

Suspension & Permanent Exclusion Policy

(Independent School Standards: Parts 9, 16 & 34)

Important note: The term ‘Spark’ or ‘Spark Academy Group’ applies to both our tutoring and independent school settings, also referred to as ‘provision’, ‘school’ or ‘organisation’ interchangeably.

Guidance & Legislation

- Section 51a of the Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011
- The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012
- 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
- The School Inspection Handbook, which defines ‘off-rolling’.
- DfE Behaviour in Schools (2024)

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**We Build Communities
Where Everyone Belongs,
Grows & Thrives.**



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Section 1: Introduction

- At Spark, we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and emotionally attuned environment where every pupil can belong, grow and thrive. We recognise that our learners often have complex needs, including neurodivergence, social emotional and mental health difficulties, and histories of disrupted education or trauma. As such, our approach to behaviour and crisis intervention is therapeutic, relational and always rooted in compassion.
- This policy outlines how suspensions and permanent exclusions are managed across our school and tutoring services. These actions are only ever taken as a last resort and after all appropriate therapeutic, personalised and preventative strategies have been explored and documented. Our aim is to safeguard every pupil's right to education while also protecting the emotional and physical safety of the wider community.
- We do not view exclusion as a punishment. Instead, we recognise **it as a serious and lawful decision that must be made in exceptional circumstances**, where a pupil's behaviour represents a serious breach of expectations or where their continued presence would significantly hinder the safety or education of others.
- This policy complies with the relevant Independent School Standards, particularly paragraphs 9 and 16, and is consistent with the Department for Education's statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion (2024). It also upholds our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice to consider reasonable adjustments and avoid discriminatory practice.

Above all, we hold in mind that behaviour is communication. Our responsibility is to listen, understand and respond with care. This means that any consideration of suspension or exclusion is always guided by the principles of fairness, proportionality, trauma-informed practice and the best interests of the child.

Definitions

To ensure clarity and consistency, the following terms are used throughout this policy:

- **Suspension:** A suspension is when a pupil is temporarily removed from school or tuition for a specified number of days due to a serious breach of expectations. The pupil remains on roll and must be provided with appropriate work or remote learning during the period of suspension. A reintegration meeting will be offered to take place before or at the point of the pupil's return. While the school strongly encourages parents to attend, the pupil cannot be prevented from returning if parents are unwilling or unable to do so.

- **Permanent Exclusion:** A permanent exclusion is when a pupil is formally removed from the school roll because of a serious and sustained breach of expectations or a single incident that poses significant harm. It is only considered when the safety or well-being of others is at risk or when all other interventions have failed. This decision is only made by the Headteacher and is subject to a formal review process.
- **Managed Move:** A managed move is a voluntary and planned transfer of a pupil to another provision or setting. It must always be agreed by the pupil's family, the receiving school and the local authority (as all pupils have EHCPs). A managed move will only be arranged as part of a co-produced multi-agency support plan, and will never be used as a substitute for permanent exclusion.
- **Removal from Roll:** This refers to a pupil being taken off the school's admission register. Lawful reasons include:
 - Permanent exclusion (following due process)
 - Transfer to another setting
 - Elective home education (when voluntarily initiated by parents)
 - Relocation or emigrationAll removals from roll are reported to the local authority in line with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.
- **Off-Rolling:** Off-rolling is an **unlawful or unethical practice** where a pupil is removed from roll without a legitimate reason, often to improve school data or avoid support obligations. Spark Academy Group does not engage in off-rolling and actively monitors to prevent it.
- **Therapeutic Thinking Approach:** This is the relational and trauma-informed model used across Spark Academy Group. It includes proactive regulation strategies, reflective responses to behaviour, and personalised support plans designed to stabilise, support and strengthen pupils. It underpins how we prevent exclusions and how we plan for reintegration when they occur.
- **PBSP (Positive Behaviour Support Plan):** A personalised plan developed for pupils who present with distressed or unsafe behaviour. It outlines triggers, early signs of dysregulation, support strategies and agreed approaches. PBSPs are co-produced with the pupil, their family and key adults.

Ethos & Principles

- At Spark Academy Group, our response to behaviour is not rooted in control or compliance, but in connection, curiosity and care. We recognise that many of our pupils have experienced exclusion, misunderstanding or adversity in previous settings. For these learners, safety must be felt before progress can be made.
- Our behaviour and safeguarding ethos is founded on therapeutic principles, underpinned by emotional regulation, relational safety and personalised support. We do not seek to manage behaviour through sanctions or fear, but to understand what lies beneath and create the conditions for change. This policy is an extension of our commitment to the whole child - it ensures that even the most serious decisions are made with dignity, accountability and compassion.

We are guided by the belief that:

- Every child is worthy of belonging, no matter their behaviour
- All behaviour is a form of communication, not a character flaw
- Emotional safety is the foundation of all learning and healing
- Firm boundaries and high expectations can be delivered without shame or exclusion
- Our approach aligns with the **Independent School Standards**, particularly Part 3 which requires schools to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils, and Part 2 which emphasises personal development, relationships and behaviour. We also reflect the expectations of Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework, which calls on schools to be inclusive, emotionally safe and responsive to individual need.

We aim to avoid suspension or exclusion wherever possible by:

- Responding early and relationally to distress or dysregulation
- Using personalised behaviour support plans (PBSPs), risk assessments and therapeutic strategies
- Engaging families, external professionals and pupils themselves in co-constructing solutions
- However, we recognise that there may be rare occasions where a pupil's behaviour poses a serious and sustained risk to themselves or others, or where all other avenues have been exhausted. In such cases, exclusion may be necessary - but it will never be the first step, and it will never be taken lightly.

We hold ourselves accountable to the same values we teach. When exclusion becomes unavoidable, our duty is not only to follow a lawful process, but to do so in a way that

maintains relationship, reduces shame and opens the door for repair.

Off-Rolling

- At Spark, we have a firm and transparent commitment to safeguarding pupils from the practice of off-rolling. Off-rolling is not only contrary to statutory guidance, it is also deeply at odds with our values of inclusion, dignity and equity. Every pupil at Spark has the right to remain in education unless a lawful, child-centred and clearly recorded process has been followed.
- We define off-rolling as the removal of a pupil from the school roll without a formal permanent exclusion or a legitimate, agreed reason. This includes any situation where a child is withdrawn from the school or tutoring programme in a way that avoids scrutiny, sidesteps a personalised support plan, or seeks to protect data such as attendance or outcomes.

We do not and will never:

- Pressure or encourage a parent or carer to remove their child from roll
- Use the threat of exclusion to coerce a transfer to another school or provision
- Recommend elective home education as an alternative to proper intervention
- End tuition placements without multi-agency involvement and a clear rationale

Permanent exclusion is the only lawful reason we would ever remove a child from our roll unless:

- A parent formally requests elective home education and this is done voluntarily and without pressure
- A pupil transitions to a new provision as part of an agreed move, with full oversight from the local authority
- The family relocates and confirms that the pupil is now registered elsewhere. The school will verify this directly with the receiving provision to ensure the pupil is on roll, safe, and attending. All safeguarding (Child Protection) records, EHCP documentation, and other relevant information will be securely transferred in line with statutory guidance (KCSIE and data protection requirements). We comply with our duties under the **Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006**, including notifying the local authority of any removal from roll in advance, and keeping thorough records of decision-making and family communication.
- Where tuition placements end under Spark Academy Tutoring, we ensure the local authority commissioner is informed in writing, safeguarding is reviewed, and the ending of support is never used to bypass proper review or accountability.
- We understand that Ofsted considers off-rolling to be a serious safeguarding concern. The **Proprietor and Headteacher** jointly monitor patterns in enrolment,

withdrawal, and exclusion to ensure that no decisions put pupils at risk or undermine the integrity of our provision. Any emerging patterns are reviewed termly, with scrutiny of whether pupils are leaving for legitimate reasons (e.g. family relocation, agreed managed move, transition to a more appropriate setting). The Proprietor will hold the Headteacher to account for ensuring that all pupil moves are lawful, transparent, and always in the child's best interests.

- All pupils deserve to feel held in their education- even when their journey becomes complex. For us, ending a placement is never about removing a difficulty, but about doing what is right, fair and transparent for every child.

Purpose & Aims

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all decisions around suspension and permanent exclusion are lawful, proportionate and child-centred. It exists to protect the rights of every pupil while upholding the safety, welfare and dignity of the school community.

At Spark Academy Group, we aim to:

- Prevent exclusion through early intervention, relational support and personalised planning
- Respond to behaviour through understanding, not punishment
- Ensure that any suspension or exclusion is used only when absolutely necessary and with due regard to safeguarding, SEND and equality considerations
- Maintain clear, fair and transparent procedures that comply with all legal requirements
- Involve pupils and families in the decision-making process, ensuring their voice is heard and recorded
- Provide high-quality support before, during and after any exclusion to reduce disruption and promote re-engagement
- Monitor and analyse data on suspensions, exclusions and removals from roll to ensure equity and prevent disproportionate impact on any group
- This policy is designed not only to meet statutory duties under the **Independent School Standards** (particularly paragraphs 9, 16 and 34), but to reflect the heart of our mission: to create a therapeutic and inclusive community where no child is left behind.
- We hold ourselves to a high standard because we know that exclusion, even when necessary, is a significant moment in a pupil's life. Our intent is to handle such moments with care, clarity and integrity- and to use them as opportunities for reflection, repair and renewed support.

Section 2: Before Exclusion – Preventative & Therapeutic Measures

At Spark Academy Group, we are committed to preventing the need for suspension or exclusion through the consistent application of our **Therapeutic Thinking Approach**, as outlined in our **Positive Relationships Policy**. We view behaviour as communication and believe that with the right support, all pupils can learn new ways to regulate, relate and recover.

We embed preventative measures across the entire provision. These are not reactive responses, but foundational to our daily practice and the culture of our school and tutoring services. Every member of staff plays a role in creating the emotionally safe, structured and nurturing environments that reduce the likelihood of crisis.

Relational Safety & Emotional Regulation

- Daily emotional check-ins with a trusted adult
- Access to therapeutic spaces for pupils who are overwhelmed or dysregulated
- Use of the SSS model (Stabilise, Support, Strengthen) to scaffold support at every stage of a pupil's experience
- Predictable routines, visuals and transitions to promote a sense of control and security

Personalised Support & Learning

- All pupils at risk of exclusion have a **Positive Behaviour Support Plan (PBSP)** and, where appropriate, an individual risk assessment
- PBSPs are co-produced with the pupil, their family and key professionals and reviewed regularly
- Our plans focus on what works for each individual, with an emphasis on pre-emptive regulation strategies, sensory support and clear relational boundaries
- Pupils showing early signs of emotional distress or emerging risk behaviours are identified during weekly staff briefings and multi-agency huddles
- We act early to prevent escalation, offering increased pastoral support, staff coaching and revised PBSP strategies before crisis emerges

Therapeutic Curriculum & Modelling

- Behaviour is taught, not assumed. We explicitly teach emotional literacy, self-regulation and social problem-solving through the curriculum and pastoral time
- Staff model respectful communication and co-regulation throughout the day
- Incidents of dysregulation are responded to with calm, attuned adults who seek first to understand and then to repair

Key Adults & Safety Planning

- Each pupil has access to a trusted key adult who provides relational safety, consistent boundaries and calm co-regulation
- When exclusion risk increases, safety planning meetings are held to review what the child needs, identify what is breaking down and renew support without shame

Multi-Agency & Family Partnerships

- Families are involved from the earliest signs of concern. We approach families as equal partners in understanding and supporting their child
- We work closely with external professionals, including therapists, educational psychologists, social workers and local authority SEND teams, to ensure all needs are recognised and supported
- Where appropriate, we request early help, conduct EHCP reviews or escalate to safeguarding referrals

Restorative Practice

- We prioritise restoration and repair after any incident. Pupils are supported to reflect, take responsibility and reconnect with others
- The RRR model (Reflect, Repair, Restore) is used consistently across the school to facilitate healing and learning after conflict
- Restoration is never rushed. It is done relationally and with full attention to the child's readiness and voice

Monitoring & Oversight

- All pupils identified as being at risk of suspension or exclusion are monitored through termly reports prepared by the Headteacher and shared with the Proprietor.
- These reports will include: the number and type of suspensions, reintegration outcomes, interventions used, and any pupils at risk of permanent exclusion.
- This enables leaders to review patterns, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and ensure that exclusions are not used in place of support.
- The Proprietor will review these reports with the Headteacher to ensure that:
 - exclusions are lawful, reasonable, and fair;
 - preventative strategies and therapeutic approaches are in place;
 - lessons learned are fed back into policy and practice.
- Where appropriate, findings will also inform staff training, SEND provision, and the school's improvement planning.
- Exclusion data is monitored for trends relating to SEND, ethnicity, social care involvement and other protected characteristics

Commitment to Equity

- We recognise that exclusions nationally disproportionately affect pupils with SEND, those from minoritised backgrounds and pupils with social care involvement. At Spark, we are committed to addressing this through personalised intervention, careful monitoring of trends and inclusive practice that challenges systemic bias. Every exclusion risk is examined through the lens of equity, not just behaviour.
- These strategies are not optional extras. They are the foundation of how we help pupils feel safe enough to grow and challenged enough to thrive. When pupils feel understood, valued and supported, exclusion becomes less likely. Our goal is always to meet the need, not remove the child.

Section 3: Authority to Exclude

The Headteacher's Powers to Use Exclusion

- The decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil is never taken lightly at Spark Academy Group. It is a serious action that is only considered when all other routes have been explored and exhausted, and where it is necessary to protect the emotional or physical safety of the pupil or others, or to preserve the integrity of the learning environment.
- A pupil's behaviour outside school can be considered grounds for a suspension or permanent exclusion. Any decision of a headteacher, including suspension or permanent exclusion, must be made in line with the principles of administrative law, i.e. that it is: lawful (with respect to the legislation relating directly to suspensions and permanent exclusions and a school's wider legal duties); **reasonable; fair; and proportionate**.
- Only the **Headteacher or Acting Headteacher** may authorise a suspension or exclusion.
- A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year), or permanently excluded.
- They should inform the pupil about how their views have been factored into any decision made.
- Where relevant, the pupil should be given support to express their view, including through advocates such as parents or, if the pupil has one, a social worker.

All decisions must be:

- Lawful and compliant with statutory guidance
- Rational, fair and based on a full understanding of the incident
- Proportionate in response to the context and severity of behaviour
- Rooted in accurate records, professional judgement and pupil history
- Considerate of the pupil's EHCP, SEN needs, communication profile and social circumstances

We recognise that many of our pupils have experienced trauma, exclusion or relational breakdown in the past. Exclusion can risk reinforcing those experiences. As such, we approach every decision with caution, empathy and trauma-informed reflection. We seek to understand not only what happened, but what it may be communicating and what the pupil might be feeling.

The Proprietor's Review & Oversight

- The decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil rests solely with the Headteacher (or Acting Headteacher).
- The Proprietor will reconsider or overturn exclusion decisions in line with Section 6 of this policy. In addition to the role of Exclusion Review Meetings, the Proprietor conducts regular monitoring and oversight but also has a duty to ensure that the exclusion process is applied fairly, lawfully, and in line with statutory guidance and the school's policy.
- The Proprietor fulfils this role through regular monitoring and oversight. This includes:
 - Reviewing records of all suspensions and exclusions.
 - Checking for patterns or disproportionality (e.g. by SEND, ethnicity, gender, looked-after status).
 - Ensuring exclusions are not being used in place of therapeutic support, reasonable adjustments, or planned interventions.
 - Making sure statutory notifications (to parents, the local authority, and where relevant, placing authorities) are completed on time.
- The Proprietor may also commission external advice or seek independent input where needed to assure the robustness of the process.
- Findings from this monitoring are used to strengthen practice and are considered as part of the school's termly safeguarding and behaviour reviews.

Section 4: Making The Decision to Exclude

How Decisions Are Made

Before any decision to exclude is confirmed, the following steps will be taken:

- A full and fair review of the incident, including accounts from involved parties where appropriate.
- Consideration of any known triggers, dysregulation factors, unmet needs or communication breakdowns.
- Consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENDCo, therapeutic lead and any key adults involved with the pupil and social workers.
- Review of the pupil's **Positive Behaviour Support Plan**, risk assessment and recent interventions.
- Exploration of whether the behaviour signals a **safeguarding need**, mental health deterioration or breakdown in provision, and whether an emergency EHCP review or multi-agency meeting would be more appropriate
- Opportunity for the pupil and their parent or carer to express their views, which will be considered with respect and care.

- All decisions will also take into account our responsibilities under the **Equality Act 2010** and the **SEND Code of Practice**. We will consider whether the behaviour may have arisen as a result of the pupil's disability or neurodevelopmental needs, and ensure that all reasonable adjustments have been applied before reaching a final decision.
- Exclusions are never used as a reactive or punitive measure. They are always the last step in a carefully documented process, undertaken when all other efforts to support have been unsuccessful, and where the risks involved cannot be managed safely without a temporary or permanent change.
- When establishing the facts in relation to a suspension or permanent exclusion decision the headteacher must apply the civil standard of proof, i.e. '**on the balance of probabilities**' it is more likely than not that a fact is true, rather than the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt.' This means that the headteacher should accept that something happened if it is more likely that it happened than that it did not happen. The headteacher must take account of their legal duty of care when sending a pupil home following an exclusion.
- Once a decision to suspend or exclude is made, we follow a clear and lawful process in line with statutory guidance. This includes timely communication with all relevant parties, formal documentation, appropriate learning provision and a structured reintegration or exit plan. These procedures are detailed in the next section.

The Headteacher will:

- **Investigate and gather evidence:** Ensure that a thorough investigation has been carried out and consider all the relevant facts and evidence on the balance of probabilities, including whether the incident(s) leading to the exclusion were provoked. As per the School Positive Relationships (Behaviour) policy, the Headteacher may consider the behaviour of a student outside school as grounds for an exclusion or suspension.
- **Student voice:** Allow and encourage the student to give their version of events. The Headteacher will give the student an opportunity to present his or her case taking into account their age and understanding, before taking the decision to exclude or suspend unless it would not be appropriate to do so. Students who need support to express their views will be allowed support of an advocate, such as a parent/carers or social worker.
- **Vulnerable student:** Find out whether the student comes into a category that is known to be a particularly vulnerable group (e.g., students with SEND, free school meal (FSM) students; looked after children; students with a social worker; certain ethnic groups; (for example traveller children) and consider whether all supportive and preventative strategies have been fully utilised.
- **SEND:** Where a student has any SEND, the Headteacher will consider if any reasonable adjustments need to be made and use the [Avoiding Exclusion Toolkit](#) to

ensure the student has been provided with adequate support and to consider whether any further support can be provided. The Headteacher will seek to understand the underlying cause of the behaviour and consider whether the student's SEND influenced their behaviour and if it did, whether it is still appropriate to issue the sanction or any sanction at all.

- **Social worker/VSH:** Where a student has a social worker or a Virtual School Head (VSH) the Headteacher will ensure they and, as appropriate, any parent/carers; the Designated Safeguarding Lead; and the designated lead for Looked-After Children are involved as early as possible in relevant conversations.
- **Consider alternatives:** Consider whether all relevant initial intervention strategies set out in the Behaviour in Schools guidance and alternative solutions have been explored, including an offsite direction or managed move.
- **Mitigating circumstances:** Take into account possible short-term mitigating circumstances such as bereavement, mental health issues etc.
- **Safeguarding:** Consider whether there are any safeguarding concerns and whether the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be consulted.
- **Seek guidance** from appropriate senior leaders, the SENCo, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and, where relevant, external professionals, while recognising that the decision to exclude rests solely with the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will not:

- Exclude or suspend any pupil for non-disciplinary reasons. Decisions will always be made on the grounds of serious breaches of the school's behaviour expectations, or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others. In the absence of a governing board disciplinary committee, all exclusion decisions are subject to review by the Proprietor to ensure fairness, proportionality, and compliance with statutory guidance.
- Use exclusion informally or unofficially, students will not be sent home to 'cool off' even with parent/carers' permission
- Extend or 'convert' a suspension into a permanent exclusion. In exceptional cases, usually where further evidence has come to light, a further suspension may be issued to begin immediately after the first suspension; or a permanent exclusion may be issued to begin immediately after the end of the suspension.

CCTV, Witness Evidence & Pupil Views

Before any decision to exclude is confirmed, the following steps will be taken:

- Spark Academy Group uses Close Circuit Television (CCTV) within its premises. This is to provide a safe and secure environment for pupils, staff and visitors. If behavioural incidents are recorded on CCTV, the footage may be viewed as part of the investigation and the content considered before imposing a sanction.
- If CCTV is relied upon for a decision on a suspension or exclusion, then it will be shown in some format (redacted as necessary) at any Proprietor review meeting. Please see the CCTV policy and privacy notices for more information.
- Where witness evidence is relied upon, whether that be from a pupil or a staff member, the statement(s) will be provided at any formal review panel convened by the Proprietor (or an independent complaints panel, where applicable). All statements will be signed and dated unless the Headteacher has good reason to protect the anonymity of the relevant witness. Reasons may include the risk of reprisals or safeguarding concerns.

Section 5: Suspensions Procedure

Step 1: Decision to Suspend

- The **Headteacher** decides on suspension after considering all alternatives.
- Must be lawful, reasonable, proportionate, and compliant with Equality Act duties.
- A suspension is issued for serious breach of the school's behaviour policy or where allowing as pupil to remain would seriously harm the education and welfare of others.
- Record rationale in pupil's file and log reason(s) using the DfE categories (up to three reasons) – **See Appendix A.**
- Suspensions **may not exceed 45 school days** in a single academic year.
- For pupils with an EHCP, the school will also consider whether an emergency annual review is required. The local authority SEN team will be consulted before exclusion is finalised to explore whether needs can be met through alternative arrangements.

Step 2: Immediate Notifications (Same Day As Decision)

- **Immediate Proprietor notification:**
The **Headteacher** will make the Proprietor aware of the decision to suspend the pupil without delay.
- **Immediate Parent notification:**
The **Headteacher** is **responsible** for contacting parents and issuing the letter without delay.

■ **The letter includes:**

- Lengths and reason(s) for suspension
- Start and end dates
- Parents' rights to make representations to the Proprietor
- The process for requesting a meeting
- Contact details for impartial advice
- The details of work provision for days 1-5

■ **Immediate Agency notifications:**

If the pupil has a social worker or is looked-after, the **Headteacher** will notify social workers and virtual school heads without delay. This will be done on the same day as the suspension or exclusion decision. **The Proprietor** will notify the Local Authority without delay of every suspension and permanent exclusion, regardless of length, to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. The proprietor may delegate the administrative task to the Headteacher, but retains full accountability for ensuring that notifications are made.

Step 3: Learning Provision & Therapeutic Support During Suspension

Learning Provision

- **The Headteacher** will be responsible for ensuring that **school teachers** will set and mark work that is accessible to the pupil for days 1-5. Pupils suspended for up to 5 days will be provided with remote or home-based learning, matched to their learning profile.
- If the suspension exceeds 5 school days, the **Proprietor** is responsible for full-time suitable alternative education must be provided. Parents must be notified of the placement details at least 48 hours before provision begins. This will be either on-site in an alternative therapeutic setting or via an approved alternative provider.
- Where pupils have EHCPs or additional learning needs, learning tasks will be adapted to ensure accessibility.

Emotional Holding & Relational Support

- Pupils remain part of the Spark community while suspended. A **trusted key adult** will stay in touch to provide reassurance and co-regulation.
- Therapeutic staff will offer check-ins and help the pupil process the incident where needed.

Step 4: Review Duties for Suspensions

The Proprietor has a duty to review suspensions and permanent exclusions in specific circumstances. These reviews ensure that decisions are fair, lawful, reasonable, and proportionate, and that parents and pupils have a clear voice in the process. This section follows the [Department for Education's Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance \(England, 2024\)](#).

Step 4a: Suspensions of More Than 15 School Days in a Term

A review meeting must be held and the meeting must take place **within 15 school days** of the Proprietor being notified of the suspension.

Who will attend:

- Proprietor (chair and decision-maker).
- Headteacher (presents reasons and evidence).
- Parents or carers (may bring a representative).
- The pupil (invited if appropriate).
- The pupil's social worker (if the pupil has one).
- The Virtual School Head (if the pupil is looked after).
- Any interpreter or support staff needed to ensure full participation (e.g. SEN support, BSL interpreter).

What will happen:

- The Headteacher presents the decision and evidence.
- Parents and pupil (if attending) present their views.
- All written representations are considered.
- The Proprietor considers whether the decision was lawful, reasonable, and fair, whether SEND/disability factors were addressed, and whether the behaviour policy was followed.

Outcome:

- The Proprietor reviews whether the decision to suspend was lawful, reasonable, fair, and in line with statutory guidance. Parents are notified in writing without delay of the outcome of the review. A full record, including minutes and evidence, will be kept on the pupil's file, and any necessary corrections to the pupil's record (e.g. removal or amendment of an exclusion entry if found to be invalid) will be made.

Step 4b: Suspensions Totalling Between 6 & 15 School Days in a Term

A review meeting must be held. The meeting must take place **within 50 school days** of the Proprietor being notified of the suspension.

Who will attend:

- Proprietor (chair and decision-maker).
- Headteacher (presents reasons and evidence).
- Parents or carers (may bring a representative).
- The pupil (invited if appropriate).
- The pupil's social worker (if the pupil has one).
- The Virtual School Head (if the pupil is looked after).
- Any interpreter or support staff needed to ensure full participation (e.g. SEN support, BSL interpreter).

What will happen:

- The Headteacher presents the decision and evidence.
- Parents and pupil (if attending) present their views.
- All written representations are considered.
- The Proprietor considers whether the decision was lawful, reasonable, and fair, whether SEND/disability factors were addressed, and whether the behaviour policy was followed.

Outcome:

The Proprietor decides **whether to uphold the suspension or remove all records from the pupils file**. Parents are notified **in writing without delay**. A full record, including minutes and evidence, will be kept on the pupil's file.

Step 4c: Suspensions of 5 School Days or Fewer in a Term

No formal review meeting is required. The Proprietor does not have a legal duty to arrange a hearing for short suspensions of this length.

- **Parental representations:**
 - Parents still have the right to make their views known in writing.
 - If parents submit written representations, the Proprietor must read them carefully, consider them in the context of the case, and respond in writing.
 - The written response must confirm:
 - That the representations were received and reviewed.
 - How the views of the parents were taken into account.
 - Whether any action or support will be put in place as a result.
- **Acknowledgement of pupil's circumstances:**
 - Where the pupil has **special educational needs or a disability**, or is a **looked-after child**, the Proprietor will explicitly record that these factors have been considered in relation to the suspension.
 - Any reasonable adjustments, additional support, or follow-up actions identified will be shared with parents in writing.
- **Record keeping:**
 - A written record of the representations, the Proprietor's consideration, and the written response will be kept on the pupil's file.
 - This record will include the date the representations were received, the issues raised by parents, and the Proprietor's reasoning.
 - This record will also be included in the termly analysis of suspensions, so that patterns can be monitored.
- **Communication with parents:**
 - Parents will receive the Proprietor's response **without delay and normally within five school days** of their representations being submitted.
 - The response will be sent in writing (letter or secure email), and a copy retained by the school.
- **Reintegration:**
 - Even for short suspensions, a reintegration meeting will be offered on or before the pupil's return to school. This meeting will focus on support, adjustments, and how to help the pupil succeed moving forward.
 - The school strongly encourages parent attendance, but the pupil's return cannot be delayed or refused if parents are unwilling or unable to attend.

Step 4d: Suspensions or Exclusions Affecting Public Examinations or National Curriculum Tests

- Where a suspension or exclusion would mean a pupil misses a public exam or test, the **Proprietor** must make **every reasonable effort to meet before the exam/test takes place**.
- If it is not possible to meet in time, the **Proprietor** must consider the case urgently based on the written evidence (“on the papers”) before the exam/test.
- Parents will be notified of the outcome in writing without delay.

Step 5: Decision After Review Meetings

After a review meeting, or after considering parental representations, the **Proprietor** must make a clear decision about the suspension.

Possible Outcomes Are:

1. Reinstatement

- The pupil may be reinstated **immediately** or from a specified date.
- If reinstated, the **Headteacher** will work with parents and the pupil to prepare a reintegration plan that sets out the support and adjustments needed.
- Any lost learning time will be addressed through additional support, catch-up work, or therapeutic input where appropriate.

2. Uphold the Headteacher’s decision

- The suspension will stand as originally issued.
- The **Headteacher** will ensure that work continues to be set and marked during the suspension period, and that a reintegration meeting takes place before the pupil returns.
- If the suspension is long enough to trigger day-6 provision, the **Proprietor** will confirm that this is in place.

Communication of the Decision:

- Parents will be notified of the decision **immediately in writing by the Proprietor**. This will be done immediately after the review.
- The written outcome will:
 - Confirm the decision (reinstate or uphold).
 - Summarise the reasons for the decision.
 - Acknowledge any parental representations and how they were considered.

- Provide details of the next steps, such as reintegration planning.
- Where appropriate, the letter will also be copied to the pupil's social worker and/or the Virtual School Head.

Step 6: Record-Keeping Requirements for Suspension

- These records will be retained in line with statutory guidance and data protection requirements.
- The **Proprietor** is responsible for ensuring that a full written record of the review is kept. The **Headteacher** may carry out the administrative task of storing records in the pupil's file and on the schools online safeguarding portal, however, the Proprietor must ensure that this has been done correctly.
- A full written record of the review will be kept on the pupil's file. This will include:
 - The date of the meeting.
 - A list of attendees.
 - Minutes of the discussion.
 - All evidence presented by the Headteacher.
 - Any written or verbal representations from parents, the pupil, or external professionals.
 - The decision reached by the Proprietor, with reasons.

Step 7: Reintegration After Suspension

A reintegration meeting will be arranged with the pupil and their parents or carers on or before the day of the pupil's return to school.

The school strongly encourages parent attendance, but the pupil's return cannot be delayed if parents are unwilling or unable to attend. In such cases, the meeting will still go ahead with the pupil and relevant staff, and parents will be offered alternative opportunities to engage.

The Headteacher will lead the meeting, supported by relevant staff such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the SENCo, or a trusted key adult who knows the pupil well.

Purpose of the Reintegration Meeting

- Welcome the pupil back into the school community positively.
- Rebuild trust and relationships between the pupil, staff, and peers.
- Reflect on the incident in a safe and supported way, considering any underlying needs.

- Agree a clear **reintegration plan** that identifies the support, therapeutic interventions, and reasonable adjustments that will help the pupil succeed.
- Reassure parents that their child will be supported and listened to, and that home and school will work in partnership.

Who Attends the Meeting

- The **Headteacher** (chair).
- The **pupil's parents or carers**, who may bring a representative if they wish.
- The **pupil** (where appropriate, depending on age, need, and readiness).
- A **key member of staff** who knows the pupil well (e.g. class teacher, tutor, or learning mentor).
- The **SENCo** or therapeutic lead, where relevant, to ensure that special educational needs and mental health considerations are addressed.
- Where the pupil is looked after or has a social worker, the **social worker** and/or **Virtual School Head** will also be invited.

Content of the Reintegration Plan

- Identify the pupil's strengths and what helps them feel safe and ready to learn.
- Note any reasonable adjustments or additional supports that need to be in place (e.g. movement breaks, safe spaces, adult check-ins, reduced timetable if appropriate).
- Set out strategies agreed with the pupil and family for managing emotions, behaviour, or triggers.
- Outline restorative actions, where appropriate, to repair relationships or harm caused (in line with our "Reflect, Repair, Restore" approach).
- Confirm who will monitor the plan and when it will be reviewed.

Therapeutic & Relational Approach

- Reintegration will always focus on **connection before correction**: building relationships and creating safety before discussing behaviour.
- The meeting will use language that is supportive, not punitive, and will avoid re-traumatising the pupil.

- Staff will explore whether the incident reflected unmet needs (e.g. anxiety, communication difficulties, sensory regulation), and will ensure that these needs are reflected in the plan.
- Restorative conversations may be facilitated to rebuild peer or staff relationships, with the pupil's consent.

Follow-Up & Monitoring of the Reintegration Plan

- A copy of the reintegration plan will be shared with staff who work with the pupil.
- The plan will be reviewed regularly (for example, after two weeks) to check whether the support is effective.
- Records of the meeting and plan will be kept on the pupil's file and monitored by the Headteacher and SENCo.

Step 8: Monitoring & Follow-Up After Suspension

- The **Proprietor** will review exclusion decisions termly as part of a broader monitoring of suspension and exclusion data, to check for patterns or disproportionate impact on groups of pupils (e.g. those with SEND). The Proprietor will look for patterns, equality implications or safeguarding concerns.
- The **Headteacher** supports by providing suspension and or exclusion data to the proprietor. They will co-ordinate reintegration plans and oversee staff implementations of lessons learned.
- Lessons learned from each review will inform behaviour policy updates, staff training, and pupil support strategies.

Section 6: Permanent Exclusions (PEX) Procedure

Step 1: Decision to Permanently Exclude

- Permanent exclusion is the **most serious sanction a school can use**. It will only be applied where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others, or where the breach of the behaviour policy is so serious that no other response is appropriate.
- This section should be read alongside the **Suspension Procedure**. The following procedure will be followed, which **differs from suspensions in key respects**.

Step 2: Immediate Notifications

- **Responsibility:** Headteacher (parents, social worker/VSH); Proprietor (Local Authority)
- Parents will be notified by telephone on the same day, followed by a written letter without delay. The letter will confirm that the exclusion is permanent, explain the reasons, outline the right to make representations to the Proprietor, and signpost impartial advice.
- If the pupil has a social worker or is looked after, the Headteacher will notify the social worker and Virtual School Head immediately.
- The Proprietor will notify the Local Authority without delay. If the pupil lives in a different local authority, the pupil's home Local Authority will also be notified.

Step 3: Days 1-5 Work & Supervision

- **Responsibility:** Headteacher (work); Parents (supervision duty)
- The school will provide and mark suitable work for home study during the first five school days.
- Parents must ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours for these days unless reasonable justification is provided. This duty will be explained in the exclusion letter.

Step 4: From Day 6 – Full-time Education

- **Responsibility:** Local Authority (arrangement); Headteacher (liaison)
- Unlike suspensions, for permanent exclusions it is the **Local Authority's** duty to arrange suitable full-time education from the sixth school day.
- Parents must receive written details of this provision, normally at least 48 hours before it begins. The Headteacher will liaise with the Local Authority to support a smooth transition.
- The school will share relevant strategies, therapeutic plans, and safeguarding information with the new provision to ensure continuity of care.

Step 5: Proprietor Review Meeting

- **Responsibility:** Proprietor (arrange and chair); Headteacher (papers and evidence)
- For every permanent exclusion, the Proprietor must convene a review meeting within **15 school days of being notified**.
- Parents, the pupil (where appropriate), the Headteacher, the SENCo, social worker and/or Virtual School Head (if applicable) will be invited.
- Papers will be circulated in advance, normally five school days before the meeting.
- If a public examination or national curriculum test is imminent, the Proprietor will take reasonable steps to meet before the exam, or will consider urgent written representations.

Step 6: Decision Following Review

- **Responsibility:** Proprietor
- The Proprietor will decide either to reinstate the pupil (immediately or from a set date) or to uphold the permanent exclusion.
- The decision will be confirmed in writing to parents without delay and copied to the Local Authority and, where relevant, the social worker and Virtual School Head.
- As an independent school, there is no statutory right of appeal to an Independent Review Panel. **Parents may use the school's complaints procedure if they wish to challenge the decision further.**

Step 7: Removal from the Admissions Register

Responsibility: Proprietor (authorise); Headteacher / Admin (implement)

A pupil's name will only be removed from the register when:

- **Fifteen school days have passed since parents were notified** of the decision and no complaint/appeal has been lodged, or
- Parents confirm in writing that they will not pursue a complaint/appeal.
- Attendance codes will be applied correctly during this period.
- When removal takes place, the school will notify the Local Authority and provide the required information.

Step 8: Transfer of Records

- **Responsibility:** Headteacher/Admin (CTF); DSL (safeguarding file)
- The **Common Transfer File** will be sent to the new school or the Local Authority within 15 school days of removal from roll.
- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** will ensure that the child protection file is transferred securely and promptly, and that confirmation of receipt is obtained.

Step 9: Therapeutic & Reflective Practice

- **Responsibility:** Headteacher and Proprietor jointly
- Even where permanent exclusion is upheld, the school will:
 - Record and represent the pupil's voice.
 - Communicate openly with parents and carers and signpost to advice services.
 - Reflect on the exclusion as part of whole-school learning, ensuring policies, therapeutic practice, and staff training are updated where appropriate.
- The Proprietor will monitor exclusion data to ensure patterns are identified and that practice remains lawful, proportionate, and non-discriminatory.

Step 10: Cancelling A Permanent Exclusion

- We acknowledge that situations can evolve. If new evidence emerges or a procedural concern is identified, the Headteacher has the right to withdraw the exclusion.
- If the Headteacher wishes to withdraw a permanent exclusion **before the Proprietor's review meeting takes place**, this is permitted.
- **No withdrawal is permitted** if the Proprietor has already held the review meeting (i.e., after the review has occurred, the decision is final, unless changed through the school's complaints process).

In such cases, the Headteacher must immediately notify:

- Parents/carers confirming the exclusion has been suspended and explaining reasons.
- The Proprietor.
- The Local Authority.
- Any involved social worker or Virtual School Head (where relevant).
- The pupil must be **allowed to return to school immediately**; no review meeting is required, as the exclusion is nullified.

In this case:

- The pupil is welcomed back with support in place
- All professionals and parents are informed
- The review process is cancelled
- A restorative meeting may be offered to rebuild trust and co-create next steps

Section 7: Appeals & Parental Complaints

Procedure for PEX

Rights to Make Representations

- Parents have the right to make **written and/or oral representations** to the Proprietor following a permanent exclusion.
- These representations must be submitted within **10 school days** of being notified of the exclusion.
- The pupil's views will also be sought, recorded, and taken into account.
- **Responsibility:** Proprietor to receive and record all representations. Headteacher to facilitate collection of pupil voice.

Proprietor Review Meeting

- The Proprietor will convene a **review meeting within 15 school days** of being notified of the exclusion.
- Parents, the pupil, the Headteacher, and any relevant professionals (e.g. SEN caseworker, social worker, Virtual School Head) will be invited.
- At the meeting:
 - The Headteacher presents the rationale for the exclusion.
 - Parents and the pupil may present their views and supporting evidence.
 - Relevant professionals may provide additional reports or context.
- The Proprietor will ensure that the meeting is conducted in a **fair, transparent, and supportive manner**, consistent with the school's therapeutic ethos.
- **Responsibility:** Proprietor (chair and decision-maker). Headteacher (reports and background). DSL/SENCo (safeguarding or SEN input if required).

Decisions Following Review

- After considering all evidence, the Proprietor will decide whether to:
 - **Reinstate** the pupil, either immediately or from a specified date; or
 - **Uphold** the Headteacher's decision to permanently exclude.
- The decision will be confirmed **in writing without delay**, explaining the reasons and referencing the evidence considered.

- The Local Authority (including the home LA if different), social worker, and Virtual School Head (if applicable) will also be notified.
- **Responsibility:** Proprietor (decision and written communication). Headteacher (administrative support, pupil records).

Complaints Procedure

- If parents remain dissatisfied, they may escalate the matter through the school's Complaints Policy.
- A **Complaints Panel** will be convened within **20 school days** of receiving the formal complaint.
- The panel will consist of at least three people, one of whom will be **independent of the school**.
- The panel will:
 - Review the process followed and whether it was fair.
 - Consider representations from both the school and the parents.
 - Make findings and recommendations which will be sent to the Proprietor, parents, and (where relevant) the Local Authority.
- The panel **cannot reinstate a pupil**, but it may recommend that the Proprietor reviews the decision.
- **Responsibility:** Proprietor to arrange the panel. Independent panel member to ensure impartiality. Clerk/administrator to record proceedings.

Record Keeping

- Full written records will be kept of:
 - All parental representations and evidence considered.
 - Minutes of the review meeting and Complaints Panel.
 - The decision, rationale, and notifications issued.
- Records will be stored securely on the pupil's file and made available for inspection by Ofsted.
- **Responsibility:** Proprietor (oversight). Headteacher (secure filing and admin).

Appendix A: DfE Categories for Suspension & Exclusion

Physical assault against a pupil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fighting ■ Violent behaviour ■ Wounding
Physical assault against an adult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Violent behaviour ■ Wounding
Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a pupil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Threatening violence ■ Bullying ■ Derogatory language
Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Threatening violence ■ Abuse, intimidation, harassment ■ Derogatory language
Use or a threat of an offensive weapon or prohibited item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Carrying or threatening use of knives, blades, imitation guns, or other prohibited items under the <i>School Standards and Framework Act 1998</i>.
Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Repeated, targeted behaviour (including online). ■ Includes prejudice-related bullying (racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist).
Racist abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use of racially offensive language, slurs or racist bullying
Abuse against sexual orientation and gender identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Homophobic, biphobia or transphobic behaviour
Abuse relating to disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Derogatory language, exclusion or targeting based on disability
Sexual misconduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lewd behaviour, sexual bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault.
Drug and alcohol related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possession, consumption, supplying or being under the influence of drugs and alcohol
Damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Damage to school property, another pupil's property or staff property

Theft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stealing school property, another pupil's property, or staff property
Persistent disruptive behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated refusal to follow instructions Behaviour that undermines the learning of others Ongoing disruption despite interventions
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For behaviours that do not fit into the above categories but are still serious breaches. Schools should avoid overusing this category.