

Suspension and permanent exclusion policy

Woodfield School



Approved by:	Zamir Lal	Date: January 2024
Last reviewed on:	New	
Next review due by:	Januray 2025	

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1. Aims

We are committed to following all statutory exclusions procedures to ensure that every child receives an education in a safe and caring environment.

Our school aims to:

- › Ensure that the exclusions process is applied fairly and consistently
- › Help governors, staff, parents and pupils understand the exclusions process
- › Ensure that pupils in school are safe and happy
- › Prevent pupils from becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training)be considered as ‘off-rolling’.

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on statutory guidance from the Department for Education: [Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement - from September 2023](#).

It is based on the following legislation, which outlines schools’ powers to exclude pupils:

- › Section 51a of the Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011
- › The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012

In addition, the policy is based on:

- › Part 7, chapter 2 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), which sets out parental responsibility for excluded pupils
- › Section 579 of the [Education Act 1996](#), which defines ‘school day’
- › The [Education \(Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#), as amended by [The Education \(Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2014](#)
- › [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- › [Children and Families Act 2014](#)

3. Definitions

Suspension – when a pupil is removed from the school for a fixed period. This was previously referred to as a ‘fixed-term exclusion’.

Permanent exclusion – when a pupil is removed from the school permanently and taken off the school roll. This is sometimes referred to as an ‘exclusion’.

Off-site direction – when a governing board of a maintained school requires a pupil to attend another education setting temporarily, to improve their behaviour.

Parent – any person who has parental responsibility and any person who has care of the child.

Managed move – when a pupil is transferred to another school permanently. All parties, including parents and the admission authority for the new school, should consent before a managed move occurs.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Principal

Deciding whether to suspend or exclude

Only the Principal, or acting Principal, can suspend or permanently exclude a pupil from school on disciplinary grounds. The decision can be made in respect of behaviour inside or outside of school. The Principal will only use permanent exclusion as a last resort.

Our school is aware that off-rolling is unlawful. Ofsted defines off-rolling as :

“...the practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school roll, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the pupil.”

We are committed to following all statutory suspension and exclusions procedures to ensure that every child receives an education in a safe and caring environment.

A decision to suspend or exclude a pupil will be taken only:

- In response to serious or persistent breaches of the school’s behaviour policy, **and**
- If allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others

Before deciding whether to suspend or exclude a pupil, the Principal will:

- Consider all the relevant facts and evidence on the balance of probabilities, including whether the incident(s) leading to the exclusion were provoked
- Allow the pupil to give their version of events
- Consider whether the pupil has special educational needs (SEN)
- Consider whether the pupil is especially vulnerable (e.g. the pupil has a social worker, or is a looked-after child (LAC))
- Consider whether all alternative solutions have been explored, such as off-site direction or managed moves

The Principal will consider the views of the pupil, in light of their age and understanding, before deciding to suspend or exclude, unless it would not be appropriate to do so.

Pupils who need support to express their views will be allowed to have their views expressed through an advocate, such as a parent or social worker.

The Principal will not reach their decision until they have heard from the pupil, and will inform the pupil of how their views were taken into account when making the decision.

Informing parents

The Principal will inform the parents of a suspended/excluded pupil, as soon as possible, providing the following information in writing:

- The reason(s) for the suspension or permanent exclusion
- The length of the suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent
- Information about the parents' right to make representations about the suspension or permanent exclusion to the governing board and, where the pupil is attending alongside parents, how they may be involved in this
- How any representations should be made
- Where there is a legal requirement for the governing board to hold a meeting to consider the reinstatement of a pupil, and that parents have a right to attend the meeting, be represented at the meeting (at their own expense) and bring a friend

The Principal will also notify parents without delay and by the end of the afternoon session on the first day their child is suspended or permanently excluded, that:

- For the first 5 school days of an exclusion (or until the start date of any alternative provision or the end of the suspension, where this is earlier), the parents are legally required to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without a good reason. This will include specifying on which days this duty applies
- Parents may be given a fixed penalty notice or prosecuted if they fail to do this

If alternative provision is being arranged, the following information will be included, if possible:

- The start date for any provision of full-time education that has been arranged
- The start and finish times of any such provision, including the times for morning and afternoon sessions, where relevant
- The address at which the provision will take place
- Any information the pupil needs in order to identify the person they should report to on the first day

If the Principal does not have all the information about the alternative provision arrangements by the end of the afternoon session on the first day of the suspension or permanent exclusion, they can provide the information at a later date, without delay and no later than 48 hours before the provision is due to start.

The only exception to this is where alternative provision is to be provided before the sixth day of a suspension or permanent exclusion, in which case the school reserves the right to provide the information with less than 48 hours' notice, with parents' consent.

If the Principal cancels the suspension or permanent exclusion, they will notify the parents without delay, and provide a reason for the cancellation.

Informing the governing board and the local authority

The Principal will, without delay, notify the governing board of:

- A permanent exclusion, including when a suspension is followed by a decision to permanently exclude a pupil
- All suspension or permanent exclusion which would result in the pupil being suspended or permanently excluded for a total of more than 5 school days (or more than 10 lunchtimes) in a term
- Suspension or permanent exclusion which would result in the pupil missing a National Curriculum test or public exam
- Any suspension or permanent exclusion that has been cancelled, including the reason for the cancellation

Informing the pupil's social worker and/or virtual school head (VSH)

The Principal will without delay notify social workers and virtual school heads of suspensions or permanent exclusions and share information to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children.

Providing education during the first 5 days of a suspension or permanent exclusion

During the first 5 days of a suspension, if the pupil is not attending alternative (AP) provision, the Principal will take steps to ensure that achievable and accessible work is set and marked for the pupil. Online pathways such as Oak National Academy, BBC Bitesize may be used for this. If the pupil has a special educational need or disability, the Principal will make sure that reasonable adjustments are made to the provision where necessary.

If the pupil is looked after or if they have a social worker, the school will work with the LA to arrange AP from the first day following the suspension or permanent exclusion. Where this isn't possible, the school will take reasonable steps to set and mark work for the pupil, including the use of online pathways.

4.2 The governing board

The governing board has a duty to consider the reinstatement of a suspended/excluded pupil (see section 6). Within 14 days of receipt of a request, the governing board will provide the secretary of state with information about any exclusions in the last 12 months. For a fixed-period suspension/exclusion of more than 5 school days, the governing board will arrange suitable full-time education for the pupil. This provision will begin no later than the sixth day of the exclusion. Provision does not have to be arranged for pupils in the final year of compulsory education who do not have any further public examinations to sit.

4.3 The local authority (LA)

For permanent exclusions, the LA will arrange suitable full-time education to begin no later than the sixth school day after the first day of the exclusion.

For pupils who are looked after or have social workers, the LA and the school will work together arrange suitable full-time education to begin from the first day of the exclusion.

5. Considering the reinstatement of a pupil

The governing body will consider the reinstatement of an excluded pupil within 15 school days of receiving the notice of the exclusion if:

- The exclusion is permanent
- It is a fixed-term suspension which would bring the pupil's total number of school days of exclusion to more than 15 in a term
- It would result in a pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test

If requested to do so by parents, the governing body will consider the reinstatement of a suspended pupil within 50 school days of receiving notice of the suspension if the pupil would be excluded from school for more than 5 school days, but less than 15, in a single term.

Where a suspension/exclusion would result in a pupil missing a public examination, the governing body will consider the reinstatement of the pupil before the date of the examination. If this is not practicable, the governing body will consider the suspension/exclusion and decide whether or not to reinstate the pupil.

The governing body can either:

Decline to reinstate the pupil, or
Direct the reinstatement of the pupil immediately, or on a particular date

In reaching a decision, the governing body will consider whether the suspension/exclusion was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair and whether the principal followed their legal duties. They will decide whether or not a fact is true 'on the balance of probabilities', which differs from the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt', as well as any evidence that was presented in relation to the decision to exclude.

Minutes will be taken of the meeting, and a record of evidence considered kept. The outcome will also be recorded on the pupil's educational record.

The governing body will notify, in writing, the principal, parents and the LA of its decision, along with reasons for its decision, without delay.

Where an exclusion is permanent, the governing body decision will also include the following:

The fact that it is permanent

Notice of parents' right to ask for the decision to be reviewed by an independent review panel, and:

- The date by which an application for an independent review must be made
- The name and address to whom an application for a review should be submitted
- That any application should set out the grounds on which it is being made and that, where appropriate, reference to how the pupil's SEN are considered to be relevant to the exclusion
- That, regardless of whether the excluded pupil has recognised SEN, parents have a right to require the academy trust to appoint an SEN expert to attend the review
- Details of the role of the SEN expert and that there would be no cost to parents for this appointment
- That parents must make clear if they wish for an SEN expert to be appointed in any application for a review
- That parents may, at their own expense, appoint someone to make written and/or oral representations to the panel, and parents may also bring a friend to the review

That if parents believe that the suspension/exclusion has occurred as a result of discrimination, they may make a claim under the Equality Act 2010 to the first-tier tribunal (special educational needs and disability), in the case of disability discrimination, or the county court, in the case of other forms of discrimination. A claim of discrimination made under these routes should be lodged within 6 months of the date on which the discrimination is alleged to have taken place.

6. Independent review

If parents apply for an independent review within the legal timeframe, the school will arrange for an independent panel to review the decision of the governing board not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil.

Applications for an independent review must be made within 15 school days of notice being given to the parents by the governing body of its decision to not reinstate the pupil.

A panel of 3 or 5 members will be constituted with representatives from each of the categories below. Where a 5-member panel is constituted, 2 members will come from the school governor category and 2 members will come from the Principal category. At all times during the review process there must be the required representation on the panel.

- A lay member to chair the panel who has not worked in any school in a paid capacity, disregarding any experience as a school governor or volunteer
- Current or former school governors who have served as a governor for at least 12 consecutive months in the last 5 years, provided they have not been teachers or Principals during this time
- Principals or individuals who have been a Principal within the last 5 years

A person may not serve as a member of a review panel if they:

- Are a member/director of the governing body of the excluding school
- Are the Principal of the excluding school, or have held this position in the last 5 years
- Are an employee of the governing board, of the excluding school (unless they are employed as a Principal at another school)

- Have, or at any time have had, any connection with the school, governing board, parents or pupil, or the incident leading to the exclusion, which might reasonably be taken to raise doubts about their impartiality
- Have not had the required training within the last 2 years (see appendix 1 for what training must cover)

A clerk will be appointed to the panel.

Following its review, the independent panel will decide to do 1 of the following:

- Uphold the governing board's decision
- Recommend that the governing board reconsiders reinstatement
- Quash the governing board's decision and direct that they reconsider reinstatement (only if it judges that the decision was flawed)

The panel's decision can be decided by a majority vote. In the case of a tied decision, the chair has the casting vote.

7. School registers

A pupil's name will be removed from the school admission register if:

- 15 school days have passed since the parents were notified of the exclusion panel's decision to not reinstate the pupil and no application has been made for an independent review panel, or
- The parents have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent review panel

Where an application for an independent review has been made within 15 school days, the governing board will wait until that review has concluded before removing a pupil's name from the register.

While the pupil's name remains on the school's admission register, the pupil's attendance will still be recorded appropriately. Where alternative provision has been made for an excluded pupil and they attend it, code B (education off-site) or code D (dual registration) will be used on the attendance register.

Where excluded pupils are not attending alternative provision, code E (absent) will be used.

8. Returning from a suspension

8.1 Reintegration strategy

Following fixed-term suspension, a reintegration meeting will be held involving the pupils, a member of senior staff and other staff as appropriate.

The following measures may be implemented when a pupil returns from a fixed-term suspension:

The following measures may be implemented, as part of the strategy, to ensure a successful reintegration into school life for the pupil:

- Agreeing a behaviour contract/support plan
- Providing additional mentoring
- Putting the pupil on report
- Internal isolation

The strategy will be regularly reviewed and adapted where necessary throughout the reintegration process in collaboration with the pupil, parents, and other relevant parties.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The school will collect data on the following:

- Attendance, permanent exclusions and suspensions

A member of the senior leadership team monitors the number of suspensions/exclusions every term and reports back to the Principal and Governing body. They also liaise with the local authority to ensure suitable full-time education for excluded pupils. This policy will be reviewed by the senior leadership team every two years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Proprietor.

11. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Behaviour policy
- SEND policy
- SEN information report

Appendix 1: Independent review panel training

The School must ensure that all members of an independent review panel and clerks have received training within the 2 years prior to the date of the review.

Training must have covered:

The requirements of the primary legislation, regulations and statutory guidance governing exclusions, which would include an understanding of how the principles applicable in an application for judicial review relate to the panel's decision making

The need for the panel to observe procedural fairness and the rules of natural justice The role of the chair and the clerk of a review panel

The duties of headteachers, governing boards and the panel under the Equality Act 2010

The effect of section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 (acts of public authorities unlawful if not compatible with certain human rights) and the need to act in a manner compatible with human rights protected by that Act