





'Dream, Believe, Achieve!'

'With God, all things are possible.' Matthew 19:26

Mark 9:29 'This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer'.

Suspension and Exclusion Policy

Policy Date:	February 2024
Policy Review Date:	February 2026
Signature of Headteacher:	
Ratified by Governors-Date:	February 2024
Signature of Committee Chair:	

Rationale

This policy deals with the policy and practice which informs the School's use of exclusion. It is underpinned by the shared commitment of all members of the School community to achieve two important aims:

- 1) The first is to ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the School community, and to maintain an appropriate educational environment in which all can learn and succeed;
- 2) The second is to realise the aim of reducing the need to use exclusion as a sanction.

Introduction

The decision to suspend or exclude a pupil will be taken in the following circumstances:-

- (a) In response to a serious breach of the School's Pupil Behaviour Policy;
- (b) If allowing the student to remain in School would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the School.

Suspension or Exclusion is an extreme sanction and is only administered by the Headteacher (or, in the absence of the Head, the Deputy Head who is acting in that role).

Suspension (fixed term) or Exclusion (permanent) may be used for any of the following, all of which constitute examples of unacceptable conduct, and are infringements of the School's Pupil Behaviour Policy (O3):

- Actions which put the pupil or others in danger.
- Verbal abuse to Staff and others
- Verbal abuse to students
- Physical abuse to/attack on Staff
- Physical abuse to/attack on students
- Indecent behaviour
- Damage to property
- Misuse of illegal drugs
- Misuse of other substances
- Theft
- Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff.
- Unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported and for which School sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the student's behaviour.

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

Suspension and Exclusion procedure

- Suspensions are of a fixed term nature and are of short duration (usually between one and three days).
- Exclusions are of a permanent nature.
- The DfE regulations allow the Headteacher to suspend a pupil for one or more fixed periods not exceeding 45 school days in any one school year.
- The Governors & Senior Leadership Team (SLT) have established arrangements to review promptly all permanent exclusions from the School and all suspensions that would lead to a pupil being excluded for over 15 days in a school term or missing a public exam.
- The Governors & SLT have established arrangements to review suspensions which would lead to a pupil being excluded for over five days but not over 15 days in a school term where a parent has expressed a wish to make representations.
- Following the decision to suspend or exclude, parents are contacted immediately where possible. A meeting will be called or a letter sent giving details of the exclusion and the date the exclusion ends. Parents have a right to make representations to the Head Teacher and Governing Body, as directed in the letter.
- Before a pupil returns to school, it is school practice to carry out a reintegration meeting with the child, parents and teacher to set clearly the expectations for behaviour upon return, and to identify the support provided by all concerned. *Unless in extreme circumstances, a pupil will not be able to return to school until a reintegration meeting has taken place.*
- A suspension will usually take the form of the pupil being required to remain at home.
- During the course of a suspension, parents/carers are advised that they have a duty to ensure that the pupil is not present in a public place, including on St Mary's School site, in school hours during the duration of the suspension, unless there is reasonable justification for this, and that daytime supervision is their responsibility, as parents/carers.

Permanent Exclusion

The decision to exclude a pupil permanently is a serious one. There are two main types of situation in which permanent exclusion may be considered.

1. The first is a final, formal step in a concerted process for dealing with disciplinary offences following the use of a wide range of other strategies, which have been used without success.

It is an acknowledgement that all available strategies have been exhausted and is used as a last resort. This would include persistent and defiant misbehaviour including bullying (which would include racist or homophobic bullying) or repeated incidents as listed above.

2. The second is where there are exceptional circumstances and it is not appropriate to implement other strategies and where it could be appropriate to permanently exclude a student for a first or 'one off' offence. These might include:

- Serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff.

These instances are not exhaustive but indicate the severity of such offences and the fact that such behaviour seriously affects the discipline and well being of the school.

- Exclusion will not be imposed instantly unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of others in the School or the pupil concerned. Before deciding whether to suspend or exclude a student the Head will:
- Ensure appropriate investigations have been carried out.
- Consider all the evidence available to support the allegations taking into account the Pupil Behaviour, Equal Opportunities and Race Equality Policies.
- Allow the student to give her/his version of events.
- Check whether the incident may have been provoked for example by bullying or by racial or sexual harassment.

If the Head is satisfied that on the balance of probabilities the pupil did what he or she is alleged to have done, exclusion will be the outcome.

Exercise of discretion

In reaching a decision on suspension or exclusion, the Head will always look at each case on its own merits. Therefore, a tariff system, fixing a standard penalty for a particular action, is both unfair and inappropriate.

In considering whether permanent exclusion is the most appropriate sanction, the Head will consider *a)* the gravity of the incident, or series of incidents, and whether it constitutes a serious breach of the Pupil's Behaviour Policy and *b)* the effect that the student remaining in the School would have on the education and welfare of other students and staff.

In line with its statutory duty, these same two tests of appropriateness will form the basis of the deliberations of the Governing Body when it meets to consider the Head teacher's decision to exclude. A Committee formed from the governing body will require the Head teacher to explain the reasons for the decision and will look at appropriate evidence, such as the student's School record, witness statements and the strategies used by the School to support the student prior to exclusion.

Alternatives to Exclusion

Exclusion is a last resort and alternative strategies to exclusion are always used if possible.

Lunchtime Exclusion

Pupils whose behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive may be excluded from the School premises for the duration of the lunchtime period. This will be treated as a suspension and parents will have the same right to gain information and to appeal.

Behaviour Outside School

Pupils' behaviour outside School on school "business" for example school trips and journeys, is subject to the Student Behaviour Policy. Bad behaviour in these circumstances will be dealt with as if it had taken place in school.

