Suspensions and Exclusions Policy

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For the purposes of clarity, Local Support Boards (LSBs), Education Review Groups (ERGs) and Priority Education Review Boards (PERBs) are collectively referred to as the Trust's local governance layer. The terminology used may vary between schools to reflect local arrangements, but each body performs an equivalent local governance role within the Trust's governance framework.

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1. Policy Statement

1.1 Purpose

This policy sets out the Trust's approach to suspension and permanent exclusion and should be read alongside the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding, SEND Policy, Equality Policy and Attendance Policy.

The Trust is committed to creating safe, inclusive and ambitious learning environments where every child can thrive. We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and that children and young people may demonstrate distress, trauma responses, unmet need, anxiety, social, emotional and mental health needs, or safeguarding vulnerabilities through their behaviour.

Our approach is rooted in:

- Authentic Relationships
- Adaptive and Sensitive Practice
- Child-Centred Decision Making
- Inclusion
- Equity
- Restorative Approaches
- High Expectations for All

1.2 Our Commitment

The Trust recognises that safeguarding and inclusion are fundamental to effective behaviour management. Decisions regarding suspension and permanent exclusion will be informed by a thorough understanding of the child's individual circumstances, vulnerabilities, strengths, protective factors and lived experiences.

Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious sanctions and will only be used where:

- all reasonable alternatives have been considered; or
- the severity of an incident justifies immediate action.

All decisions will be lawful, fair, reasonable, proportionate and consistent with current statutory guidance.

A suspension or permanent exclusion will only be used where the Headteacher judges that allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others, or where there has been a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy.

2. Trust Values

2.1 Authentic Relationships

We believe positive relationships are central to successful behaviour support and educational success.

Staff will seek to understand the experiences, circumstances and individual needs which may contribute to behaviour and will work collaboratively with pupils, families and professionals.

2.2 Adaptive and Sensitive to Need

We recognise that children respond differently to challenge and adversity.

Staff will make reasonable adjustments and provide appropriate support for pupils whose behaviour may be linked to:

- SEND
- SEMH needs
- Trauma
- Attachment difficulties
- Disability
- Safeguarding concerns
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

2.3 Child-Centred Practice

Every decision will place the child's welfare, educational outcomes, safety and long-term success at the centre of planning and decision-making.

2.4 Trauma-Informed Practice

The Trust recognises that behaviour may reflect underlying need rather than deliberate defiance.

Wherever possible, staff will use relational, restorative and trauma-informed approaches to:

- build trust;
- strengthen belonging;
- repair relationships;
- promote emotional regulation;
- support successful engagement in education.

Suspension and permanent exclusion remain important behaviour management tools but will be used in a manner consistent with the Trust's commitment to safeguarding, inclusion and fairness.

3. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Promote positive behaviour and inclusion.
- Maintain safe learning environments.
- Reduce the use of suspension and permanent exclusion.
- Ensure compliance with statutory guidance.
- Support vulnerable pupils.
- Ensure decision-making is fair and transparent.
- Promote successful reintegration.
- Strengthen partnership working with families and external agencies.
- Embed a culture of belonging, accountability and restorative practice.

4. Legislative Framework

This policy is based on:

- Education Act 1996.
- Education Act 2002.
- Education Act 2011.
- Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Children and Families Act 2014.
- School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012.
- Behaviour in Schools (2024).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, including Pupil Movement (July 2026).

5. Principles

5.1 The Trust Believes:

- Exclusion is a last resort.
- Early intervention is preferable.
- Positive relationships are the foundation of effective behaviour support.
- Trauma-informed approaches should underpin behaviour management.
- Behaviour must be considered within context.
- Vulnerability does not excuse harmful behaviour but should inform the response.
- Decisions must be evidence-based and proportionate.
- The balance of probabilities applies when determining facts.

5.2 Safeguarding and Behaviour

The Trust recognises that suspension and permanent exclusion are safeguarding matters as well as behaviour matters.

Before making a decision to suspend or permanently exclude, consideration should be given to whether behaviour may be linked to:

- abuse, neglect or trauma;
- adverse childhood experiences;
- social, emotional or mental health needs;
- child-on-child abuse;
- bullying;
- discrimination;
- criminal exploitation;
- child sexual exploitation;
- county lines involvement;
- serious violence;
- online harm;
- bereavement;
- unmet educational needs;
- known safeguarding concerns.

Where safeguarding concerns exist, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be involved in considering risk, support and intervention.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for suspension and permanent exclusion decisions.

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure decisions are lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.
- Ensure appropriate investigation has taken place.
- Consider all available evidence.
- Consider safeguarding, SEND and equality duties.
- Consult relevant professionals where appropriate.
- Notify parents, governors and external agencies.
- Ensure educational provision is maintained.
- Lead reintegration planning.
- Ensure exclusion data is monitored and reviewed.
- Accurately record the reason, the length, and the category of the exclusion, along with pupil characteristics and interventions used prior to suspension.

Only the Headteacher, or a person formally carrying out the duties of the Headteacher, can suspend or permanently exclude a pupil.

6.2 Role of the Leader for Culture and Ethos (Behaviour)

The Leader for Culture and Ethos will:

- Lead implementation of the Behaviour Policy.
- Promote restorative and relational practice.
- Support consistent behaviour systems.
- Coordinate intervention and support programmes.
- Analyse behaviour and suspension trends.
- Work with families to reduce repeat suspensions.
- Coordinate reintegration support.
- Ensure pupil voice informs intervention planning.
- Support staff in applying trauma-informed approaches.

The Leader for Culture and Ethos plays a pivotal role in ensuring Trust values are translated into day-to-day practice.

6.3 Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will:

- Assess safeguarding risks associated with behaviour incidents.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are considered before exclusion decisions.
- Liaise with social workers and external agencies.
- Coordinate risk assessments where required.
- Support multi-agency planning.
- Ensure vulnerable learners receive appropriate support.
- Advise leaders regarding contextual safeguarding considerations.
- Contribute to reintegration planning.

6.4 Role of School Leaders

School leaders will:

- Ensure staff understand this policy.
- Monitor behaviour data and trends.
- Ensure interventions are implemented consistently.
- Oversee reintegration and support plans.
- Promote inclusion and belonging.

6.5 Role of All Staff

All staff have responsibility for:

- Building authentic relationships.
- Promoting positive behaviour.
- Using de-escalation strategies.
- Implementing reasonable adjustments.

- Recording concerns accurately.
- Sharing safeguarding concerns.
- Contributing to support and reintegration plans.
- Supporting a culture of respect, safety and belonging.

6.6 The Role of the Trust

- Monitor any patterns of suspensions and exclusions across the school
- Identify any areas of disproportionality
- Provide challenge to the schools
- Ensure consistency of application of this policy

7. Preventative and Trauma-Informed Practice

Prior to suspension, wherever possible, schools should demonstrate evidence of:

- Relational practice.
- Restorative conversations.
- De-escalation strategies.
- Pastoral intervention.
- Behaviour support plans.
- Risk assessments.
- SEMH support.
- Mentoring.
- Family support.
- Multi-agency involvement.
- Alternative provision support.
- Reasonable adjustments for SEND.

Schools will maintain evidence of interventions and their impact.

8. Definitions

8.1 Suspension

A fixed period during which a pupil is removed from school.

8.2 Permanent Exclusion

Permanent removal from the school roll on disciplinary grounds and will follow after the governing board process.

8.3 Off-Site Direction

Temporary placement in an alternative setting to support behaviour improvement. This must be for a clear purpose, time limited, reviewed regularly and parents must be informed

8.4 Managed Move or Change of Placement

A voluntary move to another school agreed by all parties. For students with an EHCP, A 'Change of Placement' must be requested through the EHCP review process and agreed by the SEN Team.

Managed moves must be voluntary and require informed parental consent. These will NEVER be used as a threat and do not replace the exclusion processes.

8.5 Reduced Timetable

A temporary, planned arrangement used to support successful reintegration. These should explicitly state that they will be time limited, reviewed regularly, put in place with parental agreement and not used to manage behaviour indefinitely.

9. Reasons for Suspension or Permanent Exclusion

A suspension or permanent exclusion may be considered for:

- Physical assault.
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour.
- Persistent disruptive behaviour.

- Bullying.
- Racist abuse.
- Sexual harassment.
- Abuse relating to protected characteristics.
- Disability-related abuse.
- Possession of prohibited items.
- Possession or use of weapons.
- Possession, use or supply of illegal drugs.
- Serious breaches of the Behaviour Policy.
- Behaviour placing the safety or welfare of others at risk.

These examples are not exhaustive.

A suspension or permanent exclusion may also be considered for behaviours outside of school including:

- travelling to school
- travelling home
- wearing school uniform
- online behaviour
- when identifiable as a pupil
- where behaviour could adversely affect discipline

Prior to considering permanent exclusion, the Headteacher should be satisfied that:

- appropriate interventions have been considered;
- safeguarding concerns have been reviewed;
- professional views have been considered;
- reasonable adjustments have been made;

- the graduated response has been implemented unless the seriousness of the incident justifies immediate action.
- Any social workers have been involved before decisions are made wherever practicable.

10. Circumstances Where Exclusion Must Not Be Used

Suspension or exclusion will not be used for:

- poor academic attainment;
- additional needs or disability alone;
- minor uniform breaches;
- attendance concerns alone; persistent absence will trigger supportive intervention rather than exclusion unless associated with behaviour meeting the exclusions threshold;
- lateness;
- parental behaviour.
- Requesting parents to keep pupils at home without formally recording a suspension.

Informal or unofficial exclusions are unlawful.

Sending a pupil home to "cool off" or for a "reflection day" without formally recording a suspension is unlawful. The Trust is committed to a child-centred approach in all decision-making and will always act in the best interests of the child. This includes giving careful consideration to a pupil's safety, wellbeing, emotional welfare and mental health needs. Wherever possible, schools will work collaboratively with pupils, families and professionals to identify supportive and restorative interventions that promote inclusion, regulate behaviour and maintain engagement in education, while ensuring that any action taken is lawful, proportionate and consistent with the welfare of the pupil and the wider school community.

11. Mental Health, SEND and Vulnerability

Particular care must be taken where a pupil:

- has an EHCP;

- receives SEND Support;
- is a Child in Care;
- has a social worker;
- has SEMH needs;
- has experienced trauma, bereavement or adversity.

Schools should review:

- EHCPs;
- IEPs;
- Behaviour Plans;
- Positive Handling Plans;
- PSPs;
- Provision Maps;
- Intervention records;
- Agency reports;
- Risk assessments.

Reasonable adjustments and best endeavours must be evidenced.

12. Contextual Safeguarding and Alternative Provision

Schools will consider whether behaviour may indicate:

- serious violence;
- weapon carrying;
- exploitation;
- county lines activity;
- unsafe peer influences;
- online harm.

(See also Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance (DfE 2014))

The DSL will coordinate appropriate safeguarding responses.

Decisions about exclusions should not be delayed because of police investigations. The decision should be made regardless of whether criminal proceedings are underway, applying the civil standard of proof.

Where a pupil attends alternative provision, the school retains safeguarding oversight and responsibility for monitoring attendance, welfare and educational outcomes.

13. Decision-Making

A suspension may include part of a school day, including lunchtime suspensions. A lunchtime suspension counts as half a day.

A pupil may not be suspended for more than 45 school days in an academic year.

Before making a decision, the Headteacher will consider:

- evidence; which may include witness statements, CCTV, staff reports, pupil account and any digital evidence.
- context;
- safeguarding concerns;
- SEND;
- social care involvement;
- if the child is a Child in Care
- if the child has been previously looked after
- Equality Act duties;
- reasonable adjustments;
- impact on the pupil;
- impact on the wider school community.

The civil standard of proof applies.

Schools should avoid excluding Children in Care wherever possible.

14. Notification Procedures

Parents/carers will be informed without delay.

Notifications will include:

- reasons for the decision;
- duration;
- rights of representation;
- how representation may be made;
- right to attend governing board meeting (where applicable)
- Independent Review rights
- SEN expert rights
- arrangements for education;
- reintegration arrangements;
- review procedures.

The Trust, Governing Board, Local Authority, Social Worker and Virtual School Head will be informed where required.

Where a pupil has a social worker or is a Child in Care, notification should occur as early as possible.

The Trust recognises that effective information sharing is essential to safeguarding and successful reintegration.

15. Education During Suspension

Schools will provide work from the first day of suspension.

For suspensions exceeding five consecutive school days, suitable full-time education will be arranged from the sixth school day.

Parents remain responsible for ensuring pupils are not in a public place during the first five school days of a suspension during school hours without reasonable justification.

For permanent exclusions, the Local Authority must arrange suitable education from the sixth school day.

16. Reintegration Following Suspension

The Trust views reintegration as a crucial part of inclusion.

A reintegration meeting will normally take place before or immediately upon the pupil's return.

The meeting will:

- explore underlying causes;
- hear pupil voice;
- listen to parents/carers;
- identify strengths;
- agree support measures;
- identify safeguarding concerns.

Support may include:

- daily check-ins;
- mentoring;
- key adult support;
- therapeutic intervention;
- curriculum adaptations;
- Early Help support;
- attendance support;
- multi-agency involvement.

16.1 Pupil Voice

The pupil's views will be actively sought and considered as part of reintegration planning.

The reintegration process should strengthen belonging, rebuild relationships and support engagement in learning.

17. Permanent Exclusion

Permanent exclusion will only be considered:

a) following a serious breach or persistent breaches of the Behaviour Policy; and/or

b) where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Permanent exclusion remains a last resort.

18. Governing Board Duties

The Governing Board will consider exclusions within statutory timescales.

Governors must consider whether decisions were:

- lawful;
- reasonable;
- fair;
- proportionate.

As outlined in the guidance, Governors must consider:

- reinstatement
- statutory timescales
- representations
- proportionality
- discrimination
- Equality Act
- procedural fairness

and may direct reinstatement where appropriate.

Governors will receive appropriate exclusion training.

19. Independent Review

Parents/carers have the right to request an Independent Review Panel following a decision not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil. Parents may request a SEN expert.

The review process will comply with statutory guidance.

20. Equality, Inclusion and Safeguarding Monitoring

The Trust Board will monitor suspension and exclusion data relating to:

- SEND;
- gender;
- ethnicity;
- Children in Care;
- previously looked after children;
- social worker involvement;
- disadvantage;
- attendance;
- safeguarding vulnerabilities.

Where disproportionate outcomes are identified, leaders will review systems, interventions and support.

21. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The Trust Board will receive regular reports relating to:

- suspension rates;
- permanent exclusions;
- repeat suspensions;
- vulnerable groups;
- equality impacts;

- reintegration outcomes.

Data will be used to strengthen early intervention and improve inclusion.

22. Commitment to Inclusion

The Trust remains committed to keeping children connected to education wherever possible.

By embedding Authentic Relationships, remaining Adaptive and Sensitive to Need, and maintaining a consistently Child-Centred approach, we aim to reduce exclusion, improve outcomes and ensure every child is treated with dignity, compassion and fairness.

Every interaction is an opportunity to build trust, strengthen belonging and improve life chances.

PLEASE NOTE: The Trust provides template suspension and exclusion letters to support consistency; however, schools may adapt these templates where necessary to ensure compliance with the requirements, processes, and expectations of the relevant Local Authority.

APPENDIX ONE - Suspension Letter Template

[School Name]
[School Address]
[Telephone]
[Email]

Private and Confidential

Date: [Insert Date]

Dear [Parent/Carer Name],

Re: Suspension of [Pupil Name] ([Year Group])

I am writing to inform you that I have decided to suspend [Pupil Name] from [School Name] for [number] school day(s).

The suspension will begin on [date] and end on [date]. [Pupil Name] is expected to return to school on [date] at [time].

Reason for Suspension

The reason for this suspension is:

[Provide a clear, factual description of the incident(s) and the school rules or behaviour expectations breached.]

Having considered the circumstances of the incident, I have concluded that suspension is an appropriate and proportionate response in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

For the first five school days of the suspension, you are responsible for ensuring that **[Pupil Name]** is not present in a public place during normal school hours unless there is a reasonable justification. Failure to do so may result in a fixed penalty notice or prosecution.

The work attached/provided via **[platform]** should be completed and returned to school in accordance with the instructions given.

[Choose as appropriate]

Suspension of 5 school days or fewer:

Work will be provided for your child during the suspension period.

Suspension of more than 5 school days:

Alternative full-time educational provision will be arranged from the sixth school day. Details are as follows:

- Provider: [Name]
- Address: [Address]
- Start date: [Date]
- Start time: [Time]

You have the right to make representations regarding this suspension to the Chair of the Local Governing Body:

Chair of the Local Support Board (LSB) / Education Review Group (ERG) / Priority Education Review Group (PERB):
[Name]
[Address]
[Email]

[Insert one of the following as appropriate:]

- **For suspensions totalling 5 days or fewer in a term:** The Governing Board is not required to meet but will consider any representations you make. [assets.pub...ice.gov.uk]
- **For suspensions totalling more than 5 but fewer than 16 school days in a term:** You may request that the Governing Board meet to consider the suspension. [assets.pub...ice.gov.uk]
- **For suspensions totalling more than 15 school days in a term:** The Governing Board must meet to consider the suspension. [assets.pub...ice.gov.uk]

A reintegration meeting has been arranged for:

Date: [Date]
Time: [Time]
Location: [Location]

The purpose of the meeting is to support **[Pupil Name]**'s successful return to school and discuss any strategies required to prevent further incidents.

If you have any questions regarding this suspension, please contact **[name]** on **[telephone/email]**.

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher Name]
Headteacher

APPENDIX TWO - Permanent Exclusion Letter

[School Name]
[School Address]
[Telephone Number]
[Email Address]

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Date: [Insert Date]

Dear [Parent/Carer Name],

Re: Permanent Exclusion of [Pupil Name] ([Year Group])

I am writing to inform you of my decision to **permanently exclude [Pupil Name] from [School Name] with effect from [date]**. This decision has not been taken lightly and has been made after careful consideration of all the circumstances, the available evidence, and the school's Behaviour Policy. Permanent exclusion should only be used where it is a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy and allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

The reason(s) for this decision are:

[Provide a clear and factual account of the incident(s), including dates where appropriate.]

In reaching this decision, I have considered:

- The nature and seriousness of the incident(s).
- Any relevant witness statements and evidence.
- The impact on pupils and staff.
- [Any relevant previous interventions and support provided.]
- The school's legal duties, including equality duties and any known special educational needs or disabilities.

After considering all relevant factors, I concluded that permanent exclusion is a lawful, reasonable and proportionate response.

For the first five school days following the permanent exclusion, you are responsible for ensuring that **[Pupil Name]** is not present in a public place during normal school hours without reasonable justification. Failure to comply with this duty may result in a fixed penalty notice or prosecution.

Any work set by the school should be completed during this period.

The local authority must arrange suitable full-time education from the **sixth school day** following the permanent exclusion. The local authority will contact you separately regarding these arrangements.

For enquiries regarding alternative provision, please contact:

[Local Authority Contact Name]
[Telephone Number]
[Email Address]

The Priority Education Review Board is required to consider this permanent exclusion and will arrange a meeting to review my decision. You will be informed of the date, time and venue of the meeting in due course. You have the right to attend, be represented, and make representations to the Governing Board.

The Chair of the Priority Education Review Board can be contacted at:
[Name]
[Address]
[Telephone Number]
[Email Address]

You may also wish to bring a friend, representative or advocate to support you at the meeting.

If **[Pupil Name]** has a social worker, the school has informed them of the exclusion. Where relevant, the local authority's Special Educational Needs team will also be informed.

If the Governing Board upholds the permanent exclusion, you may have the right to request an Independent Review Panel within the timescale specified in the Governing Board's decision letter. You may also request that a SEN expert attends the review where relevant. Full details will be provided if applicable.

Further information is available from:

- The Department for Education's guide for parents on school exclusions. [gov.uk]
- [Local Authority Parent Partnership/Information Advice and Support Service details.]

I appreciate that this news may be upsetting and I encourage you to contact the school if you require clarification regarding any aspect of this process.

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher Name]
Headteacher

Enclosures

- Copy of the school's Behaviour Policy
- Information about the Governing Board review process
- Department for Education information for parents on exclusions
- Details of local support services