

# EXCLUSION POLICY

**2025-2026**



**Sedgehill Academy**

The best in everyone

Part of United Learning

|                                 |               |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Owner                           | Clare Cassidy |
| Date Ratified by Governing Body | December 2025 |
| Next Review Date                | December 2026 |

## Suspension from school

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy and Home-School agreement. To ensure good order and behaviour for learning it may be necessary to suspend students from attending school or to permanently exclude them. Suspension and exclusion is the ultimate sanction and is always the decision of the Principal alone or in his/her absence, the designated teacher in charge. At Sedgemoor Academy we do everything we can to avoid suspending children.

In applying this policy, the school will adhere to current legislation, including the Equality Act 2010. The school is obliged to have regard to the DfE Exclusions Guidance; Section 1 of this makes specific reference to the Equalities Act.

Consequences or sanctions must be applied fairly, reasonable and proportionately and after due investigative action has taken place.

The Principal and governing body must comply with their statutory duties in relation to SEND when administering the exclusion process. This includes having regard to the SEND Code of Practice.

The exclusion policy relates to behaviour not only in school but also to behaviour out of school: for example travelling to and from school; on school trips; work experience placement; over the telephone or online (such as social media) etc.

There are two types of official exclusion:

### 1. Suspensions

This is a suspension for a **fixed number of days**. The pupil must remain at home up to the first 5 days (during which time the school should take reasonable steps to set and mark work for the pupil). For a suspension of more than 5 days, full time education provision will commence from the 6<sup>th</sup> day. This will be organised by the excluding school, in collaboration with Lewisham Council. A placement at Abbey Manor College will be organised. A pupil is entitled to return to school once the period of suspension has ended.

A pupil may not be excluded for more than **45 days** in a school year. Where this threshold has been met and there are further breaches of the school's behaviour policy that would warrant a suspension, the school cannot issue a FTS but could instead permanently exclude the child on the basis the 'persistent breaches' criteria has been met - see below (2b). The schools track the number of suspensions in an academic year, including from any previous schools. These figures are reported to governors.

A pupil may be suspended during **lunchtimes** for a **fixed number of days**. Each lunchtime suspension is equivalent to half a day's suspension. Arrangements will be made to provide a lunch if the pupil is entitled to free school meals.

**Repeated use of suspension for children with an EHCP or disability** (and potentially those on SEN Support – especially those undergoing statutory assessment and likely to get an EHCP) or where the school knows or could reasonably be expected to know, that the child has a disability, could be considered ineffective or failing to sufficiently meet a child's needs. There is an expectation that where this is occurring, schools ensure the SENCO is involved as part of a behaviour intervention and planning process to elicit different approaches to improving the child's behaviour. This may involve advice from colleagues and specialists such as an educational psychologist, speech and language therapist etc.

## **2. Permanent Exclusion**

This is where the Principal's decision is that the pupil should not be allowed to return to the school. It will normally be used as a last resort in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy and where allowing the pupil to remain in the academy would seriously harm the learning or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

In most cases, this will be after a wide range of alternative strategies having been tried without success. However, there will be exceptional circumstances where, in the Principal's judgement, it might be appropriate to permanently exclude a child for a single serious breach (one-off or first offence). Examples of misconduct that might be considered as a serious breach are set out in Appendix 1. This list is not exhaustive.

### ***a) The Investigation***

Investigations will be conducted in accordance with DfE guidance to be lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

Witnesses will be questioned and statements taken; the accused will be given the opportunity to have his/her say.

Each case must be judged on the facts and the context taking into account:

- The degree of severity of the offence;
- The likelihood of reoccurrence (including a consideration of the student's previous behavioural record – taking care to be clear what behavioural incidents the pupil is actually being excluded for);
- Contributory factors (e.g. recent bereavement, mental health issues, bullying) harassment);
- Support provided, including with specific reference to special educational needs and disabilities (see above) and LAC status (see above);
- Preventative measures to a school exclusion including an off-site direction or a managed move
- The school behaviour policy, special educational needs policy and equality law obligations.
- The pupil's views considering these in light of their age and understanding, unless it would not be appropriate to do so.

### ***b) Principal's Decision***

The decision to exclude will be made after a review of the evidence available and will be on the balance of probabilities – i.e. is it more probable than not that the accused acted as alleged – and in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy and where allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the school.

On considering a permanent exclusion, the Principal should immediately contact their relevant Regional Director before making their decision. Where that is not possible, the Principal should contact the Education Director to sense check their decision. If this is not possible, the Principal should issue the permanent exclusion which can be rescinded if necessary (but only before the Behaviour Committee reviews it). Consequently, the Principal should not issue a suspension whilst waiting to speak to their Regional Director if their view is that a permanent exclusion is the appropriate course of action. A suspension cannot be turned or "converted" into a permanent exclusion except in exceptional cases, usually where further evidence has

come to light, where a permanent exclusion can be issued to begin immediately after the end of the suspension.

***c) Notification***

Once a decision to exclude has been made, parents will be contacted at the earliest possible opportunity, by telephone if possible. The exclusion will be confirmed (without delay) by a letter signed by the Principal, or designated teacher in charge. The letter will state a reason and explain the clerk to the governors will contact the parents about a meeting with the set timescale. If a pupil has a social worker, or if a pupil is looked-after, the Principal will also without delay after their decision, notify the social worker and/or VSH, as applicable. When headteachers suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, they must also notify the local authority, without delay.

***d) Role of the Local Governing Body***

- Governors have a duty to facilitate and consider the representations of the parents;
- The Governing Body can either uphold the exclusion or direct reinstatement (and if the latter is not practical still consider if the decision to exclude was justified);
- The decision of the Governing Body will be given in writing and without delay and will give the reasons for the decision.

***e) Additional Requirements for Permanent Exclusion***

Where the Governing Body has upheld the decision of the Principal to exclude, parents will be notified of the:

- the statutory timeframe for applying to an independent review panel;
- to whom an application must be sent, together with the grounds and evidence;
- the right for parents to request a special educational needs expert;
- the right for parents to bring an Equality Act claim for discrimination to the First Tier Tribunal (for disability discrimination) or to the County Court (for other forms of discrimination).

***f) Independent Review Panel Procedure***

The set up and process of the IRP is set out in the DfE Exclusions Guidance. The Academy must follow these guidelines. The IRP cannot compel reinstatement.

***g) Monitoring and Review***

The school monitors behavioural incidents and evaluates the effectiveness of the behaviour policy regularly by weekly data reports and at SLT meetings. This will help the school consider whether there are patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour among pupils which may indicate that there are possible cultural issues within the school which may be enabling inappropriate behaviour to occur. When patterns are identified, the school will decide an appropriate course of action, which may include more staff training, incorporating learning points into pupil's PSHE/RSE lessons, or amending the policy.

#### ***h) Managed Moves***

Managed moves will only be used on a voluntary basis and with the agreement of all parties (including parents) and the admission authority of the new school and only where it is in the best interests of the pupil.

### **3. Behaviour Outside of School Premises**

Suspensions and exclusions can be a consequence of activities outside of the school day and off the school premises. For example:

- taking part in any school organised or school related activity;
- travelling to or from school;
- wearing school uniform;
- in some other way identifiable as a pupil at the school;
- that could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school;
- that poses a threat to another pupil; or,
- that could adversely affect the reputation of the school;
- cyber-bullying or bullying using a phone/electronic device.

### **4. Preventing Recurrence of Misbehaviour**

#### ***a) Initial Intervention Following Behavioural Incidents***

State the range of initial intervention strategies to help pupils manage their behaviour and reduce the likelihood of suspension and permanent exclusion. Ensure you have in place a system that allows relevant members of leadership and pastoral staff are aware of any pupil persistently making the wrong choices, misbehaving, whose behaviour is not improving following appropriate consequences or whose behaviour reflects a sudden change from previous patterns of behaviour.

#### ***b) Reintegration***

State what the strategy is for reintegration following any time spent away from classroom. State what levels or kinds of support can be provided to help the pupil return to mainstream education and meet the expected standards of behaviour.

#### ***c) Monitoring and Evaluating School Behaviour***

State how the school will capture data including all components of the behaviour culture and how this data will be analysed to identify possible factors contributing to the behaviour, system problems or failure to provide appropriate support.

### **5. Specific Behaviour Issues**

#### ***a) Behaviour incidents online***

The provisions apply to all activity online including all forms of social media and that they apply to online activity for both school purposes and personal use that may affect the school, pupils or staff in any way.

Instances of prohibited use, includes:

- damage to the school or its reputation, even indirectly
- use that may defame school staff or any third party
- use that may harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against staff, other pupils or third parties
- false or misleading statements
- use that impersonates staff, other pupils or third parties
- expressing opinions on the school's behalf
- using school logos or trademarks.

Be clear that even where a pupil commits inappropriate online behaviour whilst not at school, these actions may be considered under the behaviour policy where that behaviour poses a threat or causes harm to another pupil, and/or could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school when the pupil is identifiable as a member of the school or if the behaviour could adversely affect the reputation of the school

Misuse of social media should be reported to a Head of Year member or the senior leadership team or DSL.

Breach of the policy and rules on the use of social media will result in disciplinary sanctions.

In line with government guidance relating to the Prevent Duty, children must be kept safe from terrorist and extremist material and suitable filtering within school will be in place.

Although the online space differs in many ways, the same standards of behaviour are expected online as apply offline and that everyone should be treated with kindness, respect and dignity.

Where an incident involves nudes or semi-nude images and/or videos, a member of staff will refer the incident to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

#### ***b) Suspected Criminal Behaviour***

If suspected criminal behaviour becomes known by a member of staff. They will report it to the DSL and Principal. The school will need to report to the police and preserve evidence; a tandem report to children's social care will also be considered. The DSL will take a lead in such cases and follow KCSIE; with specific regard to Part 5 of KCSIE re child-on-child sexual violence.

### **6. Reflection Room**

We work closely with two other schools so that students can attend their internal suspension unit in appropriate circumstances. A policy and protocol is in place for this and it is always discussed and agreed with parents in advance.

### **7. Study Leave**

Year 11 do not go on study leave until the week before GCSE examinations begin. Students are allowed to revise at home during this exam period if they do not have an examination. The Academy will still expect students to attend organised revision sessions during this time if requested. In exceptional circumstances study leave may be agreed to commence before this period. This would only occur following a meeting between a member of the Senior Leadership Team, and the student's parents. During this meeting another

agreement would be signed by the parent and a letter would be sent by the Principal to confirm the agreement.

## **Stages of exclusions**

### **1. Police Involvement and Parallel Criminal Proceedings**

The process of exclusion from school and criminal proceedings can, and should, run parallel. However, in certain circumstances it may be appropriate for a decision to permanently exclude to be postponed if a police investigation has not been concluded. In such circumstances, an extended suspension should be used. It is also critical that a school does not undermine the evidence gathering in a parallel police investigation: the school should consult with police before carrying out its own investigation.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1      Examples of Misconduct that May Lead to Permanent Exclusion

Permanent exclusions are extremely serious and should only be used in exceptional circumstances. Permanent exclusions should only be in response to persistent misconduct of a serious nature, where other sanctions have been attempted and not resulted in improved behaviour and conduct.

There are a few single incidents that may lead to a permanent exclusion. These include (but are not restricted to) the following categories:

- a serious breach of safety requirements likely to endanger other people or yourself;
- possession, use or supply (or the intended possession, use or supply) of:
  - Alcohol
  - Tobacco (including vapes and other liquid electronic smoking materials)
  - Illegal drugs (see Home Office controlled drugs list [here](#))
  - So-called “legal high” drugs including those which are edible (and whether they are technically legal or illegal) and/or anything pertaining to be a drug.
- stealing from the academy, employees of the academy, or from students;
- intentional damage to property;
- very serious / extreme abuse of the academy’s computer system and of the internet;
- sexual misconduct, abuse or assault;
- serious actual or threatened violence or physical assault against another pupil, member of staff or worker in the academy;
- carrying an offensive weapon (defined as any item made or adapted for causing injury);
- very significant / extreme bullying and/or harassment including racial, sexual or homophobic (or any other Equality Act protected characteristic) grounds;
- extreme defiance of the properly exercised authority of the academy and its staff;