

PINNER

HIGH SCHOOL

Policy	Suspensions and Exclusions Policy
Date of Review	September 2024
Reviewed By	Headteacher
Date of Approval	September 2024
Approved By	LGB
Date of Next Review	September 2025
Statutory/Non Statutory	Statutory
Website/Non Website	Website

Suspensions Policy

1. Introduction

We are committed to following all statutory exclusions procedures to ensure that every child receives an education in a safe and caring environment.

Our school aims to:

- Ensure that the exclusions process is applied fairly and consistently
- Help governors, staff, parents and pupils understand the exclusions process
- Ensure that pupils in school are safe and happy
- Prevent pupils from becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training)
- Ensure all suspensions and permanent exclusions are carried out lawfully

This policy is based on statutory guidance from the Department for Education: [Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement - from September 2023](#)

And is informed by other documents including:

[Behaviour in Schools guidance; Keeping Children Safe in Education; Working together to improve school attendance; Mental health and behaviour in schools; Understanding Your Data: a guide for school governors and academy trustees;](#)

2. Definitions

- **Suspension** – when a pupil is removed from the school for a fixed period. This was previously referred to as a ‘fixed-term exclusion’.
- **Permanent Exclusion** – when a pupil is removed from the school permanently and taken off the school roll. This is sometimes referred to as an ‘exclusion’.

3. Decision to Suspend or Exclude

Only the Headteacher, or Acting Headteacher, can suspend or permanently exclude a pupil from school on disciplinary grounds. The decision can be made in respect of behaviour inside or outside of school. The headteacher will only use permanent exclusion as a last resort.

- Any decision to suspend a student must be:
- Lawful
- Rational
- Reasonable
- Fair
- Proportionate

Individual circumstances will be taken into account. Where practical the Headteacher should give students the opportunity to present their case before taking the decision to suspend.

Suspensions are given for serious misdemeanours, either for a one-off serious offence or for prolonged serious misbehaviour. Suspensions may be fixed term, or in extreme cases, permanent exclusion. Some behaviour will result in a fixed-term suspension without the need to progress through the lower consequences. In some cases where it is deemed appropriate, students will be Managed Moved to another school, usually in Harrow, for a fresh start.

A decision to suspend or exclude a pupil will be taken:

- In response to serious or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy and if allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Examples of offences below are considered serious enough to merit automatic suspension and exclusion (which may be permanent or fixed term) from school:

- endangering others
- physical assault upon another student
- physical assault upon any member of the school staff
- threatening behaviour
- any behaviour that endangers others
- persistent bullying
- possession of an offensive weapon
- persistent sexual harassment
- persistent racial harassment
- persistent smoking
- use of alcohol and/or solvents
- possession, distribution, or use of illegal drugs
- deliberate damage of school property
- deliberately setting off the fire alarm
- theft
- swearing or offensive language directed at any member of staff

Suspensions may also be considered as a suitable sanction for other types of misbehaviour which, whilst not undermining the security of members of the school community, nevertheless disrupt the learning of other students, undermine the discipline of the school or damage the reputation of the school.

Early intervention to address underlying causes of disruptive behaviour should include an assessment of whether appropriate provision is in place to support any SEN or disability that a student may have. Headteachers should also consider the use of a multi-agency assessment for students who demonstrate persistent disruptive behaviour. Such assessments may pick up unidentified special educational needs but the scope of the assessment could go further, for example, by seeking to identify mental health or family problems.

The suspension rates for certain groups of students are consistently higher than average. This includes students with SEN, students eligible for FSM, looked after children and students from certain ethnic groups. In addition to the approaches on early intervention, Headteachers should consider what extra support might be needed to identify and address the needs of students from these groups in order to reduce their risk of exclusion and to help build trust when engaging with these families.

The decision to suspend must not involve any kind of discrimination as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and should comply with the public sector equality duty.

The school must take account of its statutory duties in relation to special educational needs (SEN) and have regard to the SEN Code of Practice when administering the exclusion process.

Where a student has received multiple suspensions or is approaching the legal limit of 45 school days of fixed period exclusion in an academic year, Headteachers should consider whether suspension is providing an effective sanction.

4. Alternatives to Suspensions

Alternatives to exclusion will be considered where appropriate:

- **Restorative Justice**

To enable the student to redress the harm done. Restorative justice meetings are chaired by trained staff and end with an agreement between both parties

- **Referral to Other Agencies**

Pinner High School works with The Jubilee Academy. There are 3 types of provision available:

- outreach work which provides interventions at Pinner High School by Jubilee staff, such as mentoring and coping skills
- respite provision where students receive intensive extra support as well as a reduced curriculum during a period of six to twelve weeks at Jubilee Academy
- a permanent move to Jubilee Academy where the student will eventually sit their GCSE exams

- **Managed Move**

A student can be transferred to another school as part of a managed move, with full consultation and agreement of all parties involved, including the parents/carers. The Harrow Managed Move Panel meets every two weeks and involves representatives from local high schools as well as the Helix.

A member of the Pinner High School's Senior Leadership Team will complete the relevant managed move paperwork and present the case to the panel. The panel will consider the case and make a decision about which school the student can move to. This will be conveyed directly to the Headteacher very shortly after the panel. A transition worker for the Helix will then set up an initial meeting at the new school. This will be followed by a six week trial period. If the trial period is successful, the student will be on roll with the new school.

5. The Suspension/Exclusion

If a suspension is deemed necessary, the length of suspension will be decided with regard to the seriousness of the incident. A first offence of sufficient gravity may lead to permanent exclusion. However, as a general rule, a first suspension would normally be for a number of days. A subsequent exclusion would be for a longer period. A student may be suspended for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year). Repeated suspensions would suggest that a student is not able to conform to the ethos of Pinner High School and must give rise to the consideration of the exclusion becoming permanent.

Cancelling Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

The headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion that has already begun or one that has not yet begun, but only where it has not yet been reviewed by the governing board.

Where there is a cancellation:

- the parents, governing board and LA will be notified without delay
- where relevant, any social worker and VSH will be notified without delay
- the notification must provide the reason for the cancellation
- the governing board's duty to hold a meeting and consider reinstatement ceases
- parents will be offered the opportunity to meet with the headteacher to discuss the cancellation, which will be arranged without delay
- the pupil will be allowed back into school without delay
- any days spent out of school as a result of any exclusion, prior to the cancellation, will count towards the maximum of 45 school days permitted in any school year
- a permanent exclusion cannot be cancelled if the pupil has already been excluded for more than 45 school days in a school year or if they will have been so by the time the cancellation takes effect

Providing education during the first 5 days of a suspension or permanent exclusion

During the first 5 days of a suspension, if the pupil is not attending alternative (AP) provision, the school will take steps to ensure that achievable and accessible work is set for the pupil. Online pathways such as Google Classroom/Oak Academy may be used for this. If the pupil has a special educational need or disability, the school will make sure that reasonable adjustments are made to the provision where necessary.

If the pupil is looked after or if they have a social worker, the school will work with the LA to arrange AP from the first day following the suspension or permanent exclusion. Where this isn't possible, the school will take reasonable steps to set work, including the use of online pathways.

6. Procedure

The Local Authority guidelines will be followed by the Headteacher to notify the parents, without delay, of the period of exclusion and the reason for it.

The following information will be provided in writing:

- the reasons for the exclusion
- the period of a fixed period suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent
- parents' right to make representations about the suspension to the Governing Body and how the student may be involved in this
- how any representations should be made
- where there is a legal requirement for the Governing Body to consider the suspension/exclusion, that parents have a right to attend a meeting, be represented at this meeting (at their own expense) and bring a friend

Details regarding this suspension are sent to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Office, Head of Year, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher (for school and LA monitoring) and Chair of Governors.

7. Fixed Term Suspension

The student will only be accepted back into school accompanied by the parent/carer and following discussion to ensure the future good behaviour of the student. Only when all parties agree will the student return to class and confirmation of the agreement be sent to the parent (with a copy to the Head of Year).

Fixed-term Suspensions cannot be extended or converted into a permanent exclusion. Instead, if a longer exclusion is required, a new fixed-term or permanent exclusion must be issued to begin immediately after the first one ends. This would be limited to exceptional circumstances, usually where new information or evidence has come to light.

Consecutive fixed-term suspensions are regarded as a cumulative period for the purposes of the duties of the Governing Body. Therefore, education must be arranged for any pupil of compulsory school age from the 6th day of exclusion regardless of whether this is as a result of one fixed period or more.

A Governing Body Discipline Committee (GBDC) will be convened for:

- suspensions of more than five days in a term, if requested by the parents
- where it would bring the student's total number of school days of exclusion to more than 15 days in a term
- it would result in a student missing a public examination

The GBDC is not required to meet and cannot direct the reinstatement of the pupil for suspensions of more than 5 but fewer than 15 school days in the term if the parents do not make representations. The GBDC meeting can be held remotely at the request of parents

Reintegration meetings

The school will clearly explain the reintegration strategy to the pupil in a reintegration meeting before or on the pupil's return to school. During the meeting, the school will communicate to the pupil that they are getting a fresh start and that they are a valued member of the school community.

The pupil, parents, a member of senior staff, and any other relevant staff will be invited to attend the meeting. The school expects all returning pupils and their parents to attend their reintegration meeting.

8. Permanent Exclusion

A permanent exclusion will only be used as a last resort in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school behaviour policy and where allowing the student to remain in the school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the school.

A GBDC must be convened for all permanent exclusions.

9. Governing Body Discipline Committee (GBDC)

The power to consider exclusions has been delegated to a discipline committee consisting of three Governors. Exclusions training will take place every two years and the committee must have regard to the statutory guidance.

The GBDC has a responsibility to review exclusion decisions taken by the Headteacher and should consider the lawfulness, reasonableness and procedural fairness of the decision in light of the Headteacher's duties.

- The GBDC should be convened within fifteen school days of the exclusion at a convenient date and time. If it results in a student missing a public exam, reasonable steps should be taken to meet before the date of the examination. If this is not practical, the Chair of Governors may consider the student's reinstatement independently.
- Written evidence, including (anonymised) witness statements and SEN statements should be available to all parties at least five school days in advance.
- Reasonable adjustments should be made to support the attendance and contribution of the parties.
- The GBDC will review the decision to exclude a student on the balance of probabilities after hearing the evidence and the representations and can either uphold the decision or direct the student to be reinstated.
- A fully reasoned decision of the GBDC must be communicated in writing to parents, Headteacher and the local authority within two days of the meeting.
- Where the decision not to reinstate a permanently excluded student is disputed, parents can ask for this decision to be reviewed by an Independent Review Panel (IRP) within fifteen days of notice being given. (The exclusion decision to be reviewed at an IRP hearing is the decision of the GBDC rather than that of the Headteacher).
- The IRP must make one of three fundamental decisions as follows:
 - Uphold the GBDC decision
 - Recommend a reconsideration
 - Quash the decision
- Following an IRP decision to direct or recommend reconsideration of an exclusion decision, the GBDC has a duty to reconsider reinstatement (there is no requirement to seek further representations from the other parties or invite them to a meeting when re-considering). The GBDC must reconvene within 10 school days of being given notice of the panel's decision.
- The decision as to whether the IRP hearing should be held in private is for the LA /Academy Trust (not IRP).
- The IRP decision must not be influenced by any stated intention of the parents or pupil not to return to the school. IRPs are expected to understand the legislation and legal principles that apply in judging the lawfulness of the GBDC decision not to reinstate.
- Whether or not a school recognises that a student has special educational needs (SEN), all parents have the right to request the presence of a SEN expert at an IRP. The SEN expert must be someone with expertise and experience of SEN and be considered by the LA or academy trust as appropriate to perform the functions specified in the legislation. SEN expert advice can be provided in writing to the IRP or orally or both. If a SEN expert has been requested but is not present, the panel is expected to make the parents aware of their right to request an adjournment.

Remote access to meetings

Parents can request that a governing board meeting, or independent review panel be held remotely. If the parents don't express a preference, the meeting will be held in person.

In case of extraordinary or unforeseen circumstances, which mean it is not reasonably practicable for the meeting to be held in person, the meeting will be held remotely.

Remotely accessed meetings are subject to the same procedural requirements as in-person meetings. The governing board and the academy trust should make sure that the following conditions are met before agreeing to let a meeting proceed remotely:

- All the participants have access to the technology which will allow them to hear, speak, see and be seen
- All the participants will be able to participate fully
- The remote meeting can be held fairly and transparently

10. Monitoring and review

The school will collect data on the following:

- Attendance, permanent exclusions and suspensions
- Use of pupil referral units, off-site directions and managed moves.
- The school will use data analysis to make sure it is meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010. If any patterns or disparities between groups of pupils are identified by this analysis, the school will review its policies in order to tackle it.
- This policy shall be monitored in accordance with the school's ongoing self evaluation and shall be reviewed not less than every year

Headteacher
September 2024