

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

13 October 2026

About This Document

Annual Policy Period	2026 - 2027
Policy Adopted by Governors	7 September 2018
Last Policy Review	13 October 2026
Next Policy Review	September 2027

History

Version	Date	Name	Description
0.1	Sep - 2018	René Esterhuizen, Clerk to Trustees	First release. DRAFT
1.0	Sep - 2018	School Governors	Approved and adopted.
1.1	16 Aug - 2021	School Governors	Reviewed and approved.
1.2	15 Sep - 2022	School Governors	Reviewed and approved.
1.3	23 Jun - 2023	School Governors	Reviewed and approved.
1.4	8 May - 2024	School Governors	Reviewed and approved.
1.5	10 June - 2025	René Esterhuizen, Headteacher	Reviewed, no changes.
1.6	8 July - 2026	René Esterhuizen, Headteacher	Reviewed, no changes.
1.7	13 Oct - 2026	René Esterhuizen, Headteacher	Reviewed, updated to come in-line with new KCSIE guidelines.

© The Vine Christian School 2026

Contents

1. Introduction 4
2. Exclusion Procedure 5
3. Permanent Exclusion 6
4. General Factors the School Considers before Deciding to Exclude 6
5. Safeguarding, SEND and Equality 7
6. Exercise of Discretion 7
7. Lunchtime Exclusion 7
8. Behaviour Outside of School 8
9. Drug Related Exclusions 8

1. Introduction

1.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy. It deals with the policy and practice which informs the school's use of suspension and permanent exclusion. It is underpinned by the shared commitment of all members of the school community to achieve two important aims:

i. The first is to ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community, and to maintain an appropriate educational environment in which all can learn to succeed.

ii. The second is to realise the aim of reducing the need to use suspension or permanent exclusion as a sanction.

1.2. This policy applies to an independent school in England. It is informed by the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, the Equality Act 2010, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the School's Behaviour Policy. The statutory suspension and permanent exclusion framework for maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units does not apply to independent school; the school therefore follows its own published policy and contractual arrangements with parents.

1.3. The decision to suspend or permanently exclude a student will be taken in the following circumstances:

i. In response to a serious breach of the school's Behaviour Policy.

ii. If allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the school.

1.4. Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious sanctions. A suspension may be authorised by the Headteacher or, in their absence, by a senior member of staff who has been formally authorised to act on their behalf. A permanent exclusion will normally be decided by the Headteacher, or by a person formally authorised by the Governors and Trustees to act in their absence.

1.5. Suspension or permanent exclusion may be considered for any of the following, all of which are examples of unacceptable conduct and breaches of the School's Behaviour Policy:

i. Verbal abuse to staff and others.

ii. Verbal abuse to students.

iii. Physical abuse to/attack on staff.

iv. Physical abuse to/attack on students.

v. Indecent behaviour.

vi. Damage to property.

vii. Misuse of illegal drugs.

viii. Misuse of other substances.

ix. Theft.

x. Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff.

xi. Sexual abuse or assault.

xii. Supplying an illegal drug.

xiii. Carrying an offensive weapon.

xiv. Arson.

xv. Unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported.

xvi. Repeated unacceptable behaviour for which school sanctions and support have already been used.

xvii. When other interventions have not been successful in modifying the student's behaviour.

1.6. This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other situations where the Headteacher makes the judgement that suspension or permanent exclusion is an appropriate and proportionate sanction.

1.7. Alternative strategies to suspension or permanent exclusion are included in the school's Behaviour Policy.

2. Exclusion Procedure

2.1. Most temporary removals from school will be suspensions and will be for the shortest period considered appropriate and proportionate in the circumstances.

2.2. The statutory 45-school-day limit that applies to maintained schools and academies does not apply to independent schools. The duration and use of suspensions will instead be kept under review by the school and will be consistent with this policy, the Behaviour Policy and the school's contractual arrangements with parents.

2.3. Parents may make written representations about a suspension and may request a review of a permanent exclusion by the Governors and Trustees. Any review will be conducted by persons who were not directly responsible for the original decision, so far as reasonably practicable, and in accordance with the school's published procedure and contractual arrangements.

2.4. Following a suspension or permanent exclusion, parents will be contacted as soon as reasonably practicable. Written confirmation will state the reason for the decision, the period of any suspension, the date on which the pupil may return where applicable, and how parents may make representations or request a review under this policy.

2.5. A return to school meeting will be held following the expiry of the fixed term exclusion and this will involve the Headteacher and other staff where appropriate.

2.6. Following a suspension, the school may use an appropriate reintegration or monitoring arrangement to support the pupil's return, taking account of the pupil's individual circumstances and needs.

2.7. Where suspensions are repeated or indicate that additional support may be needed, the school will consider a pastoral or behaviour support plan in consultation with the pupil and parents, and with relevant staff or external professionals where appropriate.

2.8. Repeated suspensions, repeated classroom removals, part-time timetables or risk of permanent exclusion may also indicate unmet safeguarding needs; the DSL or Deputy DSL will be involved where appropriate.

2.9. During a suspension the pupil will normally remain at home and must not attend the school premises unless specifically invited or authorised by the school.

2.10. Parents remain responsible for the pupil's supervision while the pupil is at home during a suspension. The school will make reasonable arrangements for the pupil to continue with appropriate schoolwork during the suspension where practicable.

3. Permanent Exclusion

3.1. The decision to exclude a student permanently is a serious one. There are two main types of situations in which permanent exclusion may be considered:

i. The first is a final, formal step in a concerted process for dealing with disciplinary offences following the use of a wide range of other strategies, which have been used without success. It is an acknowledgement that all available strategies have been exhausted and is used as a last resort. This would include persistent or serious misbehaviour, including bullying or prejudice-based or discriminatory behaviour or repeated possession and or use of an illegal drug on school premises.

ii. The second is where there are exceptional circumstances, and it is not appropriate to implement other strategies and where it could be appropriate to permanently exclude a student for a first or 'one off 'offence. These might include:

a) Serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff.

b) Sexual abuse or assault.

c) Supplying an illegal drug.

d) Carrying an offensive weapon.

e) Arson

3.2. The school will consider whether the police, children's social care, the local authority designated officer (where relevant), or another appropriate safeguarding agency should be contacted in relation to any serious incident.

4. General Factors the School Considers before Deciding to Exclude

4.1. Exclusion will not be imposed instantly unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of others in the school or the student concerned. Before deciding whether to exclude a student either permanently or for a period of suspension the Headteacher will:

i. Ensure appropriate investigations have been carried out.

ii. Consider all available evidence, the school's Behaviour and Equal Opportunities/Equality policies, any relevant safeguarding information, and the student's individual circumstances, including SEND or disability and any reasonable adjustments required.

iii. Give the student an appropriate opportunity to provide their account of events, taking account of age, understanding and any communication needs.

iv. Consider whether the behaviour may have been affected by bullying, harassment, discrimination, unmet needs, disability, SEND, mental health needs, exploitation, abuse or other safeguarding concerns.

v. If, on the balance of probabilities, the Headteacher is satisfied that the students did what is alleged, they will then determine what sanction, if any, is reasonable and proportionate. Establishing the fact does not automatically mean that suspension or permanent exclusion will be imposed.

5. Safeguarding, SEND and Equality

5.1. The school will not suspend or permanently exclude a student because of disability or additional needs that the school is required to accommodate. Before imposing a sanction, the school will consider its duties under the Equality Act 2010, including reasonable adjustments for disabled students, and will consider whether SEND, unmet needs or other vulnerabilities may have contributed to the behaviour. Where behaviour raises a safeguarding concern, the school's safeguarding procedures will take precedence, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be involved as appropriate.

6. Exercise of Discretion

6.1. In reaching a decision, the Headteacher will always look at each case on its own merits. Therefore, fixing a standard penalty for an action is both unfair and inappropriate.

6.2. In considering whether permanent exclusion is the most appropriate sanction, the Headteacher and Governors when they meet to consider the Headteachers decision to exclude will consider:

i. The gravity of the incident, or series of incidents, and whether it constitutes a serious breach of the school's Behaviour Policy.

ii. The effect that the student remaining in the school would have on the education and welfare of other students and staff. Possession of an offensive weapon will be treated as an exceptionally serious matter and may result in permanent exclusion, but the school will still consider the individual circumstances, available evidence, safeguarding implications and whether the sanction is proportionate.

6.3. Where a review of a permanent exclusion is requested, the reviewing Governors and Trustees will consider the Headteacher's reasons, the evidence relied upon, any representations from the parents and student, and any support or interventions used by the school before the decision, where relevant.

7. Lunchtime Exclusion

7.1. In exceptional circumstances, a pupil may be suspended from the school premises for the lunchtime period. Parents will be notified, and safe supervision arrangements must be agreed. Any such lunchtime suspension will be recorded and managed under this policy.

8. Behaviour Outside of School

8.1. Students' behaviour outside of school on school "business" for example school trips and journeys, games lessons or a work experience placement is subject to the school's Behaviour Policy. Behaviour outside school that is not part of a school activity may also be considered where there is a sufficiently strong connection with the school, its students or staff, the safety or welfare of members of the school community, the reputation of the school, or the orderly running of the school. Any sanction will be reasonable, proportionate and consistent with the Behaviour Policy and this policy.

9. Drug Related Exclusions

9.1. In deciding whether suspension or permanent exclusion is appropriate for a drug-related incident, the Headteacher may seek advice from the local authority, police, health services or another appropriate specialist, where relevant.

9.2. See the school's Misuse of Substances and Drugs Policy.

© The Vine Christian School 2026