



Symphony Learning  
TRUST

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# Suspension and Exclusion Policy

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Adopted by Symphony Learning Trust	Autumn 2022
Ratified by Trustees	Autumn 2022
Next Review Due	Change of Regulations



## Overview

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It is the policy of the Symphony Learning Trust schools to try to deal with all behavioural issues in an active, positive way, employing a wide range of strategies, including those specifically designed to avoid such issues reaching the point of exclusion.

Suspensions and exclusions can be a worrying, upsetting and difficult time for you and your child. Provided here is a brief overview of the process involved if your child has either been excluded from school permanently or for a fixed period (including lunch times).

The process of suspension or exclusion that all schools must follow is based on guidance ***DfE Suspension and Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England. A guide for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusions (September 2022).***

This guidance affects all pupils, including those who may be below or above compulsory school age. However, the guidance in relation to education provision beyond the sixth day, only applies to those children who are of compulsory age school and are excluded for more than six days. This means if your child is of compulsory school age, they will continue to receive an education provision beyond the sixth day of exclusion.

**For the remainder of this policy, reference to 'school' will indicate the individual SLT school in question. Reference to 'Head teacher' also includes Executive Head teachers and/or Heads of Schools**



## Purpose of this policy

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This policy is designed to briefly outline the school's approach to exclusions within the statutory framework as defined in the ***The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012.*** It outlines only where the school applies its own additional guidance and policies, which complement and reinforce the statutory guidance, for purposes of clarity in the day-to-day operation of the school.

### 1. Principles

- 1.1. As a school we feel it is important to promote a caring and supportive environment to enable all members of the school community to feel secure, respected and therefore promote good behaviour in others.
- 1.2. The development of personal qualities and social skills and the fostering of socially acceptable behaviour are an integral aspect of the school curriculum.

1.3. Exclusion is a sanction used by the school only in cases deemed as **serious breaches** of the School Behaviour Policy. A pupil may be at risk of an exclusion from school for:

- serious fighting
  - verbal or physical assault of another pupil or adult;
  - threatening/intimidating behaviour towards other pupils and/or adults;
  - bullying behaviour including racism;
  - foul language directed at another pupil or adult;
  - defiance towards any authorised adult in the school;
  - damaging school or others' property;
  - persistent and repetitive disruption of lessons and other students' learning;
  - extreme misbehaviour, which is deemed outside the remit of the normal range of sanctions.
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- Possessing weapons or imitation weapons

### **Evidence of Poor Behaviour**

1.4. In most cases, except for the most extreme, the Head teacher will have considered the following before making a decision about an exclusion:

- Verbal or written reports from members of staff
- Discussions with the pupils concerned
- Discussions with the parent/s of the pupils concerned □ Responses to any of the following:
  - persistent loss of playtime;
  - entries into the Head teacher's behaviour record book /incident slips
  - letters sent to parents reporting incidences of poor behaviour.

### **Types of Exclusion**

- a. **A suspension** from the school can only be authorised by the Head teacher (including Executive Head or Head of School) or Deputy Head teacher acting on their behalf. If none are available to authorise the exclusion a decision should be deferred until the opportunity for authorisation is available.
  
- b. In the case of a **Permanent Exclusion** this can only be authorised by the Head teacher (or Executive Head teacher) and **must only** be

done after consulting the Chair of Governors of the intention to impose this sanction, although the **final** decision rests with the Head teacher of the school.

- c. The school seeks to reduce the number of incidents leading to exclusions by promoting a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and discipline within the school.
- d. The school regularly monitors the number of Fixed Term Exclusions to ensure that no group of students is unfairly disadvantaged through their use and that any underlying needs of individuals are being fully met.

### **Notification of a Suspension**

- i. The pupil who has been suspended will have the reason for his/her exclusion explained to them by either the Head teacher or Deputy Head teacher, so that they understand the nature of their misbehaviour and why it is unacceptable.
- ii. If an incident takes place at the end of the school day or after school that day, the parents of the pupil will be contacted and a meeting with the parents and pupil will be arranged for the next morning to investigate the incident and provide the pupil with an opportunity to discuss what took place and why before a decision to suspend is made.
- iii. The parents will be notified as soon as possible of the decision to suspend and the reasons for the suspension. The evidence leading up to the decision will be explained.
- iv. This will be done on the day of the suspension being authorised by either direct phone contact or a face-to-face meeting.
- v. A written confirmation of the reason(s) for the suspension will be sent to parents the same day, outlining the reasons for the decision, the date upon which the pupil will be allowed back into school, the procedures for appeal which are open to the parents.
- vi. In the case of a Permanent Exclusion parents will be notified by the Head teacher in a face-to-face meeting.
- vii. The Chair of Governors will be informed, and a copy of the letter to parents made available.
- viii. The school administrator will record the nature and length of the suspension on the schools SIMs system and the Local Authority informed.
- ix. The suspension will be reported to the next Full Governing Body meeting.

- x. Work will be set for the pupil to complete at home during a fixed-period suspension. This will be made available to the parents on the morning following a suspension.

Headteachers may cancel a suspension or exclusion that has not been reviewed by the governing board. This practice is sometimes known as withdrawing/rescinding a suspension or permanent exclusion. If this occurs, parents, the governing board and the local authority should be notified, and if relevant, the social worker and VSH.

When headteachers suspend or permanently exclude a pupil they must, without delay, notify parents. Legislative changes mean that if a pupil has a social worker, or if a pupil is looked-after, the headteacher must now, also without delay after their decision, notify the social worker and/or VSH, as applicable.

### **Students Returning from a Fixed Term Suspension**

All students returning from a Fixed Term suspension are required to attend a reintegration meeting, accompanied by a parent. This meeting will seek to establish practical ways in which further exclusion can be avoided and behaviour modified to acceptable standards in partnership between student, parent and school.

### **For permanent exclusions:**

- e. A school will usually only permanently exclude a child as a last resort, after trying to improve the child's behaviour through other means. However, there are exceptional circumstances in which a Head teacher may decide to permanently exclude a pupil because of on-going issues or even for a 'one-off' incident.
- f. In the case of a **Permanent Exclusion** this can only be authorised by the Head teacher (or Executive Head teacher) and **must only** be done after consulting the Chair of Governors of the intention to impose this sanction, although the **final** decision rests with the Head teacher of the school. If your child has been permanently excluded, be aware that:
  - The Head teacher will inform the parents of the decision in a face-to-face meeting. The parents will be informed of the decision and the reasons for it. The evidence leading up to the decision will be explained;
  - A letter of confirmation will be sent on the same day by first-class post outlining the reasons for the decision, the procedures for appeal which are open to the parents;

- The Chair of Governors and the Hearings & Appeals Governor will be informed, and a copy of the letter to parents made available;
- The school's governing body is required to review the Head teacher's decision and you may meet with them to explain your views on the exclusion;
- the Academy must provide full-time education up to the sixth day of a permanent exclusion;
- A special meeting of a delegated committee of the Governing Body will be called within fifteen working days of the date of exclusion, of which the parents will be notified, in order to consider the decision of the Head teacher.

## 2. Appeals

All correspondence regarding an exclusion from the school will inform parents of their right to appeal to the Governing Body against the decision to suspend or exclude. This procedure is clearly set out in the statutory guidance.

The person who should be contacted to initiate an appeal is the Clerk to the Governors.

## Exclusions Committee

2.1. The Governing Body delegates authority to a committee comprising at least three governors, of whom the Head teacher shall **not be one**.

2.2. The membership of the committee shall be reviewed annually at the first full meeting of the Governing Body of each year.

2.3. The committee is delegated the authority, to consider:

- the report of the Head teacher in respect of the decision to suspend a pupil
- the representations of the parents of the pupil (if present)
- to question those involved, if appropriate;
- to allow cross-questioning, and;
- to decide either to endorse the decision of the Head teacher, or to direct the Head teacher to reinstate the pupil.

## 3. Relationship to other school policies

The Suspension and Exclusion Policy should be read in tandem with the school's Behaviour

Policy as well as other relevant school policies, particularly the Inclusion Policy, Special Educational Needs Policy and the Equal Opportunities Policy.

It also has a close inter-relationship with the Anti-Bullying Policy and Attendance Policy.

#### **4. Monitoring and Review**

- a. The impact of this policy will be reviewed by the governors' Curriculum & Standards Committee (or equivalent) of the Governing Body and through Head teacher's Reports to Governors
- b. The Head teacher will provide the Committee with regular monitoring reports, which will help it to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and procedures.
- c. The policy and procedures will be reviewed and amended in the light of such evaluation and in consultation with representatives of all key stakeholders

### **Fixed Period Suspension from school**

- Fixed period exclusions are either a set number of days or during lunch time or other periods of the school day. During this time your child must not return to school or enter the school premises.
- You will be notified immediately of a suspension (usually by phone) and a letter **must** be sent to you within one school day of the Head teacher's decision. The letter should tell you the reasons for the suspension (it should explain clearly what has happened), the length of the suspension (in school days) and the date and time when your child must return to school.
- A child cannot be suspended from school for a period of more than 45 school days in any school year (either as a single sanction or cumulative). Once a pupil has reached the limit of 45 days, any subsequent suspension should result in a permanent exclusion.

### **Long term fixed period suspensions (i.e. more than 15 days):**

- If your child has been excluded for 15 school days or more over a term, then the Governing Body must meet to review the suspension within 15 school days after the suspension. The Discipline Committee can decide to uphold the Head teacher's decision or allow your child back in to school (called reinstatement). If your child would miss a public examination, the governors will try to hold the meeting before the date of the examination.
- The committee will have a clerk to record what is said and to ensure that everybody can state their case fairly.

### **Short term fixed period suspensions:**

- If your child has been suspended for between 5.5 - 15 school days in a term (adding together all the suspensions that term), the Governing Body will meet within 50 school days, but only if you (the parent/carer) request to do so to review the suspension. You are entitled to attend this meeting. Even if your child has returned to school, Governors can still say if they would have upheld the suspension or not and place a statement of their views on your child's record. The school will write to you with details and the arrangements for this meeting.



- The school will make arrangements for off-site education from the 6th school day of a fixed period suspension.
- If your child has been suspended for up to 5 school days, the Governing Body do not have to meet with you. However, you can make written representations if you wish, which must be considered within 50 days of the decision to suspend. The decision will be placed on your child's file.

**There is no right to an independent review for fixed period suspensions.**

- Details of your child's suspension will be entered on their school records.
- You have a right to see your child's school record. If you would like to do so, you will need to contact the school directly.

During the first 5 days of a suspension you must ensure that your child is not in a public place during normal school hours without good reason (This applies whether or not the parent is with the child). A failure to comply with this is an offence and you can be given a fixed penalty notice from the Local Authority.

**Permanent Exclusion from School**

- Permanent exclusion means that your child cannot return to the school or enter the school premises. Only the Head teacher has the right to exclude your child from school.
- You will be notified immediately of an exclusion (usually by phone) and a letter **must** be sent to you within one school day informing you of the decision to permanently exclude your child from school and the reasons why this happened.
- The Governing Body must meet within 15 school days of a Head teacher's decision to permanently exclude a child. You will be invited to attend this meeting with a friend or legal representative, as well as sending a written statement if you wish. The school will write to you with details and the arrangements for this meeting.
- After the Governor's meeting, you will receive a letter from the Clerk to

Governors' stating the decision reached by the Governing Body and the reasons why. If the Governing Body uphold the Head teacher's decision to exclude, then you have the right to have the Head teacher's decision reviewed by an Independent Review Panel (IRP).

- The Clerk to the Governors' will write to you to let you know when you must lodge your review by. This is within 15 school days of being officially notified by the Governing Body in writing.
- The role of the IRP, as an impartial body, is to review the decision of the Governing Body. The panel, in reviewing the decision, can make one of three decisions, which are:-
  - Uphold the decision of the Governing Body;
  - Recommend that the Governing Body reconsiders the matter, or
- If it considers that the decision of the Governing Body was flawed, **when considered in the light of the principles applicable on an application for judicial review**, the IRP can quash the decision of the Governing Body and direct the Governing Body to reconsider the matter.
- If you do not wish to have the exclusion reviewed, your child will be taken off roll at the school from which they were permanently excluded, the day after the *Review* period expires.
- If you decide to have the decision reviewed, your child's name cannot be removed from the school roll until after the outcome of your IRP is known or the period within which the right of review has elapsed (unless you formally waive your right to have the decision reviewed at an earlier date).
- The school has to provide education for your child for the first five school days of the exclusion. This is usually done by work being sent home to complete. The Local Authority will contact you in order to arrange provision from the 6<sup>th</sup> day and to discuss your child's needs to continue his/her education.
- You have the right to see your child's school records. You will need to contact the school direct if you wish to see these records.

## **PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

- Schools should avoid permanently excluding pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan. Where a child is excluded, the Head teacher should use the period between his decision to exclude and the meeting of the Governing Body, to work with the Local Authority to see whether more support can be made available or whether the Plan can be changed to name a new school.