



Woodlane High School

achieving success in a nurturing environment

Exclusion and Suspension Policy

Updated: January 2026

Next Update: January 2027

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1.0 Introduction

Woodlane High School's exclusion policy aims to set out the process that will be followed and the additional considerations around suspensions and exclusions that the school will apply. Good behaviour and self-discipline lead to effective learning and help prepare children and young people for life beyond the school gate and adulthood.

Where the school's approaches towards behaviour management have been exhausted, then suspensions and permanent exclusions will sometimes be necessary as a last resort. This is to ensure that other pupils and teaching staff are protected from disruption and can learn in safe, calm and supportive environments.

The school will always have regard to the statutory guidance on suspensions and exclusions (August 2024) when making decisions on suspensions and exclusions, and will follow the law as set out in the relevant School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's positive behaviour policy and SEND policy.

2.0 Application of policy

This policy applies to all members of the school community. The school will apply suspensions and exclusions in accordance with this policy and ensure that its contents are relayed to all staff, parents and pupils.

3.0 Types of exclusion

Suspensions and permanent exclusions are different:

3.1 Suspensions

Suspensions (previously called fixed-term exclusions) are where a pupil is prevented from attending the school for a fixed period. At the end of the period, they are expected to return to school following a reintegration meeting. A pupil may receive a maximum of 45 days of suspension in an academic year before being permanently excluded.

3.2 Permanent Exclusions

Permanent exclusions are where, subject to a decision of the governing board to reinstate the pupil to the school, the pupil is prevented from attending the school again. A decision to permanently exclude will only be taken in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy, and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others, such as staff or pupils, in the school.

4.0 Roles and responsibilities

All members of the school community are expected to follow this policy. Roles, responsibilities and expectations of each section of the school community are set out in detail below.

4.1 The headteacher

All decisions to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil will be taken by the headteacher after considering all the circumstances. Every decision made will be proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour with reference to the school's positive behaviour policy.

4.2 The governors

The governing board is responsible for forming committees to review exclusions and suspensions when it is required to do so, it is requested by parents or it is, in its view, prudent to review an individual decision. In each case, the decision of the relevant committee formed by the governing board will be to decide whether to uphold the exclusion or suspension or, instead, to reinstate the pupil to the school.

4.3 Parents

Parents will be informed without delay of any suspension or exclusion, and there is an ability to make representations regarding any suspension or exclusion decision. Details will be provided on the rights parents have with every letter that is sent from the headteacher.

4.4 Pupils

All pupils of the school are expected to follow the expectations regarding their behaviour to ensure that all pupils can learn and participate in school life effectively. Where those expectations are breached, the behaviour policy will apply.

5.0 CCTV, witness evidence and pupil views

The school uses closed circuit television (CCTV) within its premises to provide a safe and secure environment for pupils, staff and visitors. Where behavioural incidents are recorded on CCTV, the footage may be reviewed as part of the school's investigation and the information obtained from it may be taken into account when deciding whether to impose a sanction.

Where CCTV evidence is relied upon in a decision relating to suspension or exclusion, a summary or report of the relevant footage will be provided to the governor review meeting, rather than the footage itself, unless there is a legal requirement to do otherwise. Please see the school's privacy notices for further 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 governor review meeting. All statements will be provided by way of a CPOMS report, the anonymity of the relevant pupil witness will be protected, unless there is a legal requirement to do otherwise.

Before taking a decision to suspend or exclude and where appropriate, the headteacher will take the pupil's views into account, considering these in light of their age and understanding, and inform the pupil about how their views have been factored into any decision made. Where relevant, the pupil will be given support to express their view, including through advocates such as parents or, if the pupil has one, a social worker. The headteacher will also take account of any contributing factors identified after an incident of misbehaviour has occurred.

6.0 Reintegration strategy meetings following suspension or off-site direction

Where a pupil is suspended or is directed to be educated off site, upon return to the school, both the pupil and parents will be invited to a reintegration strategy meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- offer the pupil a fresh start;
- help them understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others;
- teach them to how meet the high expectations of behaviour in line with the school culture;
- foster a renewed sense of belonging within the school community; and
- build engagement with learning.

This is to ensure that further suspensions are not needed.

School staff will work with the pupil to understand what led to the behaviour, and to establish if any changes can be made or further support implemented from a pastoral or practical perspective that might reduce the chance of repeat behaviours. Previous behaviour is not seen as an obstacle to future success.

The school uses various measures to support a pupil's successful reintegration. Which may include:

- Daily contact with a designated member of staff in school.
- Use of a behaviour report with personalised targets leading to personalised rewards.
- Ensuring the pupil receives academic support upon return to catch up on any lost progress.
- Planned pastoral interventions.
- Mentoring by a trusted adult or a local mentoring charity.
- Regular reviews with the pupil and parents to praise progress being made and raise and address any concerns at an early stage.

- Informing the pupil, parents and staff of potential external support.

Whilst reintegration meetings are highly encouraged by the school, pupils will not be prevented from being admitted to the school or being put in mainstream classes because a meeting has not taken place.

7.0 Cancelling a suspension or exclusion

A suspension or exclusion can be cancelled by the headteacher as long as the suspension or exclusion has not been considered by the governors. In relation to an exclusion, it cannot be cancelled if the total time the pupil was excluded or suspended that academic year would be over 45 days at the point of the decision to cancel the exclusion.

Where a suspension or exclusion is cancelled, the relevant parties will be informed by the headteacher in accordance with the statutory guidance on suspensions and exclusions.

8.0 Suspensions before a permanent exclusion

In exceptional circumstances, pupils may receive a suspension prior to a permanent exclusion. For each decision, the headteacher will send the relevant letter setting out the rights of parents. A suspension cannot be converted into a permanent exclusion and so any subsequent permanent exclusion would be a fresh decision due to commence immediately after the suspension had ended. Exceptional circumstances may include where further evidence has come to light or where the incident was serious and time is required to fully investigate the circumstances and consider alternatives.

9.0 Directing off-site and managed moves

Before taking any decision to permanently exclude a pupil, the headteacher will consider whether a direction to attend alternative provision and/or a managed move as part of a planned intervention would be a reasonable alternative that should be considered. This will be explored in partnership with the local authority.

In the case of directing a pupil off site to alternative provision, the aim of any direction is for it to be used as a short-term measure as part of the school's behaviour management strategy to improve a pupil's behaviour, where in-school interventions and/or outreach have been unsuccessful or are deemed inappropriate. While parental consent is not needed, discussions will take place with parents to feed in their views about the options.

For a managed move to take place, there needs to be agreement between the school, the parents and the local authority that a managed move should occur. An emergency review of the EHCP will be held to explore this further.

10.0 Independent review panels (IRPs)

For permanent exclusions, an Independent Review Panel (IRP) may be requested if the governing body's decision to uphold the exclusion is challenged.

The school/Local Authority will arrange an IRP. Requests for an IRP following the upholding of a permanent exclusion should be made to the clerk to governors within 15 school days of the decision being communicated.

Further details on the role and powers of IRPs can be found in part ten of the statutory guidance on exclusions and suspensions.

10.1 Reconsideration by the governing board

Where an IRP either recommends reconsideration or quashes the initial decision of the governing board, the decision will be considered within 10 school days; this may involve a rehearing with oral evidence given by the school and parents or may be a reconsideration, with only the governing board members and the clerk present.

11.0 Remote meetings

Any governor and/or an IRP meeting may be conducted remotely where the parents request it be conducted remotely and the meeting can be fairly held remotely, with all participants having access and able to make representations. A meeting may also take place remotely where there is an extraordinary event or unforeseen circumstance that means it is not reasonably practicable to hold the meeting in person; such events can include but are not limited to floods, fire, and an outbreak of an infectious disease etc.

In addition, where a child's social worker or the virtual school head are due to attend a meeting, they may join an in-person meeting remotely, as long as it can be fairly accessed, the technology is available, and everyone would be able to make representations.

12.0 Complaints

If parents have any concerns or complaints over the application or implementation of this policy, or feel that they are being pressured into a managed move, they should raise their concerns with a senior leaders or the headteacher in accordance with the school's complaints policy. If the concern relates to an exclusion, the statutory procedure set out in the statutory guidance on exclusions and suspensions will be followed.

13.0 Equality impact

The school does all it can to ensure that its policies do not discriminate against pupils or others, either directly or indirectly, in line with any Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics; these include race, religion, disability, sexual orientation and sex.

14.0 Monitoring arrangements

The governors review data on suspensions and exclusions to ensure that the use of suspensions and exclusions is appropriate. The following are monitored by the governors to ensure the processes and support for pupils are appropriate:

- The interventions put in place for pupils at risk of suspension and permanent exclusion.
- The processes in place for determining and reviewing directions to alternative provision and such placements being reviewed at sufficient intervals to assure that the education is achieving its objectives, and that pupils are benefiting from it.
- The full-time educational provision for pupils of compulsory school age from the sixth consecutive school day of a suspension; in particular, checking the provision is suitable and quality assured to ensure that:
 - Any previous placements have been evaluated, including support for any applicable SEND.
 - There is a process in place to monitor the pupil's attendance and behaviour at the provision.
 - The correct attendance code is being used.
 - The pupil's child protection file and any other information relevant to the pupil's safeguarding and welfare has been securely transferred to their new setting as early as possible.
- Whether there is any variation within the year on suspensions and permanent exclusions and the characteristics of pupils.
- The cost implications of directing children to be educated off site in alternative provision and whether there are any patterns to the reasons or timing of moves.
- Whether the school register and absence codes have been recorded correctly.
- How the behaviour policy is applied and, specifically, its consistency.
- The circumstances in which pupils receive repeat suspensions.
- Whether personal education plans for looked after children have been reviewed on a termly basis.

Appendix 1

Checklist for investigating a serious incident or ongoing behaviour concerns and considering suspension/exclusion

When a serious behavioural incident occurs, the school will follow a fair, consistent and proportionate process before deciding whether suspension or exclusion is required. This process will include careful consideration of any special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

1. Immediate response and safeguarding

- Ensure the safety of pupils, staff and visitors.
- De-escalation is an immediate priority.
- Provide any necessary first aid or emotional support.
- Separate pupils involved where appropriate, taking into account individual needs and vulnerabilities.

2. Initial fact-finding

- Obtain initial accounts, including witness statements from staff and pupils involved, using approaches appropriate to the pupil's age, communication needs and level of understanding.
- Record the incident and witness statements on CPOMS.

3. Evidence gathering

- Review relevant evidence, including written statements, behaviour logs, incident reports and CCTV footage where available.
- Any CCTV footage will be reviewed by authorised staff and used to inform the investigation.
- Record details on CPOMS, including observations from CCTV.

4. Opportunity to respond

- Give the pupil the opportunity to give their account of events, with reasonable adjustments made as necessary (for example, additional time, adult support, or alternative communication methods).
- Record the incident and statement on CPOMS.

5. Fact-finding

- Obtain any further information or accounts.
- Record the incident and any further information on CPOMS.

6. Consideration meeting

- The headteacher, senior leadership team and SENDCO should attend.

- The following headings should be discussed and explored. The headings a) to e) should be copied into CPOMS and **live** notes taken in the meeting:

a) The evidence and information available

- i. the seriousness of the behaviour
- ii. any harm caused
- iii. intent
- iv. whether it represents a breach of the behaviour policy
- v. Take account of the pupil's understanding of the consequences of their actions.

b) SEND and vulnerability consideration

- i. Consider the pupil's special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and any additional or targeted support being received.
- ii. Consider any known vulnerabilities, including mental health needs, communication difficulties, trauma, safeguarding concerns, or adverse experiences.
- iii. Consider whether the behaviour may be linked to, or exacerbated by, the pupil's needs, disability, mental health, emotional regulation difficulties, or other vulnerabilities.
- iv. Review relevant documentation, such as EHCPs, support plans, risk assessments, or behaviour support plans, to understand the strategies and adjustments already in place.
- v. Consider whether reasonable adjustments were in place at the time of the incident and whether further or alternative adjustments may be required to support the pupil effectively.

c) Consider whether reasonable adjustments, additional support, or alternative sanctions, restorative approaches, behaviour support plans, or specialist interventions where relevant could be appropriate and effective at this stage to avoid exclusion/suspension.

d) Any further advice from the SENDCO or other relevant professionals e.g. social worker where appropriate before reaching a decision (it is essential the SENDCO's advice and opinions are recorded). The SENDCO may leave the meeting at this point.

e) The senior leaders, after considering all evidence, SEND factors, and reasonable adjustments, should determine if a suspension is necessary and proportionate, in line with statutory guidance. The headteacher makes the final decision.

7. Inform parents/carers

- Inform parents/carers without delay of the decision to suspend or exclude.

- Ensure a suspension or exclusion letter is issued, setting out clearly:
 - the reasons for the decision;
 - the length and dates of the suspension or exclusion;
 - a summary of the evidence and information gained
 - a summary of SEND and vulnerability considerations made
 - a summary of consideration of reasonable adjustments and alternatives
 - reference to SENDCO and other professionals involved; and
 - the right to make representations or request a review, in line with statutory guidance
- Ensure the correct template is used, taking into account the number of days of suspension and any previous suspensions or exclusions.
- Ensure the letter includes an invitation to a reintegration meeting, where applicable.

8. Post-incident support and review

- Where applicable, plan appropriate reintegration and ongoing support in advance of the reintegration meeting, including a review of SEND provision, behaviour support plans and/or risk assessments, with the aim of reducing the likelihood of recurrence.
- Attend and conduct a reintegration meeting with the pupil and parent/carer.
- Take account of the views of the pupil and parent/carer and incorporate these, where appropriate, into reintegration planning and ongoing support arrangements.
- While the seriousness of the incident/behaviour should not be diminished the pupil should be welcomed back to school and it should be made clear that previous behaviour is not seen as an obstacle to future success.