



Wycliffe Church of England Primary School

Suspension and Exclusion Policy



Ratified by the governing body: DEC 2024

To be reviewed on: OCT 2025

Vision Statement

We nurture an aspirational family of hard-working, respectful individuals who work collaboratively to have a lifelong love of learning.

“Life in all its fullness” (John 10:10)

Our vision is to ensure that our school family are happy and fulfilled in a creative learning environment. This is flexible and caters to individual needs while developing a life-long love for learning through which all members can flourish. We nurture an aspirational family of hard-working, respectful individuals who work collaboratively.

COVID: Return to schools guidance

The guidance document issued to schools titled *Guidance for full opening: schools* was produced by the Department for Education to help schools understand how to approach reopening after the shutdown. It includes a section on “behaviour expectations” which explains how schools should view disruptive behaviour and avoid resorting to exclusion where appropriate. It states:

It is likely that adverse experiences or lack of routines of regular attendance and classroom discipline may contribute to disengagement with education upon return to school, resulting in increased incidence of poor behaviour. Schools should work with those pupils who may struggle to reengage in school and are at risk of being absent or persistently disruptive, including providing support for overcoming barriers to attendance and behaviour and to help them reintegrate back into school life.

We acknowledge that some pupils will return to school having been exposed to a range of adversity and trauma including bereavement, anxiety and in some cases increased welfare and safeguarding risks. This may lead to an increase in social, emotional and mental health concerns and some children, particularly vulnerable groups such as children with a social worker, previously looked-after children who left care through adoption or special guardianship, and young carers, will need additional support and access to services such as educational psychologists, social workers and counsellors. Additionally, provision for children who have SEND may have been disrupted during partial school closure and there may be an impact on their behaviour. Schools will need to work with local services (such as health and the local authority) to ensure the services and support are in place for a smooth return to schools for pupils.

This guidance makes clear that schools should consider alternative approaches in light the disruptions to SEND provision set out above.

In addition, children without SEND or whose SEND is not identified may still have faced disruptive, traumatic and adverse childhood experiences in lockdown that will impact on their behaviour in a way that is outside of their control. This must be factored into a Headteacher’s decision making and can be highlighted to argue to the school’s governors that a suspension/exclusion was not appropriate in the circumstances.

If you are supporting someone who has been excluded during or following adverse experiences in lockdown, you can download the Suggested Wording: adverse experiences during Covid-19. You can use this to write to the headteacher to ask them to withdraw an exclusion/suspension, or to include in arguments to the school’s governors to challenge a school exclusion/suspension.

Suspension/Exclusion Policy

This policy should be read in line with: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>

And

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65ce3721e1bdec001a3221fe/Behaviour_in_schools_-_advice_for_headteachers_and_school_staff_Feb_2024.pdf

This policy follows guidance set out in:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66be0d92c32366481ca4918a/Suspensions_and_permanent_exclusions_guidance.pdf

Wycliffe CE Primary School seeks to avoid exclusions or suspensions and they are extremely rare in this school. They take place only for very serious incidents or when other strategies have been tried and have failed over time.

Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, headteachers of maintained schools and pupil referral units must determine measures to be taken with a view to:

- promoting, among pupils, self-discipline, and proper regard for authority,
- encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils,
- securing that the standard of behaviour of pupils is acceptable,
- securing that pupils complete any tasks reasonably assigned to them in connection with their education, and
- otherwise regulating the conduct of pupils. Permanent exclusions can be used to help achieve these aims when they are absolutely necessary, as a last resort.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

In most cases, exclusions will be the last resort after a range of measures have been tried to improve the pupil's behaviour and after a range of strategies have been put in place to address the inappropriate behaviour which may lead to exclusion or suspension.

The Headteacher and staff will identify pupils whose behaviours place them at risk of exclusion or suspension, and seek additional provision to meet their individual needs, which could include working in partnership with other agencies. Where practical, all those with parental responsibility should be involved in this also.

The suspensions and permanent exclusions process.

Suspensions and permanent exclusions are used when other strategies and sanctions have not been effective over time or when there has been a single clear and serious breach of discipline.

A serious offence could by itself justify a pupil's suspension or permanent exclusion. This may include an aspect of the following:

- Violence towards an adult or child (which is deliberate and/or causes serious injury).
- Extreme verbal abuse of staff.
- Serious challenge to authority.
- Absconding from the school building, or site.
- Vandalism.

- Persistent bullying (see Anti-Bullying Policy).
- Bringing weapons onto the school site.
- Use or possession of illegal substances/materials in school.
- Arson.

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

Permanent Exclusion or Suspension

Each individual situation will be investigated according to need. The Headteacher will gather evidence; seek opinions and advice of colleagues. The views of the pupil/s will also be sought to gain the full picture before action is taken. If satisfied that, **on balance of probabilities**, the pupil did what he or she is alleged to have done; the Headteacher may give out a suspension or permanently exclude the pupil.

Managing serious or persistent problems

Disruptive behaviour can be an indication of unmet needs. Where a school has concerns about a pupil's behaviour, it should try to identify whether there are any causal factors and intervene early in order to reduce the need for a subsequent exclusion. In this situation, schools should consider whether a multi-agency assessment that goes beyond the pupil's educational needs is required.

At Wycliffe:

- We accept that it is the behaviour that is the problem and not the child.
- The behaviour of children giving cause for concern will be assessed.
- Triggers or antecedents will be established.
- Individual programmes may be planned to help modify inappropriate behaviour.
- The child may be referred to the SCIL team for additional support, e.g. emotional regulation training or they may receive in house pastoral support work.
- In the first instance, pastoral support will be offered in school. Referrals to external agencies such as the Local Authorities Specialist Teams or CAMHS will be considered as part of wider support.

Individual Education/Behaviour Support Plans / Risk Assessments

These will be used to help pupils at risk of exclusion in order to support him/her to make correct behaviour choices.

They will:

- Identify objectives and address one at a time.
- Include strategies for managing the environment, the class or group, the activities which give rise to the inappropriate behaviours.
- Emphasise teaching the child alternative positive behaviours.
- Specify the behaviour that is unacceptable and the consequence should it occur e.g. time-out, red card etc.
- Include some form of self-assessment e.g. chart to grade own behaviour during a session, to encourage responsibility for own behaviour.

Classroom

Teaching and learning must be able to take place undisturbed in classrooms. If this is prevented from happening by an individual or group, the behaviours must be tackled and we therefore have a Behaviour Policy.

The aim of our Behaviour Policy is:

- To help pupils realise the appropriate behaviours and provide strategy/guidance on putting it right.
- To promote positive behaviour.
- To help support behaviour modification if pupils persist in making 'wrong' choices with their behaviour.

To support good behaviour we have a clear process that is shared with the children. The school rules and 'class code of conduct' apply across all aspects of life in school. These are regularly reinforced to ensure that the children are clear about the levels of expectation of their behaviour and reviewed to ensure consistent use across the whole school.

Off-rolling and unlawful exclusions

Telling or forcing a pupil to leave school, or not allowing them to attend school, is a suspension (if temporary) or permanent exclusion (if permanent). Whenever a pupil is made to leave school, or forbidden from attending school, on disciplinary grounds, this must be done in accordance with the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012 and with regard to relevant parts of this guidance.

Suspending a pupil for a short period of time, such as half a day, is permissible, however, the formal suspension process must be followed. Each disciplinary suspension and permanent exclusion must be confirmed to the parents in writing with notice of the reasons for the suspension or permanent exclusion.

Any exclusion of a pupil, even for short periods, must be formally recorded. It would also be unlawful to exclude a pupil simply because they have SEN or a disability that the school feels it is unable to meet, or for a reason such as: academic attainment/ability; or the failure of a pupil to meet specific conditions before they are reinstated, such as to attend a reintegration meeting.

If any of these unlawful exclusions are carried out and lead to the deletion of a pupil's name from the register, this is known as 'off-rolling'. An informal or unofficial exclusion, such as sending a pupil home 'to cool off', is unlawful when it does not follow the formal school exclusion process and regardless of whether it occurs with the agreement of parents.

Types of Exclusion

1. Reflective time

It is the decision of the Headteacher, or Deputy Head in their absence, as to whether to implement a period of reflection following a red card (see Behaviour Policy). This will mean that the pupil will remain in school, away from their usual class, with a member of the Senior Leadership Team/pastoral team/TA for the remainder of the day or fixed time period deemed appropriate. On most occasions parents will be informed of reflection times. Work set will address the negative impact of a choice made then move swiftly to undertaking work that replicates class work.

2. Suspension

The Headteacher may exclude a pupil for one or more fixed periods for up to 45 days in any one school year.

A suspension is used when persistent inappropriate behaviour continues over time or if a one-off serious offence is committed such as:

- a. Violence towards an adult or child (which is deliberate and/or causes serious injury).
- b. Extreme verbal abuse of staff.

- c. Absconding from the school building, or site.
- d. Vandalism.
- e. Persistent bullying (see anti-bullying policy).
- f. Bringing weapons onto the school site.
- g. Use or possession of illegal substances/materials in school.
- h. Serious challenge to authority.

Parents (both, where feasible) will be informed of the suspension which will range from 1 – 3 days depending on the timescale needed in order to make changes to the provision for the child's return. Parents, child and school staff will be invited for a reintegration meeting, usually on the pupil's first morning back into school so that an appropriate plan can be agreed.

During the course of a suspension where the pupil is to be at home, parents are advised that the pupil is not allowed on the school premises and should not be out in public. The supervision during the suspension is the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

School will provide suitable work to be completed during the suspension and should be handed in at the reintegration meeting and it will then be marked by the class teacher.

3. Permanent Exclusion

Permanent exclusion is very rare as it is a very serious matter and is never undertaken lightly.

Only the Headteacher, or Deputy Head in their absence, can permanently exclude a pupil. The Headteacher may decide to permanently exclude a pupil only when s/he is sure that:

- a. The pupil has seriously breached the school's behaviour policy.
- b. If the pupil remains in school, it would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupils or others in the school.

The Headteacher must inform the Bradford Diocesan Academy Trust on all exclusions using the correct forms. The Headteacher will then inform the Chair of Governors and full Governing Body of any exclusion.

From September 2022 whenever a headteacher suspends or permanently excludes a pupil they must without delay, after their decision, also notify the social worker if a pupil has one, and the Virtual School Headteacher, if the pupil is a LAC, of the period of the suspension or permanent exclusion and the reason(s) for it.

The information in paragraphs 65 to 68 of the *Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement Guidance for maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units in England (2022)* must be provided in writing to the local authority.

To support schools to discharge their duty to notify the local authority's Social Workers and Virtual School please send a copy of the notification letter to parents to the Social Worker and the Virtual School if the child is looked after. This has been added to the model letters on BSO as a reminder.

SEN/vulnerabilities:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>: P23

Duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Children and Families Act 2014 Under the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act) and the Equality Act 2010: advice for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk), schools must not discriminate against, harass, or victimise pupils because of: sex; race; disability; religion or belief; sexual orientation; pregnancy/maternity; or gender reassignment.

For disabled children, this includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments to any provision, criterion

or practice which puts them at a substantial disadvantage, and the provision of auxiliary aids and services. In carrying out their functions, the public sector equality duty means schools must also have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not; and 6 Understanding your data: a guide for school governors and academy trustees - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) 7 Section 88 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The 'relevant protected characteristics' in this context are the characteristics mentioned above. Age is also a relevant protected characteristic, but not when carrying out a function which provides education, benefits, facilities, or services to pupils. These duties need to be complied with when deciding whether to exclude a pupil. Schools must also ensure that any provision, criterion, or practice does not discriminate against pupils by unfairly increasing their risk of exclusion. For example, if reasonable adjustments have not been made for a pupil with a disability that can manifest itself in breaches of school rules if needs are not met, a decision to exclude may be discriminatory.

The governing board must also comply with their statutory duties in relation to pupils with Special Educational Need (SEN) when administering the exclusion process, including (in the case of the governing board of relevant settings) using their 'best endeavours' to ensure the appropriate special educational provision is made for pupils with SEN and (for all settings) having regard to the Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice.

When headteachers suspend 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, (virtual school head) as applicable.

When headteachers suspend a pupil, they must also notify the local authority, without delay. Legislative changes mean that this must be done regardless of the length of a suspension.

Right of Appeal

Headteachers may cancel an 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.

In all aspects of this policy, parents will reserve the right to appeal any decisions made by school leaders. In the first instance, parents should contact the Headteacher then the Chair of Governors. If concerns still exist at this point, parents should follow the parental complaints policy.

Where parents dispute the decision of a Governing Body not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil, they reserve the right for this decision to be reviewed by an independent review panel.

It is unlawful to exclude for a non-disciplinary reason. For example, it would be unlawful to exclude a pupil simply because they have additional needs or a disability that the school feels it is unable to meet, or for a reason such as: academic attainment/ability; the action of a pupil's parents; or the failure of a pupil to meet specific conditions before they are reinstated, such as to attend a reintegration meeting. However, a pupil who repeatedly disobeys their teachers' academic instructions could, be subject to exclusion.

'Informal' or 'unofficial' exclusions, such as sending a pupil home 'to cool off', are unlawful, regardless of whether they occur with the agreement of parents or carers. Any exclusion of a pupil, even for short

periods of time, must be formally recorded.

Maintained schools have the power to direct a pupil off-site for education to improve their behaviour⁶. A pupil at any type of school can also transfer to another school as part of a 'managed move' where this occurs with the consent of the parties involved, including the parents and the admission authority of the school. However, the threat of exclusion must never be used to influence parents to remove their child from the school.

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor the rate of exclusions and to ensure that the school policy is administered fairly and consistently.

Reintegration after a suspension or off-site direction

Schools should support pupils to reintegrate successfully into school life and full-time education following a suspension or period of off-site direction. They should design a reintegration strategy that offers the pupil a fresh start; helps them understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others; teaches them to how meet the high expectations of behaviour in line with the school culture; fosters a renewed sense of belonging within the school community; and builds engagement with learning.

The reintegration strategy should be clearly communicated at a reintegration meeting before or at the beginning of the pupil's return to school. During a reintegration meeting, the school should communicate to the pupil that they are valued, and their previous behaviour should not be seen as an obstacle to future success. This meeting should include the pupil's parents. However, it is important to note that a pupil should not be prevented from returning to a mainstream classroom if parents are unable or unwilling to attend a reintegration meeting. To ensure ongoing progress, the strategy should be regularly reviewed and adapted where necessary throughout the reintegration process in collaboration with the pupil, parents, and other relevant parties.

Independent advice for parents and professionals can be found at: www.ace.ed.org.uk/

Linked Policies:

Equal Opportunities Policy

Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

