



Exclusions Policy

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Scope

The statutory suspension and permanent exclusion regime for local-authority-maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units does not apply directly to an ordinary independent school. The school nevertheless has regard to the principles in the current Department for Education guidance as good practice where they are compatible with independent-school law, the Independent School Standards, the parent contract, and any local-authority placement agreement.

Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious sanctions. They will be used only through the formal process in this policy. The school will not use unofficial exclusions, informal "cooling-off" periods, repeated requests for a learner to remain at home, or a part-time timetable as a behaviour sanction.

This policy must be read with the school's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, SEND Policy, Attendance Policy, Restrictive Interventions Policy, Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy, Mobile Phone Policy (and statement), Complaints Policy, parent contract and any commissioning or placement agreement.

Policy Principles

- The welfare, safety and education of the learner and others will be the central considerations.
- Decisions will be lawful, reasonable, fair, proportionate, evidence-based and consistent with the school's published policies and contractual arrangements.
- The civil standard of proof, the balance of probabilities, will be used when deciding whether an incident occurred.
- No behaviour listed in this policy automatically results in suspension or permanent exclusion. Context, intent, impact, risk, safeguarding information, and the learner's individual needs will always be considered.
- The learner will be given an accessible opportunity to explain what happened before a decision is made, unless this is not possible because of an immediate emergency. Their views may be gathered through speech, writing, symbols, AAC, visual prompts, an advocate, or a trusted adult.
- The school will make reasonable adjustments and consider whether behaviour may be connected with disability, SEND, trauma, communication needs, mental health, medical needs, or unmet provision.
- Permanent exclusion is a last resort, except where the seriousness of a single incident makes it a proportionate response.
- Parents will be informed promptly and treated respectfully. Relevant local authorities and professionals will be involved where appropriate.
- A learner's return from suspension will not be made conditional on a parent attending a meeting or signing an agreement.
- The school will not pressure a parent to withdraw a learner, electively home educate, accept an unsuitable alternative placement, or agree to a part-time timetable.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy has been drawn up with regard to the following legislation and guidance, as applicable:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including paragraphs 7, 9, 10, 15, 16, 16A, 32, 32A, 33 and 34 of the Schedule.
- The Independent School Standards: Guidance for Independent Schools, April 2026.
- Equality Act 2010, including the duties not to discriminate and to make reasonable adjustments.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Working together to improve school attendance, updated July 2026.
- Keeping children safe in education 2026.

- Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools, September 2025.
- Education Act 1996, including section 19 where a local authority may need to arrange suitable education.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and relevant principles of the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, where applicable and as good practice for EHC plan and multi-agency arrangements.
- Department for Education guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion, effective 26 July 2026, used as good practice only because its statutory exclusion process does not apply directly to independent schools.
- Ofsted inspection information and operating guidance for non-association independent schools for use from September 2026, including the definition of off rolling.
- The school's parent contract and any local-authority funding, commissioning, or placement agreement.

Where a policy, contract or placement agreement appears to conflict with legislation, the school will obtain appropriate advice before acting. The law takes precedence.

Definitions

Suspension: A formal, temporary exclusion from attending the school site for a defined period because of behaviour. A direction to leave or remain away from school for disciplinary reasons, even for part of a day, will be treated and recorded as a suspension.

Permanent Exclusion: The formal ending of the learner's place and, where applicable, the parent contract or placement agreement because of serious or persistent behaviour. In some independent-school contracts this may be described as expulsion.

Internal Removal: A time-limited, supervised on-site sanction in which a learner is educated separately from their usual class. It is not a suspension. It must be recorded under the Behaviour Policy and must not be used in a way that amounts to unrecorded seclusion.

Seclusion and Restraint: Terms defined in the Restrictive Interventions Policy. Any incident meeting the regulatory definition must be recorded and reported in accordance with Independent School Standards 16A and 32A.

Off-Rolling: Removing a learner from roll, preventing normal attendance, or pressuring a parent to remove a learner in the interests of the school rather than the learner, without following the published policy, contractual arrangements, and admission-register law.

Parent: A person with parental responsibility or a person who has care of the learner. Information will normally be provided to each person entitled to receive it, subject to safeguarding or legal restrictions.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Directors

- Ensure that this policy and the Behaviour Policy meet the Independent School Standards and are implemented consistently.
- Ensure that particulars of the school's arrangements for misbehaviour and exclusions are made available to current and prospective parents.
- Provide oversight of patterns, equality impact, repeated suspensions, permanent exclusions, and any evidence of off rolling.
- Appoint an appeal panel for permanent exclusions and ensure that it is impartial and has an independent member.
- Ensure leaders have the knowledge, resources, and authority to fulfil this policy effectively.

The Principal

- Is the only person who may suspend or permanently exclude a learner, except where another senior leader has been formally appointed as acting Principal.
- Ensures that a fair investigation is completed and that the learner's views, SEND, disability, safeguarding and contextual information are considered.

- Records the decision, evidence, reasons, alternatives considered and proportionality assessment.
- Notifies parents and relevant agencies and ensures education and reintegration arrangements are made.
- Ensures that attendance and admission registers are accurate and that serious sanctions are recorded.

The Designated Safeguarding and Prevent Lead

- Reviews whether the incident or pattern indicates child-on-child abuse, exploitation, serious violence, weapon-related risk, criminality, neglect, mental health risk, self-harm, suicide risk, or another safeguarding concern.
- Makes or coordinates referrals to children's social care, police, early help, or other agencies when required.
- Advises what information can be shared with parents and the decision-maker without increasing risk or prejudicing an investigation.

The SENDCo

- Advises on the learner's needs, EHC plan, communication, reasonable adjustments, provision and whether needs may be unmet.
- Coordinates a review of support and requests an urgent EHC plan review where placement breakdown or permanent exclusion is being considered.
- Ensures the learner can participate in the process using accessible communication and appropriate support.

All Staff

- Use the Behaviour Policy consistently, record serious incidents accurately and report safeguarding concerns immediately.
- Do not send a learner home or ask a family to keep a learner at home unless a formal suspension has been authorised by the Principal.
- Provide evidence and information honestly, including information that may support the learner's account.

Prevention and Early Intervention

The school will seek to prevent suspension and permanent exclusion by identifying needs early and using a graduated, person-centred response. Depending on the learner and the circumstances, this may include:

- reviewing the learner's individual behaviour support plan, risk assessment, communication profile, sensory plan, and EHC plan provision;
- reasonable adjustments to routines, teaching, environment, communication, and sanctions;
- additional pastoral, therapeutic, mental health, safeguarding, or family support;
- increased supervision, mentoring, restorative work where safe and voluntary, and structured reparation;
- staff training or specialist advice;
- multi-agency planning, early help, social care involvement, or an urgent EHC plan review;
- a review of whether the current placement remains suitable and whether additional resources are required.

Repeated suspensions will trigger a formal review led by the Principal, DSPL and SENDCo. The review will consider patterns, unmet need, discrimination, safeguarding, curriculum access, placement suitability and whether further action is needed with the responsible local authority.

Decision-Making Process

The following process will be followed before a suspension or permanent exclusion is imposed, except where immediate emergency action is necessary to keep people safe:

- 1. Immediate safety:** Staff will use de-escalation and safeguarding procedures, arrange medical attention where required and preserve relevant evidence. Any restrictive intervention will be dealt with under the Restrictive Interventions Policy.
- 2. Initial safeguarding and SEND review:** The DSPL and SENDCo, or appropriate deputies, will consider safeguarding, disability, SEND, communication, mental health, medical needs, EHC plan provision, and reasonable adjustments.
- 3. Fair investigation:** The school will gather relevant evidence. This may include staff and learner accounts, witness statements, CCTV (where possible), digital evidence, behaviour records, risk assessments, and contextual information. Evidence that does not support the allegation will also be considered.
- 4. Learner voice:** The learner will be told the substance of the concern in accessible language and given a genuine opportunity to respond. A trusted adult, advocate or communication support may be provided.
- 5. Alternatives and proportionality:** The Principal will consider the seriousness and impact of the behaviour, previous support, mitigation, risk, consistency with similar cases, reasonable adjustments and whether a lesser response would be sufficient.
- 6. Decision:** The Principal will decide on the balance of probabilities and record the findings and reasons. A safeguarding or police investigation does not remove the school's duty to make its own proportionate decision; the school will coordinate with agencies to avoid prejudicing enquiries.
- 7. Notification and arrangements:** Parents will be contacted without delay and provided with written information. Education, attendance, safeguarding, reintegration, and local-authority arrangements will be put in place.

Suspension

A suspension may be used in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the Behaviour Policy where the Principal decides that temporary removal from the school site is proportionate and necessary. It will not be used simply because support arrangements are difficult to provide.

- Each suspension will have a clear start date and end date and will be as short as possible.
- The suspension will be no longer than five consecutive school days. Any longer period requires written approval from the Schools Director and a recorded explanation of why a shorter period would not manage the risk.
- The school voluntarily adopts a maximum of 45 school days of suspension in an academic year. Approaching this limit will trigger an urgent placement and support review; it will not be used to justify informal exclusion.
- A suspension may be issued for part of a school day. If a learner is sent home for behaviour, the incident will be treated as a formal suspension and recorded accurately.
- A suspension may be extended or converted to permanent exclusion only by a further formal decision and written notice. It will not be backdated.
- The parent will be told by telephone or another agreed accessible method as soon as possible and will receive a written notice by the end of the same school day wherever practicable.
- The written notice will contain the information listed in Appendix B.
- Parents may make written representations to the Principal. These will be considered promptly and the outcome confirmed in writing.
- The learner will return on the stated date. Attendance at a reintegration meeting or signing an agreement is not a condition of return.

Education During Suspension

- The school will set and mark suitable, accessible work from the first day of suspension and maintain contact proportionate to the learner's needs and safeguarding plan.
- Where a suspension is longer than five school days, the school will arrange suitable supervised education from the sixth school day as a matter of school policy, unless the learner is already receiving suitable education through another agreed arrangement.
- For an EHC plan or publicly funded placement, the school will liaise promptly with the responsible and placing local authorities about provision, funding, and any section 19 responsibilities.
- Remote education, where used, will be safe, accessible, and part of a defined reintegration plan. It will not be used to disguise an exclusion or replace accurate attendance recording.

Permanent Exclusion

Permanent exclusion may be considered where:

- there has been a serious breach or persistent breaches of the Behaviour Policy; and
- allowing the learner to remain would seriously harm the education, safety or welfare of the learner or others.

A single incident may justify permanent exclusion where its seriousness makes that response proportionate. Permanent exclusion will not be automatic for any category of behaviour.

Before deciding on permanent exclusion, the Principal will:

- complete the decision-making process in this policy and consult the Schools Director;
- obtain advice from the DSPL and SENDCo;
- review reasonable adjustments, support, risk management and whether the learner's needs or EHC plan provision may be unmet;
- request an urgent EHC plan review with the responsible local authority wherever circumstances allow;
- involve the social worker, designated teacher, and Virtual School Head where relevant;
- consider the parent contract and all commissioning, funding, and placement terms;
- consider how suitable education and safeguarding will be maintained if the learner cannot attend the site.

The parent will receive a written decision setting out the behaviour found, evidence considered, reasons, alternatives considered, effective date, interim education arrangements, contractual and placement implications, local authority liaison and right of appeal.

The learner will remain on the admission register until the relevant contractual or placement arrangements have ended, the appeal has concluded or been waived, and a lawful ground for deletion under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 is met. The school will not delete the learner retrospectively.

Where the learner cannot safely attend the school site while an appeal is pending, the school will put in place a formal, time-limited, and regularly reviewed interim education arrangement. This will not be treated as an informal exclusion.

Examples of Behaviour that may lead to Suspension or Permanent Exclusion

The following are illustrative only. The Principal will consider the individual facts and the principles in this policy:

- serious actual or threatened violence, including use or threatened use of a weapon;
- sexual violence, sexual assault, or serious harmful sexual behaviour;
- serious or persistent bullying, discriminatory abuse, harassment, or victimisation;
- supplying illegal drugs or other serious drug-related behaviour;
- arson or serious deliberate damage to property;
- serious theft, extortion, or coercion;

- serious online behaviour that creates a safeguarding, welfare, or disciplinary risk to the school community;
- leaving the site without permission where this creates a serious and immediate safety risk;
- persistent, serious disruption or defiance after appropriate support, adjustments and interventions have been implemented and reviewed;
- behaviour outside school, including on transport, which has a sufficiently close connection with the school and seriously affects safety, welfare, discipline, or the school community.

Where behaviour may constitute a crime or safeguarding concern, the school will consider referral to the police, children's social care or another agency. External referral is separate from the school's disciplinary process.

SEND, Disability and EHC Plans

The school will comply with the Equality Act 2010. It will not discriminate directly or indirectly, discriminate because of something arising from disability, fail to make reasonable adjustments, harass, or victimise a learner.

Where behaviour may be connected with disability or SEND, the Principal will consider:

- whether the learner understood the rule, allegation, and consequences;
- communication, cognition, sensory, emotional regulation, trauma, mental health, and medical factors;
- whether the school had implemented the learner's EHC plan, individual plans and agreed reasonable adjustments;
- whether additional or different adjustments could reasonably have prevented or reduced the incident;
- whether unfavourable treatment is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim;
- whether specialist advice, additional resources or a change in provision is required.

SEND or disability does not prevent the school from taking proportionate action where necessary to protect safety and education. It does require careful individual consideration, evidence of reasonable adjustments and a fair process.

Although the school is not approved under section 41, it will follow relevant SEND Code of Practice principles as good practice for person-centred planning, EHC plan review and multi-agency working. It will provide information reasonably required by the responsible local authority for an EHC plan review.

Safeguarding and Multi-Agency Working

- A suspension or permanent exclusion decision will never replace a safeguarding response.
- The DSPL will consider whether the learner may be at risk of or causing harm, and whether early help, Family Help, children's social care, police, health, or another service should be involved.
- Serious violence, weapon-related concerns, exploitation, child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment or violence, self-harm and suicide risk will be managed under KCSIE 2026 and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Parents will normally be informed, unless the DSPL, children's social care or police considers that this would place a child at increased risk or prejudice an investigation.
- For a learner with a social worker, the social worker will be informed promptly of a suspension or proposed permanent exclusion. For a looked-after learner, the designated teacher and Virtual School Head will also be involved.
- The school will share information lawfully, proportionately and on a need-to-know basis. Relevant safeguarding information will be transferred securely to a new setting.

Attendance, Admission Register and Local Authority Notification

- The school will record each suspension in the attendance register using the national code that applies to the learner's circumstances and any alternative education provided.
- The school will keep a complete record of the date, duration, and reason for each serious sanction.
- The school will notify the home and placing local authorities promptly of a permanent exclusion and of suspensions where required by a placement agreement, EHC plan arrangements, safeguarding duties, or current attendance guidance.
- When a learner's name is deleted from the admission register, the school will ensure that a ground in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 is fully met and will make the required deletion return to the local authority. The deletion will not be retrospective.
- The school will cooperate with children-missing-education procedures and section 19 arrangements so that a compulsory-school-age learner does not go without suitable education.
- The school will not use a part-time timetable for behaviour management. A temporary part-time timetable may be used only for an appropriate health-related reason under the Attendance Policy, with agreement, review, and a return-to-full-time plan.

Reintegration after Suspension

The school will plan reintegration before or as soon as possible after the learner returns. The learner must be allowed to return on the stated date even if a meeting has not taken place. The reintegration plan will be proportionate and may include:

- an accessible discussion with the learner about what happened and what support is needed;
- revised reasonable adjustments, risk assessment, or behaviour support plan;
- curriculum, timetable, staffing, sensory or communication adjustments;
- restorative work only where it is safe, voluntary, and appropriate;
- support for affected learners and staff;
- clear expectations, review dates, and named staff;
- multi-agency or local-authority involvement where needed.

Appeals and Representations

Suspension Representations

A parent may make written representations to the Principal about a suspension within five school days of receiving the written notice. The Principal will review the representations, seek further information if needed and respond in writing normally within five school days. The Principal may uphold, shorten, or cancel the suspension and will correct the record where necessary.

Permanent Exclusion Appeal

A parent may appeal a permanent exclusion by writing to the Schools Director within ten school days of the written decision. The appeal is an internal contractual safeguard and is not the statutory independent review panel process used by maintained schools and academies.

- The Directors will appoint a panel of at least three people who were not directly involved in the decision. At least one member will be independent of the management and running of the school.
- The parent will receive reasonable notice of the hearing and the documents to be considered.
- The parent may attend, be accompanied by one person and make written and oral representations. Legal representation is not automatic and must be agreed in advance.
- The learner will be supported to participate where appropriate or may provide views in another accessible form.

- The Principal may attend to explain the decision but will not be a member of the panel.
- The panel will consider whether the decision was fair, evidence-based, proportionate, non-discriminatory, consistent with policy and contract, and whether reasonable adjustments and relevant safeguarding and SEND factors were properly considered.
- The panel may uphold the decision, overturn it, and direct reinstatement, or require the Principal to reconsider specified matters.
- The panel will give a reasoned written decision normally within five school days of the hearing. Its decision is final under this policy.

Complaints

A concern about procedural handling may be raised under the Complaints Policy. The complaints process will not normally rehear the merits of a decision already determined by the permanent-exclusion appeal panel, but it may consider whether the published procedure was followed. Where a local authority commissioned the place, the parent may also use any review or complaint route provided in the placement agreement.

Transport and Behaviour Away From School

Behaviour on school-arranged transport or outside the school may be considered where it has a sufficiently close connection with the school or affects safety, welfare, or discipline. The school will investigate fairly and apply this policy.

Transport will not be withdrawn simply as an alternative to suspension. Where transport behaviour creates a risk, the school will complete or review an individual transport risk assessment and work with the parent, transport provider, and responsible local authority to agree safe arrangements. Any temporary change must be lawful, reasonable, recorded and must not prevent attendance without suitable alternative arrangements.

Recording, Monitoring and Review

The Principal will maintain a secure central log of serious sanctions including suspensions and permanent exclusions. Records will include:

- learner name, date, duration, reason, and decision-maker;
- incident summary, evidence considered and the learner's account;
- SEND, disability, EHC plan, reasonable adjustments, and safeguarding considerations;
- looked after status, social worker involvement, and local-authority notifications where relevant;
- education provided, attendance coding and reintegration arrangements;
- parental representations, appeal, and outcome;
- repeat incidents, support plans and actions taken.

Directors will review anonymised data at least termly, including frequency, duration, reasons, repeated suspensions, SEND and EHC plan status, protected characteristics, looked-after status, social-care involvement, and outcomes. Disproportionate patterns or possible off rolling will be investigated and addressed.

Records will be retained and shared in accordance with the Data Protection and Records Management Policy. This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner following significant legal or regulatory change, a serious incident, a complaint finding or evidence that practice is inconsistent.

The policy and particulars of the school's arrangements for suspensions and exclusions will be made available to current and prospective parents via the school's website in accordance with Independent School Standard 32.



APPENDIX A

PRINCIPAL'S DECISION CHECKLIST (Suspension and Permanent Exclusion)

☐	Has immediate risk been managed and any medical need addressed?
☐	Has the DSPL completed a safeguarding review and made any required referral?
☐	Has the SENDCo considered SEND, disability, communication, EHC plan provision, and reasonable adjustments?
☐	Has the learner been told the concern in an accessible way and given an opportunity to respond?
☐	Has relevant evidence been gathered, including evidence that may not support the allegation?
☐	Has the civil standard of proof been applied?
☐	Have context, mitigation, intent, impact, and previous support been considered?
☐	Have alternatives and the least restrictive proportionate response been considered?
☐	Is the decision consistent with the Behaviour Policy, parent contract, and placement agreement?
☐	Have equality and discrimination risks been considered and recorded?
☐	For repeated suspensions or possible placement breakdown, has an urgent review been initiated?
☐	Have parents, notification email and relevant local authorities/professionals been notified with the letter via email?
☐	Are work, safeguarding contact, attendance coding, and reintegration arrangements in place?
☐	Has the serious sanction been entered on the central log and CPOMS?

Appendix B: Minimum Contents of a Suspension or Permanent Exclusion Notice

- learner's name;
- whether the decision is a suspension or permanent exclusion;
- the behaviour found and the reason for the decision;
- the start date, end date, and return date for a suspension;
- the effective date and contractual or placement implications for a permanent exclusion;
- education and safeguarding-contact arrangements;
- expectations during the period away from site;
- reintegration arrangements for a suspension;
- how and by when the parent may make representations or appeal;
- the name and contact details of the person to whom representations or an appeal should be sent;
- local authority and professional liaison where relevant;
- a statement that return from suspension is not conditional on attending a meeting or signing an agreement.