

POLICY TITLE: EXCLUSION AND SUSPENSION POLICY

STATUS:	Non-statutory
REVIEWED BY:	Local Governing Body Senior Vice Principal Principal
DATE OF APPROVAL:	September 2024
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Etonbury Academy has the highest concern for the safety and wellbeing of the whole school community, and we work hard to ensure that our ethos and environment supports student learning and success. Suspension is a sanction used only as a last resort, and we aim to reduce the need for the use of suspension as far as possible. This policy outlines the school's use of suspensions and is supported by our **school behaviour policy**. This policy is available via the school website.

1. Power to exclude

The Principal is the only member of staff within the school who can exclude a pupil, either permanently or for a suspension. In the absence of the Principal, or acting Principal can make this decision.

The governing body can review the Principal's decision and consider representations from parents of excluded pupils. They may direct the reinstatement of an excluded pupil, or decline to reinstate and uphold an exclusion after a review, but they cannot exclude a pupil themselves. For more information on the governing body's role in suspensions, see section 5.

In making decisions on suspensions, the Principal and governing body must have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education on exclusion & suspensions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

2. Reasons for suspension

Any suspension, whether fixed term or permanent exclusion, will flow from a breach or breaches of the behaviour policy. In accordance with DfE guidance on suspensions, a permanent exclusion may only be imposed in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the behaviour policy and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education and/or welfare of the pupil or others in the school community.

In line with the school's behaviour policy, the following actions are examples of unacceptable behaviour which may result in permanent exclusion or fixed-term suspensions:

1. verbal abuse to staff and others
2. verbal abuse to pupils
3. physical abuse to/attack on staff
4. physical abuse to/attack on pupils
5. bullying (to the extent not covered above)
6. indecent behaviour (including social media)
7. damage to property
8. misuse of illegal drugs
9. misuse of other substances including but not limited to vapes/e-cigarettes, legal highs or alcohol
10. theft
11. serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff
12. sexual abuse or assault

13. supplying an illegal drug or other substances that can be harmful including but not limited to alcohol, laughing gas, solvents, vapes/e-cigarettes & prescription medication.
14. carrying/threatening someone with an offensive weapon or prohibited item
15. Arson
16. Breach or persistent breaches of the filtering and monitoring guidelines KCSIE 2024
17. refusal to follow instruction
18. unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported and for which school sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the pupil's behaviour
19. Disruption to the running of The Academy of education of other students

3. Types of exclusion/suspension

3.2 Permanent exclusion

Permanent exclusion is an extremely serious sanction, and a step taken by the school only as a last resort. In most cases, permanent exclusion will be used only after various alternative strategies have been tried to improve behaviour but have been unsuccessful. There are, however, some situations in which permanent exclusion on the first offence is the only option will be considered. These may include but are not limited to:

1. serious, actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff
2. sexual abuse or assault
3. possession of an illegal drug
4. supplying an illegal drug
5. carrying an offensive weapon
6. arson
7. where allowing the student to stay at the school would disrupt the welfare and education of others
8. in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy
9. 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.

The list is not exhaustive but provides an indication of the severity of the offence which may lead to permanent exclusion.

It may be necessary for the school to involve the police if the offence warrants it. All permanent exclusions will be reviewed by the governing body to ensure that the Principal's decision was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair. The Principal can withdraw an exclusion that has not yet been reviewed by the governing body.

3.3 Fixed-term suspension

The length of a fixed-term suspension will be set out by the school at the start of the suspension period. If a pupil is excluded for more than 45 days in one school year, they will be permanently excluded.

A fixed-term suspension may result from a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy. It may be a first offence or persistent disruptive behaviour that requires a tougher sanction than other sanctions available to the school under the behaviour policy, but does not warrant permanent exclusion.

A permanent exclusion may follow on from a fixed term suspension by the Principal if the circumstances warrant it. This will generally be in cases where further evidence comes to light during the school's investigation. In this case, parents or carers will be notified in writing of the decision to permanently exclude the pupil, together with the reasons for doing so. During fixed-term suspensions and permanent exclusions, daytime supervision of the child is the responsibility of their parent or guardian for the first 5 days of the suspension period. From the 6th day of a fixed term suspension, the school must arrange suitable full-time education. For permanent exclusions, the local authority must arrange suitable full-time education for the pupil to begin no later than the 6th school day of the suspension.

An excluded pupil has no automatic right to take a public examination or National Curriculum tests on the school's premises. The governing body can decide whether or not to allow the pupil to sit the tests, and this will depend on the seriousness of the reason for suspension.

3.4 Lunchtime suspension

This is a type of fixed-term suspension and will not be used as a long-term solution to a behaviour problem. A lunchtime suspension counts as half a day when calculating the total number of days of suspension.

The school may decide to exclude a pupil from the school premises during the break at lunchtime if their behaviour during this time is very disruptive or dangerous to other pupils and breaches the behaviour policy. Arrangements will be made for parents or carers to collect the excluded pupil and supervise them if their age or vulnerability warrants it. The school will not normally invoke a lunchtime suspension for any period longer than a week. If the problem persists, alternative strategies will be looked at to deal with managing the pupil's behaviour.

Pupils who are entitled to free school meals will still be given this provision over their period of lunchtime suspension.

4. Making the decision to exclude

Suspension of any sort, for any period of time, is taken very seriously by the school, and the decision to exclude is not taken lightly. Various alternative strategies to manage behaviour will usually be tried before suspension, as this sanction is only used as a last resort unless the behaviour exhibited equates to a serious breach of the behaviour policy.

If it is decided that exclusion is necessary, the parents or carers of the pupil will be notified, without delay and the circumstances surrounding the exclusion will be formally recorded in writing to the parent/carers and the local authority.

The school can direct a student's education to an alternative provision as a strategy to prevent further exclusion.

4.2 Alternative behaviour management strategies

Behaviour Support

If a pupil needs to be removed from a lesson that is in progress, or a social situation, for disruptive behaviour or to calm down, it may be necessary to place that pupil elsewhere in the school. This may occur over break times and will be used in circumstances where it is not necessary to remove the pupil from the school site, but separation is needed. They will be placed in another class or somewhere where appropriate support and supervision can be provided.

Mediation

If there is a conflict between two or more pupils, a member of staff will sit down with those involved and attempt to mediate the situation through discussion. This strategy may also be used if there is a conflict between a teacher and a pupil.

Restorative justice

This strategy is dependent on the cooperation of all parties involved in an incident or situation, and will usually be used where one person has done something to upset or harm another. It can be helpful for the offender to redress the harm that they have done and hopefully learn from their mistakes. It can also provide closure for those who have been harmed.

Managed move

It may be in the best interest of a pupil to have a chance of a fresh start by moving to another school. This will only occur in consent with parents, the LA, the Principal, and the school's governing body. The new school will be asked by the Principal to accept the pupil.

Parents will not be put under any pressure to agree to a managed move, especially in fear of a permanent exclusion, and the school will do everything it can to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible.

If a managed move is not successful the pupil will be permitted to return to school.

4.3 Looked-after children and young people

Etonbury Academy understands that looked-after children and young people may be more susceptible to having behavioural problems due to additional problems they may face at home. We work in conjunction with all relevant childcare authorities to support looked-after children and try every possible means of keeping them in school. Before any decision to exclude is made, the school will (as appropriate):

- consult the LA about alternative options to support a looked-after pupil
- consult the LA about what alternative provision will be available if the pupil is excluded
- involve the child's social worker as early as possible to help the school avoid suspension
- work with the foster carer to improve the pupil's behaviour.

4.4 Pupils with special educational needs or a disability (SEND)

Pupils with SEN

Our school's full SEN provision is outlined in our **special educational needs policy and the SEN Information Report**. We work hard to include students who have behavioural difficulties or difficulties with elements of social interaction as part of their SEN. The school will try every practical alternative to suspension, but there may be some cases where it cannot be avoided. Where a pupil with an Education, Health and Care plan is at risk of suspension, the school will consider calling an interim/emergency review

If a permanent exclusion is made, the Principal will use the time between the initial decision and the governing body's review to see whether a change of circumstances might enable the school to withdraw the suspension. It may be the case that more support is needed for the pupil, or that it is in the child's best interest that their SEN statement/Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHC plan) be changed to name a different school, in which case the school will work with the LA and the child's parents or carers to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Pupils with a disability

If a pupil with a disability is under consideration for suspension, the Principal will ensure that all other possible options have been tried. To justify excluding a pupil with a disability for a reason related to their disability, there must be material and substantial reason. The erosion of order and discipline in the school may be material and substantial justification, but only if reasonable adjustments have been made for the pupil's disability. You can find more information on reasonable adjustments in our **school accessibility plan and our Equality Policy**.

4.5 Ethnicity

Etonbury Academy does not discriminate against any person and our school ethos is one of inclusion, equality, and diversity. If any person feels that they have been discriminated against due to their ethnicity they may make a formal complaint to the school following the process outlined in our **school complaints procedure**. Where the issue arises in relation to a suspension, the school will deal with any concerns raised by parents through the consideration of parental representations within the suspension framework.

4.6 Investigating the circumstances

Disruptive behaviour or actions that may warrant discipline will always be investigated before the decision to exclude is made.

Before the decision to exclude is made, the Principal will use some or all of the following list as they see appropriate.

1. ensure that the school has undertaken a thorough investigation
2. consider all the evidence available
3. encourage the pupil to give his or her version of events
4. take into account the school's behaviour policy and all other relevant school policies including equal opportunities policy
5. find out whether the behaviour may have been provoked, for example in the case of racial or sexual harassment, or bullying
6. consult other people as necessary (but not anyone on the governing body or management committee who may later have a role in reviewing the decision)
7. keep a written record of discussions, interviews and actions, and retain copies of written records made by other members of staff, ensuring that witness statements are dated and signed if possible.
8. Explore whether there are any other suitable alternatives to suspension

4.7 Confidentiality

The school will deal with all cases of suspension and the surrounding circumstances confidentially. Information will be shared only with those who need to know it, and a breach of this may result in disciplinary action.

4.8 Recording and notifying the decision to exclude

All suspensions will be formally recorded and the Principal, Vice Principal, Member of SLT or Head of Year will contact the parents or carers of the pupil immediately once the decision has been made to exclude, specifying why this action has been taken and the length of time that it will last. If the pupil is over 18, they will be notified directly. The decision will be confirmed in writing. The Principal will notify the LA within one day of the decision to exclude being made. Suspensions are discussed with the Governing Body once a term. Without delay, the Principal will notify the Governing Board of any Permanent Exclusion.

5. Reviewing a suspension

The governing body will review fixed-term suspensions of any length on request by parents who feel that the sanction is unjustified. A meeting will not always be required. They will automatically review all cases of permanent exclusion, as well as any fixed-term suspensions that would lead to a pupil being excluded for more than 15 days of a school term or missing a public exam. The governing body will look at the evidence and the records leading up to the suspension and decide whether, in light of the evidence and his/her legal duties, the Principal has made a lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair decision.

The review hearing will be minuted by the clerk.

Parents who want a review of the suspension can contact the governing body. Subject to the type and length of the suspension imposed by the Principal, parents will be invited to a review meeting and are entitled to bring a friend or legal representative with them. Parents will be asked to provide the governing body with any written statements or evidence that they might have relating to the

suspension prior to the review meeting so that these can be circulated. There will be an opportunity during the meeting for parents to ask questions of the other parties.

The pupil concerned is encouraged to attend if they are able to fully understand the proceedings. Etonbury Academy believes that pupils should be encouraged to take part in the review process and feel that they are listened to. This will hopefully increase the chance of a positive behaviour pattern emerging in the future.

In order to contact the governing body please access the academy's website and click the 'About Etonbury' title, then click on 'Governance' and 'Local Governing Body' (link below).

<https://www.etonbury.org.uk/about-etonbury/governance/local-governing-body>

5.2 Notification of the review decision

Parents will be notified of the outcome of the governing body review meeting in writing. This letter will also outline how parents can request a review by the independent review panel if they are unhappy with the outcome of the governing body's review. The outcome of the governing body meeting will be one of the following.

- **Upholding the exclusion Decline to reinstate**

If the governing body finds that the suspension decision was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair, they will uphold the decision to exclude. In this case, a letter will be sent to the parent or carer of the child outlining:

 - the decision
 - the reason for the decision
 - the parent's right to request an independent review panel
 - the name and contact details of the person to whom to send the request
 - the date by which the request and the reasons for it should be given
 - that the notice of appeal must set out the reasons for the request
 - the right to an SEN expert to attend the independent review panel
 - the right to have a representative at the independent review panel at the parents' own expense
 - that allegations of disability discrimination may also be pursued to the First Tier Tribunal (SEND Tribunal)
 - that a claim to the county court can be made for other forms of discrimination.
- **Reinstating the pupil Direct reinstatement of the pupil immediately or on a particular date**

If the governing body decides that the decision to exclude was not lawful, reasonable or procedurally fair in light of the evidence and the duties of the Principal, the governing body must reinstate the pupil immediately or by a given date. If the latter option is chosen support will be given to ensure that the pupil is easily reintegrated into the school. This will include the offer of a reintegration interview with the Principal/Vice Principal/Head of Year and parent or carer on school grounds, during which a pastoral support plan will be drawn up.

A copy of the letter detailing the outcome will be put in the student's academic records along with any relevant papers. The governing body may also decide to arrange for an educational provision offsite to improve the child's behaviour, such as an anger management course.

6. During a suspension

Although the Principal has made the decision to exclude a pupil, we maintain responsibility for the education of that child and will do everything that we can to minimise the disruption to their education.

For the first five days of any type of suspension, the school will set and mark work that the child should complete at home under parental supervision.

From the sixth day onwards, if the suspension is fixed-term, the school will arrange for alternative full-time educational provision. If the exclusion is permanent, the LA will arrange for this provision having assessed the child's needs. Alternative provision might be arranged at:

- another school in the area
- a shared joint facility
- a pupil referral unit
- a private provider
- a local FE college.

If the child has a SEN statement/EHC Plan, the alternative provision will meet those needs.

If you have any questions about legality if a suspension you can contact Central Bedfordshire Council using this link

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/4/pupil_support/524/exclusion_from_school/3#:~:text=If%20you%20are%20the%20parent,6924%20or%200300%20300%206531.
