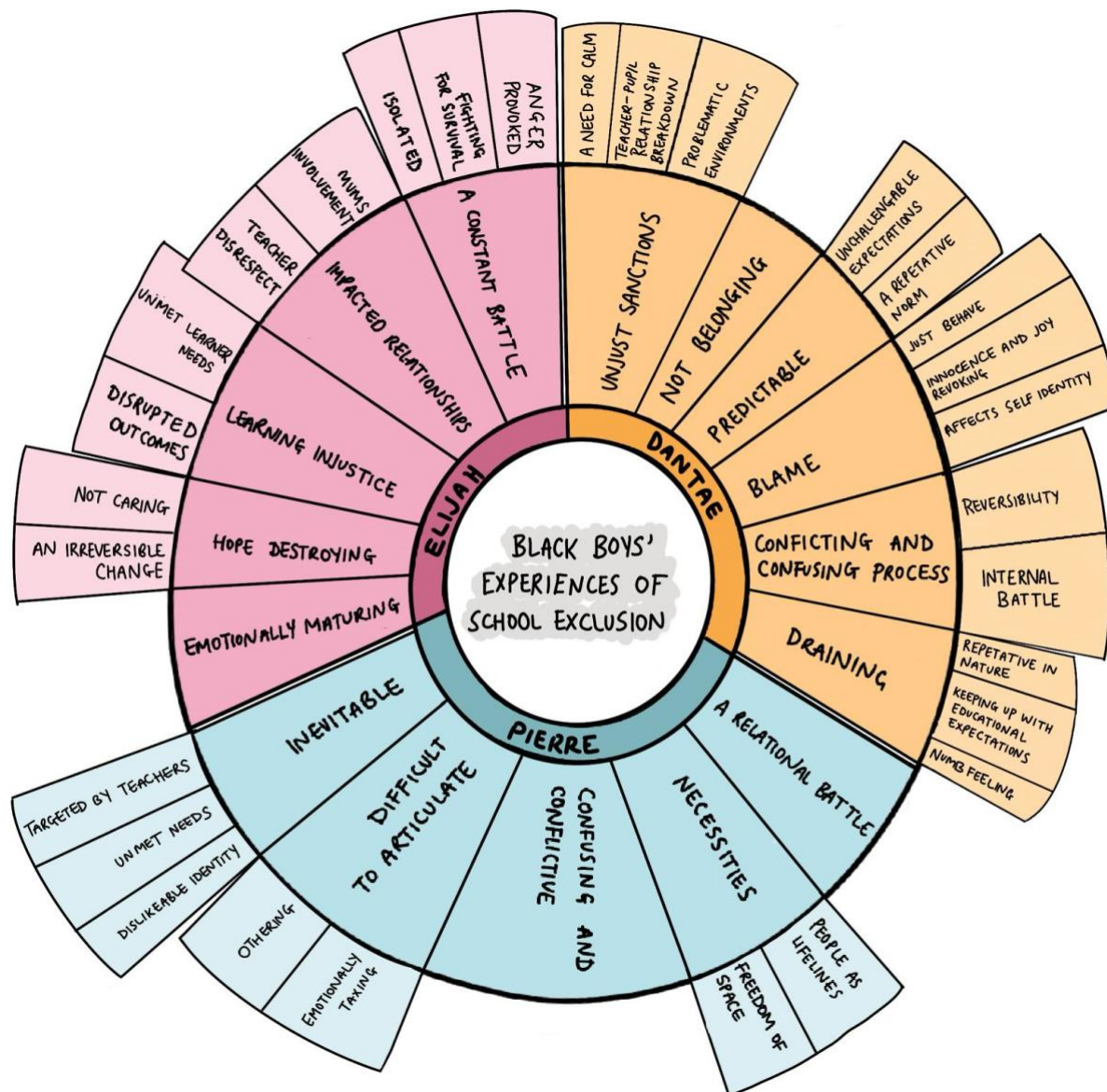
He named other environmental benefits of alternative provision such as physical space. The way Pierre talks about environmental differences highlights the positive impact of changes which helped to meet his needs, linking to the previous subtheme 'unmet needs' in mainstream environments.

#### **4.6 Summary of PETs**

The figure below is a visual illustration which summarises the personal experiential themes for each participant described in the sections above. The central ring is the research question, the first inner ring contains the participant names, and the off-shooting segments contain the corresponding colour-coded PETs and subthemes where appropriate: Elijah is in pink, Dantae is in orange and Pierre is in blue.

Figure 13

PET summary for all participants



#### 4.7 Group Experiential Themes

The PETs are foundational to explore emerging patterns of similarity and difference between participants and facilitate the creation of Group Experiential Themes (GETs). The GETs function to highlight the unique and shared features of the experience across the sample (Smith et al., 2022 p.100). The GETs will help to understand and explore points of convergence and divergence across the boys' cases. Development of the GETs occurred through a process of grouping participant PETs, as previously described in the methodology chapter. Producing an illustrative presentation of GETs to tell a story about the understanding of experience at a group level, whilst demonstrating unique individual ways participants share a quality is a mark of high quality IPA (Smith et al., 2022 p.101).

The development of GETs is a dynamic process which requires the researcher to zoom in and out of the data, moving between themes, experiential statements and raw data (Smith et al., 2022). There is no hard and fast rule for what constitutes a GET, though one suggested way of determining plausibility is for a theme to apply to at least half of the participants in the study (Smith et al., 2022). Within the context of this research, the development of the GETs followed an in-depth, rich exploration of experiences at the individual level. Therefore, interpretation of the GETs is made in relation to the range of individual variation from a sample of three participants. GETs have not dominated analysis and interpretation. The implications of the sample size and conceptualisation of themes is considered further in the discussion chapter.

A summary of GETs and corresponding PETs are illustrated in Figure 14. Each participant has a different colour which corresponds to those that were used to

illustrate the summary of PETs in Figure 13. This information is also available in Appendix Q and R. Capitalised text on yellow post-it notes represents GET labels, individual PETs are in upper case font and the lowercase font represents subthemes.

Figure 14

Map of PETs to GETs



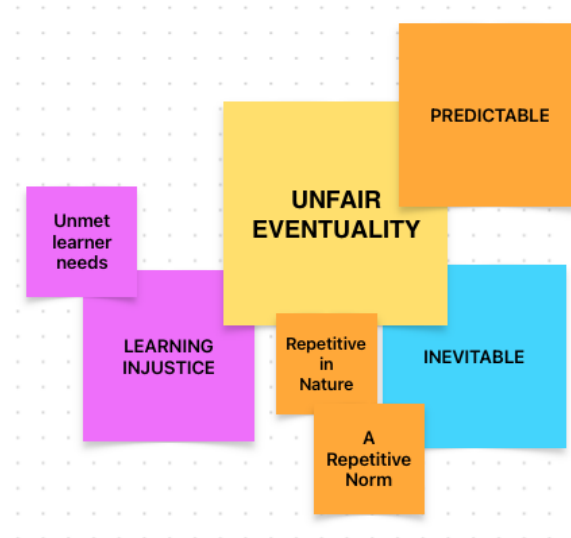
The five GETs are presented in turn with graphical figure screenshots and associated quotes to provide further account of individuality within commonality.



#### 4.7.1 GET 1: Unfair Eventuality

Figure 15

GET 1 Graphic



All participants described a sense that being excluded was unfair and eventual because they could foresee it happening. Repeated instances of internal exclusion were a precursor for the ways they made sense of predicting eventual permanent exclusion. Dantae spoke about repeated visits to the [internal exclusion room]; Elijah described repeatedly being sent home; and Pierre echoed experiences of repeatedly being excluded from several schools. In different ways they expressed a shared sense of being sent out/away as a normative part of their school experience. Elijah and Pierre spoke in a monotone fashion, whilst Dantae placed emphasis on words (e.g. “*whole time*”) to highlight the routine nature.

The sense of inevitability about exclusion related to feelings of helplessness. Dantae stressed how decisions made by schools (“*it is just the way it is*”) could not be challenged, suggesting they were out of his control. Elijah also expressed feelings of inevitability as he reflected on the reduced chances of returning to school. All boys were also influenced by others’ narratives about exclusion looming if they did not

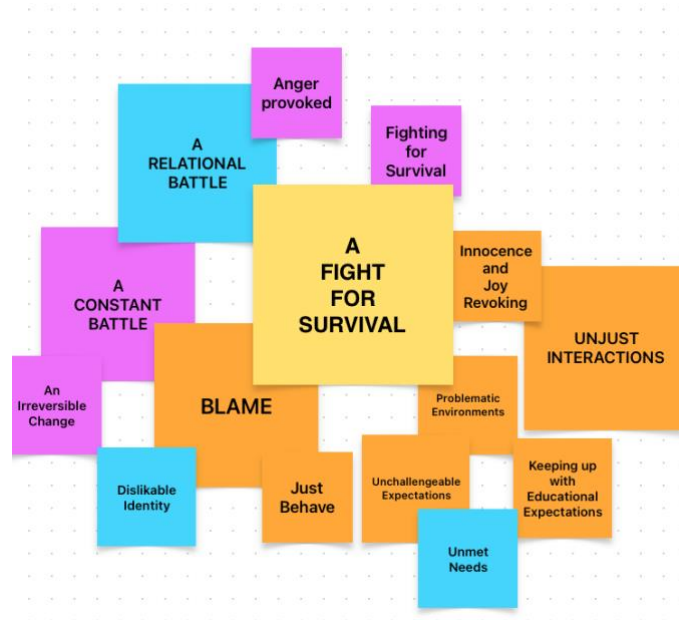
change – Dantae experienced this from family members, whereas Pierre and Elijah made sense of their fate more specifically through their mothers.

The feeling of unfairness was a unified expression of being targeted by teachers and subject to differential treatment. Elijah and Dantae described situations where they were responded to by teachers disproportionately. Elijah spoke about “*any little thing*” and Dantae expressed how teachers were always “*onto*” him conveying the sense that they were under surveillance more so than their peers. Elijah also described how his “*needs*” were not being met when he was moved to a PRU, implying the mainstream exclusion experience unfairly removed him from access to support and resources. In comparison, Dantae and Pierre talked about how exclusion brought about changes to their learning environment (bigger schools, more space) and enhanced their experience of access to provision.

## 4.7.2 GET 2: A Fight for Survival

Figure 16

GET 2 Graphic



The focus on this GET is the feeling that the experience of exclusion was like a fight for survival for all boys in the literal and non-literal sense. Elijah and Pierre held a dominant narrative about fighting in their interviews which linked to their understanding of the basis for their exclusions from school. Similarly, Dantae made sense of the reason for his exclusion based on his behaviour and he repeatedly used the words 'behave' and 'behaviour' to justify his sanctions and how others perceived him. Elijah reflected on how he was in a constant battle, both with his peers who he fought, and sometimes with teachers, who got involved in physical altercations. Although Pierre shared fighting experiences, he reflected on how he felt blamed based on judgements of likeability by teachers, which links to the previous GET on unfairness.

Pierre and Elijah spoke about anger from different standpoints. Pierre said he was angry because he found the work challenging and Elijah described the anger he felt in relation to social situations, injustice he cared about, and bereavement. Both considered how their feelings of anger led them to express physically challenging behaviours in response to what could be perceived demanding. Dantae responded differently to demands by accepting that rules are to be adhered and this suggests a more passive response to survive exclusion – just accept it and keep quiet.

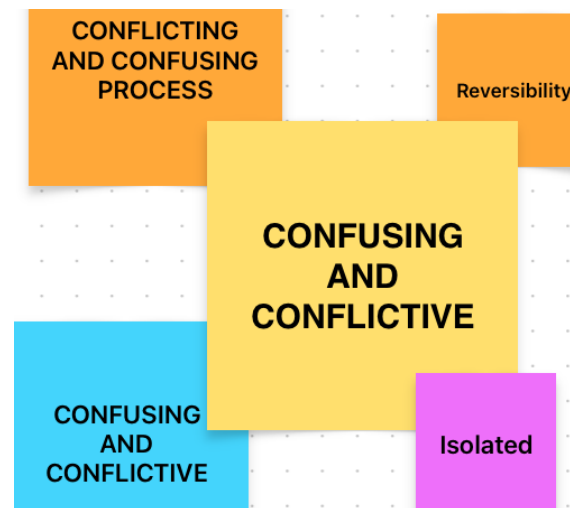
All participants made sense of their exclusion through specific challenges with problematic teachers or environmental factors. They all used language which referred to the constancy of negative interactions with teachers and made sense of this by attributing self-blame. This is evident in the repeated use of “I” and “they” to refer to teachers who mostly appeared to be on an opposing side in protest of their behaviours and attitudes.

This GET highlights how all participants were fighting to survive their individual exclusions across individual, group and systemic levels.

### 4.7.3 GET 3: Confusing and Conflictive

Figure 17

GET 3 Graphic



The entire process and experience of going through exclusion was notably confusing and caused conflict for all three boys. Although all participants referred to the eventuality of being excluded, the process to get there was unanticipated. For example, Dantae spoke about forgetting he had been suspended prior to a summer term break to finding out at the start of the new term that he was ‘permanently excluded’, which caused an element of surprise. Elijah noted his exclusion notification experience during lockdown by an unanticipated call from school. He talked about not knowing whether he would be managed moved or permanently excluded and attending a PRU. This suggested a different sense of confusion in relation to next steps about an anticipated outcome.

The participants varied in their use of terms to convey the phenomenon of exclusion. All boys referred to being ‘kicked out’. Elijah spoke about “isolation”, Dantae mentioned “*permanently excluded*” and Pierre used a slang term for “*perm(anent)*”, though there was a sense of suddenness and lack of clarity when informed. The

implications of exclusion were confusing and further conflictive as the messages conveyed a sense of not belonging to the schools attended any longer (*"we can no longer have you"*). Pierre reflected on how he was present in the school meetings with his mother but felt a sense of hopelessness as he was spoken 'about' and not involved in decision making. Pierre described how he felt *"excluded but still part of the school"*, which indicates a mismatch between environmental and behavioural treatment. Similarly for Elijah and Dantae there was a confusion in their experiences of being isolated within the school grounds within the internal exclusion room or isolation room.

The sense of conflict was apparent for all three boys to different degrees, within themselves, with peers and with teachers. Elijah consciously reflected on how inner conflict was expressed as anger towards others and influenced by his experience of bereavement. He considered how conflicts with peers stemmed from *"too much people around me... being childish"*. Similarly, Pierre spoke about how the inner conflict of finding work too hard brought on challenges and conflict within the classroom. However, Dantae seemed less aware of inner conflict, saying *"I don't know"* in response to questions about this and other tricky topics, whereas disagreement with teachers was an important point of contention for him within the classroom and playground.

The dichotomy of feelings promoted confusion for all the boys in different ways. Pierre spoke about feeling both annoyed and relieved about leaving school, Elijah openly noted the difficulty in answering questions and Dantae reflected on the positive feelings he would have felt had it not been for his exclusion.

The focus on this GET gives rise to opposing positive and negative feelings about the same phenomenon and is discussed further in the next GET – Emotionally labouring.

#### 4.7.4 GET 4: Emotionally Labouring

**Figure 18**

*GET 4 Graphic*



Speaking about the affective aspect of being excluded from school was somewhat challenging for all participants. Exclusion was a broadly negative experience: all participants spoke and made sense of their journeys in unenthusiastic ways which was evident in their tone, pace and response lengths. Elijah spoke most out of all three boys, however all spoke in brief sentences or short prose, which implied the processing and affective time needed to make sense of their experiences. Gaps in speech and long pauses may indicate challenges with communication, and/or how hard it may have been for the boys to express their experiences of exclusion.

All participants referred to 'not caring' in one sense, yet caring in another, in the way they spoke about the impact of exclusion on their futures. Closely linked to not caring was a sense of 'not knowing' the answer to questions about feelings, suggesting a collective disconnect/numbing to their own feelings based on the disturbance of being 'kicked out'.

The sense of taxed emotions remained throughout the interviews as it became harder for the boys to articulate their meaning making. Elijah was the only participant who was able to articulate the challenge of the experience. This enabled him to mature emotionally, following periods of reflection about his loss of hope in the exclusion ultimatum reversing.

Positive emotions were considered when the boys noted people who promoted 'calm' in their educational lives. Dantae described teachers who were calm by defining what constituted not calm – shouting, invasiveness and other punitive measures. Elijah and Pierre talked about members of staff who helped regulate their emotions during provoking school situations and this suggests these people acted as facilitators in alleviating their emotional toil.

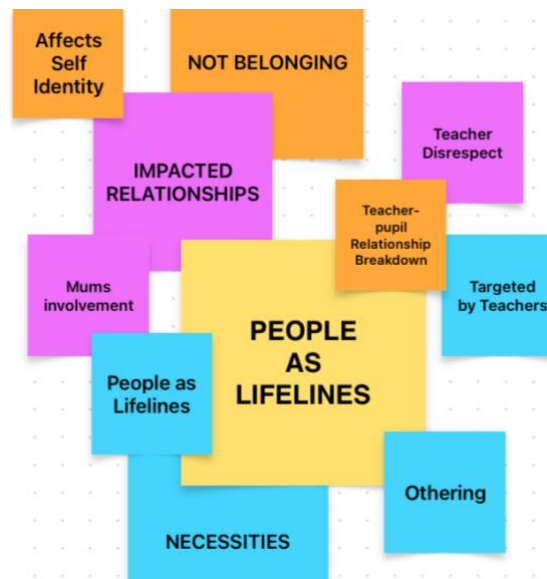
The focus on this GET is the emotional impact that the exclusionary experience brought on and begins to consider how key people helped the participants live through it – this is also linked to the final PET – People as lifelines.

#### **4.7.5 GET 5: People as Lifelines**

##### **Figure 19**



### GET 5 Graphic



People were at the core of each boy's experience of exclusion in both obstructive and facilitative ways. All the boys' experiences of exclusion were defined based on how they made sense of it in relation to key others. One key group of people considered were school staff including headteachers and teachers. Dantae, Elijah and Pierre spoke about conflict they encountered with teachers in relation to their behaviour and Elijah described how he felt disrespected by the headteacher who he positioned as a provider with a duty of care. There was a sense of mutual disrespect by how the boys were disciplined by teachers in response to their behaviour and this promoted a collective teacher-pupil relationship breakdown.

Not only were the boys impacted by school staff, but the experience of exclusion was perceived to indirectly impact family members closest to them, especially parents. Mothers were a shared, significant role mentioned by all boys, though Dantae's dad was his primary carer at the time. They all seemed to be influenced by their mothers' narratives about being excluded – Dantae spoke about the need to behave; Elijah

spoke about his mum repeatedly being called into the school; and Pierre spoke about his mum being annoyed he kept being excluded.

Others' narratives influenced how the boys made sense of themselves in relation to being excluded and suggested the need to make an internal change. Dantae reflected on how being called "*loud*" before exclusion prompted him to become "*quiet*" afterwards and Elijah spoke about not listening to members of authority because he did not feel "*respected*".

Headteachers were of importance within the collective experience and a key determinant for decision making about a final exclusion. Only Pierre spoke about the constructive relation he had with a headteacher whose presence seemed to bring him calm ("*he was just cool*"). For Elijah and Dantae, headteachers represented positions of power who made decisions which were important, detrimental and irreversible.

The sense of people as lifelines presented as a literal telephone line for Pierre who lived through his exclusion by speaking to his mum to calm down when he struggled at school. Elijah and Dantae similarly spoke about having a member of staff help them calm down and break away from the environment as supportive in regulating their emotions. This links to Pierre's necessity for a change to provision with more physical space and teachers he could address by first name which suggested both visible freedoms and relational connections. The focus of this GET was relationships with people. How the boys were in relation with/to others affected how they saw themselves and understood the basis for being subject to exclusion.

#### **4.8 Summary and conclusion**

This chapter reported findings on Black boys' experiences and perceptions of exclusion from school. At the individual level, PETs were interpreted and presented in detail for each participant. At the group level, emerging GETs were considered based on points of convergence and divergence across themes in the cases. The next chapter will discuss and present the above findings in relation to relevant theory and research, considering implications, researcher reflections and future research.

## **5. Discussion**

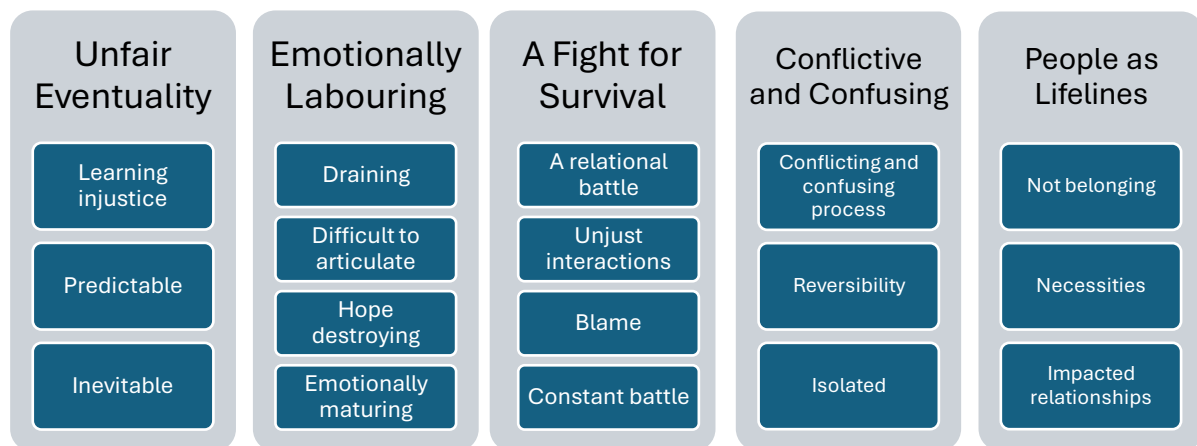
### **5.1 Chapter overview**

This chapter will provide a summary of the findings from this research pertaining to the RQ – What are Black boys' experiences of school exclusion? Key findings will be made sense of through psychological theory and existing research within the literature. Implications for research and practice for stakeholders including LAs, EPs, schools and PRUs will be discussed. An evaluation of the research will consider strengths and limitations of the current study. Reflections for future research based on findings will be outlined. The chapter will conclude with thoughts of reflexivity pertaining to the researcher throughout the study.

### **5.2 Summary of Findings**

The aim of the research was to explore the experiences of Black boys who have been excluded from secondary school. The diagram below illustrates the outcome of the IPA process which generated 5 GETs, reported in detail within the findings chapter:

- An Unfair Eventuality
- Emotionally Labouring
- A Fight for Survival
- Confusing and Conflictive
- People as Lifelines

**Figure 20***Visual summary of GETs*

The prominent aspects and interlinking nature of the GETs are discussed further in the chapter. The researcher's rationale for the formation of GETs is documented in a research journal extract in Appendix S.

### 5.3 Significance of Group and Individual Findings

Whilst the experience was unique for each participant, there were significant points of overlap which unified aspects of how exclusion from school is conceptualised and experienced as a phenomenon by the Black boys within this study. The research findings raise important questions, call for critical analysis and pose a dilemma for professionals to consider the effectiveness of suspension and permanent exclusion as a procedural practice within the UK education system.

#### 5.3.1 People as Lifelines

Findings from the current and previous research show how people and relationships are a core part of the human experience of being excluded (Graham et al., 2019). All

participants were influenced by adults' perceptions of them which were mostly negative and detrimental to their self-view and care towards the situation. This supports existing research which found how negative perceptions, if unchallenged become internalised and can affect later life outcomes, limiting ambitions and the development of adolescence and carrying the potential for a detrimental self-fulfilling prophecy (Wright et al., 2016). Dantae, Elijah and Pierre each shared encounters with teachers or figures in authority who made them feel less than, othered or disrespected. A minority of teachers were an important part of the experience to buffer the difficulty of feeling rejected. People either acted as lifelines for survival to endure the process or relationship breakdowns were a catalyst for being othered. It is therefore important to understand and develop more psychologically safe and trusting relationships between pupils and teachers to foster positive perceptions of self, others and the school system.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) theorises that individuals inherently seek warm interactions with others as a foundation to contribute towards the development of esteem and the achievement of self-actualisation. This theory can help to explain why the boys struggled to succeed in maintaining a school place based on dysfunctional relationships with teachers. It also illuminates how exclusion as a symbolic dimension goes against a transcendence towards motivation and achievement in education (Gorman, 2010). Findings support previous review of the literature which highlighted how the sense of self was impacted during adolescence and socially influenced by teachers' perceptions (Bei & Knowler, 2022; Boyd, 2021; Crozier, 2006, Demie, 2021, Howarth, 2004, Wright, 2010, Wright at al., 2016). The need to belong is a central part of the hierarchy which explains how individuals

establish a sense of connection after basic needs are in place and before self-fulfilment can be accomplished.

The nature of relationships with teachers continues to be a prominent theme throughout the literature. Relationships with male teachers in Boyd's (2021) research were a key finding. Similarly, Wright (2010) found teacher perceptions and interactions made excluded pupils feel singled out and altercations with teachers in Bei & Knowler's (2022) study was a shared experience throughout the narratives which had damaging impacts on self-identity.

Erikson (1968) theorises that adolescence is a crucial period to develop a sense of identity and independence. This can explain why other people were so influential for the participants in this study as they support the formation of self based on interactions, perceptions and experiences with others which create meaning. The presence and significance of positive relationships with parents/carers was identified as important in this study as well as other research (Wright et al., 2016; Howarth, 2004; Boyd, 2021). Parents/carers acted as lifelines in multiple ways from their physical presence in meetings to providing emotional support in the face of school conflict. Parents/carers' views contributed to the boys' views and helped them to make sense of what being excluded meant for their present circumstance or future outcomes and this indicates how they as another social agent are held in high regard, influential during the adolescent stage of development.

### 5.3.2 A Fight for Survival

The fight was sensed as both mental and physical conflict across multiple levels; internally and externally with other people and the system. Instances of fighting were linked to feelings of anger and acts of aggression. The iceberg model can be used to describe anger as an emotion visible on the surface (in expression and behaviour), though sometimes misleading to other emotions hidden beneath the surface (Rosenwein, 2020). It is therefore important to understand that the expression of anger is a secondary emotion which can serve to mask or be fuelled by other underlying feelings such as shame, frustration, vulnerability and hurt. Elijah's anger was infolded in the grief of losing family members. Being trauma-informed would therefore help to understand the extremity and regularity of his behaviours based on an underlying state of hypervigilance (Van der Kolk, 2014).

Experience of trauma during child development can have ten-fold impacts on social and emotional development (Van der Kolk, 2014), suggesting the rejection of exclusion is even more complex. Trauma can also be attributed to the converging experience of drastic change to environments and associated relationships which has implications on individual windows of tolerance as a means to function, socialise and learn in school (Frieze, 2015). The anger iceberg links to the adolescent stage of development, when brains are still maturing frontal cortex regions responsible for skills like emotional recognition and regulation (Hartley et al., 2021).

Despite the experience of exclusion being prefaced by anger, Social Representation Theory (Moscovici, 1998) can help make sense of how racialised patterns based on perceptions of people can become embodied and re-present as aggressive,



confrontational and disruptive for Black pupils (Howarth, 2004). Theory can help to explain Dantae's internal battle with himself as he believed he was to 'blame' for the exclusion based on his 'behaviour' as told by significant others. This finding suggests the issue of school exclusion as being seen as a within-child problem. Government guidance which focuses on schools following procedures in response to challenging behaviours (2024a) seems to absolve society from the responsibility of better understanding the link between mental health, associated exclusion risk factors and behaviour in schools (DfE, 2018). The social model of disability states that individuals are disabled by barriers in society and not their difference or impairment (Oliver & Sapey, 2006). Therefore to address negative internalisation within the context of the findings from this research, Black boys need more relational opportunities with adults in authority leading to greater independence and control (Graham et al., 2019; Kearney, 2011).

The constancy of battling links to historical findings of stereotypical conflict documented in literature about the subnormalisation of Black Caribbean (then referred to as West Indian) children by the school system. Writing about the link between low expectation, low motivation and low teacher expectation as factors influencing subsequential 'Black child attitude' and exam performance, Coard (1971) states, "*... under these circumstances, and in this entire racial context, the Black child feels (and quite rightly) that he is fighting a losing battle. He becomes so consumed with fear, inner rage and hatred that he is unable to think clearly when attempting the test*" (Coard, 1971, p.25). This illuminates the subtle battle of institutional racism which is a dominant theme throughout the literature (Bei & Knowler, 2022; Boyd, 2021; Crozier, 2006, Demie, 2021, Howarth, 2004, Wright,

2010, Wright et al., 2016). Coard's (1971) reference to emotions links back to the management and expression of anger as a Black adolescent within a wider system which arguably has become more sophisticated in silently catastrophising Black boys' presentation as challenging (Graham, 2004).

The fight within the context of the findings in this research is evidenced as subthemes of struggles in keeping up with educational standards, interactions with teachers, challenges to authority and maintaining innocence as a Black boy. The sense of a lost innocence links to the 'adultification bias' which positions Black children as one group who are not afforded the notions of innocence and vulnerability (David & Marsh, 2020). Perceptions of boys grounded in bias and discrimination arguably occur when they are perceived through racially stereotyped lenses such as angry, aggressive strong and rude (Davis, 2022). This links to the current research findings which makes them seem more adult like and less likely to be seen as in need.

In contrast to Boyd (2021), this study found no explicit mention of experience based on race, however research findings converge to highlight the phenomenon of the boys' difficulty in naming discriminatory practices, attitudes and interactions systematically embedded in school systems due to potential fear of reprimand (Ahmed, 2023). Collectively participants shared experiences of being unliked, subdued and treated differently in a way that reinforces known ideologies and discourses in society about Black boys (Stewart et al., 2023).

There are several ways to speculate the significance of race or racism not being brought up by participants during the data collection phases of the study.

Sophisticated racism (Showunmi & Tomlin, 2022) explains how the experience of racial discrimination and consequential inequalities in education can be civilised to such a degree that the nature of the experience is not easily observed or measured.

The intersection between the adolescent age of the participants and their racial identities suggests making meaning between racial identity and exclusionary experiences may not have been in the consciousness of their realities. The boys may have lacked awareness and competence in racial literacy to convey unseen, internal feelings using language. Racism primarily requires understanding before expression and Critical Race Theorists propose without research exploring and amplifying experiences of Black people, clear and critical understanding of silent struggles with the oppression of race and racism would not be possible to make sense of (Yull, 2014). Findings from this study showed how aspects of individual meaning-making converged to create group experiential themes such as 'fighting for survival' as a product of racialization. Racialization is a process which takes place in time and space and involves the investigation of skin colour and associated meaning (Ahmed, 2002).

Within the context of this study, racialisation includes Black boys being disliked for perceptions of dangerousness, threat and consequentially isolated in educational circumstances. Child experiences of racialization can cause young, developing minds to internalise, question and attribute self-blame to something perceived as a wrongdoing (Lorde, 1984). Race is an effect of racialisation, not a cause and has implications for the way individuals are perceived and treated (Ahmed, 2002) based

on the meaning attributed to their identity. It is possible that the boys did acknowledge race as a salient factor contributing to their exclusionary experience, yet internalised their Blackness based on conflictive experiences (internal/external fights) in order to 'survive' educational systems within which they exist within. The implications of mentioning race or calling out racism carry negative ramifications for individuals and this may have been unappealing in addition to the lack of explicit questions about race as an invitation for discussion in the interview questions.

Dialogue about race could have positioned the participants to feel in a one-down position—less than, inferior, and upholding the power dynamic that disadvantages Black boys, making them feel more isolated, angry, and powerless beyond the schooling context. The complexity of race as a social construct is re-visited. Since two of the participants were of mixed Black and White racial categories, it is possible that the diversity of Blackness was difficult to capture and discuss due to the multitude of environmental, social, and historical factors that make the term problematic (Burrell-Craft, 2020). The explicit lack of mentioning race here supports theoretical assumptions that race and racism can overtly and covertly impact discourses and practices within educational settings (Yosso, 2005). Fighting to survive exclusion links to the next subsection on unfair eventuality which illuminates the socially unjust, anticipated nature of the experience.

### **5.3.3 Unfair Eventuality**

The participants spoke about the phenomenon of exclusion as something they were both displeased with yet expecting to happen. This finding extends the complexity of conflict beyond their internal conceptualisations to the multifaceted interaction

between their social positions within the system. Intersectionality and CRT can help to explain how the multiplicity between identity and discrimination for certain groups is hard to establish (Crenshaw, 1989).

The current research findings on the ordinary repetitiveness of being excluded as a Black male support findings across the literature concerning the intersectionality of race being gendered and gender being racialised (Bei & Knowler, 2022; Crozier, 2004; Demie, 2021; Wright, 2010). Interpretation of Black male behaviour has been masculinised as threatening (Howarth, 2004) therefore influencing boys to perceive their experience as bad and to be reprimanded.

Injustices in learning and unmet learner needs speaks to the findings of a lack of exploration of SEND needs for excluded Black pupils (Bei & Knowler, 2022; Crozier, 2005). The current research noted that all participants converged in being assessed for SEN, though only Pierre had known diagnoses which could have knowingly impacted his world view and interaction within the learning environment. The intersectionality between SEND and age can present as problematised behaviours such as aggression, violence and rudeness masked by the anxiety of underlying learning needs for some children (Templeton, 2021).

Other research based on pupils' views of exclusion alluded to racial inequalities. Bovell (2022) noted all negative experiences of being watched were from Black and mixed heritage pupils and Caslin (2021) found a crossover between race and ableism from the mixed sample exploring SEMH without aims to explore intersectionality. It is therefore important to look beyond behaviour and apply an

intersectional lens for thinking about the lived experiences and perceptions of Black boys due to their vulnerabilities to experiencing racial stereotyping and adultification bias (Davis & Marsh, 2020; Lichwa, 2024). This links with previous research findings that the behaviour of Black boys with a neurodivergent condition is more likely to be interpreted as aggressive and judged against expectations for that of an older child due to misperceptions in emotional responses (Smiley & Fakunle, 2016; Halberstadt et al., 2018). Findings from this research supports the view that the intersection between race and neurodivergence worsens the impact of adultification and can explain the findings of revoked joy and innocence.

The sense of divergence in how the participants felt they could challenge differential treatment can be explained by CRT. Elijah was perceived as a threat, Dantae perceived as badly behaved and Pierre as annoying. Theory argues that Black racialised people are treated differently/more harshly because of systematic and inherent categorisation at the bottom of a racial order (Bei & Knowler, 2022; Delgado, & Stefancic, 2023). CRT argues race as a concept is part of the underlying problem for the inevitability of bad experiences for Black boys because of the associated negative discourses which are perpetuated in society. Participants experienced differential, repetitive treatment in and outside of the classroom by teachers which was not always easy to articulate but prevalent across the perceptions and use of language. The concept of over-monitoring (Browne, 2015) can be used to describe experiences of being excessively observed (in close proximity), targeted (presumed up to no good) and reprimanded (sent out or away) and strengthens the argument of minoritized experiences for pupils racialised as Black (Bei & Knowler, 2022). There are implications for teachers striking a fair

balance between monitoring for legitimate reasons such as safety and respecting individual privacy for autonomous learning.

### **5.3.4 Confusing and Conflictive**

Despite the eventuality of facing exclusion, findings from the current research demonstrate how the process did not come without mixed feelings of confusion which magnified the inner conflict. The prospect of all participants ending up in a PRU at some point over the course of their educational journey foreshadows the idea of a school/PRU to prison pipeline (Empathy not Exclusion, 2018; Perera, 2020). Figure 2 (introduction chapter) illustrates the sequential steps of being sent out of class to temporary exclusion ahead of placement at a PRU. Pierre was the only participant who had a somewhat positive experience of AP and this lent itself to eventually being placed within an independent specialist educational setting.

For all participants there was a sense of lack of clarity between anticipating an exclusion and how it occurred. Change and variance in use of exclusionary language (off-rolling, off-site direction, managed move) within policy over time is reflective of the varied use of terms by the participants. Current guidance defines the temporary removal of a student from school as a 'suspension', though prior to 2023 this was referred to as a 'fixed-term' exclusion (DfE, 2023b). Findings show only Dantae used 'suspended' in his vocabulary, which accompanied a sense of confusion about his anticipated return to school. All participants converged in their use of slang terminology, 'kicked out' to conceptualise and concretise no longer belonging to their schools. Literature has found that off-rolling practices are under scrutiny based on legal, ethical and subsequential underreporting practices by schools (Timpson,

2019). Bei & Knowler (2022) also found pupil narratives were rooted in confusion and misunderstanding based on misinformation about their exclusion until it was too late to return to school. This links to the previous theme/analogy of fighting to survive exclusion whilst being confusingly kicked out, temporarily or permanently, from a school.

The use of internal inclusion/exclusion units further complicated the participants' experience of belonging. Research exploring the effectiveness of Internal Inclusion Units found decreased instances of misbehaviour as well as negative emotional impacts for attendees (Reynolds, 2021). Despite dissimilar findings of a positive change in behaviour by the participants from the current research, similar ethical implications arise for those repeatedly subject to within-school isolation spaces. Research has found a correlation between pupils temporarily and permanently excluded and findings support ideas that isolation/internal exclusion is a precursor for both (Timpson, 2019). Pierre's reference to "*being excluded but still part of the school*" encapsulates the rejecting and neglectful aspects of exclusion within an unfair, punitive behavioural system based on zero-tolerance approaches (DfE, 2019; Stewart-Hall et al., 2023). Subjectivity to unfairness and confusing processes generates a host of competing emotions, which links to the next subsection – Emotionally labouring.

### **5.3.5 Emotionally labouring**

Emotions serve as internal data and carry social complexities within the context of race and gender. Emotions can be evoked in different ways during instances of



social injustice and less visibly articulated or effectively interpreted in males (Ahmed, 2023; Brody 2013).

Seeming not to care was a big theme throughout the findings of this research. This concurs with findings by Boyd (2021) whereby 3/6 participants talked about not caring and feeling unconcerned by their exclusion. Psychoanalytic interpretation of 'not caring' suggests the reverse - over caring until eventual defending, repressing, regressing, projecting or rationalising as a coping mechanism. Theory suggests the adoption of an attitude of indifference can be an attempt to protect oneself from the impact of challenging circumstances (Freud, 1936). Within the context of this research, the brevity of interview durations and difficulty in articulating emotive language could be understood using psychoanalytic ideas. The experience of strong emotions can manifest as anxiety and trigger a masked behaviour defence as a form of protection from emotional intensity and pain (Ahmed, 2023). The sense of 'lost hope', 'out-casting by teachers' and the 'irreversibility' of educational fate found by the current research, converged as collective emotional toll from the exclusionary experience which infers an onset of emotional ('draining') fatigue. Dantae spoke about feeling the need to suppress himself to avoid attracting negative attention; Pierre uncovered underlying feelings of sadness beneath his frustrations and Elijah expressed a destruction of hope which links back to under surface feelings from the iceberg model in 'Fighting for survival'.

Developing on the analogy of surviving, a need for 'calm' was an apparent finding amongst the participants who sought out an emotional containment from influential people and places – someone/something to hold the intolerable delicacy of mixed feelings. Two participant interviews were conducted in a community youth club and

this supports ethnographic methodologies used by other research to promote comfortability and, through doing so, psychological safety (Howarth, 2004; Wright 2010). Wright et al.'s (2016) findings on how Black males navigated the challenge of exclusion by drawing on community resources and different forms of capital (social) illuminates the research findings for the current study and has implications for the importance of promoting calm for Black boys through relatable, safe people and places – as part of a turnaround narrative (Yosso, 2005).

#### **5.4 Research Implications**

This section will discuss what needs to be put in place based on what has been learned from the findings of the current research study. There are implications for Black boys as pupils, schools as education providers and channels for exclusion, parents/carers as related social agents, EPs who work with Black boys and the wider government system.

##### **Pupils**

- Black boys' lives matter: Race was not explicitly mentioned but presented as an undercurrent within the themes of unfairness, fighting and emotionality. Research found a sense of not belonging, self-blame and inevitability of ending up excluded as a negative experience, indicating there is a need for more uplifting intervention. Black boys need more culturally relevant opportunities to get involved in projects which are protective and conducive to their personal, social and future growth. There are research-led LA initiatives (unnamed for anonymity purposes) which address the emotional needs of

Black boys and challenge negative stereotypes in wider society using creative arts.

- For example, 'For Black Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When the Hue Gets Too Heavy' is a theatre production showcasing in London and depicts the social constructivist learnings of six Black men through their journey of masculinity and life in Britain (New Diorama, 2024). The play speaks to experiences of exclusion from school and other injustices faced by boys to men over their life course. Findings showed how repeated experiences of isolation became unstimulating and suggest a gap for creatively building curriculum knowledge. This links to how story-telling could be used to educate all students as part of an inclusive, secondary curriculum.
- Explain the process and impact of exclusion in an accessible way: Terms were used interchangeably and the sense of confusion suggested lack of clarity and a need for informed understanding. Dantae perceived exclusion as an ultimatum which had to be accepted. Only Elijah appeared to understand the implications of being excluded, but in hindsight, when for him it felt too late. Better understanding for pupils can address feelings of seeming not to care and promote pupil informed choice about behaviour.
- Amplifying the student voice: Black boys should have more opportunities to share their views in relaxed and relational forums – using story to effect change. The difficulty with recruitment, eventual sample size and brevity of the interviews indicates sharing narratives is not a conventional or motivating collective experience. The process of seeking participants supported the idea

that Black boys are subject to the phenomenon in focus and hold views, but may experience trust and vulnerability barriers in sharing such experiences.

### **Parents and carers**

- A forum to unify parents/carers raising children going through the experience of exclusion: Parents/carers were instrumental throughout the process, attending meetings and relaying messages about the exclusionary decisions. Even though research focused on the views of the boys, families were directly impacted and perceived as lifelines. They could therefore benefit from culturally responsive, relational advice and support.

### **Schools**

- This research highlighted the importance of relationships with teachers for the pupils ahead of formal exclusion. Mentions of significant members of staff who had a calming and positive influence on the boys during times of difficulty highlights how essential the development of relational approaches within school is. Research concerning relational practice highlights the effectiveness of approaches based on unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1957), promoting a sense of belonging (Maslow, 1943) and the development of a secure base by adults based within school so pupils develop essential reasoning, relating and regulating skills through teaching practices (Lysaker & Furuness, 2011). Interactions with pupils despite their circumstances should involve instances of warmth and interest to make a positive difference in their self-concept, perception of the school system and 'respectful' relationship with linked professionals.

- The concept of identity could be discussed further within the school curriculum so Black boys can build necessary self-awareness, self-regulation and self-advocacy skills. Findings revealed how instrumental and influential other people were for mostly bad but sometimes good reasons, affecting how they perceived themselves and their construction of self. Interventions within the school targeting identity development during the adolescent period could be transformative for all pupils and staff alike. Relational approaches through intervention provided by male staff were a positive finding for the boys in Boyd's (2021) study, perceived helpful in establishing their sense of self and feeling seen by others.
- Anger and acts of aggression were key findings within the research. Antecedents and consequences associated with managing anger could be explored further to enhance understanding of behaviour. Schools could invest in anger-management specific programmes to support emotional and social needs from individual to organisational levels using psycho-educational sources (Pickering et al., 2019). The Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) programme is one example of a whole school provision targeting the development of emotional literacy skills for pupils by upskilling teaching staff (ELSA Network, 2017). ELSA covers relevant aspects including anger management and The Firework Model to support pupils' ability to talk through, recognise and re-evaluate anger triggering responses with adult help (Woodcock, 2006). ELSA could be adapted through individual or small group sessions with a culturally responsive framework (Sakata, 2021) applied to support affected Black boys at risk of exclusion struggling to regulate and comprehend the basis of their emotions. At a whole school level, anger

management programmes can be a form of responsive and preventative action taken by schools to audit relational practice in the day-to-day management of emotional dysregulation and consider environmental adaptations such as accessibility to calming spaces and pastoral staff – as time and space to calm down were evident subthemes from this study.

- Further school reflection and exploration into ‘aggression’ as a label attributed to children could be re-framed from an intersectional lens with the understanding that Black boys are vulnerable to adultification bias and racial stereotyping through language representations.
- Suspension was a precedent for permanent exclusion in all cases. Schools need to review organisational practice and the impact of how what is happening at a wider-system level affects the individual. This includes zero-tolerance policies and internal exclusion units as a means of behaviour management, observing trends in demographic and reason for attendance.

### **Educational Psychologists**

- Because of the correlation between suspension and permanent exclusion, there is a role for EPs to work closely with schools to support pupils at risk of exclusion with the aim to reintegrate them back into school. EPs could support secondary schools to evaluate their existing behaviour policies and highlight the importance of taking a culturally inclusive approach, including considering specific social identity markers included in this research – gender and race.
- As there were shared experiences of unmet learning needs, there is a role for EPs to explore vulnerable students with Special Educational Needs

Coordinators. EPs could raise pupils in planning meetings may be at risk of exclusion due to under-recognised SEND.

- More preventative work is needed to address the perceptions of predictability, inevitability and irreversibility. EPs could help schools to improve relational working between teachers and pupils using a range of approaches. Research findings and literature show how teachers' beliefs and perceptions hold power and influence over Black pupils' identity and academic potential. This could involve hosting focus groups for teachers and pupils affected by exclusion or with experiencing general breakdowns in communication/challenged relationships as a dominant theme from this research. Group or 1:1 supervision could be offered as a safe space for school staff to explore difficult relationships with pupils and the management of behaviours perceived as challenging on a regular basis.
- Intersectional findings from the current research indicate the multiplicity of social identity needs further exploration supported by practitioners with psychological knowledge of theory and research. The incorporation of specific theoretical models such as Burnham's (2013) Social Graces into practice within schools could help address the experiences of Black boys in a targeted, structured and psychologically grounded way. The model could be used within teacher forums to promote understanding and accepting of difference, as well as highlight implications for exclusion within overrepresented, isolated groups.
- EPs could support schools to shift and expand from individual to contextual thinking through systemic working. Research findings from this study support findings in other research which suggests exclusion is a problem located

within-child (self-blame), neglecting wider cultural and historical influences that have ripple effects on other forms of exclusion (Daniels et al., 2022).

- There is a need for EP service provision beyond schools and within the wider community. Two participants were more comfortable to partake in the interviews at the youth club they attended outside of school. This shows how valuable community organisations such as youth clubs are for Black boys. These places should be accessible to specialist services including Educational Psychology to improve relational working between community and school provision.
- EP services need to monitor and respond to referrals for Black boys who may have been or are at risk of school exclusion with cultural awareness, sensitivity and responsiveness. EPs have a duty to support and amplify marginalised group perspectives. Racial justice in education calls for interrogation of dominant institutionalised narratives (Bei & Knowler, 2022) which may be hidden in service referral forms.

### **Wider System**

- More funding needs to be reallocated to community services such as youth clubs and outreach for Black boys. The sense of community was a crucial aspect of the boys' survival through the exclusion, giving them a positive environment containing adult role models outside of the school system. Review of the literature shows how culturally responsive social practices based on group initiatives can serve to impart knowledge, value and worth into the esteem of Black boys (Boyd, 2021) as a form of Community Cultural Wealth contributing to social and navigational capital (Yosso, 2005).



- The ‘confusion and conflicting’ theme from research findings implies the DfE needs to investigate the recording and procedures followed by schools regarding school exclusions and protected characteristics. The government could consider how schools are off-rolling students to address ongoing issues of pupils disproportionately excluded without comprehensive justification and assessment.
- Alternative provision is intended to be ‘an intervention, not a destination’ (DfE, 2023a). Implementation of the SEND and AP plan (DfE, 2023a) needs to be reviewed over time. Before pupils are excluded, a system should be put in place to assess if there are unidentified SEND which has put them at risk of a change in placement.
- The sense that exclusion was a final, devastating and irreversible ultimatum was a finding from the current study. Placement in PRUs and other off-site education should be monitored as temporary provisions. A system needs to be put in place to formalise the reintegration of pupils back into mainstream school following a period of exclusion.

## 5.5 Research Evaluations

This subsection will include strengths and limitations of the current study with consideration given to criteria for validity in qualitative research.

- **Recruitment:** The recruitment of participants was a challenging part of the research. Recruitment within IPA studies is important because the aim is to seek out nuanced experiences. Within the context of school exclusion, whilst statistics show there is a disproportionate number of the target group (Black

boys) there was a disparity in willingness to take part in the research. Several APs were approached, showed initial interest but never passed the consent stage. Researcher interactions with Black boys outside of the research presented with opportunistic instances of sharing exclusionary experiences, however the concept of being interviewed was off-putting for some. What is significant is the three males who did give informed consent to be part of the research were willing to share their stories and engaged in a way which did not inhibit them.

- **Small sample size:** IPA research is commonly criticised for small sample sizes and the implications for generalisability (Smith et al., 2022). However, a small sample size of three participants gives rise to a rich, in-depth exploration of experience.
- **Homogeneity:** The participants shared homogenous, intersecting factors to unify the lens of their views on the phenomenon but this is not without scrutiny. Empirical generalisability could be criticised for Black and mixed heritage boys being defined under one ethnic group. The intention was not for participants to represent the entire population of Black boys who have experienced school exclusion therefore findings are advised to be interpreted carefully. Two of the three participants in this sample were of mixed Black and white racial groups. Some could argue experiences between Black and mixed-race boys are distinctly different, however this research supports findings that gender can be racialised and children are less explicitly concerned about racialisation as part of social identity development (Rogers & Meltzoff, 2017; Sims & Joseph-Sailsbury, 2019). Research also shows how males of mixed Black and White heritage are more likely to perceive and

experience acceptance as same gender Black peers than females due to associations with heteronormative masculine identities as part of a racialised group (Joseph-Sailsbury, 2019). This has implications for the intersectionality between race, gender and culture within the UK context. Generalisability is considered further within the future research considerations section of this chapter.

- **Interview questions:** The interview questions used were of a semi-structured nature indicating a level of flexibility and responsiveness based on participant answers. Findings showed no explicit mention of race and the interview schedule included no explicit questions on racial identity. This is a potential limitation of the research design. The researcher did consider alternative questions during the interview drafting process. However, it was concluded unsuitable and inappropriately fitting to the nature of the design to use open questions without leading judgement. Time was spent practising and critically reflecting through mock interviews to ensure a high-quality data outcome (Smith et al., 2022 p151).
- **Data collection:** Researcher flexibility helped promote psychological safety for the participants which enabled transparent involvement. Smith et al., (2022) suggest that in-depth interviews range around an hour duration, however the average for this research was 20 minutes per participant. All participants were informed of their entitlement of up to 60 minutes, however the styles of their communication meant the interviews came to a natural end beforehand. Prompts were used by the researcher to extend answers where possible, keeping in mind the remit of their capacity given the sensitivity of the topic and their stage of development for in-depth conversations. Factors that

might have influenced the interviews being shorter in duration include the participants lack of familiarity and previous opportunity to have conversations about exclusionary experiences in an in-depth way, the presence of the researcher as a new person whom they were building a relationship with, differences in expressive language communicative styles by adolescent males and reduced levels of tolerance to speak about an experience which was still a challenging reality for an extended/concentrated period of time. The researcher used ethical judgement based on their responses, demeanour and newness of the interviewer-interviewee relationship to move on in questioning or allow the interviews to end. The shorter interviews allowed for further depth of analysis into the descriptive, linguistic and conceptual aspects of data produced.

### **5.5.1 High quality markers of IPA**

Despite critique for having no set criteria checklist to evaluate 'good enough' research, validity and quality are important considerations within IPA which can be evaluated (Smith et al., 2022 p.147). The methodology chapter applied Yardley's (2000) framework (sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence and impact and importance) to review the research quality. Nizza et al., (2021) four quality indicators are used to evaluate the quality of findings from the current study:

1. **Construction of a compelling, unfolding narrative:** IPA findings should portray a coherent and persuasive story (Nizza et al., 2021). The current research built a narrative by unfolding the dialogue in the order that interviews

were conducted and carefully presented transcripts alongside the researchers' analytical interpretations. A documented trail of purposefully selected data extracts were included within the findings write-up before making sense of findings in the discussion chapter.

2. **Developing a vigorous experiential account:** IPA research should focus on the experiential meaning of participants' experiences, beyond reporting biographical details of what happened (Nizza et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2022). The analysis shed light on the subjective lived experiences of boys' exclusion from school, beyond the procedural information about being removed from school to the reflection of underlying thoughts, feelings and meanings given to the experience. The research design can be criticised based on the double hermeneutic feature which suggests subjectivity by the researcher's interpretation. Supervision was used to cross-check interpretations and the development of themes made sense within the contexts of the transcripts. The research design can also be commended for adding breadth and depth to findings through combined analytical interpretation and reflexive bracketing off.
3. **Close analytic reading of participants' words:** Analysis and interpretation of quoted material helps enrich the data and validate the meaning. Quotes were used throughout the findings chapter to support the researcher's claims for transparency and rigour. Quotes were analysed and reanalysed beyond description for fuller meaning using a synergy of conceptual, linguistic and descriptive lenses as documented in the transcripts (Appendix I).
4. **Attending to convergence and divergence:** The idiographic nature of IPA considers the uniqueness of each participant's experience in addition to

patterns of connection within homogenous groups (Smith et al., 2022 p.147). This research carefully balanced individuality and commonality within a small group of three participants by highlighting the complexity of a shared experience and abstracting key individual parts. The consideration of group assumptions identified are not intended to be representative of an entire population. Emphasising patterns of connection was achieved by zooming in and out of the data to reveal similar and different idiosyncrasies – each in their own ‘fight for survival’.

## **5.6 Future Research Considerations**

Due to the lack of research concerning Black pupils’ experiences of education and exclusion, there are a number of considerations for future research. Research shows there is an underrepresentation of Black and African Psychology within Britain and a growing proportion of people who identify as of dual heritage within the UK (McInnis & Moukam, 2013; ONS, 2021). Insights could be gained from continuing to explore the experiences of Black boys to deepen understanding and amplify their voices. The current study looked at both Black and Mixed heritage boys and there could be benefit from disaggregating the intersectionality of race and ethnicity further as statistics show rates for mixed race white and Black Caribbean boys are higher than that of Black Caribbean boys (DfE, 2024c).

The current study did not include the experiences of Black girls excluded from school. Further research is needed into Black girls’ experiences of school exclusion because, whilst the proportion of girls excluded is less than boys, they continue to be excluded at a concerning higher rate than their peers (Stewart-Hall, 2023).

Underreported statistics, unlawful and self-exclusion through non-attendance is more likely in girls and suggestive of a need to investigate the intersect between race and gender within exclusion (Agenda Alliance, 2021; Rollock, 2007). Like boys, Black girls are deemed to transgress gender norms when they are perceived as threatening and aggressive in their behavioural acts or attitude (Agenda Alliance, 2021). Future research could explore teacher constructions of threat linked to Black femininity and masculinity.

This study focused on boys of secondary school age however experiences of suspension and exclusion occur as young as 6 years old (Black, 2022).

Emancipatory and ethnographic methodological approaches could better explore younger Black children's experience of exclusion in a child-friendly way to suit a range of developmental abilities. Key adults and access to community services such as youth clubs were standout points from the findings, also suggestive of avenues for additional populations and locations to include in future research surrounding exclusion for Black boys.

### **5.7 Researcher reflexivity**

This subsection will provide reflections of the researcher's experience in first person to fit the change in narrative.

Going into the research process, I was aware of racial identity similarities. The process itself heightened my awareness of the impact, influence and implications of my identity as a Black British woman of Caribbean heritage researching Black boys. My perception, interaction with and interpretation of the participants and their

experiences were not mutually exclusive. 'Double hermeneutics' and 'bracketing off' are core features of the chosen methodology (IPA) which helped to ground me back to the data, zooming in and out, putting my views aside to elicit others. I had to repeatedly check the maintenance of my curiosity and consider if *I was making sense* of what the participants said or if I was making sense of *their sense making*. The research process challenged me to disable parts of my self-in-role and enable my role as a researcher with aims to explore and *not* consult, assess or fix the pupil experience. When I let go of the fear of 'doing the research justice' I was able to flourish in the uncertainty of promoting social justice through curious exploration.

Burnham's (2013) SOCIAL GRACES model helped me to consider the degree of sameness and difference across aspects of my identity for example gender, age and education which also had an intersectional impact on the interview dynamic and subsequent analysis. Johari's window (Luft & Ingham, 1961) helped me to reflect further on the visible and unvoiced aspects of my racial identity and the impact on the participants' perception of me as a researcher. During this process, I became more aware of the complexity of race as a social construct and how as a 'Black' person I could subconsciously represent part of a participants' identity who is of dual heritage and neglect another. This has implications for the social-cultural context within which research is conducted, whom by and with.

Ethical procedures to debrief after each interview were necessary to address unmentioned topics if needed for participants. The foundational need to build trust was core throughout the literature regardless of researcher race. Debrief time after



each interview, upheld ethical practice and gave participants the opportunity to discuss further if desired.

Supervision was a space for further discussion and exploration in a reflective way on a regular basis. Consideration of ethnicity differences between my supervisor and I promoted validity through transparency and value to the multifaceted analysis. The reflective journal process helped me to acknowledge, process and release the emotional complexities which accompanied the research undertaking. In hindsight, the analysis and findings write-up were challenging to engage with continuously, so the journal acted as a helpful means to withstand associated thoughts and feelings. Appendix H and S contains extracts that were part of the researcher's reflexive journal.

Maynard's (2022) writing on 'seeing herself as a Black therapist in the dramatherapy room' resonated with me as a Black Trainee Educational Psychologist and researcher in the interview room. The implicit racial oppression was embodied by me as a professional, part of a wider educational institution which systematically fails Black boys and needs to be more culturally responsive. I mirrored their feelings of stuckness and isolation, feeling at times helpless, saddened and infuriated as they elicited their views whilst simultaneously living the challenges of being excluded from school. Engaging in these processes helped to maintain my researcher reflexivity, bracket off my preconceptions, highlight blind/soft spots and sustain my cognitive and emotional resilience.

## **5.8 Dissemination**

A summary of the research findings will be shared with the Educational Psychology Service in the researcher's LA. The researcher will also present the research findings to the PRU and youth community services, which consist of a multidisciplinary team of professionals who support pupils excluded from school. The participants will have the opportunity to be informed of the findings and implications in a person-centred way by the researcher. The researcher also intends to write up and submit the research to a journal for wider publication. All of this is with the aim to highlight underrepresented voices through research in the hopes to facilitate improved outcomes for Black boys, promote racial equity in education, empower pupil voice and overcome the social justice issue of school exclusion.

## **5.9 Conclusion and Summary**

This chapter has highlighted how the findings link to, expand on and challenge existing research and theory. In conclusion, Black boys' experiences of exclusion from school continues to be a fight for survival wrapped in emotionally labouring feelings of angered, lost hope and dressed up as unconcern. The findings are a critical call to stakeholders who make up Black boys' lifelines to address ongoing experiences perceived an unfair eventuality and facilitate a turnaround narrative in the educational, social and emotional inclusive outcomes they deserve – just like everybody else.

Word count: 37, 808

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## 7. Appendices

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**Appendix A: Articles included in the systematic literature review**

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- Bei, Z., & Knowler, H. (2022). Disrupting unlawful exclusion from school of minoritised children and young people racialized as Black: using Critical Race Theory composite counter-storytelling. *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties*, 27(3), 231–242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2022.2146225>
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**Appendix B: Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) Tool for qualitative studies**

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Checklist used and information noted for the critical appraisal of selected studies from the literature review

1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?
3. Was the research design appropriate to the aims of the research?
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?
6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?
7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?
9. Is there a clear statement of findings?
10. How valuable is the research?

## WRIGHT 2010.

1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research? **YES**
  - The experience of black young people in the British education system.
  - RQ: what is the impact of school factors on the educational outcomes of Black children?
  - Study aims: (1) document the nature of secondary school exclusions of children from ethnic minority groups (2) identify school processes that led to the exclusion of BPs. (Black Pupils)
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate? **YES**
  - Bottom up approach: use of personal accounts and data.
3. Was the research design appropriate to the aims of the research? **YES**
  - Intersectional approach: divisions of age, gender and class
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research? **YES**
  - 5 schools in one LA selected to reflect a range of socioeconomic status and proportions of Black children attending schools.
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?
  - over 2 years.
6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered? **NO**
  - Not mentioned.
7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration? **YES**
  - Psychological harm potential: participant vulnerabilities and feelings of disempowerment. Potential to re-open past hurts. (Painful)
  - Aimed to establish sensitivity & trust w/ participants.
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous? **NO**
  - Ethnographic = researcher interacted with participants within their real life environment.
9. Is there a clear statement of findings? **YES**
  - Themed: (1) Teachers perceptions and views of Black children. (dominant discourses) (2) resistance and the embodiment of classed and racialised-gendered ~~ethnic~~ identities.
  - Interactions between teachers and Black children and teachers views of Black children implicated inequality in Black childrens experiences.
10. How valuable is the research?
  - Valuable for educators and policy makers. 'whiteness' and privilege within the education system
  - Implications for teachers to be trained. to engage in multicultural classrooms with pupils from diverse backgrounds.

## BOYD (2021) EXCLUSION + REINTEGRATION.

YES | NO | CANNOT TELL

1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research? YES.
  - To explore Black male secondary school students experiences of exclusion and reintegration.
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?
  - IPA: aim to understand experiences of a homogenous group.
  - Rich, detailed, emancipatory, experiences explored.
3. Was the research design appropriate to the aims of the research? YES.
  - Qualitative
  - 2 strands: exclusion and reintegration
  - Interviews to give depth to understand individual experience of a significant event.
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?
  - Purposive sampling
  - Homogenous sample: Race, ethnicity, gender, ability, exclusionary experience.
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?
  - Exploratory through interviews.
  - Semi-structured nature allowed flexibility in response
  - Gave a voice behind statistics
6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered? YES.
  - Black female researcher
  - African and Caribbean heritage
  - Previous experience working in secondary schools
  - Transparent and reflexive researcher positions and potential for bias.
7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration? YES
  - Right to withdraw
  - Informed consent: school, child, parent
  - Confidentiality
  - Safeguarding
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous? YES.
  - IPA: Step by Step.
  - Themes drawn out. 3/6 applied to all interviews.
9. Is there a clear statement of findings? YES.
  - Relationships } impacted by exclusionary experience. Mostly negative.
  - Identity }
  - Environments }
10. How valuable is the research?
  - Highlights BM pupil experiences of marginalisation
  - Indicates educational professionals need to reflect on inclusive practice.
  - Gives BMs a voice, representing pupil views.

## LIER (2005)

1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?
  - To explore the educational experiences of African-Caribbean pupils from the perspective of their parents
  
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?
  - Exploring experience
  - Gaining views
  
3. Was the research design appropriate to the aims of the research? YES
  - grounded theory aims to construct hypotheses through the collection and analysis of data.
  - inductive reasoning: based on parents views. Explains underachievement and eventual exclusion.
  
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?
  - Parents were asked about their views ~~on~~ about their child's education and their role within this.
  
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?
  - semi-structured / unstructured interview.
  
6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered? YES
  - x2 white researchers (male and female)
  - Acknowledge contention surrounding researching 'black issues'
  - Declare aims to 'present' findings as oppose to 'speak out' for a group
  - social positioning ~~is~~ considered
  
7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?
  - SEMH impact of negative school experiences, the need to develop coping mechanisms in response to stressors.
  
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous? YES
  - Based on grounded theory: Glaser & Strauss (1967)
  - included coding, pattern identification and conversion into themes
  
9. Is there a clear statement of findings? YES
  - ~~conclusive~~ cumulative negative experiences <sup>resulting in underachievement,</sup> summarised as exclusion, rejection and reduced motivation
  
10. How valuable is the research?
  - \* Amplifies parents voices, fears and aspirations
  - \* Implications for educators
  - \* contributive towards evidence of institutionalised racism within the British education system.



WRIGHT, MAYLOR + BECKER (2016).

OPTIONS: YES, NO, CANNOT TELL

1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?
  - Explores how young Black males navigate negative school experiences and seek educational success for their future (personal & professional/educational).
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate? YES.
  - Rich, in-depth exploration of male experiences and the process of overcoming.
3. Was the research design appropriate to the aims of the research?
  - ENGAGE + EMPOWER the men
  - core of the research design.
  - used PHOTOGRAPHY as a visual research method to place men at the centre of the research.
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?
  - Concentration on male participants b/c they exhibited forms of capital described.
  - 21 ~~males~~ males out of 33 total.
  - Snowballing technique due to 'hard to reach' sample.
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue? CT.
  - Interviews (up to three) conducted over two years → why 2 years?
6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered? NO?
7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?
  - Not discussed in the paper.
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous? CANNOT TELL
9. Is there a clear statement of findings? 4.
  - Black males transcend the educational terrain to create successful outcomes by drawing on cowealth and different types of capital.
  - ① Aspirational capital (ambitious despite barriers)
  - ② Family capital: the role of family and parents in buffering overcoming a success. 'mothers'
  - ③ social and navigational capital: organizational engagement with participants helped foster access to educational opportunities, provided strategies for social mobility and encouraged constructive racial-cultural identity.
10. How valuable is the research?
  - (inc. advice, mentoring, training opportunities) → lead to social & navigational capital.

DEMIE (2021)

1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?
  - investigate reasons for overrepresentation
  - Explore experiences of Black Caribbean pupils experiences.
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate? YES.
  - appropriate & accessible.
  - useful to obtain in-depth information.
3. Was the research design appropriate to the aims of the research?
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research? PARTIALLY
  - various stakeholders included.
  - chosen at random once schools were identified.
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?
  - mixed approach: one-to-one interviews and focus groups
  - gathers both individual views and discourse.
6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?
  - disclosure statement indicates 'no conflict of interest'.
7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration? YES.
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous? NO.
  - included extracts from data. Analysed on the surface but not in depth or comparisons made.
9. Is there a clear statement of findings? YES.
  - Factors linked to disproportionate exclusion: teacher expectations, labelling, institutional racism, lack of diversity in the workforce and training on multicultural education.
10. How valuable is the research?
  - Policy makers and educators need to tackle the ongoing issue of overrepresentation and reduce school exclusion.



1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research? **Y**.  
Page 232 (top).
  - Exploring the relationship between racial disparities in exclusionary practices.
  - Aimed to explore different aspects of off-rolling practices using counter story telling.
  - To provoke dialogue for educational professionals.
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate? **CANT TELL**
  - critical examination of four composite counter-stories.
  - Hearing marginalised voices and making sense of experiences from rich detail.
  - CRT analysis of counter story telling.
3. Was the research design appropriate to the aims of the research?
  - served an emancipatory purpose for people of colour.
  - speaks to the ontology and epistemology. (CRT)
  - use of counter-storytelling to justify and explain the harmful impact of exclusion.
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research? **YES**
  - Author chose characters to represent an array of experiences.
  - chose not to have a 'sample group' because the sensitivity of the subject meant some views would not have been captured.
  - sampling method unclear.
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue? **YES**
  - using the critical Race Theory lens to highlight the racialised context in education.
  - supports an alternative way of understanding racialised <sup>CYP</sup> experiences.
6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered? **CANT TELL**.
  - strong author view. Reflections offered after each account.
  - Researchers special interests in exclusion, difficult areas 4 educators and racism within schools, school-prison pipeline.
7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration? **YES**
  - presenting and exploring uncomfortable accounts of exclusionary practices = risky
  - reduced the ~~exp~~ risk of individual exposure to harm by making events the main recognisable focus rather than people/places.
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous? **NO**.
  - Purpose + objectives of the data collection method needs to be carefully considered.
  - Reflections after each account.
9. Is there a clear statement of findings? **NO / CANT TELL**
  - Pupils are off-rolling impacts the child & family system.
  - Excluded pupils don't feel a sense of belonging and feel judged.
10. How valuable is the research?
  - Relevant to teachers, educational professionals and educational psychologists for speaking up about oppressive systems, policies and practices.
  - Promoting healing, transformation and healing through research.

HONNAY (2004):

1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research? YES.  
- Explores the lived experience of inequality at school from the perspectives of young people and significant others.
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate? YES.  
- Research questions: (1) what representations constitute excluding practices?  
(2) how may exclusion be resisted?
3. Was the research design appropriate to the aims of the research?  
- methods were sensitively chosen for the research.  
- Aims: openness, collaboration, non-judgemental approach  
- Participant observation and unstructured interviews.
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research? YES.  
- Engaging participants in the process of research itself.
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue? YES.  
- observations and interviews.
6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered? YES.  
- write researcher exploring the experiences of majority Black participants who have experienced racism.  
- Person-centred approach.
7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration? YES.  
- ~~ethical~~ - Pseudonyms chosen by young people.
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?  
- back of info. Ethnographic approach.
9. Is there a clear statement of findings? YES.  
- ~~categorised~~ under 3 areas: (1) The institutionalization of stigmatizing representations  
(2) The role of re-representations visible in social practices  
(3) The possibilities of resistance and critical engagement in everyday.  
- doesn't claim generalisability
10. How valuable is the research?  
Valuable for critical social psychology. Arguing against id-dominant discourses and ideas and resisting narratives about the 'Black pop.'

### Appendix C: Weight of evidence critical appraisal tool for qualitative studies

Review Area	Key Questions
<b>(1) STUDY OVERVIEW</b>	
Bibliographic Details	0. Author, title, source (publisher and place of publication), year
Purpose	1. What are the aims of the study? 2. If the paper is part of a wider study, what are its aims?
Key Findings	3. What are the key findings of the study?
Evaluative Summary	4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the study and theory, policy and practice implications?
<b>(2) STUDY, SETTING, SAMPLE AND ETHICS</b>	
Phenomena under Study	5. What is being studied? 6. Is sufficient detail given of the nature of the phenomena under study?
Context I: Theoretical Framework	7. What theoretical framework guides or informs the study? 8. In what ways is the framework reflected in the way the study was done? 9. How do the authors locate the study within the existing knowledge base?
Context II: Setting	10. Within what geographical and care setting is the study carried out? 11. What is the rationale for choosing this setting? 12. Is the setting appropriate and/or sufficiently specific for examination of the research question? 13. Is sufficient detail given about the setting? 14. Over what time period is the study conducted?
Context III: Sample (events, persons, times and settings)	15. How is the sample (events, persons, times and settings) selected? (For example, theoretically informed, purposive, convenience, chosen to explore contrasts) 16. Is the sample (informants, settings and events) appropriate to the aims of the study? 17. Is the sample appropriate in terms of depth (intensity of data collection - individuals, settings and events) and width across time, settings and events (For example, to capture key persons and events, and to explore the detail of inter-relationships)? 18. What are the key characteristics of the sample (events, persons, times and settings)?
Context IV: Outcomes	19. What outcome criteria are used in the study? 20. Whose perspectives are addressed (professional, service, user, carer)? 21. Is there sufficient breadth (e.g. contrast of two or more perspective) and depth (e.g. insight into a single perspective)?
<b>(3) ETHICS</b>	
Ethics	22. Was Ethical Committee approval obtained? 23. Was informed consent obtained from participants of the study? 24. Have ethical issues been adequately addressed?

Researcher's Potential Bias	34. Are the researcher's own position, assumptions and possible biases outlined? (Indicate how those could affect the study, in particular, the analysis and interpretation of the data)
<b>(5) POLICY AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS</b>	
Implications	35. To what setting are the study findings generalisable? (For example, is the setting typical or representative of care settings and in what respects? If the setting is atypical, will this present a stronger or weaker test of the hypothesis?) 36. To what population are the study's findings generalisable? 37. Is the conclusion justified given the conduct of the study (For example, sampling procedure; measures of outcome used and results achieved?) 38. What are the implications for policy? 39. What are the implications for service practice?
<b>(6) OTHER COMMENTS</b>	
Other Comments	40. What were the total number of references used in the study? 41. Are there any other noteworthy features of the study? 42. List other study references
Reviewer	43. Name of reviewer 44. Review date

<b>(4) DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND POTENTIAL RESEARCHER BIAS</b>	
Data Collection	25. What data collection methods are used to obtain and record the data? (For example, provide insight into: data collected, appropriateness and availability for independent analysis) 26. Is the information collected with sufficient detail and depth to provide insight into the meaning and perceptions of informants? 27. Is the process of fieldwork adequately described? (For example, account of how the data were elicited; type and range of questions; interview guide; length and timing of observation work; note taking) 28. What role does the researcher adopt within the setting? 29. Is there evidence of reflexivity, that is, providing insight into the relationship between the researcher, setting, data production and analysis?
Data Analysis	30. How were the data analysed? 31. How adequate is the description of the data analysis? (For example, to allow reproduction; steps taken to guard against selectivity) 32. Is adequate evidence provided to support the analysis? (For example, includes original / raw data extracts; evidence of iterative analysis; representative evidence presented; efforts to establish validity - searching for negative evidence, use of multiple sources, data triangulation); reliability / consistency (over researchers, time and settings; checking back with informants over interpretation) 33. Are the findings interpreted within the context of other studies and theory?



Appendix D: Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet sample used during the literature review process

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M													
	Participants N (characteristics, setting, recruitment)					Methodology (study design & analytic method) (procedural info: what did they do?)			Findings (results for the outcome of interest*)		Limitations		Authors conclusion (brief, relevant sentence)		Theory		Teacher exp									
1	Title	Author	Type	Location	Year	what stage/type of exclusion	Aim																			
2	LRQ: What does the literature tell us about Black pupil views/experiences/perceptions of school exclusion?																									
3	Disrupting unlawful exclusion from school of minoritised children and young people racialized as Black: using Critical Race Theory composite counter-storytelling.	Bei & Knowler	journal article			not disclosed as not considered important for the purposes of the research	4 (1 PRU CT & 3 excluded students), Black, 2 males 1 female. Racilaised and minoritised children	off-rolling / dual registration	Exploration of racial injustices related to exclusionary practices for racialised and minoritised children. Aims to remedy the harms of oppressive practices and policies which have silenced voices, taking back the power	qualitative: counter-story telling linked to struggles for civil rights. Black students narratives captured over many years. Counter storytelling is a principle of CRT in relation to off-rolling practices which are hidden and often invisible to CYP+Fs of excluded young people. Method chosen to demonstrate	x3 goals: to inspire educators of colour to tell stories sharing their realities, white educators to be encouraged to develop their racial literacy and willingness to work through discomfort. To reject dominant narratives and challenges exclusion practices.	unsystematic, vague research design, limited participant information, ethical concerns regarding the data collection/analysis approach. The presentation of uncomfortable exclusionary accounts is problematic	call to educators and policy makers to consciously challenge racial justice and promote inclusion for social change and racial justice in education. Important for educators to develop	critical race theory (CRT) analytical lens. Centrality of racism in everyday society. Storytelling of racialised people ranked them at the bottom of the racial order ranking (Bell, 1987). Lens deeply rooted in a need for social justice and calls to challenge power structures and relations.	B = described i	ready to learn	GCSE exam ac	feel encourage	on teacher per	grades, popula	sports					
4	Black boys' experiences of exclusion and reintegration in mainstream secondary schools.	Boyd	periodical journal	2 LAs 1 low 1 high SES	2019	6 males, 3 secondary school aged (12-15), African Caribbean heritage (inc. mixed race), external exclusion and reintegration back into mainstream secondary. English language skills appropriate for communication in interview. 1 LA school declined & 1 parent declined due to concerns of BBs being targeted, sought reassurance researcher was Black. Detailed contextual information provided.	temporary/fixed	explore Black boys experiences of exclusion and reintegration back into mainstream secondary school. Give a voice to YP behind exclusionary stats with hopes for better understanding and more equitable treatment. Under researched reintegration and low rates.	qualitative, IPA focus on sense making of significant events, 1:1 semi-structured interviews. Qs: how do BBs experience exclusion and reintegration? What is perceived to be helpful and difficult in the process of reintegration?	original thesis 3/6 presented in this paper common to all 6 interviews: pupils positive and negative relationships with schools and teachers, self-identity and managing adults perceptions, inclusive environments. (Other 3 retrived from original: personal impact of different forms of exclusion, forms of exclusion, the role of significant people	Lack of generalisability due to small sample. May not representative. Lack of reintegration rates suggests PRUs as a temporary intervention are not most successful. relationships described in mostly negative terms, treated the same upon	experiences of marginalisation and reintegration into mainstream, implying a need for educational professionals to reflect on practices and authority attitudes. Low reintegration rates suggests PRUs as a temporary intervention are not most successful. relationships described in mostly negative terms, treated the same upon	term describes how the Black community overcome difficulties. Some boys were disaffected by teacher perceptions if they reintegrated into school. Child development theory describes how adolescence is a crucial stage for identity development and can explain why some Boys found it difficult to separate their sense of self from teachers perceptions. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds can be more susceptible to self-fulfilling prophecies based on teacher expectations which shows the damaging effects of the power held by such views. CRT can explain the individual experiences of	x												
5	Young black males: resilience and the use of capital to transform school 'failure.'	Wright et al.	journal article	and London (high exclusion cities). Various locations: homes, community centres and	2016	females but focus on males. Black males excluded from school, 21 males, 14-19 years old, African-Caribbean heritage, experienced permanent exclusion from school. Snowballing sampling method for BMs are described as 'hard to reach' through chosen persons: 2 Black British and two Mixed heritage. Each nominated 3 others to be interviewed: parents, teachers, siblings, learning mentors, policy advisors. Snowballing technique	permanent exclusion from independent and state schools	addresses the idea of how Black men see possibilities for their future despite negative school experiences. Explores how young men transform school failure into educational and personal success. Aimed to empower and engage the men.	Qualitative, interviews (up to 3) over two years. Interview topics: view of self, sources of support, coping strategies and future aspirations. 60 additional interviews were provided. Visual research methods - photography.	and low attainment factors do not deter the pursuit of education. BMs navigate the challenges of education by drawing on cultural, community resources and different forms of capital (inc. aspirational & navigational). Shows determination to succeed by transforming negative school existing research at this time: 1. the institutionalisation of stigmatising representations (how practices like curriculum affect experiences like identity) 2. The role of re-presentations visible in social practices (e.g. school culture othering) highlights the	due to awareness of previous experience of exclusion and subsequent interview situations which could have been triggering. Aruges individual attributes must not be focused upon, instead increasing Black males as a group. How were visual	BM's transcend school exclusion to create successful futures by drawing upon capital and community cultural wealth. Contrary to most existing research concerning the exclusionary problem,	narrative. Uses Theory of intersectionality to discuss 'capital' and CRT (Yosso, 2005) to discuss Black communities response to racial inequality in education. 'Embodied intersectionality' is applied to this article to unpick Black males experiences about the construction if gendered, classed and racialised identities within the context of learning and personal goals. How do social													
6	Re-presentation and Resistance in the context of school exclusions: Reasons to be critical	Howarth	journal article	London, Nottingham & Brighton	2004	N=22 families (25 parents; 4 fathers 21 mothers). 55 children between them. Parental perspective: African-Caribbean and mixed	permanent exclusion	school inequality from the perspectives of young people who had been excluded and their significant others. What maintains uneven patterns and how is exclusion actively challenged/resisted? Aims to 'do' critical psychology in the	and unstructured interviews. What happened? How could it have been prevented? Telephone conversations and attendance to meetings, parent support groups, judicial reviews, activist meetings. RQs: what representations maintain exclusion practices? How may exclusions be resisted? Challenges the	Overall pattern of negative experiences recounted by parents. Resulted in underacademic achievement, unmotivation to learn feeling rejected and	inability to generalise to all Black pupils. White female wanted to encourage trust in the face of difference. limited information about research design and data analysis yet complimentary to research aims. Emancipatory. parents views of child experiences is less direct. Lacking mehodological robustness - how were participants recruited? The	how we are engaging in dialogue about injustice. The need critically engage with young people's perception of power and challenge the role of re-presentation in maintaining racialised	oppression, exploitation and human wellbeing. Invites a more participatory and less divisive approach to research. Studying ideology from the perspectives of those involved to shift power relations and surrounding oppression (social constructionist approach). Social Representations Theory (SRT) (Moscovici,	and teaching f	their classroom	resultantly res'	Somali childre	down. In Engli	eye-contact is	However failu	norm differenc	Teachers felt p	expectations w	Judgements th	achieve becau	heritage. Low

## Appendix E: Participant recruitment poster

The Tavistock and Portman **BLACK BOYS  
RESEARCH****LOOKING FOR  
PARTICIPANTS**

What is your experience of  
school exclusion?

**Seeking the views of:**

- Black and Mixed Race boys
- Aged 12-16 years old
- Removed from mainstream secondary school
- Attending a Pupil Referral Unit

This research project is  
interested in hearing your  
story

**TO FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION  
SPEAK TO A MEMBER OF STAFF  
OR GET IN TOUCH BY EMAIL**

[sbarclay@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:sbarclay@tavi-port.nhs.uk)



## Appendix F – Ethical amendment request and approval

### Notification of Amendment to Approved Ethics Application

To apply for an amendment to an existing study please complete the form, attach all appendices (track changes where appropriate) and send application including all appendices to [academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk) – ensuring that your supervisor is copied into the email.

#### 1. Details of Researcher/Principal Investigator and Supervisor

Student name	Shyla Barclay
Doctoral Programme	Professional Doctorate in Child, Community and Educational Psychology (M4)
Supervisor(s)	Katy Cole

#### 2. Details of Research Project

Project Title:	Exploring Black boys experiences of exclusion from school
Original Date of Approval:	11th May 2023
Date Project Commenced (if applicable):	N/A

#### 3. Details of Amendments

*(Please delete as appropriate)*

Does the amendment involve changes to information supplied in the original ethical application to TREC? <i>(If yes, please detail the changes in Section 4 below)</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
Does the information involve changes to the consent form, information sheet or other supporting materials for the study? <i>(If yes, please ensure all amended materials are appended to this application)</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
If your project has the approval/consent of external/commissioning organisations 'external organisations', please confirm that they have been consulted/consent to the changes	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>NA</b>

**4. Summary of Amendments** - Please state clearly and simply the proposed changes to your project (methods of data gathering, changes to design etc)

*Please explain the reason for the change(s) and their implications for the study.*

*If the amendment substantially changes the research design, methodology, data gathering or may otherwise affect the value of the study, please indicate if additional and appropriate critique has been obtained.*

The scope of the research is being widened beyond one local authority to local authorities across X city. The purpose of this research design change is to increase possibilities of participant recruitment. The project aims to explore the experiences of Black (including Mixed Race) boys who have been excluded from mainstream school and attend Alternative Provision including Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). Limiting recruitment to one local authority has proved challenging. As there are two PRUS in this LA the pool for recruitment is reduced. Educational professionals in surrounding areas have been contacted to scope out potential participants who have been excluded and are known to alternative provisions elsewhere. These named areas include: X Local Authorities. These areas all contain Alternative Provision for secondary age students who are not educated in mainstream schools due to reasons defined by the researcher - 'school exclusions'. Additional and appropriate critique has been obtained through research supervision. Widening the pool for recruitment has been recognised to increase chances of gaining participants who match the criteria whilst still meeting the research aim.

Below is a copy of contact information for some of the organisations I have been in communications with (also available on the TREC application form):

[\[identifiable information removed\]](#)

Email attachments are appended for some organisations with approval/expressions of interest as requested.

**5. Additional Information**

*Applicants may indicate any specific ethical issues relating to the proposed changes, on which the opinion of TREC is sought.*

**6. List of enclosed documents**


<i>Document</i>	<i>Date</i>
Updated TREC form (see NB)	16-11-2023



Amended TREC from	28-11-2023
Information sheets & Consent forms	28-11-2023
Recruitment Poster	28-11-2023

## 7. Declaration

- I confirm that the information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and I take full responsibility for the details herein.
- It is my belief that it would be practical for the proposed amendment to be implemented.
- I have discussed the changes with my supervisor(s) and I can confirm that they are in agreement with my changes and have approved my changes (please copy your supervisor into the email request)

Signature of Student: 

Print name: S BARCLAY

Date of submission: 28-11-2023

Please return this form as directed by your supervisor or course lead to [academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

You **must** ensure any changes are also approved by the ethical approval body before you start work

Dear Shyla,

I can confirm that I have received your updated TREC documentation in relation to the four amendments to your project proposal. I can confirm that the changes have been approved.

You may proceed with your research.

Your updated Ethical Approval documentation is attached for reference.

**Please note that any changes to the project design including changes to methodology/data collection etc., must be referred to TREC as failure to do so, may result in a report of academic and/or research misconduct.**

May I take this opportunity of wishing you continued success with your research.

Your supervisor and lead have been copied in.

Best wishes,



**The Tavistock and Portman**  
NHS Foundation Trust

[www.tavistockandportman.nhs.uk](http://www.tavistockandportman.nhs.uk)

Michael Franklyn (he/him)  
**Academic Governance and Quality Officer**  
Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust  
[mfranklyn@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:mfranklyn@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

## Appendix G: interview questions

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**Key:** Blue text represents similar/alternative questions relating to the same topic

### Interview questions 2

Questions with additional prompts if needed:

- ⇒ What do you think of when you hear the word exclusion?
  - What does exclusion mean to you?
  - What words or pictures come to mind? [invitation to draw]
  - Tell me about your drawing
  - How do you feel about the word exclusion
  
- ⇒ What was your experience of school before you were excluded?
- ⇒ Tell me about a typical/normal day at school before you were excluded?
- ⇒ When you were in school what does a typical day look like?
  - What did a typical day at school look like?
  - How did you feel about school?
  - What are lessons/learning/teachers like?
  - What was happening at school around that time?
  - What was happening outside of school?
  
- ⇒ Can you tell me about the experience of finding out you were excluded from mainstream school?
- ⇒ How did you find out you were no longer going to be at that school? [Process]
  - Where was you and who told you?
  - Was you expecting it to happen?
  - How did you feel?
  - What were you thinking?
  
- ⇒ What is the difference between a school and a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)? [Comparison]
  - What are the similarities/differences?
  - How do you feel about coming to the PRU?
  
- ⇒ How do you feel about going back to school?
- ⇒ How do you think things might have been different if you were not excluded / did not come here (PRU) / stayed at your old school?
- ⇒ If you had the opportunity to go back to school what would you do/say?
  - What do you think will happen in the future?
  
- ⇒ How do you think others would view your experience of exclusion?
- ⇒ What do you think others would say about what has happened to you?
  - Parents
  - Friends
  - Teachers – *what do you think teachers think about students who are excluded?*

⇒ Is there anything else you wanted to share?

**General prompts**

⇒ Can you tell me more?

⇒ What do you mean by?

**Debrief questions**

How did you feel about taking part in the interview?

How did you feel about the questions I asked you?

Was there anything in the interview you found difficult to talk about? How do you feel now? Is there anything worrying you?

Is there anything else you would like to say?

Do you feel you need any extra support?

Are you okay to go back to class?

## Appendix H : Reflective journal extracts

TUESDAY. 18<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2023.

As I was leaving Sainsburys in looking a newspaper headline caught my eye: "... save our boys". I went back to see more and discovered a young Black boys face on the cover of the voice.

"BLACK PUPILS ARE 5x MORE LIKELY TO BE SENT TO PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS"

I took a picture of the page, refusing to spend £2.50 and buy the whole paper. My initiative to explore online saved me and I discovered a very similar story: about the disproportionality of Black boys in exclusionary data. The usual / known information about ~~etc~~ historical educational abnormalisation and unrecognised SEND needs were included. But then it got juicy and empowering.

I need to get in touch with her and present my research ideas.

Does it still apply if I recruit boys from an alternative school to find out about their experiences of exclusion?

Maybe my questions will need tweaking slightly to capture what is working in their current school and how this information can be shared more widely.

"DON'T BE WEDDED TO YOUR HYPOTHESIS"

### REFLECTION FROM INTERVIEW PRACTICE:

28/10/23.

#### Feedback:

- + Promoted comfort and feelings of welcome
- \* Helpful check-in part way through
- \* Helpful prompts and signalling types of questions that were coming up
- + Give opportunity for questions not to be answered
- \* Intro and outro helpful
- + No judgement
- + Prompts allowed for elaboration
- \* Young Black boys may struggle with expressing ~~emotion~~ and identifying emotion → Explain first → Affect second  
eg. What happened → How did you feel?

2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023

### Research recruitment #1

Today I presented my research to a group of potential participants at the PRU - what an experience! I had a group of approximately six maximum at one point and one minimum at another. Pupils were unsure whether to enter the room once they saw me and I presume that was because I was a new person. Some made observational comments and questions - "why am I here" "why is it all the Black boys". I felt even more intentional about being there and recruiting them. Some voted with their feet and left before the presentation finished and others stayed, listened,

## Appendix I: Samples of annotated transcript

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**Key:** highlighted text was used during the analysis process to support the researcher's learning needs and bring attention to key/standout language

### Elijah's Interview Transcript

### CORE: Experience of exclusion from school

**Descriptive** – Describing the **content** of **what** the participant has said, the subject of the talk and sometimes **summarising important** elements of the passage

**Linguistic** – Specific **use** of language by the participant and pointing to what these linguistic features (**pauses, repetition, tone, fluency**) may be contributing to our **understand** of the participants experience – drawing out the **meaning** from language

**Conceptual** – May take a more **interrogative** form – we are **explicitly asking questions** of the data – Stimulated and tied to the text – beyond literal understanding

Experiential Statements	Interview Transcript ( <b>bolded</b> words within-text = emphasised) *Pseudonym	Exploratory Notes
<p><b>Exclusion is being kicked out Ep1</b></p> <p><b>Being isolated from everybody else in society Ep1</b></p>	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. I would like to ask you some questions to find out about your experience of being excluded, to get your views. And I want you to feel comfortable and feel like you can be honest... erm and say whatever comes to mind for you. If you need to take a break then just let me know. So what do you think of when you hear the word exclusion?</p> <p><b>Elijah:</b> Erm <b>separated</b> from general society.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Separated from general society, so what other words come to mind when I say the word exclusion?</p> <p><b>Elijah:</b> <b>Kicked</b> out</p>	<p>Descriptive – what Linguistic - how Conceptual – meaning</p> <p>Defines exclusion in his own words Separated = <u>outcasted, made to feel different</u></p> <p>Kicked = <u>Something done to him / an aggressive act</u></p>

<p><b>Reactions to anger led to a managed move Ep2</b></p> <p><b>Feeling misunderstood by teachers Ep2</b></p> <p><b>Social childish situations provoked angry responses by Elijah Ep2</b></p> <p><b>Isolation as a normal experience Ep2</b></p>	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Mm kicked out and separated. So can you tell me a bit about your experience of school before you were excluded?</p> <p><b>Elijah:</b> Err when I first started school, in year 7 I <b>used to</b> get really <b>ann-, really angry easily</b> then I was having a bad reputation with the teachers and stuff, then the teacher <b>didn't really like me any little thing</b> that I would do they made it into a big thing and eventually I got <b>manage moved</b> to a different secondary school and then <b>kept on losing my temper</b> there then I got <b>referred</b> to Canada Lee* (PRU).</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> And so you were saying that when you first started in year 7, sometimes you would get angry, can you give me an example of things that would make you feel that way?</p> <p><b>Elijah:</b> Just like <b>too many people</b> being around me. People just talking loads of <b>rubbish</b>, people being <b>childish</b>.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> So erm and then feeling angry, how would the teachers respond?</p> <p><b>Elijah:</b> Er normally they would <b>put me in isolation or exclude</b> me for the rest of the day.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Okay. And was anything happening at school around that time... when you were feeling angry then ended up being in isolation or excluded for the day?</p> <p><b>Elijah:</b> Inside the school?</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Yeah inside, outside</p>	<p>Explains the lead up to being excluded      Angry = <b>loss of temper</b>      Meant to say annoyed but changed to 'really' angry      Disliked and judged as bad by others      Used to and kept= <b>change of tense suggests build-up of anger over time</b>      Any little thing = <b>sense of injustice; disproportionate</b>      Manage move; referred = <b>Uses exclusion specific language</b></p> <p>Rubbish/childish = <b>'ish' slight immaturity by others</b>      Feeling different to others      People = <b>Peers triggered and maintained anger responses</b></p> <p>Isolation/exclusion = <b>the norm – usual predictable way to deal with his behaviour</b>      Teachers respond to Elijah by isolating or excluding      Put me = <b>done to him</b></p>
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<p><b>Views on exclusion change with age Ep4</b></p> <p><b>Exclusion messes up present and future learning Ep4</b></p> <p><b>Exclusion news expected but unanticipated through Elijah's mum Ep4</b></p> <p><b>Isolation leading to exclusion Ep4</b></p>	<p><b>Elijah:</b> Yeah <b>nowadays</b> I'd prefer to be in school cause like currently I <b>haven't had</b> a single lesson for the whole of my time in year 11 and I'm <b>missing out</b> on loads of learning, and that's gonna <b>mess up my future</b>. So now I <b>look at it differently</b> cause if I am not in school I'm just doing <b>dumb stuff</b> <b>out on roads</b> [pause] And that don't make no sense</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> mm what do you wanna do in the future?</p> <p><b>Elijah:</b> I wanna be a brick layer.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Mm amazing. Okay And so the next question is can you tell me a bit about the experience of finding out that you were no longer going to be at that school? So you said about a managed move, how did you find out?</p> <p><b>Elijah:</b> Er it was it was during <b>lockdown</b>, I was at home and then my mum came in my room [gesturing phone call] and was like I got I got your teacher on the phone... <b>w-why</b> I don't even go to the school right now. She's like well they're saying that you've been <b>kicked out</b> this and that saying how they are gonna try and <b>manage move</b> me and if they are not able to <b>manage move</b> me then it's going to be a <b>permanent exclusion</b> I am going to have to go to a <b>pupil referral unit</b>. But I <b>didn't really</b> I <b>didn't really care</b>. Feel like I literally just gotten into year 8 when that happened, I <b>didn't really care</b> about getting excluded or none of that</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> So you feel like you [clears throat] feel like you didn't care, was you expecting it to happen?</p> <p><b>Elijah:</b> Yeah</p>	<p>Reflects on change in perspective about being sent home from school with age I haven't had = <u>learning has been taken away</u> Missing out – <u>not getting educational entitlement</u> Miss out/ Mess up = <u>being excluded has disrupted learning experiences, progress and future outcomes</u> Dumb – <u>as a consequence of not learning in school</u> <u>Out on roads – slang refers to being out in the community doing what you're not supposed to</u> No sense = <u>Making sense of what doesn't make sense. Questions exclusion worth</u></p> <p>Aspires to be a brick layer in the future</p> <p>Found out he was excluded during the coronavirus pandemic lockdown when schools were running reduced provision Why – <u>questioning contact from a place he is not included. dysfluency</u> Kicked out; managed move; permanent exclusion = <u>exclusionary specific language</u> Going to try; going to have to = <u>no personal choice</u> Didn't really care = <u>some care but not much/enough? To be overtly bothered.</u> Care = <u>emphasised. Appears contradictory</u> Elijah's mother passes on the message that he will not be allowed to return to the school</p>
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## Dantae transcript extract:

<p><b>Repeated instances of misbehaviour equals more time spent in the [internal exclusion room] Dp4</b></p>	<p>detention or you're in there for two hours or <b>however long a detention was. But</b> If you go in there and you have a double period, like, if you have double Maths and went in there for the double Maths.  <b>But</b> yet if you have one period you're <b>only</b> there for the period and then you <b>leave</b>, but <b>if you get another one then you're there for the whole day.</b></p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> You could be there for a period a double period or a whole day. And when you're there, what do you do?</p>	<p>Yawning ++ - tired, bored?  How long a detention was is not decided by <u>Dantae</u>  The [INTERNAL EXCLUSION ROOM] room is for people who skip detention <u>too</u>  But x2 – exceptions to the [INTERNAL EXCLUSION ROOM] rules  Whole day – possibility if behaviour does not <u>improve</u>  Skip; get – action – <u>response</u>  Only one period – reversible, able to unexcluded self, know there is a <u>return</u>  More than one – irreversible  Who is in the [INTERNAL EXCLUSION ROOM] room?</p>
<p><b>Sneaking out of the boring [INTERNAL EXCLUSION ROOM] Dp4</b></p>	<p><b>Dantae:</b> <b>Write lines. Like write up a poem.</b> Like sometimes I'd <b>sneak out</b> between cause <b>m- l-</b> like the teacher is always distracted and then. I'll just get people to come in the thing and then cause <b>[stutter]</b> coats were there, I just go over there sharpen my pencil grab my coat and go.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Okay. And what made you <u>wanna</u> sneak out?</p> <p><b>Dantae:</b> It is <b>boring</b>.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> boring so it felt boring and, said you had to write lines... were the lines you w-Were you writing about something that you <u>chose</u> or you were given the lines to write by a teacher?</p> <p><b>Dantae:</b> Yes, that's right <b>like poems</b>.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Okay. How did you feel about school? Then.</p>	<p>Recounting a time when he left the [INTERNAL EXCLUSION ROOM] room.  Students write <u>lines</u>  m-l- dysfluency. Implies another underlying reason for sneaking <u>out</u>  There – vague narrative  Go – taking up his own <u>authority</u>  Is he avoiding the writing task? Literacy difficulties</p> <p>How <u>Dantae</u> feels about [INTERNAL EXCLUSION ROOM]  Boring – <u>emphasised</u>  Lack of stimulation, not engaging and/or challenging</p>
<p><b>Did not really care about school Dp4</b></p>	<p><b>Dantae:</b> Okay, <b>cause</b> I don't really care because <b>that's what school is.</b> That's <b>just what you</b> do in school.</p>	<p>Like poems? Comparison to another written task</p> <p>Refers to what school as a place <u>is</u></p>

<p>The rules are set by the headteacher and cannot be challenged <u>Dp12</u></p> <p>Lost count of the number of different exclusions which feel the same <u>Dp12</u></p> <p>There is no coming back once school has decided</p>	<p><u>Dantae</u>: Erm probably February</p> <p><u>Interviewer</u>: Okay. And <u>So</u> how do you feel about not knowing yet which school it could be?</p> <p><u>Dantae</u>: <u>It's just, I don't know</u>. It's that's <u>that's just the rules</u>. You <u>cant</u> be told what school you are going <u>bef-</u> before you start doing your tests and go back to mainstream.</p> <p><u>Interviewer</u>: And who sets the rules? Do you think?</p> <p><u>Dantae</u>: Headteacher</p> <p><u>Interviewer</u>: Okay. Okay. <u>Erm</u>. <u>So</u> you said if I just I'm just trying to understand properly here. You said a couple of schools that you couldn't go back to. How many times have you changed schools?</p> <p><u>Dantae</u>: Probably like 3/4 times.</p> <p><u>Interviewer</u>: So moved from One school to another school free to 4 times.</p> <p><u>Dantae</u>: Yeah.</p> <p><u>Interviewer</u>: <u>Yeah</u> And is that in just in secondary school or does that include primary school as well?</p> <p><u>Dantae</u>: I moved <u>like once</u> in primary school.</p>	<p><u>Dantae</u> will find out about which school he can go to next in <u>February</u></p> <p>Just ++ - obedience Don't know – hard to think about the <u>uncertainty</u> Shocked no pre-<u>warning</u> Sense of confusion/misunderstanding about how the education system <u>works</u></p> <p>Headteachers set the rules – authority figure <u>power</u></p> <p><u>Dantae</u> has been excluded more than <u>once</u> Probably – expected <u>norm</u> Lots of movement and change and disruption to <u>learning</u> 3-4 – numerical value emphasises the repetitiveness. Why not a solid number?</p>
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<p><b>Others view Dantae as loud, funny and kind sometimes <u>Dp17</u></b></p> <p><b>Family members view exclusion as Dantae's behaviour problem <u>Dp17</u></b></p> <p><b>Exclusion affects future career success chances <u>Dp18</u></b></p>	<p><b>Dantae:</b> They just, <u>they</u> just some <b>people used to call me annoying</b>. I'm like okay cool. I just didn't <u>didn't</u> speak.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> <u>So</u> it's made you <u>wanna</u> change your behaviour?</p> <p><b>Dantae:</b> [nods]</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Okay. <u>So</u> what might your parents say?</p> <p><b>Dantae:</b> Erm My dad will probably say that. I'm <b>loud, well not loud</b> like, I'm <b>funny</b> sometimes. And like I don't know you'd have to ask him. But. My mum my mum says that I'm <b>kind</b> and that I <b>obviously I do what she asks sometimes</b> and I'm always <b>looking after my little</b> brothers and my little sisters when she's not in not at home.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Okay, so loud and kind and a helpful older brother. What do you think they would say about the exclusion and change in the schools?</p> <p><b>Dantae:</b> <u>Well</u> erm (yawns) my mum would be like ar <b>why are you doing this?</b> You need to behave and stuff like that. My <u>my</u> older sister she is always on my case as well cause she's like you need to behave or you won't get a <b>good, good, grade</b> or whatever. Then <u>my dads</u> just, I don't even know what <u>my dads</u> like because he just <b>sick of it now</b>.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Okay, so different. Different, different views from your mum, your oldest sister and your dad. Erm... What about your friends? What do you think they might say about? The experience of exclusion.</p> <p><b>Dantae:</b> Oh, that, ah you <u>needs</u> to <b>behave or else</b> you won't make it pro.</p>	<p>Annoying – label given by <u>others</u> Didn't speak – to please others; avoid being picked <u>on</u></p> <p>Perceptions of others influenced a change in behaviour and <u>personality</u></p> <p>Views of <u>Dantae's</u> mum and dad Loud, funny, caring, kind, responsible – words used to describe <u>him</u> I don't know – Dads views are more difficult to think about Sometimes – noticing differences of opinion and desirable/<u>less</u> desirable traits</p> <p>Family members views on <u>Dantae's</u> exclusion <u>differs</u> Yawns – tired of exclusion Why are you? Within-child focus Behave – child-centred. How do you behave? Feeling pressured by his older sister to act in a controlled <u>way</u> Good Good (x2 emphasis) grades are <u>idolised</u> Sick of it now – links to exhaustion repeated experience</p>
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## Pierre's transcript extract:

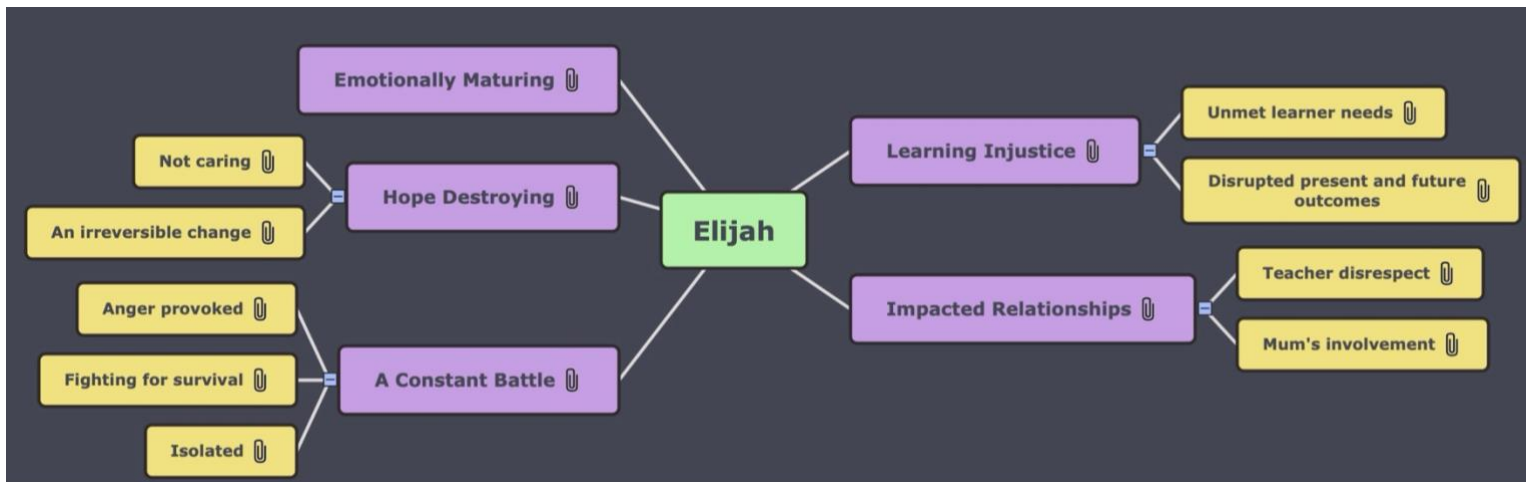
<p><b>Incidents of fighting occur at break times Pp3</b></p> <p>Teachers pick on children who are troublesome and protect children who are popular Pp3</p> <p><b>Peers inclusion and exclusion is confusing for Pierre Pp3</b></p> <p><b>Social exclusion by peers brings feelings of sadness Pp3</b></p>	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Yeah. <u>So</u> can you tell me a little bit about a normal day at school for you before you was excluded, what was it like?</p> <p><b>Pierre:</b> Going to school... err finding the <b>work hard</b> and then like at <b>break times</b> and stuff there would be <b>like a problem</b> and then <b>fighting</b> and stuff. And then the <b>teachers would either go for the one who has a friend group with them</b>. Who who Mm so either the person who is always like, <b>apparently causing trouble when they are not</b>, you know, and then like someone tries to fight you and then they started it and then you ended it and then <b>you get in trouble but they don't</b>.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Okay so going into school and then having... Well so say that again what happened you go into school and then... Go into school and then an incident would happen at playtime.</p> <p><b>Pierre:</b> Including me or not including me.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Say that again?</p> <p><b>Pierre:</b> They <u>was</u> like either <b>including me or not including me</b>.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Who's they?</p> <p><b>Pierre:</b> <b>Just</b> people that are at school that I know or <b>just</b> don't know.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> And when they would include you or not include you how would that make you feel?</p> <p><b>Pierre:</b> Ermm [long pause] a bit sad. Erm</p>	<p>Non-verbal communication because verbal is too hard/<u>painful</u> Silent acknowledgement</p> <p>A typical day at school before exclusion Incidents were a usual occurrence at <u>break times</u> Teachers taking sides based on <u>likeability</u> Apparently – contradictory, seeming to but not <u>actually</u> You/they – back into third person Injustice – getting in trouble for others <u>actions</u> Fighting is <u>problematic</u></p> <p>P was punished by teachers whether he was involved in the incident or not Being included yet feeling excluded Change of tense to 1<sup>st</sup> person</p> <p>Peers were including Pierre in incidents which didn't always concern <u>him</u> Just – adverb holds significance but seems <u>downplayed</u> Confusion Social interaction</p> <p>Long pause – time taken to think about and acknowledge <u>feelings</u> A bit sad – buffering. Not completely identifying with the emotion</p>
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<p><b>Feelings of anger and annoyance in response to unfairness by teachers Pp5</b></p> <p><b>it is hard to put feelings about exclusion into words Pp5</b></p> <p><b>Challenging <u>school work</u> is a trigger for anger Pp5</b></p> <p><b>Parents support difficulty controlling big emotions at school Pp5</b></p>	<p><b>Pierre:</b> Angry and annoyed.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Okay And so how did you feel about school before the exclusion in general? <u>Was</u> you enjoying school?</p> <p><b>Pierre:</b> Not really</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> You said that the work was sometimes too hard?</p> <p><b>Pierre:</b> Mm-hmm. [nods]</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> And what would happen when the work would get too hard?</p> <p><b>Pierre:</b> I would like <u>get angry</u> and stuff.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> And that would make you feel angry and then what was you thinking when you would get angry?</p> <p><b>Pierre:</b> Like I <u>hate the teacher</u> and <u>left the class</u> and stuff. And then... And... And then if they kept annoying me, then I'd have to call my mum and I'd like... It <u>depends</u> what they done <u>to be honest</u>.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Okay. And then what might happen if you called your mum? How would that help?</p> <p><b>Pierre:</b> Like talk to her about the situation.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> And then how would that make you feel after you talked to her about the situation?</p>	<p>Feeling angry and annoyed about teachers taking <u>sides</u> And – two feelings from the anger iceberg <u>Injustice</u></p> <p>P was not enjoying school Short sentence – impartial Not really – yes really? <u>Appearing to enjoy</u></p> <p>School work was <u>challenging</u> Nodding – NVC b/c words are too <u>hard</u></p> <p>Angry feelings in response to hard work – internal frustration caused by external <u>stimulus</u> And stuff – what else? Maybe just anger is noticed as the iceberg <u>tip</u> Get – the feeling is gained/<u>given</u></p> <p>Thoughts of hate towards the teacher Leaving the class as a result Feeling annoyed by teachers Reactions are dependent on what is done to P first And then... frequent narrative <u>Call mum – access to phone?</u> To be honest – speaking frankly</p>
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<p><b>Parent as a positive source of support Pp6</b></p> <p><b>Positive perception and presence of the male headteacher Pp6</b></p> <p><b>Influenced by parent predictions of exclusion Pp6</b></p> <p><b>A swift transition from suspension to a permanent exclusion Pp6</b></p> <p><b>Received home tutoring whilst waiting to be placed in another school Pp6</b></p>	<p><b>Pierre:</b> Better</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> <u>So</u> you talked a bit about the lessons, a bit about the teachers, were there any teachers that you liked and got on with?</p> <p><b>Pierre:</b> Err the headteacher. I didn't really see him <u>much</u> but we were <b>cool</b>. Err [pause] can't remember now.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> And what did you like about the headteacher?</p> <p><b>Pierre:</b> He was <b>just cool</b> I didn't really see him that <u>much</u></p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> What kind of cool things would he do? Was it he or she?</p> <p><b>Pierre:</b> He. Erm nothing much really. Just seeing him here and there.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Okay. And so how did you find out that you were kicked out from that school?</p> <p><b>Pierre:</b> Because I was like, <b>mum said you are gonna get kicked out soon</b> if I keep doing this and this and then we were having a meeting and you go have them in the school with my mum and some teachers and then they said you're suspended and then it turned into a perm, and then I was sitting at home and then a month <b>couple months later or something</b> I had to wait for tutoring... until I got to another school.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Okay, so you had a meeting, Was you in the meeting?</p>	<p>Talking about hard situations in school with his mum made P feel <u>better</u> Parents as a source of positive support Better – suggests improvement not complete <u>resolve</u></p> <p>Pierre got on well with the <u>headteacher</u> Cool – opposite to previous descriptions of anger Member of staff in authority as a positive source of indirect support Him – male</p> <p>A need for 'cool teachers' opposite to anger provoking, ever-present and <u>annoying</u></p> <p>Just seeing the headteacher was enough to feel <u>supported</u> What about seeing him?</p> <p>How Pierre found out he was excluded from a school Meeting took place between mother, Pierre and <u>teachers</u> Sitting – waiting for his fate Perm = slang for permanent And then ++ quick turn of narrative events Two + months without school education</p>
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## Appendix J: Personal Experiential Themes, subthemes, experiential statements and quotes

## ELIJAH





## Learning Injustice

### School helps learning and stops laziness Ep9

“Stop me from being lazy [sigh/laugh?]”

“I’d be I’d be learning stuff.”

### Authoritative figures are needed to help learning Ep8

“Going to an authoritative figure and telling them that someone is doing something that they shouldn’t be doing.”

“You’re supposed to be preventing these things from happening and actually doing stuff about it but you are not, you’re just you’re too comfortable you need to be on your toes.”

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## Unmet learner needs

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### Recognition and requirement for educational providers to uphold their duty of care Ep8

“Well when the thing happened with my cousin, I got onto the headteacher about it because like while students are there they are supposed to be **under his care and his supervision** so for him to not be doing anything about it, I had to just tell him about himself like. I said to him why why are you letting that go on in your school, in your pupil referral unit when you got a **duty of care.**”

### Schools are capable of meeting everybody’s needs Ep6

“A school’s more... a school’s more like... more of a controlled environment. A pupil referral unit is more like a youth centre.”

“Like there’s a lot more staff, there’s a lot more funding so the school is more capable of meeting everybody’s needs and there’s like more time where you are actually in the school learning.”

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## Disrupted present and future outcomes

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### Exclusion messes up present and future learning Ep4

“I haven’t had a single lesson for the whole of my time in year 11 and I’m missing out on loads of learning, and that’s gonna mess up my future.”

“I wanna be a brick layer.”

### Exclusion means missing out on an education Elijah should be getting Ep10

“I think the parents would see it as the school systems failed me. **Cause really and truly I should still be getting an education, but its just not happening.**”

### Exclusion means nothing is happening at home Ep7

“Mostly just staying at home, having a meeting every two months or so and nothing happening about it.”

## Impacted Relationships

### **Difference between how parents, friends and teachers view Elijah’s behaviour’ Ep10**

“I think the parents would see it as the school systems failed me.”

(friends would say) “That the school system has failed me as well”

(teachers) “They’d probably say that its my actions that led me here.”

## Teacher disrespect

### **Acknowledges that teachers can disrespect students Ep7**

“They said I was allowed to come in from 2.30 until erm 4.15 and then that same day that I’ve gone in the headteacher was rude to me so I started I started getting rude to him, then one of my favourite teachers got me to come outside and just cool down... “

### **Mutual respect is a valued need for functioning school-pupil relationships Ep10**

“I would say to them that, even though I’m able to control my temper a bit better now don’t mean you can talk to me the way I see you try talk to other students cause that’s still not gonna run with me.”

“Like the way I see them talk to other students they try to like shout in their face and that all doing pointing in their face and that just being really rude and disrespectful.”

### **Elijah anticipated exclusions after continuous warnings from teachers Ep5**

“Nah cause I knew it was going to happen because I had been on my last warning for like 22 warnings before that [sharp exhale]”

### **Feeling misunderstood by teachers Ep2**

“Err when I first started school, in year 7 I used to get really ann-, really angry easily then I was having a bad reputation with the teachers and stuff, then the teacher didn’t really like me any little thing that I would do they made it into a big thing”

### **Reactions to anger led to a managed move Ep2**

“... and eventually I got manage moved to a different secondary school and then kept on losing my temper there then I got referred to Canada Lee\* (PRU).”

## Mum's involvement

### **Exclusion news expected but unanticipated through Elijah’s mum Ep4**

“I was at home and then my mum came in my room [gesturing phone call] and was like I got I got your teacher on the phone... w-why I don’t even go to the school right now. She’s like well they’re saying that you’ve been kicked out this and that saying how they are gonna try

and manage move me and if they are not able to manage move me then it's going to be a permanent exclusion I am going to have to go to a pupil referral unit."

### **Parent meetings were apart of the exclusion process Ep5**

"call my mum in, get my mum to come down the school we'd have a meeting and they'd say ah yeah he's excluded for the rest of the day he has to go home he can come back tomorrow but he will be in isolation."

## **A Constant Battle**

### **Accountable tension between Elijah's actions and an unjust system Ep10**

"It depends because some people look at it as I deserve it because it's my actions that brought me here. Other people look at it as, the school system failed me. It just depends on what side what side of the table you are sitting on."

---

## **Anger provoked**

### **Social childish situations provoked angry responses by Elijah Ep2**

"Just like too many people being around me. People just talking loads of rubbish, people being childish."

### **Losing sense of self when becoming angry Ep7**

"So the next day the school the center tried to punish me and then I got told that he was the one who went to them so then I kinda lost it and started punching him up then a couple teachers started to grab me so I started fighting with them as well."

### **The impact of loss negatively impacted on behaviour in school and increased anger Ep3**

"Er outside... when I first started year 7 one of my family members passed away... literally like five days before I started year 7 and then mostly throughout year 7 to year 9 quite a lot of my family members passed away [pause] so that led me to feel a bit more angry than usual"

---

## **Fighting for survival**

### **Perceived a threat Ep7**

"And the person it was that threw the water bottle in her face was the same person who snitched on me. Now I've seen him at the bus stop now so I started running him down, he's ran towards the school, so as I caught up to him the teachers came out seen me so they just started grabbing me and that pulling me off of him and then now they are saying I'm a threat to students and staff."

### **Feeling and fighting betrayal by students and staff Ep7**

"Then one of one of my friends got hurt and they decided to go to the school with my name in their mouth saying how I attacked them with a cricket bat, they need to go hospital they

think their knee is broken this and that. So the next day the school the center tried to punish me”

### **Fighting at school was an exhausting norm Ep5**

“Just getting into loads of fights. From year 7 till like year 8 I didn’t go a single week without having a fight in that school”

### **Physical aggression with others led to removal from school Ep7**

“...started punching him up then a couple teachers started to grab me so I started fighting with them as well. Then we had a meeting, They said I was allowed to come in from 2.30 until erm 4.15”

“Its like say I’m tryna fight somebody and a teacher tried to like restrain me, I’d end up trying to fight the teacher.”

### **Exclusion is being kicked out Ep1**

“Kicked out”

Isolated

### **Fighting, being isolated and sent home is normal Ep3**

“Go in, have my first lesson, have a fight, go in isolation have lunch go home.”

### **Isolation leading to exclusion Ep4**

“They would just... it would depend on how serious the fight was if it was just like a little fight like couple punches from then it would just be isolation but if it’s a actual serious fight where like I’ve lost it and I’m bugging out on teachers and that then they’d normally put me in isolation”

### **Being isolated from everybody else in society Ep1**

“Erm separated from general society.”

### **Isolation as a normal experience Ep2**

“Er normally they would put me in isolation or exclude me for the rest of the day.”

## **Hope Destroying**

Not caring

### **Negative school experience led to feelings of not caring about implications of exclusion Ep5**

“But I didn’t really I didn’t really care. Feel like I literally just gotten into year 8 when that happened, I didn’t really care about getting excluded or none of that”

**Elijah appeared not to really care about exclusion Ep3**

“Cause I was young I didn’t really care, like I just looked at as ah yeah I get off school early”

**An irreversible change****Lost hope in going back to school Ep8**

“I would like to go back to school, feel like it would do some good for me but it don’t look like its gonna happen.”

“But then now that I am not there its like while I was there I shoulda behaved myself [laughs] but its too late now.”

**After being kicked out people lose hope and trust Ep6**

“Because when you go in there there’s no authoritative figure, even though there’s a headteacher whatever, what they say don’t really get into peoples heads. People are not going to listen to them. Because people would think I have already been kicked out of school what’s the point in this like you’re not gonna change my life around so why am I going to listen to you?”

**Thoughts about going back to mainstream are hard Ep9**

“[looks around the room] that’s a hard question you know. If I was able to go back to a mainstream school or pupil referral unit?”

**Emotionally Maturing****Views on exclusion change with age Ep4**

“Cause I was young I didn’t really care, like I just looked at as ah yeah I get off school early”

“Yeah nowadays I’d prefer to be in school cause like currently I haven’t had a single lesson for the whole of my time in year 11”

“So now I look at it differently cause if I am not in school I’m just doing dumb stuff out on roads [pause] And that don’t make no sense”

**Exclusion forced Elijah to grow up Ep9**

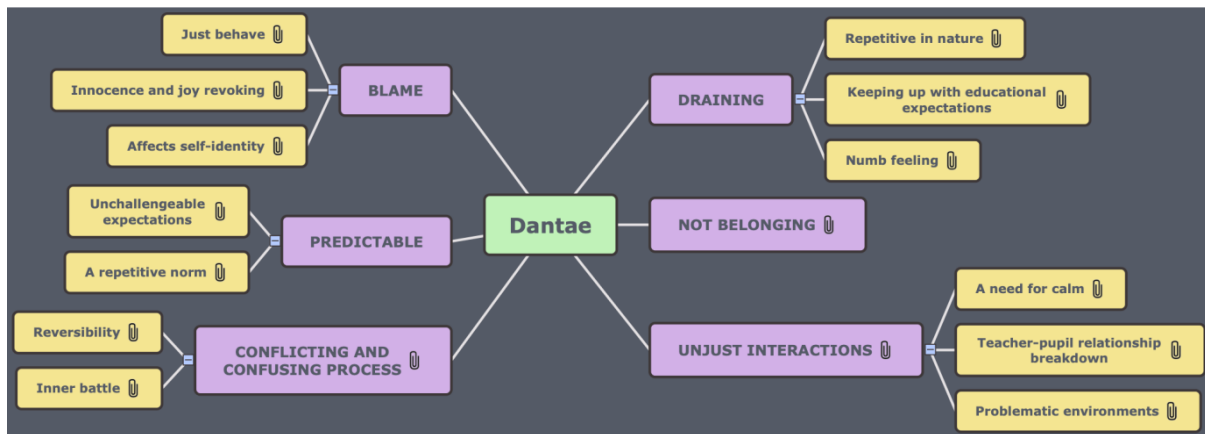
“If I weren’t excluded... being excluded taught me some things so I feel like if I weren’t excluded I would still be really childish.”

**Outside of school Elijah can do what he wants Ep6**

“Cause I’m not really in. When I was in, I was liking it there because it was like whatever I wanna do I can do and there’s nothing nobody that’s there can tell me what to do.”

**Growing awareness of need to control anger whilst stand up for self Ep9** “Like just loosing my temper all the time, getting into fights every day, like just not behaving myself at all.”

# DANTAE



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## DRAINING

Repetitive in nature

**Exclusion meant leaving and starting three new schools Dp14**

“Then I went Petchey...Then Dotch Academy...Then Dotch Academy.”

**Trying your best is a tiring experience Dp11**

“**[yawns]**. S'alright. I **try** my best so it's Good.”

Keeping up with educational expectations

**Loads of lessons are overwhelming Dp9**

“There was **bare... there was bare** classes. I don't like, **when I go back** o- in February. **I don't like, I don't mind** big classes”

**Hard to stay calm at school Dp2**

“then I mess around in the line up sometimes. And then we go into class. I try and keep calm for the. I normally get passed it for the first 2 period, but sometimes I didn't. Like sometimes I just messed around too much and where the third or fourth period 4 for the fourth period I started to misbehave cause it was, break just finished.”

Numb feeling

**Exclusion feels like nothing Dp18**

“Nothing really.”

**Did not really care about school Dp4**

“Okay, cause I don't really care because **that's what school is**. That's **just what you** do in school.”

## NOT BELONGING

**Permanent exclusion means no longer wanted by school Dp6**

“one day and they were like ah **“we can no longer have you anymore... you're permanently excluded”**. And like **I didn't really feel anyway”**

**Exclusion stops Dantae going back to some places but opens him up to belong in other places Dp11**

“Nah **not yet**. You cant like, I can't go back to Westow\*. Erm **I don't know if I can** go back to Paxton or not I don't think so. I cant go back to Westow, Patxon\* or Dotchey Academy\* I'm not in that area anyway. So the other schools are probably like Roach\*, Halstow\*, Wind\*,



Seam\*, Solly Park\* or Fity erm Fity Academy\* and I don't wanna Carla Paul\* yeah theres other schools as well."

### Cannot be kicked out any further from the PRU Dp13

"3 times, cause I'm still here. Erm and they can't kick out of this school. Cause there's nowhere to go this this is like bottom line. You cant go anywhere"

## UNJUST INTERACTIONS

### People are unforgivingly unjust Dp10

"Like the, there's like. People, if someone does one thing wrong people, people are always onto the person."

"Students"

### A need for calm

#### Some teachers were calm others were not Dp5

"Some were calm some were just like less lessons that you can joke around in"

"Like they just, they just, they don't shout that you, they just ty- they just warn you and then like and then if you ignore then they're gonna ask you what are the... do the sanctions, they'll do it calmly they wont just shout every five seconds"

#### Recognition of a need for adult support to take time out from learning Dp9

"if I'm feeling angry then I just need someone that will like let me go out and speak to someone or whatever or go sit somewhere but but It's quieter"

### Teacher-pupil relationship breakdown

#### Teachers are annoying, unfair, invasive and unforgiving Dp7-8

"Yeah and the teachers are just... annoying"

"They were just bare talking like the- when I'm doing my work I just have a teacher right there [gestures hand close to face] standing next to me when I'm getting on my work annoying and every time like if I did one thing wrong they're always on my case."

#### Dantae's jokes are perceived as troublesome by teachers Dp8

"Like when I'm messing around with my friends at at at break or lunch like we're not touching nobody, we're just making jokes and we are in the corner making jokes with everyone like and one of the teachers come and be like "oh move away from them" and I'm like "why?" And they're like oh "cause its too much trouble".

#### Small instances of misbehaviour led to big reactions by school Dp2

"Like just just pushing and everything just talking and Laughing about stuff"

### Uncontrolled laughter is controlled by teacher telling-off Dp3

“Then the teacher would come tell us off and then And then someone would be like oh shut them shush and then we would just start laughing even more”

### Nodding confirms agreement about feeling targeted and rejected by teachers Dp15

“(Feeling like when you were messing around the teachers were or when you were in school the teachers were watching you more) [nods] ... [nodding]

## Problematic environments

### PRUs are loud schools with less people and less problems Dp8/9

“There's not many people in the same class. They have 2 classes so there's not much people in the in this, like down here. Everyone's friends with each other and there is barely any problems erm I was gonna say quiet but I know its not, erm (yawns) that's probably it”

### Mainstream school teachers are problematic Dp9

“erm.. mmm. Less teachers erm Less problems [pause] No, no, no, no there's more problems in mainstream erm... that's probably it.”

### Being excluded from a small school does not matter Dp7

“I- I didn't really care cause the sch- the school is small and I came to bigger schools. The school is just small.”

### Bad schools exclude pupils Dp15

“Nothing, I don't wanna go back to any of the schools.”

“Cause they are all bad schools... well not bad schools I just didn't like the schools.”

## CONFLICTING AND CONFUSING PROCESS

### Confusion between suspension and exclusion Dp6

“my dad told me not to get ready and I was like cool I thought I was gonna have a day off and then we went to the school one day and they were like ah “we can no”

### Exclusion is easy and difficult to talk about at the same time Dp6

“Hmm. I don't know I don't think so. “ “ I I wont talk?”

## Reversibility

### Exclusion is temporary Dp1

“You're getting, like you're leaving the school for a a short period of time and then coming back”

### Ending exclusion promotes good learning Dp11

"I would I would be in school **right now**. Not in a **PRU**" "Learning"

**There is no coming back once school has decided they cant have you anymore Dp13**

"I've changed. No, no, no, no, it's 'cause they've decided I'm not coming back. Like they just said we can't have you anymore."

**Suspended temporarily to excluded permanently Dp6**

"Erm I got put like- sent in another school or whatever and then **they suspended me in the last week where it summer** was where were breaking up for summer so I **didn't have school for a long time.**"

Inner Battle

**Nothing else was happening at school around the time of exclusion Dp6**

"Hmm. I **don't know I don't think** so."

**Dantae moved between homes and schools Dp13**

"Yeah then I went secondary. Down where my mum lives."

**PREDICTABLE**

Unchallengeable expectations

**Exclusion is predictable and to be accepted Dp6**

"I **knew this was going to happen**, so I'm like **o-ok.**"

"I **knew it was coming**"

**The rules are set by the headteacher and cannot be challenged Dp12**

"It's just, I don't know. It's that's **that's just the rules**. You cant be told what school you are going bef- before you start doing your tests and go back to mainstream." ... "Headteacher"

**Repeated instances of misbehaviour equals more time spent in the [internal inclusion room] Dp4**

"you're in there for two hours or **however long a detention was**. **But** If you go in there and you have a double period, like, if you have double Maths and went in there for the double Maths. **But** yet if you have one period you're **only** there for the period and then you **leave**, but **if you get another one then you're there for the whole day.**"

**Schools expect students to behave and get on with their work Dp15/16**

"Behave."

A repetitive norm

**Being excluded to the PRU is unsurprising Dp8**

"I knew what, I was gonna come here."

### Getting sent out of class repeatedly is normal Dp2

"I got sent to [internal inclusion room] and whatever and then when I went. Back to lesson after lunch I got sent again so that was twice in a day And that's just what happened. For the ... For the whole time I was there."

### Lost count of the number of different exclusions which feel the same Dp12

"Probably like 3/4 times."

## BLAME

### Just behave

#### Misbehaviour is the reason for exclusion Dp7

"Cause my behaviour"

#### Good behaviour is the only solution to the exclusion problem Dp18

"That I just need to behave that's all they say."

#### Family members view exclusion as Dantae's behaviour problem Dp17

"Well erm (yawns) my mum would be like ar why are you doing this? You need to behave and stuff like that. My my older sister she is always on my case as well cause she's like you need to behave or you won't get a good, good, grade or whatever. Then my dads just, I don't even know what my dads like because he just sick of it now."

#### Repeated bad actions and attitudes were uncontrollable Dp18

"I'll be like okay then move class and do the same thing. That I that I got in trouble for."

### Innocence and joy revoking

#### A return to mainstream school would make a bad boy reputation good Dp10

"Good. Because I don't want people to look at me being like aw he goes \*Old Stanton, And he's a bad boy."

#### Desire to behave, learn and feel happy at school Dp16

"Just getting on with my work and everything... Happy (quieter tone of voice)."

#### Innocence outside of school detention Dp6

"I I wont talk? all I did outside of school was is have detention or whatever, go get food from the chicken shop and go home."

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## Affects self-identity

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### **Exclusion quietens you as a person Dp16**

“Like cause I used to be like all loud but now I'm just I'm just quiet I try to be quiet.”

“I was just keeping myself to myself because I used to just speak every time. Like I used to be loud and used to talk to my friends loud and, I just I just quiet.”

### **Exclusion affects future career success chances Dp18**

“Oh, that, ah you needs to behave or else you won't make it pro.”

### **Schools change but the unsuccessful feelings remain the same Dp14**

“Same.”

## Removed

**Others view Dantae as loud, funny and kind sometimes Dp17**

**Sneaking out of the boring [internal inclusion room] Dp4**

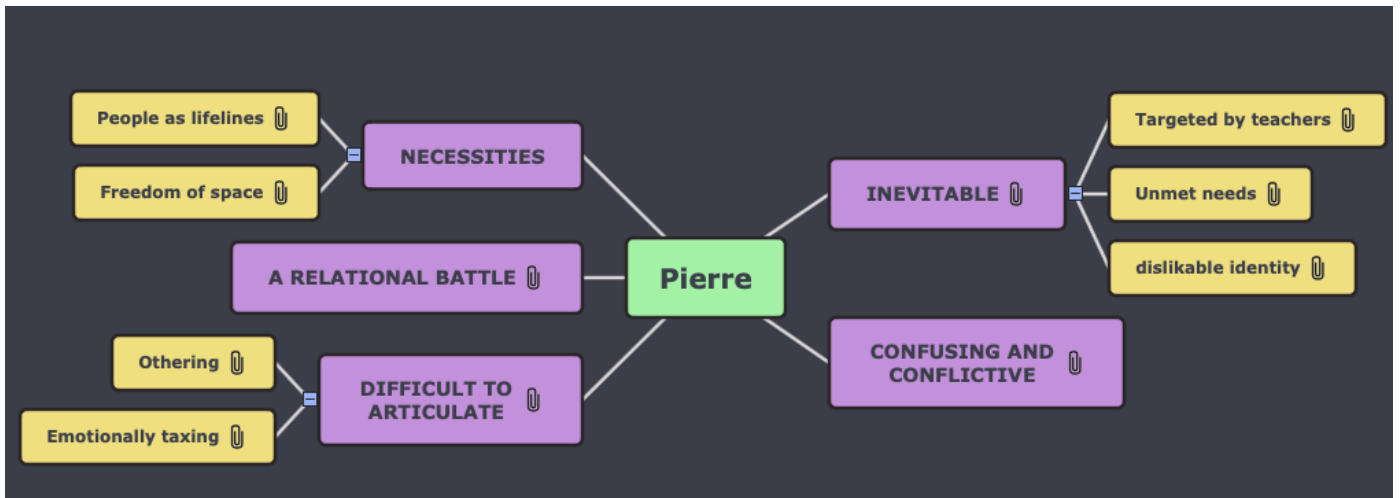
**Laughter with friends at school Dp3**

**Calm teachers tolerate students messing around Dp5**

**Uncalm teachers shout often Dp5**

**A change of learning environment helped Dp9**

# PIERRE



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## INEVITABLE

### Targeted by teachers

#### Feelings of anger and annoyance in response to unfairness by teachers Pp5

“Angry and annoyed.”

#### Teachers target children perceived as rude without explanation Pp2

“Like, shouting for no reason. Always going for the wrong person... annoying and stuff.”

#### Teachers pick on children who are troublesome and protect children who are popular Pp3

“And then the teachers would either go for the one who has a friend group with them. Who who Mm so either the person who is always like, apparently causing trouble when they are not, you know, and then like someone tries to fight you and then they started it and then you ended it and then you get in trouble but they don't.”

### Unmet needs

#### Influenced by parent predictions of exclusion Pp6

“Because I was like, mum said you are gonna get kicked out soon if I keep doing this and this and then we were having a meeting”

#### Confident he was going to be kicked out before it happened Pp7

“Yeah they told me. My mum told me.”

“That I know I was going to get kicked out.”

#### Deep down parent and Pierre felt the school was unsuitable regardless of exclusion Pp10

“Even worse because I didn't really want to be there. My mum didn't want me to be there anyways.”

#### Challenging school work is a trigger for anger Pp5

“I would like get angry and stuff.” “... Like I hate the teacher and left the class and stuff.”

### Dislikable identity

#### Pierre is perceived as annoying and other stuff Pp13

“Apparently I'm just annoying all the time and stuff.”

#### Teachers exclude rude children they don't like Pp2

“How they are at school and like, they're like, they're like, like, rude to them and stuff.”

#### Teachers perceived to go against pupils they dislike Pp4

“Depends on the situation... Has like a **friend group** or something or like against the person but like **against the person that they don't like** like”

## CONFUSING AND CONFLICTIVE

### A swift transition from suspension to a permanent exclusion Pp6

“...having a meeting and you go have them in the school with my mum and some teachers and then they said you're suspended and then it turned into a perm, and then I was sitting at home and then a month **couple months later or something** I had to wait for tutoring... until I got to another school.”

### Pierre and his mother were included in the school exclusion meeting yet excluded from the decision making Pp7

“No. **It was kind of, I mean**, it wasn't the way they were talking stuff, it's like they were talking stuff **right next to me to my mum** about me and yeah”

### Excluded within the building yet still part of the school Pp12

“I was **excluded but** I was still part of the school.”

### Exclusion feels like being kicked out by teachers Pp1

“Err getting kicked out... Teachers.”

### Peers inclusion and exclusion is confusing for Pierre Pp3

“there would be **like a problem** and then **fighting** and stuff... They was like either **including me or not including me**. **Just** people that are at school that I know or **just** don't know.”

### Annoyance and relief about leaving the school Pp11

“**Annoyed but then relieved** because I don't have to **go back there** again.”

## DIFFICULT TO ARTICULATE

### It is hard to put feelings about exclusion into words Pp5

“Mm-hmm. **[nods]**”

### Nodding is easier than talking about the difficulty of exclusion Pp14

“Mm mm **[nods]** head in agreement]”

---

## Otherring

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### Other stuff is not spoken about Pp7

“Because like, the **way they were talking**, I just **felt** it. The way they were talking and **stuff**.”

### Lost count of repeated instances of being kicked out Pp11

“That they **kept excluding** me and stuff... Yeah, **not a lot but like a couple times** yeah.”



**Other stuff could be said to old teachers Pp10**

“I’d say like go away and stuff [quieter tone].”

**Emotionally taxing****There is no room for other feelings amidst sadness Pp4**

“Ermm [long pause] a bit sad. Erm ...No ... Depends on the situation.”

**Hard to remember situations which evoke sadness Pp4**

“Erm not that I can remember of.”

**Felt emotionless after the exclusion meeting Pp8**

“Nothing. Like literally nothing.”

**Nervousness associated with starting a new school Pp9**

“Nervous.”

**A RELATIONAL BATTLE****The idea of returning from exclusion gives rise to refusal and annoyance Pp9**

“What do you mean? ... Feel annoyed I wouldn’t go.”

**Friends perception of Pierre’s exclusion is a relieving miracle Pp12**

“Thank God and stuff.”

**Defensive towards all teachers perceived as unfair in handling conflict Pp11**

“To everyone. All of the teachers, except the headteacher. If the headteacher wants to join in, they’re getting the same thing.”

**Teachers’ perceptions of Pierre’s exclusion would be relief from annoyance Pp13**

“Relieved... Yeah. That they wouldn’t have to deal with someone like me.”

**Incidents of fighting occur at break times Pp3**

“Going to school... err finding the work hard and then like at break times and stuff there would be like a problem and then fighting and stuff.”

**Negative perception of excluding teachers Pp2**

“Apparently having enough of the child. You don’t like them or something?”

**NECESSITIES****People as lifelines****Positive perception and presence of the male headteacher Pp6**

“Err the headteacher. I didn’t really see him much but we were cool. Err [pause] can’t remember now.”

### Parents support difficulty controlling big emotions at school Pp5

“Like I hate the teacher and left the class and stuff. And then... And... And then if they kept annoying me, then I'd have to call my mum and I'd like... It depends what they done to be honest.”

“Like talk to her about the situation.”

### Parent as a positive source of support Pp6

“Better”

---

### Freedom of space

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### Preferred being at home playing games rather than being at school Pp10

“Because that time I was waiting I could just play games.”

### Positive experience of calm teachers in alternative provision Pp8

“The teachers are nicer and you don’t have to say miss or mister, you can just say that by their first name. And the teacher’s are calmer and then, Like free food and stuff.”

### Environmental benefits in alternative provision Pp9

“Like space and stuff.”

## REMOVED

### Received home tutoring whilst waiting to be placed in another school Pp6

## SOCIALLY EXCLUDING

### The opinion of one friend is important Pp12

“Nothing much. Except one Guy from my primary school”

### Social exclusion by peers brings feelings of sadness Pp3

“Just people that are at school that I know or just don’t know.” “Ermm [long pause] a bit sad. Erm”

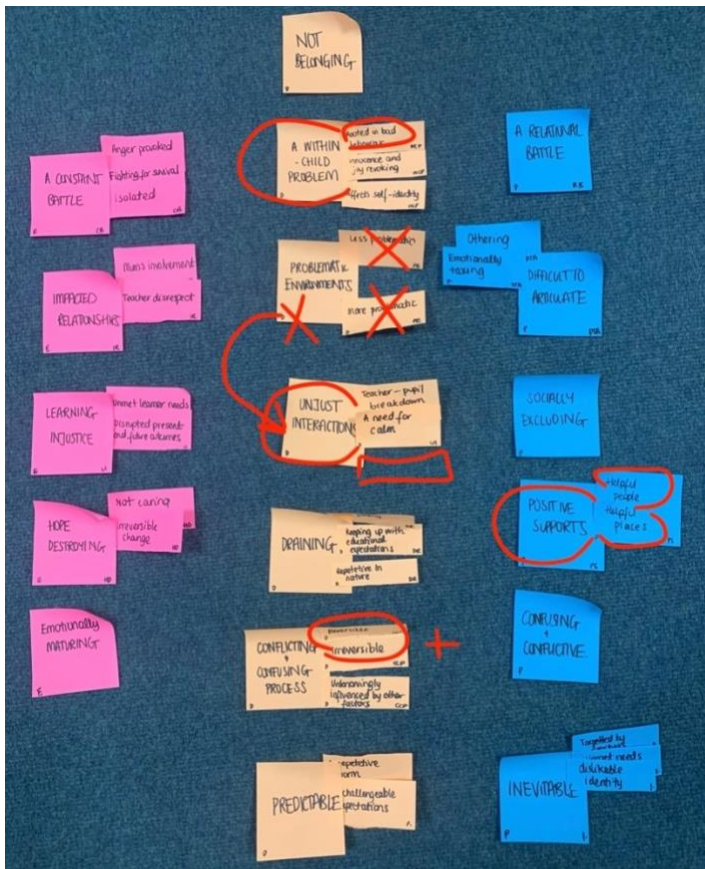
### Against friendships which are dependent on permission from authority Pp13

“... But If he was a friend, you shouldn’t be asking him stuff. Asking him if he can do this. Because he does it every time, like, because its his mum and dad... and he says please”

### Issues with acceptance within friendship groups led to social exclusion Pp12

“ Well, **except when I accept him**. He when I won't accept him but I already can't stop being friends with him. Because I said, do you want to play a game inside? Once he asks his **“friend”** [gestures quotation marks], can I go play with him?”

Appendix K: The process of developing PETs into GETs



Ordering PETs in columns to represent participants and rows to show similarities between labels



Ordering and reordering GETs

## Appendix L: Alternative Provision Information sheet and consent form

### School/Provision Information Sheet

This information is being shared with you as I request your consent to invite children attending your setting to take part in my research. It is important you have a clear understanding of the research and what it will involve before making your decision. Further detail is provided below, followed by an informed consent sheet:

**Research title:** The experiences of Black and Mixed Race boys excluded from school

**Researcher information:** My name is Shyla Barclay and I am an Child & Educational Psychology Trainee studying at Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. I am carrying out this research for my doctoral thesis. Completing this research will also contribute to my qualification as an Educational Psychologist.

**Why is this being studied?** National statistics and research show that Black and Mixed Race boys of African-Caribbean heritage are more likely to be excluded from school than any other group. Black and Mixed Race boys are likely to be placed in Alternative Provisions such as Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) on temporary and permanent basis. Research shows low rates of reintegration of students back into mainstream schooling following alternative placement at a PRU. Whilst targeted learning and emotional support is available, there are considerable downsides to being excluded from school which can have negative impacts on later life.

The overall aim of this research is to understand what it is like for Black boys who have been excluded from school. Through understanding the hope is to inform better support and culturally relevant outcomes when working with young people in future. The research is to be shared with other relevant professionals.

**What is involved?** I will interview up to 6 participants on a 1:1 basis for up to 60 minutes. This will involve games and asking them a series of questions about their experience of exclusion. The interview will be audio recorded and deleted once analysed for write up. The interview will take place at your provision in a quiet room with a named adult nearby. Pupils will be informed of their right to pause or stop the interview at any time should they not feel comfortable.

**Confidentiality and anonymity:** Pseudonyms will be used in the research to protect the identities of the students, the PRU and Local Authority. Information shared during the interviews will not be shared unless safeguarding concerns arise. There is a possibility that students may recognise things they have said due to the size of the sample. Ethical and legal practice will be followed to ensure the safe and sensitive handling of personal data. Audio recordings will be securely stored in line with The Research Council's UK (RCUK) guidance.

**Am I obliged to partake in this research and can students withdraw?** Your educational provision's participation is voluntary so the choice to opt-out does not require reason. The decision not to take part will not impact your access to Educational Psychology Services. Likewise students are not obliged to take part in this project. Students and parent/carers can withdraw up until the point of data transcription (after interview) because the data is anonymised from this point and no longer traceable to each individual. The interview will be stopped if the student wishes or if they are showing signs of distress.

**Ethical Approval and Ethical Concerns:** This project has received ethical approval from Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC). If you have any concerns about the conduct

of the researcher or specific queries about aspects of the project, you can contact Lisa Harrison, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance at [academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

If you have any further questions or require more information, please do get in touch with me using the details below. Please complete and return the attached consent form to indicate your agreement to being part of this research.

Kind Regards,  
Shyla Barclay  
[sbarclay@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:sbarclay@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

0208 871 8744 (Monday – Wednesday)

## Setting Consent Form

**Title of research project:** The experiences of Black and Mixed Race boys excluded from school

**Researcher:** Shyla Barclay – Trainee Child & Educational Psychologist

- I understand that the AP/PRU and Local Authority will not be named in the final research.
- I understand the students' names will be anonymised. As there will be up to 6 participants, individuals may recognise some of their own statements.
- I understand identities will be protected unless the researcher has safeguarding concerns
- I understand my provision's participation in this research is voluntary.
- I understand that students can choose to withdraw at any time and can withdraw their interview from the research up until the point when it has been transcribed.
- I give permission for students to be interviewed and audio recorded in a quiet room in school.
- I understand that the research may be shared with professionals on completion.
- I give permission for students at this Pupil Referral Unit to be part of Shyla Barclay's research.

I have read and understood this information sheet, consent form and been given the opportunity to ask questions

**Name:** .....

**Role:** .....

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

Thank you

## Appendix M: Participant information sheet and consent form

### Participant Information Sheet

**Research title:** The experiences of Black and Mixed Race boys excluded from school

Image of  
researcher  
removed for  
confidentiality

**Researcher information:**

**Name:** Shyla Barclay

**Role:** Trainee Child & Educational Psychologist

**Studying at:** Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust



**Why me?**

- You identify as a Black or Mixed Race boy with a parent who is of African or Caribbean heritage
- You have been moved from your mainstream school and attend a Pupil Referral Unit

**Why is this being studied?**

- Research and statistics show that Black and Mixed heritage African-Caribbean boys are more likely to be excluded from school than any other group of boys and girls
- There are lots of statistics but not much is known about pupils' views
- Exclusion has an impact on learning, identity, relationships and future opportunities
- I am interested in your experience of being excluded from your point of view. I hope by listening to you I can better understand and share your experience with others to provide better support and prevent exclusion for other Black boys
- I am completing this as part of my studies and it will help me qualify as an Educational Psychologist



**What is involved?**

- I will interview up to 6 participants on a 1:1 basis for up to 60 minutes.
- There will be 30 minutes after if you wish to speak to me about anything that has upset you in the interview or have any questions
- I will ask you some questions about your experiences of exclusion
- The conversation will be audio recorded so I can look at it in more detail. The recording will be deleted after I have completed the research
- It is up to you to share what you are comfortable with. You can change your mind about being involved in the interview at any time and don't have to explain why. If you become uncomfortable, upset or distressed during the interview you can ask for a break or to stop
- We will meet in a quiet room and you can choose an adult to be around if you need help when talking to me
- The interviews will be typed up and examined by me. The final write up will be shared with other people to help them understand and make improvements when supporting young people at school





### **Who will know what I say? (confidentiality)**

Other people will not be told who said what in the interviews unless you share something that puts you/someone else in danger. If this happens, I will speak to you first and let you know I have to tell a member of staff to help keep everyone safe.

The research will not include your real name or where you go to school. There is a small number of boys taking part in the project so you might be able to recognise something you have said. The recordings are deleted after they have been typed up and information is kept safe and secure.

As well as doing my research with you, on another occasion you may meet me to complete different types of work to support you with your learning. What you share in these discussions will not affect your access to help from any adults who support you. If you feel confused or have any questions during the process you can ask at anytime.

### **Do I have to be in this research?**

- Your participation is voluntary which means it is your choice
- If you change your mind and no longer want to be part of the research, you can let me know before or during the interview
- Your decision will not affect your support at school or the PRU

### **What if I am unhappy?**

- This research has been approved by a team called the Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC)
- If you are concerned about what I am doing or any other parts of the research you can contact Lisa Harrison. She works in a job that looks at the quality of research: [academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)



Need more information? Have a question? Contact me using the details below:



[sbarclay@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:sbarclay@tavi-port.nhs.uk)









020 8871 8744 (Monday – Wednesday)

Kind Regards,  
Shyla Barclay

## Participant Consent Form

**Research title:** The experiences of Black and Mixed Race boys excluded from school

**Researcher:** Shyla Barclay – Trainee Child & Educational Psychologist

-  I understand that it is my choice to take part in this research and can withdraw any time up until the interview is finished
-  I agree to being interviewed and give permission for the interview to be audio recorded
-  I understand that names and any other identifiable information will be changed
-  I understand that the research will be shared with other professionals when it is completed
-  I understand that if I say something which makes the Shyla worried about my or others safety, the information will be shared with other adults to keep everyone safe
-  I understand that this meeting with Shyla is about gaining my views and will not include any testing of my learning

I have read and understood all of the above and agree to take part in this research project

**Your Name:** .....

**Your Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

Thank you

## Appendix N: Parent/carer consent form and information sheet

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### Parent/Carer Consent Form

**Title of research project:** The experiences of Black and Mixed Race boys excluded from school

**Researcher:** Shyla Barclay – Trainee Child & Educational Psychologist

*Please tick to indicate your agreement for the following statements:*

- I have read and understood this information sheet, consent form and been given the opportunity to ask questions
- I understand that involvement in the research is voluntary and my child is free to withdraw at any time during the interview or up until data transcription
- I agree to my child taking part in this research

**Child's Name (printed):**

.....

**Your Name (printed):**

.....

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

Thank you – please return the completed form to the SENCo

## **Parent/Carer Information Sheet**

This information is being shared with you as your child has expressed interest in being a part of my research and I need your consent. It is important that you have a clear understanding of the research and what it will involve before making your decision. Further detail is provided below, followed by an informed consent sheet for you to sign:

### **What is the research title?**

The experiences of Black and Mixed Race boys excluded from school

### **Who is doing the research?**

My name is Shyla Barclay and I am Child & Educational Psychology Trainee studying at Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. I am carrying out this research as part of my studies for my doctoral thesis.

### **Why has my child been chosen?**

I would like your son to be involved because I want to explore and understand his experience. By listening to your child's experience, I hope to contribute understanding for how to prevent the issue of exclusions for Black boys and improve their future outcomes.

### **Why is this being studied?**

National statistics and research show that Black and Mixed Race boys of African-Caribbean heritage are more likely to be excluded from school than any other group. Black boys are also increasingly likely to be placed in Alternative Provisions such as Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). Research shows low rates of reintegration for students back into mainstream schooling following exclusion. Whilst learning and emotional support is available within alternative provision, there are considerable downsides to being excluded from school which can have negative impacts on later life outcomes.

The research aims to understand what it is like for Black boys who have been excluded from school to explore their understanding of their unique experience and hear their views. Through understanding, the hope is to inform better support and culturally relevant outcomes when working with young people in future.

### **What is involved?**

I would meet with your son on up to two occasions. The first meeting would be to introduce myself, play games and answer any questions he may have about taking part. I would then interview him, where he would be free to talk about his experiences, guided by some questions for up to one hour. There will be an opportunity for debrief about how he is feeling and plans for next steps. The interview will be audio recorded and deleted once used for analysis. It will be carried out 1:1 in a quiet room at the agreed provision which your son is most comfortable with. A member of staff will be available should your child want additional support. I understand the topic of exclusion and identity could be hard to talk about, so your son would be free to end the interview and withdraw from the research if he wishes.

I will interview up to 6 young people in total. This will be allocated on a first-come-first serve basis. An information sheet and consent form have been provided to the young people also.

### **Who will know what my son says in the interview?**

Confidentiality and anonymity will be prioritised. School staff and other pupils will not be told which individuals said what in the interview which will not impact on his relationships, access to services schooling. The only exception for sharing information will be if your child says something which is of a safeguarding concern and puts them or someone else in danger. Your child's name, the educational

setting(s) and the Local Authority will not be shared in the research write up for protection. Whilst efforts are made to reduce the likelihood of your child being identified, due to the small number of students in the research, there is a possibility your son may recognise some of the things he has said. Legal and ethical guidelines will be followed for the handling and storage of data.

**Does my child have to participate?**

If your son expresses interest in this research, he will be invited to take part following parent/carer consent. The decision will not impact you or your son's relationship with the PRU/alternative provision or access to wider services. Involvement is voluntary and you/your son are welcome to withdraw any time up until after the interview, when the data will be transcribed and no longer traceable to individuals. The interview will be stopped if the student wishes or is showing signs of distress.

**What if I am unhappy with the research?**

If you have any concerns about the conduct of the researcher or specific queries about aspects of the project, you can contact Lisa Harrison, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance at [academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk). This project has received ethical approval from Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC).

If you have any further questions or require more information, please do get in touch with me using the details below. Please complete the attached consent form to indicate your agreement.

Kind Regards,  
Shyla Barclay

[sbarclay@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:sbarclay@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

0208 871 8744 (Monday to Wednesday)

**Additional advice and support**

*[Adapted depending on LA]*

## Appendix O : Ethics application form

### **Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC)** **APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW OF STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS**

This application should be submitted alongside copies of any supporting documentation which will be handed to participants, including a participant information sheet, consent form, self-completion survey or questionnaire.

Where a form is submitted and sections are incomplete, the form will not be considered by TREC and will be returned to the applicant for completion.

For further guidance please contact Paru Jeram ([academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk))

#### **FOR ALL APPLICANTS**

**If you already have ethical approval from another body (including HRA/IRAS) please submit the application form and outcome letters. You need only complete sections of the TREC form which are NOT covered in your existing approval**

Is your project considered as 'research' according to the HRA tool? ( <a href="http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/index.html">http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/index.html</a> )	Yes
Will your project involve participants who are under 18 or who are classed as vulnerable? (see section 7)	Yes
Will your project include data collection outside of the UK?	No

#### **SECTION A: PROJECT DETAILS**

<b>Project title</b>	Exploring the experiences of young Black boys excluded from school		
<b>Proposed project start date</b>	February 2023  Amendment requested: November 2023	<b>Anticipated project end date</b>	May 2024
<b>Principle Investigator (normally your Research Supervisor):</b> Katy Cole			
<b>Please note: TREC approval will only be given for the length of the project as stated above up to a maximum of 6 years. Projects exceeding these timeframes will need additional ethical approval</b>			
<b>Has NHS or other approval been sought for this research including through submission via Research Application System (IRAS) or to the Health Research Authority (HRA)?</b>	<b>YES (NRES approval)</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>YES (HRA approval)</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Other</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>NO</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>If you already have ethical approval from another body (including HRA/IRAS) please submit the application form and outcome letters.</b>			

#### **SECTION B: APPLICANT DETAILS**

<b>Name of Researcher</b>	Shyla Barclay
---------------------------	---------------

<b>Programme of Study and Target Award</b>	Professional Doctorate in Child, Community and Educational Psychology
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:sbarclay@tavi-port.nhs.uk">sbarclay@tavi-port.nhs.uk</a>
<b>Contact telephone number</b>	N/A

### **SECTION C: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

<p><b>Will any of the researchers or their institutions receive any other benefits or incentives for taking part in this research over and above their normal salary package or the costs of undertaking the research?</b></p> <p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If YES, please detail below:</p>	
<p>Is there any further possibility for conflict of interest? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p><b>Are you proposing to conduct this work in a location where you work or have a placement?</b></p> <p>YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If YES, please detail below outline how you will avoid issues arising around colleagues being involved in this project:</p>	
<p>This piece of research has been contracted outside of the schools commissioned work in the Local Authority (LA). It will not interfere with the Schools and Community Psychology Service (SCPS) current involvement at the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), as all allocated Educational Psychologists (EPs) will be informed of the project details. There will be continued communication between myself and colleagues as the project progresses and this will include the recruitment of participants from the PRU provision. I will ensure that students who are recruited for the project do not have any conflicts of interest with other types of work/intervention. Also recruited participants will be informed of their rights to give informed consent and withdraw as there is no obligation to take part in the work.</p> <p>NB May 2023: I have now been allocated to the PRU where the research will be conducted. I will join two EPs to make up the team commissioned to carry out work over the year (June 2023 to July 2024). The team is aware of my plans for undertaking research. We have conducted a joint planning meeting with the PRU stakeholder team and they too are aware of my research interests. Students who have had EP involvement and wish to participate in the research will not be excluded. As participation is voluntary, students will be informed of their rights to withdraw at any time. Clarification between the role of the EP and the role of the researcher will be made to the young person ahead of the research beginning. So they will have an opportunity to ask questions and gain a clearer understanding.</p> <p>In addition to conducting work in my current placement location, I will be contacting PRUs and alternative provisions in other locations in residing boroughs. Participants who are recruited from boroughs outside of the researcher's placement location will not be a conflict of interest. Therefore, some participants will not be known to the researcher beforehand and will be introduced by another member of staff who has or is working with the child.</p>	
<p><b>Is your project being commissioned by and/or carried out on behalf of a body external to the Trust? (for example; commissioned by a local authority, school, care home, other NHS Trust or other organisation).</b></p> <p><small>*Please note that 'external' is defined as an organisation which is external to the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust (Trust)</small></p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

If <b>YES</b> , please add details here:	
<p><b>Will you be required to get further ethical approval after receiving TREC approval?</b></p> <p>If <b>YES</b>, please supply details of the ethical approval bodies below AND include any letters of approval from the ethical approval bodies (letters received after receiving TREC approval should be submitted to complete your record):</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If your project is being undertaken with one or more clinical services or organisations external to the Trust, please provide details of these:</p> <p>Below is a list of potential sites and organisations who have expressed interest in being a part of the project:</p> <p><u>Settings approved in ethics application (May 2024)</u></p> <p>[all identifiable information removed]</p> <p>Initial telephone conversation held with Assistant Headteacher on 03/11/23</p> <p>[all identifiable information removed]</p> <p><a href="#">PRUs in the following other LAs will be approached if not enough participants are identified through the above settings: [all removed]. Enquiries will be conducted on a needs basis as the recruitment develops.</a></p>	
<p>If you still need to agree these arrangements or if you can only approach organisations after you have ethical approval, please identify the types of organisations (eg. schools or clinical services) you wish to approach:</p>	
<p>Alternative provisions are funded by the state and available for children and young people who are unable to access mainstream school for reasons including: school exclusion, behavioural difficulties, illness and arranged education outside of school. Organisations include the following types: Pupil Referral Units, therapeutic centres, forest schools, outdoor learning centres, youth clubs, hospital schools. The alternative provisions concerned for the proposed study are those where the target pupils are being educated and provided for whilst not in a mainstream school provision.</p>	
<p><b>Do you have approval from the organisations detailed above? (this includes R&amp;D approval where relevant)</b></p> <p>Please attach approval letters to this application. Any approval letters received after TREC approval has been granted MUST be submitted to be appended to your record</p>	<p>YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> NA <input type="checkbox"/></p>


#### **SECTION D: SIGNATURES AND DECLARATIONS**



**APPLICANT DECLARATION**


I confirm that:


- The information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and up to date.
- I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research.
- I acknowledge my obligations and commitment to upholding ethical principles and to keep my supervisor updated with the progress of my research
- I am aware that for cases of proven misconduct, it may result in formal disciplinary proceedings and/or the cancellation of the proposed research.
- I understand that if my project design, methodology or method of data collection changes I must seek an amendment to my ethical approvals as failure to do so, may result in a report of academic and/or research misconduct.

<b>Applicant (print name)</b>	S Barclay
<b>Signed</b>	
<b>Date</b>	28/11/2023

**FOR RESEARCH DEGREE STUDENT APPLICANTS ONLY**

<b>Name of Supervisor/Principal Investigator</b>	Dr Katy Cole
--	--------------

<b>Supervisor –</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the student have the necessary skills to carry out the research? <b>YES</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>▪ Is the participant information sheet, consent form and any other documentation appropriate? <b>YES</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>▪ Are the procedures for recruitment of participants and obtaining informed consent suitable and sufficient? <b>YES</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>▪ Where required, does the researcher have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance? <b>YES</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	
<b>Signed</b>	
<b>Date</b>	01.12.23

<b>COURSE LEAD/RESEARCH LEAD</b>	
Does the proposed research as detailed herein have your support to proceed? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Signed</b>	
<b>Date</b>	01.12.23

**SECTION E: DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH**

**1. Provide a brief description of the proposed research, including the requirements of participants. This must be in lay terms and free from technical or discipline specific terminology or jargon. If such terms are required, please ensure they are adequately explained (Do not exceed 500 words)**

The proposed research is an exploration of the experiences of young Black boys who have been excluded from mainstream school. The research is proposed in response to an increasing prevalence of children and young people being excluded from school on temporary (or permanent) bases. National statistics indicate that the temporary exclusion of males from ethnic minority backgrounds is disproportionate to their make up within the UK school system. Moreover, adolescent males (aged 14 years) of Black African-Caribbean heritage are most likely to be temporarily excluded and alternatively placed in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) for a fixed period of time. Previous research has found there is a low rate of reintegration for excluded students back into mainstream education. With this knowledge, the proposed research aims to investigate what the experiences are of the identified subgroup of Black males. The targeted sample will be recruited to participate in interviews and share their views based on removal from school and attendance elsewhere. Interviews will be of a semi-structured nature and conducted on a 1:1 basis.

**2. Provide a statement on the aims and significance of the proposed research, including potential impact to knowledge and understanding in the field (where appropriate, indicate the associated hypothesis which will be tested). This should be a clear justification of the proposed research, why it should proceed and a statement on any anticipated benefits to the community. (Do not exceed 700 words)**

The exploration of black boys' experiences is significant because of the associated negative impact identified across theory and research. The lifetime cost for 2020's cohort of excluded young people was estimated over £2.9bn (IPPR, 2020). Short-term effects interfere with child social-emotional development and learning opportunities. Long term effects are greater unemployment, impaired relationships and poor mental health. Research shows parental pressures result in decreased self-confidence (Murphy, 2022) and school leaders are conflicted by their legal obligation to use when making exclusionary decisions to reduce the risk of harm and sustain education attainment. The implications of not addressing child experiences of school marginalisation and the wider, later-life on adulthood outcome. This suggests the need to address the issue of exclusion in a positive and preventative way using research as a cost-effective means to better individuals, schools and society outcomes.

This research aims to understand 'what it feels like' to experience the phenomenon of exclusion (no longer allowed to attend school), whilst being subject to alternative provision for education. This will delve into the experience of the target population of Black males known to PRUs. Literature documents a history of low attainment and high exclusion rates amongst Black pupils (DfES, 2006, Rampton, 1981). Identified contributing factors include institutional racism, negative media portrayal, non-inclusive policy and behavioural misperceptions (Boyd, 2019). Exploration with Black males in PRUs revealed a lack of belief in returning to mainstream education and this is negatively reinforced by low reintegration rates reported by national statistics (DfE, 2021). The risk of PRU placement is 17 times greater for Black pupils (Strand & Fletcher, 2014). Furthermore working class, Caribbean boys were found to represent almost double the national rate and are overrepresented within London PRUs (Perera, 2020).

Review of existing literature concerning the views of young people and exclusion found themes of injustice, broken relationships and feeling misunderstood. Young people's views have tended to be gathered in small sample sizes, using qualitative methods to invoke a rich understanding (Bovell, 2022; Caslin, 2021; Murphy (2022)). Though findings had implications for the impact of exclusion on the intersections of a child's identity (e.g. race, ability, gender, socioeconomic status), there was no explicit exploration of experience by aspects of identity. Therefore, the proposed project aims to explore exclusionary experiences from a racial lens to address and improve social inequalities in education.

Benefits from the study carry positive implications for the individuals targeted, directly supporting educational professionals and the wider community within the social system. The topic is relevant

for addressing the national issue of racial disparity within existing exclusionary data. A plethora of literature on the phenomena of school exclusion exists, however there is a dearth of research investigating the experience of young people subject to it. This project will voice the views of young people and act in accordance with legislative guidance to include CYP and their families in decision-making about health, care and education matters which concern them (DfE, 2014).

Research will provide a psychologically informed space to be heard non-judgementally and represented. The local impact is applicable to the PRUs and alternative provisions who will take part in the study. As a result of gaining their attendees' views, they can gain a deeper insight into the strengths and challenges of their experience which has implications for improving relationships and practice. Staff can cultivate healthy working relationships with pupils to support their engagement in learning and well-being as socially excluded pupils. Policy can be reviewed to consider cultural, person-centred sensitivity in behavioural management practice.

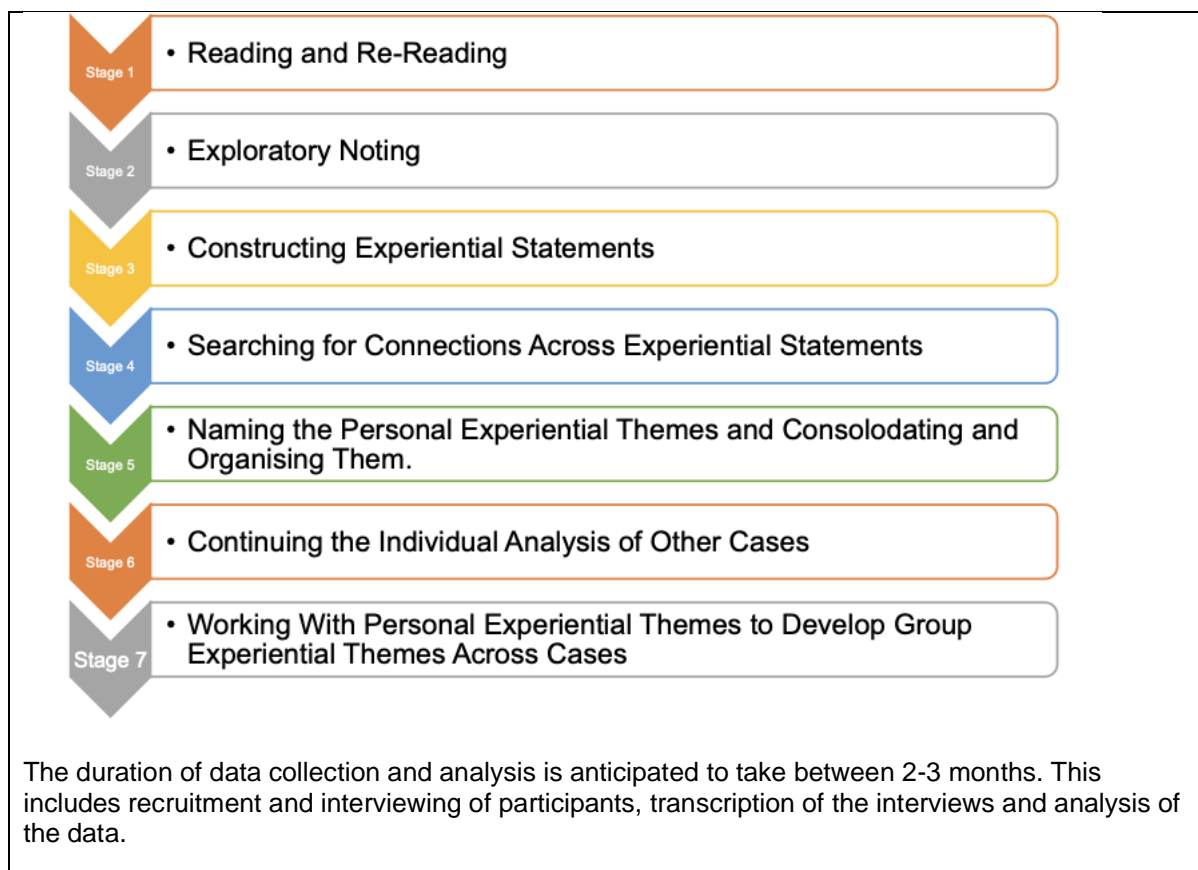
Project outcomes will give Educational Psychologists (EPs) insight to understanding, supporting and advising on work with this vulnerable group. EPs have a duty of care to safeguard and protect the well-being of young people who can be at greater risk. EPs are well placed to support the adults through psychoeducation. Ultimately carrying out this research brings hope to improving the educational experiences and outcomes for young people.

**3. Provide an outline of the methodology for the proposed research, including proposed method of data collection, tasks assigned to participants of the research and the proposed method and duration of data analysis. If the proposed research makes use of pre-established and generally accepted techniques, please make this clear. (Do not exceed 500 words)**

The research will adopt a qualitative methodology to delve into the values and meanings of the participants. Defining features of qualitative research includes: a natural setting, researcher reflexivity, (reflection on how identity shapes the interpretation of data) focus on participant meaning and an inductive design (building patterns and themes from the bottom-up).

Data will be collected using semi-structured interviews to allow for flexible interpretation of the participants views and a rich engagement with the topic of exclusion. The interview will be structured as a guide for the dialogue between researcher and participant. Rapport building activities will be incorporated to establish comfortability, openness and trust necessary for pupil engagement. This will take the form of playing interactive turn-taking games with the pupils and sharing information to get to know each other better.

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith et al., 2009; 2022) is the chosen method of data analysis which fits the aims of the research to interpret how human beings make sense of the world based on their experiences. In this case, looking at the phenomena of school exclusion as a shared experience for a disproportionate number of Black boys. The phenomena of school exclusion as a shared experience will be explored with a double hermeneutic lens because the researcher will actively engage in interpretation of the participants whilst the participants are also attempting to interpret their own experiences. Whilst the nature of the IPA approach concentrates on the individual, there is scope for recognition of similarities and differences between Black Boys as individuals as part of a homogenous group. The stages of IPA data analysis are summarised in a flowchart below:



## **SECTION F: PARTICIPANT DETAILS**

**4. Provide an explanation detailing how you will identify, approach and recruit the participants for the proposed research, including clarification on sample size and location. Please provide justification for the exclusion/inclusion criteria for this study (i.e. who will be allowed to / not allowed to participate) and explain briefly, in lay terms, why these criteria are in place. (Do not exceed 500 words)**

Black and mixed race adolescent males between the ages of 11 and 16 years (Key stage 3 and 4) are the focus sample group for this study. Males who identify as of African and/or Caribbean heritage will define this ethnic group for the purposes of this study (Gaine, 2005). Between three and six participants are intended for recruitment using purposive sampling and the project will take place on the familiar grounds of their alternative educational provision placement.

Justification for the inclusion and exclusion criteria is provided in the table below:

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria	Rationale
Black and mixed race males	Other ethnic groups	Research is focused on the experiences of this homogenous group. Whilst overall exclusion rates have decreased since 2006, pupils from Black and mixed ethnicity group backgrounds have the highest rates overall.
Adolescents aged 11-16 years old	Pupils younger or older than this age range	Targeting educational levels KS3-4 is developmentally appropriate to obtain views based on a considerable amount of experience in school and with education. Secondary schools are the chosen age group for data shows the

		highest prevalence rates of exclusion for 14 year olds.
Temporary or permanent exclusion from mainstream school	Out of education and not known to any provision	Pupils will have experienced exclusion from school and be on roll at a PRU
Sufficient level of functional spoken English to engage fully in an interview	Identified Speech, Language or Communication difficulties	The cognitive demands of the project will require participants to have a sufficient understanding of language in order to answer questions and expressive language to articulate and convey their ideas in a way that is comprehensible

Between three to six boys will be recruited across X Local Authorities. This includes PRUs and other Alternative Provisions which provide educational and pastoral support for children and young people who have experienced exclusion. Initially recruitment will be targeted within the [one borough]. The scope will be widened geographically to increase recruitment chances if it is not easily possible to find and gain consent with students who match the above criteria. Prospective Educational Psychologists and educational professionals with links, experience and knowledge of working with children who have been excluded will be drawn upon to scout out potential participants. The researcher will share background information about the aims, purposes and plans for the study (including a summary poster and informed consent information) as a form of information sharing and give the opportunity for initial queries to be asked. Educational professionals will be invited to consider if they know participants who fit the criteria that may be willing to be part of the research and have early scoping discussions with the young people whom they would have an existing trusting relationship and positive rapport with. The researcher would then share further detail in the form of informed consent for the young person through discussion. Young people will be given the opportunity to share their views and clarify any further questions ahead of giving informed consent. Identified individuals' parents and carers will also be contacted due to their age, using a similar process whereby the researcher shares information about the project and gives opportunity for queries. In summary, participants will be approached through the institutions which they are part of and then consent gained at all three levels of the system involved: provision, child or young person and parent.

**5. Please state the location(s) of the proposed research including the location of any interviews. Please provide a Risk Assessment if required. Consideration should be given to lone working, visiting private residences, conducting research outside working hours or any other non-standard arrangements.**

**If any data collection is to be done online, please identify the platforms to be used.**

The interviews will take place on the provisional site. A PRU is a secondary placement alternative provision under the Local Authority for students who are not able to access mainstream education for several reasons (DfE, 2017). The provision aims to support students who are experiencing emotional, behavioural or social difficulties at school and subsequently have been removed. The ethos revolves around working closely with young people to safely support their development and learning, whilst preparing them for further education and training or trying to support their return to mainstream schooling.

Some children who attend a PRU also access secondary services including youth clubs whereby they go to learn, relax and have fun. Clubs are accessible to children and young people aged 8-19 years old or up to 25 with disabilities and/or special needs. Clubs are linked with PRUs because they offer: advice and support workshops, one-to-one education programme support, short courses and cultural trips.

**6. Will the participants be from any of the following groups?(Tick as appropriate)**

- Students or Staff of the Trust or Partner delivering your programme.
- Adults (over the age of 18 years with mental capacity to give consent to participate in the research).
- Children or legal minors (anyone under the age of 16 years)<sup>1</sup>
- Adults who are unconscious, severely ill or have a terminal illness.
- Adults who may lose mental capacity to consent during the course of the research.

- Adults in emergency situations.
- Adults<sup>2</sup> with mental illness - particularly those detained under the Mental Health Act (1983 & 2007).
- Participants who may lack capacity to consent to participate in the research under the research requirements of the Mental Capacity Act (2005).
- Prisoners, where ethical approval may be required from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).
- Young Offenders, where ethical approval may be required from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).
- Healthy volunteers (in high risk intervention studies).
- Participants who may be considered to have a pre-existing and potentially dependent<sup>3</sup> relationship with the investigator (e.g. those in care homes, students, colleagues, service-users, patients).
- Other vulnerable groups (see Question 6).
- Adults who are in custody, custodial care, or for whom a court has assumed responsibility.
- Participants who are members of the Armed Forces.

<sup>1</sup>If the proposed research involves children or adults who meet the Police Act (1997) definition of vulnerability<sup>3</sup>, any researchers who will have contact with participants must have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance.

<sup>2</sup> 'Adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, or a reduction in physical or mental capacity, and living in a care home or home for people with learning difficulties or receiving care in their own home, or receiving hospital or social care services.' (Police Act, 1997)

<sup>3</sup> Proposed research involving participants with whom the investigator or researcher(s) shares a dependent or unequal relationships (e.g. teacher/student, clinical therapist/service-user) may compromise the ability to give informed consent which is free from any form of pressure (real or implied) arising from this relationship. TREC recommends that, wherever practicable, investigators choose participants with whom they have no dependent relationship. Following due scrutiny, if the investigator is confident that the research involving participants in dependent relationships is vital and defensible, TREC will require additional information setting out the case and detailing how risks inherent in the dependent relationship will be managed. TREC will also need to be reassured that refusal to participate will not result in any discrimination or penalty.

**7. Will the study involve participants who are vulnerable? YES  NO**

For the purposes of research, 'vulnerable' participants may be adults whose ability to protect their own interests are impaired or reduced in comparison to that of the broader population. Vulnerability may arise from:

- the participant's personal characteristics (e.g. mental or physical impairment)
- their social environment, context and/or disadvantage (e.g. socio-economic mobility, educational attainment, resources, substance dependence, displacement or homelessness).
- where prospective participants are at high risk of consenting under duress, or as a result of manipulation or coercion, they must also be considered as vulnerable
- children are automatically presumed to be vulnerable.

**7.1. If YES, what special arrangements are in place to protect vulnerable participants' interests?**

Due to the sensitive background and methodology of this study, targeted Black males can be acknowledged as vulnerable participants subject to exclusionary experiences. The nature of IPA using interviews as an exploration of these experiences may invoke challenging thoughts and feelings for participants that can affect their emotional and/or psychological well-being. The following measures will be taken to protect their interests:

- The interview will be conducted on site with a familiar adult present with who the CYP has a positive relation with
- Ahead of the interview beginning, the construction of the content and timetable will be visually provided and explained to the participants
- Participants will be informed what they can do if they become upset or feel uncomfortable during the interview. Explanation will be in detail and provide examples of what CYP may experience to help them identify and express feelings appropriately – e.g. your chest may feel tight or your palms sweaty
- Students who show visible distress in the interview will be offered the option to stop completely or take a break and continue. Those who do not show visible negative affect will be prompted throughout the interview, "are you okay to continue speaking to me/about this?" "Is everything alright?"
- In the instance that greater or prolonged distress arises a higher level of intervention will be agreed. This will involve initial support from the staff member in attendance and supplementary support from the on-site Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) practitioner at the PRU.

- Arrangements to access on-site counselling and well-being services will also be discussed before and after the interview.

If **YES**, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check **within the last three years** is required.

Please provide details of the “clear disclosure”:

Date of disclosure: Start date	14/09/2021
Type of disclosure:	Enhanced Statement
Organisation that requested disclosure:	The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust
DBS certificate number:	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

(NOTE: information concerning activities which require DBS checks can be found via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-check-eligible-positions-guidance>). Please **do not** include a copy of your DBS certificate with your application

**8. Do you propose to make any form of payment or incentive available to participants of the research?**  
 YES  NO

If **YES**, please provide details taking into account that any payment or incentive should be representative of reasonable remuneration for participation and may not be of a value that could be coercive or exerting undue influence on potential participants' decision to take part in the research. Wherever possible, remuneration in a monetary form should be avoided and substituted with vouchers, coupons or equivalent. Any payment made to research participants may have benefit or HMRC implications and participants should be alerted to this in the participant information sheet as they may wish to choose to decline payment.

**9. What special arrangements are in place for eliciting informed consent from participants who may not adequately understand verbal explanations or written information provided in English; where participants have special communication needs; where participants have limited literacy; or where children are involved in the research? (Do not exceed 200 words)**

In order to meet the inclusion criteria for the study, participants are required to have sufficient receptive and expressive language abilities. As children and young people will be involved, a total-communication approach will be adopted to facilitate their learning and development:

- Visual aids will be used as additional methods of communication when interacting with the CYP. This will include a poster with imagery, coloured graphics and photos to recruit participants. Visuals will also be used in the interview to support participants with expressing their emotional needs. This will take the form of visual symbols to represent if the question is too hard or uncomfortable, or if the participant needs a break.
- Participants will be reminded of their rights to withdraw at any time until the point of data analysis and given the opportunity to ask questions throughout the study.
- Information sheets will be given to the adults around the child also so they can explain their understanding of the project. Information sheets will be adapted for the CYP to suit their developmental stages of learning and processing written information. This will include less text, simplified language and more colour and imagery.
- CYP will have the option to meet the researcher in-person or online prior to the project start and clarify any queries.

## **SECTION F: RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

**10. Does the proposed research involve any of the following? (Tick as appropriate)**

- use of a questionnaire, self-completion survey or data-collection instrument (attach copy)  
 use of emails or the internet as a means of data collection  
 use of written or computerised tests  
 interviews (attach interview questions)  
 diaries (attach diary record form)  
 participant observation  
 participant observation (in a non-public place) without their knowledge / covert research  
 audio-recording interviewees or events  
 video-recording interviewees or events  
 access to personal and/or sensitive data (i.e. student, patient, client or service-user data) without the participant's informed consent for use of these data for research purposes  
 administration of any questions, tasks, investigations, procedures or stimuli which may be experienced by participants as physically or mentally painful, stressful or unpleasant during or after the research process  
 performance of any acts which might diminish the self-esteem of participants or cause them to experience discomfort, regret or any other adverse emotional or psychological reaction  
 Themes around extremism or radicalisation  
 investigation of participants involved in illegal or illicit activities (e.g. use of illegal drugs)  
 procedures that involve the deception of participants  
 administration of any substance or agent  
 use of non-treatment of placebo control conditions  
 participation in a clinical trial  
 research undertaken at an off-campus location (risk assessment attached)  
 research overseas (please ensure Section G is complete)

**11. Does the proposed research involve any specific or anticipated risks (e.g. physical, psychological, social, legal or economic) to participants that are greater than those encountered in everyday life?**

YES  NO

If **YES**, please describe below including details of precautionary measures.

Whilst the topic of exclusion will not be uncommon given the PRU setting, there is a risk that explorative discussion could be emotive for some young people. There is social and psychological risk in taking participants out of their typical learning day with peers to engage in 1:1 interview conversation which is not routine. These risks are not intended to be greater than those encountered in their context of learning and education so far. Further details of arrangements to protect CYPs interest are provided in section 7.1.

**12. Where the procedures involve potential hazards and/or discomfort or distress for participants, please state what previous experience the investigator or researcher(s) have had in conducting this type of research.**

I am a Trainee Child and Educational Psychologist (TEP) who has previous experience and a growing knowledge of working with children and young people from 0 – 25 years including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, marginalised and vulnerable groups such as those at risk of exclusion. Prior to training, I worked as a Speech and Language Therapy Assistant across school, community and healthcare settings. I have experience in working with CYP who have a range of complexity in need including social, emotional and behavioural difficulties as well as neurodiversity and learning needs. I have experience in working with CYP 1:1, in groups and supporting adults around them (school staff and parent/carers) through training and advice-giving. I am able to adapt my communication skills to suit the individual needs of a child and apply my knowledge of child-development and psychological theory and research to up-skill others. In my previous role I assisted



on a research project evaluating the impact of digital word-learning for children with expressive language difficulties.

In my current work as TEP, I have regular interaction with CYP by conducting assessments, collating pupil views and running interventions to address identified developmental needs. I adopt a person-centred approach when working with children. I am creative, sensitive and attuned in response to their needs by adopting an unconditional positive regard and excellent communication skills such as active listening. I am able to seek additional support where needed and have access to regular supervision to ethically oversee my practice. I attend CPD training regularly including Safeguarding to ensure my knowledge and skill set are contextually relevant for promoting child welfare and protecting them from harm.

**13. Provide an explanation of any potential benefits to participants. Please ensure this is framed within the overall contribution of the proposed research to knowledge or practice. (Do not exceed 400 words)**

**NOTE:** Where the proposed research involves students, they should be assured that accepting the offer to participate or choosing to decline will have no impact on their assessments or learning experience. Similarly, it should be made clear to participants who are patients, service-users and/or receiving any form of treatment or medication that they are not invited to participate in the belief that participation in the research will result in some relief or improvement in their condition.

This research aims to contribute to literature about Black boys' experiences of their school lives. As it aims to explore the experiences of those subject to exclusion, there is scope for prevention or reduction of the national problem by hearing from those directly involved. Being an exploratory study, this research aims to give YP the platform to be heard in response to previous literature which reports feelings of "not being listened to or believed". Lamhari (2022) identified themes of poor communication, behaviour management and unfairness in research when collecting views of young people excluded from school. So this research aims to address those identified problems by allowing vulnerable groups to communicate and challenge perceived unfairness.

As a sub-group which is overrepresented in exclusionary data, there may be a benefit to Black boys as a homogenous collective of participants to feel empowered by taking part. Despite anonymity, they will be contributing to research amplification of missing voices which could influence positive outcomes such as full-time reintegration back into mainstream school. The boys may be encouraged to raise awareness for other YP, families and schools with similar experiences. Research has found a 'class of cultures' between class teachers and students from ethnic minority groups as a reason for disparity in exclusion data (Smith et al., 2012). Exploring YPs experiences could elucidate processes which occur in these relationships and the associated risk of exclusion whilst promoting inclusion in a preventative way. They could benefit from an unfamiliar, psychologically-informed, non-judgemental space to be heard and represented through research.

**14. Provide an outline of any measures you have in place in the event of adverse or unexpected outcomes and the potential impact this may have on participants involved in the proposed research. (Do not exceed 300 words)**

- All the young people interviewed will be provided with information in verbal and written form about services they can access for additional support if beneficial.
- The young person will be given the opportunity to identify an adult in the school whom they feel comfortable speaking with should issues arise during the process. It will be agreed with the YP that the named adult will be nearby and contacted if significant emotional stress arises during the interview.
- The YP and their families will be contacted after a cooling-off period (1 week) from the interview to check-in on their general well-being and to answer any potential queries regarding the content or study process. This will be to promote clarity, avoidance or harm and reduce the risk of adverse consequences from the interview.
- The interview approach will be sensitive, consistent and committed to observing how the young person is responding throughout the process. Participants will be offered a break

and the right to withdraw if they are uncomfortable. The interview will be ended immediately if the interviewee is deemed to be showing or reports signs of distress.

- In the event that an interview is terminated early, the key contact will be informed. The researcher will provide a follow-up call the next day to the setting and parent/carer to monitor participant well-being. If concerns remain after one week, the researcher will signpost to specialist services, e.g. CAMHS
- The researcher will keep regular communications after each participant contact with all systems involved including the PRU staff and linked EPs

**15. Provide an outline of your debriefing, support and feedback protocol for participants involved in the proposed research. This should include, for example, where participants may feel the need to discuss thoughts or feelings brought about following their participation in the research. This may involve referral to an external support or counseling service, where participation in the research has caused specific issues for participants.**

Potential participants who express interest in the study will be provided with an information sheet to clearly outline the aims, purposes and procedures involved. The information and consent form will make clear the young person's right as a participant to withdraw from the study (up until data analysis). Names and other identifiable information will be made as anonymous as possible given the setting. Participants will be verbally debriefed after the interviews and given the opportunity to ask questions. They will also be provided with an information sheet with an email address and number to contact the researcher on. The key person and consenting parent(s) will also be provided with this information.

Where participants may feel the need to discuss thoughts or feelings brought about following their participation in the research, they will have option to meet and speak with the researcher in a way that is preferred (e.g. online, by telephone or in-person). Additional support may be sought out from the in-house CAMHS support based within the PRU and external counselling services will be signposted to as a secondary or alternative option. Once the data has been interpreted for reporting, an overview of the findings will be made disseminated amongst the setting staff and the involved individuals will be offered a 1:1 meeting to share the results.

**16. Please provide the names and nature of any external support or counselling organisations that will be suggested to participants if participation in the research has potential to raise specific issues for participants.**

The internal CAMHS service at the PRU in XXX is led by a Clinical Psychologist who is available on-site. Support is available to young people who attend the PRU as well as their families and professionals working with the YP. Support includes counselling intervention and psychological support to help them find the best way to manage their difficulties and build strengths to manage problems better in the future.

[[removed identifiable information]

provides 1:1 counselling in relation to substance misuse, emotional health and wellbeing issues. They offer assessment and 6 additional sessions via telephone, online or some face-to-face sessions for young people not in education or employment.

For pupils who do not have internal access to Mental Health support services at their provision, they will be signposted to national charities/organizations such as below:

**Young Minds** – A UK charity for children and young people's mental health. They provide counselling services, specialist mental health support and general information about understanding mental health. Young people have various ways to get involved by volunteering, fundraising or simply accessing help and support. Young Minds have a 24/7 free text line which young people can access if they are struggling to cope and have a mobile phone.

[[removed identifiable information]

**better u:** a supportive platform created by young people in which the user can manage their well-being, reflect upon their emotional resilience and access various types of support

Mental Health Support signposting for parents during out of school hours:

**Shout** – UK text line  
Text 'shout' to 85258

**Childline** – Help for children to discuss worries  
Call 0800 1111 available 24/7

**17. Where medical aftercare may be necessary, this should include details of the treatment available to participants. Debriefing may involve the disclosure of further information on the aims of the research, the participant's performance and/or the results of the research. (Do not exceed 500 words)**

N/A

#### **FOR RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN OUTSIDE THE UK**

**18. Does the proposed research involve travel outside of the UK?**   
**YES  NO**

**If YES, please confirm:**

I have consulted the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website for guidance/travel advice? <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/>

I have completed a RISK Assessment covering all aspects of the project including consideration of the location of the data collection and risks to participants.

All overseas project data collection will need approval from the Deputy Director of Education and Training or their nominee. Normally this will be done based on the information provided in this form. All projects approved through the TREC process will be indemnified by the Trust against claims made by third parties.

If you have any queries regarding research outside the UK, please contact [academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk):

Students are required to arrange their own travel and medical insurance to cover project work outside of the UK. Please indicate what insurance cover you have or will have in place.

**19. Please evidence how compliance with all local research ethics and research governance requirements have been assessed for the country(ies) in which the research is taking place. Please also clarify how the requirements will be met:**

**SECTION G: PARTICIPANT CONSENT AND WITHDRAWAL**

**20. Have you attached a copy of your participant information sheet (this should be in *plain English*)? Where the research involves non-English speaking participants, please include translated materials.**

YES  NO

If **NO**, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

**21. Have you attached a copy of your participant consent form (this should be in *plain English*)? Where the research involves non-English speaking participants, please include translated materials.**

YES  NO

If **NO**, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

**22. The following is a participant information sheet checklist covering the various points that should be included in this document.**

Clear identification of the Trust as the sponsor for the research, the project title, the Researcher and Principal Investigator (your Research Supervisor) and other researchers along with relevant contact details.

Details of what involvement in the proposed research will require (e.g., participation in interviews, completion of questionnaire, audio/video-recording of events), estimated time commitment and any risks involved.

A statement confirming that the research has received formal approval from TREC or other ethics body.

If the sample size is small, advice to participants that this may have implications for confidentiality / anonymity.

A clear statement that where participants are in a dependent relationship with any of the researchers that participation in the research will have no impact on assessment / treatment / service-use or support.

Assurance that involvement in the project is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw consent at any time, and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.

Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

A statement that the data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the [Trusts 's Data Protection and handling Policies.](#):

<https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/about-us/governance/policies-and-procedures/>

Advice that if participants have any concerns about the conduct of the investigator, researcher(s) or any other aspect of this research project, they should contact Lisa Harrison, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance ([academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk))

Confirmation on any limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

**23. The following is a consent form checklist covering the various points that should be included in this document.**

- Trust letterhead or logo.
- Title of the project (with research degree projects this need not necessarily be the title of the thesis) and names of investigators.
- Confirmation that the research project is part of a degree
- Confirmation that involvement in the project is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw at any time, or to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
- Confirmation of particular requirements of participants, including for example whether interviews are to be audio-/video-recorded, whether anonymised quotes will be used in publications advice of legal limitations to data confidentiality.
- If the sample size is small, confirmation that this may have implications for anonymity any other relevant information.
- The proposed method of publication or dissemination of the research findings.
- Details of any external contractors or partner institutions involved in the research.
- Details of any funding bodies or research councils supporting the research.
- Confirmation on any limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

#### **SECTION H: CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY**

**24. Below is a checklist covering key points relating to the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Please indicate where relevant to the proposed research.**

- Participants will be completely anonymised and their identity will not be known by the investigator or researcher(s) (i.e. the participants are part of an anonymous randomised sample and return responses with no form of personal identification)?
- The responses are anonymised or are an anonymised sample (i.e. a permanent process of coding has been carried out whereby direct and indirect identifiers have been removed from data and replaced by a code, with no record retained of how the code relates to the identifiers).
- The samples and data are de-identified (i.e. direct and indirect identifiers have been removed and replaced by a code. The investigator or researchers are able to link the code to the original identifiers and isolate the participant to whom the sample or data relates).
- Participants have the option of being identified in a publication that will arise from the research.
- Participants will be pseudo-anonymised in a publication that will arise from the research. (i.e. the researcher will endeavour to remove or alter details that would identify the participant.)
- The proposed research will make use of personal sensitive data.
- Participants consent to be identified in the study and subsequent dissemination of research findings and/or publication.

**25. Participants must be made aware that the confidentiality of the information they provide is subject to legal limitations in data confidentiality (i.e. the data may be subject to a subpoena, a freedom of information request or mandated reporting by some professions). This only applies to named or de-identified data. If your participants are named or de-identified, please confirm that you will specifically state these limitations.**

YES  NO

If **NO**, please indicate why this is the case below:

**NOTE: WHERE THE PROPOSED RESEARCH INVOLVES A SMALL SAMPLE OR FOCUS GROUP, PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BE ADVISED THAT THERE WILL BE DISTINCT LIMITATIONS IN THE LEVEL OF ANONYMITY THEY CAN BE AFFORDED.**

**SECTION I: DATA ACCESS, SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT**

**26. Will the Researcher/Principal Investigator be responsible for the security of all data collected in connection with the proposed research? YES  NO**

If **NO**, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

**27. In line with the 5<sup>th</sup> principle of the Data Protection Act (1998), which states that personal data shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes for which it was collected; please state how long data will be retained for.**

1-2 years  3-5 years  6-10 years  10> years

**NOTE: In line with** Research Councils UK (RCUK) guidance, doctoral project data should normally be stored for 10 years and Masters level data for up to 2 years

**28. Below is a checklist which relates to the management, storage and secure destruction of data for the purposes of the proposed research. Please indicate where relevant to your proposed arrangements.**

- Research data, codes and all identifying information to be kept in separate locked filing cabinets.
- Research data will only be stored in the University of Essex OneDrive system and no other cloud storage location.
- Access to computer files to be available to research team by password only.
- Access to computer files to be available to individuals outside the research team by password only (See 23.1).
- Research data will be encrypted and transferred electronically within the UK.
- Research data will be encrypted and transferred electronically outside of the UK.

**NOTE:** Transfer of research data via third party commercial file sharing services, such as Google Docs and YouSendIt are not necessarily secure or permanent. These systems may also be located overseas and not covered by UK law. If the system is located outside the European Economic Area (EEA) or territories deemed to have sufficient standards of data protection, transfer may also breach the Data Protection Act (1998).

Essex students also have access the 'Box' service for file transfer:

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/it-services/box>

- Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, e-mails or telephone numbers.
- Collection and storage of personal sensitive data (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political or religious beliefs or physical or mental health or condition).
- Use of personal data in the form of audio or video recordings.
- Primary data gathered on encrypted mobile devices (i.e. laptops).

**NOTE:** This should be transferred to secure University of Essex OneDrive at the first opportunity.

- All electronic data will undergo secure disposal.

**NOTE:** For hard drives and magnetic storage devices (HDD or SSD), deleting files does not permanently erase the data on most systems, but only deletes the reference to the file. Files can be restored when deleted in this way. Research files must be overwritten to ensure they are completely irretrievable. Software is available for the secure erasing of files from hard drives which

meet recognised standards to securely scramble sensitive data. Examples of this software are BC Wipe, Wipe File, DeleteOnClick and Eraser for Windows platforms. Mac users can use the standard 'secure empty trash' option; an alternative is Permanent eraser software.

All hardcopy data will undergo secure disposal.

**NOTE:** For shredding research data stored in hardcopy (i.e. paper), adopting DIN 3 ensures files are cut into 2mm strips or confetti like cross-cut particles of 4x40mm. The UK government requires a minimum standard of DIN 4 for its material, which ensures cross cut particles of at least 2x15mm.

**29. Please provide details of individuals outside the research team who will be given password protected access to encrypted data for the proposed research.**

N/A

**30. Please provide details on the regions and territories where research data will be electronically transferred that are external to the UK:**

N/A

## **SECTION J: PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

**30. How will the results of the research be reported and disseminated? (Select all that apply)**

- Peer reviewed journal
- Non-peer reviewed journal
- Peer reviewed books
- Publication in media, social media or website (including Podcasts and online videos)
- Conference presentation
- Internal report
- Promotional report and materials
- Reports compiled for or on behalf of external organisations
- Dissertation/Thesis
- Other publication
- Written feedback to research participants
- Presentation to participants or relevant community groups
- Other (Please specify below)

## **SECTION K: OTHER ETHICAL ISSUES**

**31. Are there any other ethical issues that have not been addressed which you would wish to bring to the attention of Tavistock Research Ethics Committee (TREC)?**

## **SECTION L: CHECKLIST FOR ATTACHED DOCUMENTS**

**32. Please check that the following documents are attached to your application.**

- Letters of approval from any external ethical approval bodies (where relevant)
- Recruitment advertisement
- Participant information sheets (including easy-read where relevant)
- Consent forms (including easy-read where relevant)
- Assent form for children (where relevant)
- Letters of approval from locations for data collection
- Questionnaire
- Interview Schedule or topic guide
- Risk Assessment (where applicable)
- Overseas travel approval (where applicable)

**34. Where it is not possible to attach the above materials, please provide an explanation below.**



**Appendix P: Ethical approval 1**

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The Tavistock and Portman   
NHS Foundation Trust

Quality Assurance & Enhancement Directorate of Education & Training Tavistock  
Centre 120 Belsize Lane London NW3 5BA

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Shyla Barclay

By Email

10 May 2023

Dear Shyla,

Re: Trust Research Ethics Application

Title: 'Exploring the experiences of young Black boys at risk of school exclusion'

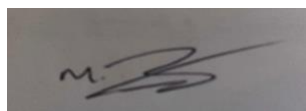
Thank you for submitting your updated Research Ethics documentation. I am pleased to inform you that subject to formal ratification by the Trust Research Ethics Committee your application has been approved. This means you can proceed with your research.

Please be advised that any changes to the project design including changes to methodology/data collection etc, must be referred to TREC as failure to do so, may result in a report of academic and/or research misconduct.

If you have any further questions or require any clarification do not hesitate to contact me. I am copying this communication to your supervisor.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Franklyn

Academic Governance and Quality Officer T: 020 938 2699

E: [academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

cc. Course Lead, Supervisor, Research Lead

## Appendix Q: Graphical illustration of PETs



KEY:

- Each colour represents a different participant: Elijah is pink, Dantae is orange, Pierre is blue. Each column is representative of a participant
- Large square Post-it notes written in CAPITAL LETTERS represent individual PETS.
- Smaller Post-it notes with lowercase font are the PET sub-themes

Appendix R: Graphical illustration of GETs and corresponding PETs



**Key:**

- Each colour represents a different participant: Elijah is pink, Dantae is orange, Pierre is blue
- Large square Post-it notes written in CAPITAL LETTERS represent individual PETs
- Smaller Post-it notes with lowercase font are the PET sub-themes
- Yellow Post-it notes in CAPITAL LETTERS represent GET labels. Each cluster of post-it notes represents a GET comprised of PETs and subthemes.

## APPENDIX S: Discussion reflexive journal extracts

### PETs into GETs?

Is a sample size of three big enough to constitute a group? I sit and ponder over these post-it notes which represent personal themes for each boy. I find myself at a decision point - whilst I want to respect, give honour to and highlight their individualities, might there be some areas of convergence and divergence? Making group themes could add to the richness and apparent sameness between experiences but it could also take away from the idiosyncratic feature of IPA. The manual suggests more than half of the sample could be suggestive of a group theme, but when there are only 3 to begin with, 1/2 appears difficult and biased to achieve.

### GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEMES

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zooming in and out of the data across different data levels to see what I can find? No - to explore whether there is commonality which binds individual experience. Keeping my analysis hat on and leaving behind my EP, formulating hat is hard. The task is to analytically interpret how the participants are making sense of their experience. How can I make sense of an experience I have not been subject to? By paying close attention to the evidence in the detail. Reading between the lines of the language and making an informed judgement about what lies at the heart ♥ of the experience.

The manual guidance states there is no hard and fast rule about what constitutes a GET. This makes things both difficult and easy. There is freedom and flexibility in decision making by me as a researcher, but also a lack of clarity which means the decision could result in various outcomes. Every person who carried out the analysis would come to different conclusions and that highlights the beauty of the research process.