



WESSEX
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Suspension and Exclusion Policy

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Suspension and Exclusion Policy

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Statement of intent

At the Wessex Multi-Academy Trust we understand that good behaviour and discipline is essential for promoting a high-quality education.

Amongst other disciplinary sanctions, the academy recognises that suspension and exclusion of pupils may be necessary where there has been a serious breach, or consistent breaches, of the school's Behaviour Policy. Suspending or excluding a pupil may also be required in instances where allowing the pupil to remain in school would be damaging to the education and welfare of themselves or others; in all cases, suspending or excluding pupils should only be used as a means of last resort.

The Academy has created this policy to clearly define the legal responsibilities of the headteacher, school governance committee and the trust when responding to pupil suspensions and exclusions, to ensure that they are dealt with both fairly and lawfully, and in line with DfE statutory guidance. This policy also aims to secure a pupil's right to an education despite having been suspended or excluded, by ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place.

A **"suspension"** is defined as the temporary removal of a pupil from the school for behaviour management purposes. A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods, up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year. A suspension does not have to be for a continuous period.

An **"exclusion"** is defined as the permanent removal of a pupil from the school, in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy, and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupils or staff in the school.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007
- Equality Act 2010
- The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) (Amendment and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2023
- The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

1.2. This policy also has due regard to statutory and non-statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2023) 'Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE (2022) 'Behaviour in Schools'
- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'

1.3. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Pupil Code of Conduct
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The LA is responsible for:

- Having due regard to the relevant statutory guidance when carrying out its duties in relation to the education of LAC.
- Arranging suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age excluded permanently, in coordination with the school.
- Reviewing and reassessing pupils' needs in consultation with their parents where they have an EHC plan and are excluded permanently, with a view to identifying a new placement.

2.2. The trust, or the individual school where appropriate, is responsible for:

- Ensuring the hearing takes place without delay at a time, date and venue convenient for all parties.
- Ensuring the independent review panel consists of three or five members as appropriate, which represent the required categories.
- Ensuring all panel members and the clerk have received training within the two years prior to the date of the review.
- If requested by parents, ensure a SEND expert has been instructed to attend the panel and the appropriate costs debited from the school's budget
- Ensuring that an independent review panel is convened to review the decision of the school governance panel not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil where required.
- Ensuring arrangements for the independent review panel hearing to be held via remote access where requested by parents or excluded pupils aged 18 and above.

2.3. The school governance committee is responsible for:

- Providing information to the Secretary of State and the trust about any suspensions and exclusions within the last 12 months.
- Arranging suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age who is suspended, where required.
- Considering parents' representations about suspensions and exclusions within 15 school days of receiving notice if the appropriate requirements are met.
- Where a suspension or exclusion would result in a pupil missing a public examination or test, considering the suspension or exclusion before this date.

- Considering whether it would be appropriate for a pupil to be permitted onto the school premises to sit the public examination or test.
- Arranging the representation meeting at a time and date convenient to all parties, but in compliance with the statutory time limits.
- Arranging for the representation meeting to take place via remote access where requested by parents or excluded pupils aged 18 and over.
- Adhering to its responsibilities to consider the reinstatement of pupils.
- Considering the interests and circumstances of the suspended or excluded pupil, including the circumstances in which they were suspended or excluded, and have due regard to the interests of others at the school.
- Using the civil standard of proof (based on the 'balance of probabilities', it is more than likely that the fact is true) when establishing the facts relating to a suspension or exclusion.
- Ensuring clear minutes are taken of the representation meeting.
- Noting the outcome of the representation meeting on the pupil's education record, along with copies of relevant papers for future reference.
- Notifying the pupil's parents, the headteacher/ head of school and the trust of its decision and the reasons for it, without delay.
- Appointing a clerk to provide advice to the relevant panel and parties to the review on procedure, law and statutory guidance on suspensions and exclusions.
- Where appropriate, informing parents of where to apply for an independent review panel.
- Informing parents of relevant sources of information.
- Ensuring a pupil's name is removed from the school admissions register, where appropriate.
- Reconvening within 10 school days to reconsider reinstatement of a pupil where directed to do so by the suspensions and exclusions review panel.
- Using data to evaluate the school's practices regarding intervention, suspension and exclusion.

2.4. The clerk to the suspensions and exclusions review panel is responsible for:

- Informing the appropriate individuals that they are entitled to:
 - Make written representations to the panel.
 - Attend the hearing and make oral representations to the panel.

- Be represented.
- Circulating copies of relevant papers at least five school days before the review to all parties.
- Giving all parties details of those attending and their role, once the position is clear.
- Attending the review and ensuring that minutes are produced in accordance with instructions from the panel within the timeframe of the policy.

2.5. The headteacher/ head of school is responsible for:

- Implementing good levels of discipline to ensure all pupils can benefit from the opportunities provided by education and to minimise potential suspensions and exclusions.
- Applying the civil standard of proof when establishing the facts in relation to a suspension or exclusion.
- Complying with their statutory duties in relation to pupils with SEND when administering the suspension or exclusion process, as outlined in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.
- Considering any contributing factors that are identified after an incident of poor behaviour has occurred, e.g. if a pupil has suffered bereavement, experienced bullying or has a mental health issue.
- Considering the use of a multi-agency assessment for a pupil who demonstrates persistent disruptive behaviour.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of suspensions and exclusions as sanctions, e.g. if a pupil has received multiple suspensions or is approaching the legal limit for suspensions in an academic year.
- Considering what extra support may be needed to identify and address the needs of individual pupils, particularly those with SEND, those eligible for FSM, LAC and those from certain ethnic groups.
- Engaging effectively with parents in supporting the behaviour of pupils with additional needs.
- Determining whether a pupil will be suspended or excluded on disciplinary grounds.
- Adhering to their responsibilities when cancelling an exclusion before the school governance committee has met to consider whether the pupil should be reinstated. Withdrawing any suspensions or exclusions that have not been reviewed by the school governance committee, where appropriate.

- Ensuring any decision to suspend or exclude is lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate.
- Complying with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 when deciding whether to suspend or exclude a pupil.
- Ensuring they have considered their legal duty of care when sending a pupil home following a suspension or exclusion.
- Making the decision to suspend or exclude based on the evidence available at the time, regardless of any police investigation and/or criminal proceedings.
- Notifying a pupil's parents without delay where the decision is taken to suspend or exclude the pupil, including the days on which the parents must ensure the pupil is not present in a public place at any time during school hours, as well as any other necessary information statutorily required.
- Ensuring that all information provided to parents is clear and easily understood.
- Notifying the governor responsible and the trust of their decision to exclude a pupil where appropriate, as well as the pupil's home authority if required.
- Notifying the school governance committee once per term of any exclusions in the headteacher's/ head of school's report to governors.
- Organising suitable work for excluded pupils where alternative provision cannot be arranged.

3. Grounds for suspension or exclusion.

3.1. The school will only suspend or exclude a pupil where it is absolutely necessary, and where all other possible disciplinary sanctions, as detailed in the school's Behaviour Policy, have failed to be successful.

3.2. The following examples of behaviour may warrant the decision to suspend or exclude a pupil:

- Physical assault against a pupil
- Physical assault against an adult
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a pupil
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult
- Use, or threat of use, of an offensive weapon or prohibited item
- Bullying

- Discriminatory abuse, e.g. racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or ableist abuse

3.3. Pupils can be suspended on a fixed-period basis, i.e. for up to 45 school days within a year or permanently excluded. Similarly, pupils can be permanently excluded following a suspension, where further evidence is presented. In all cases, the headteacher will decide whether a pupil will be subject to a suspension or an exclusion, depending on what the circumstances warrant.

4. **The headteacher's/ head of school's power to suspend and exclude.**

- 4.1. Only the headteacher/ head of school has the power to suspend or exclude a pupil from the school, and is able to decide whether either a suspension or exclusion is appropriate. All suspensions and exclusions will only be issued on disciplinary grounds.
- 4.2. The headteacher/ head of school is able to suspend pupils where their behaviour is disruptive during lunchtime. All lunchtime suspensions will be counted as half of a school day. The headteacher/ head of school is also able to consider a pupil's disruptive behaviour outside of the school premises as grounds for suspension or exclusion, in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.
- 4.3. When sending a pupil home following any suspension or exclusion, the headteacher/ head of school will ensure that they exercise their duty of care at all times and will always inform the parents.
- 4.4. Any decision made to suspend or exclude a pupil will be lawful, proportionate and fair, with respect to legislation relating directly to suspensions and exclusions and the school's wider legal duties, including the ECHR. At all times, the headteacher will take into account their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years', ensuring that they do not discriminate on any grounds and will not increase the severity of a pupil's suspension or exclusion on these grounds.
- 4.5. The headteacher/ head of school will apply the civil standard of proof when responding to the facts relating to a suspension or exclusion, i.e. that 'on the balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that the facts are true.
- 4.6. The headteacher/ head of school may cancel any suspension or exclusion that has already begun, or one that has not yet begun; however, this power will only be used if the suspension or exclusion has not already been reviewed by the governing board.
- 4.7. **[Please note: The headteacher's/ head of school's duties in relation to notification and the duty to allow a pupil back into school have been made statutory]** Where a suspension or exclusion is cancelled, the headteacher/ head of school will notify the pupil's parents, the school committee, the trust, the LA, and, where relevant, the virtual school head (VSH) and the pupil's social worker. The notification will also provide the reason for the cancellation. The headteacher/ head

of school will offer the pupil's parents the opportunity to meet with the headteacher/ head of school to discuss the circumstances that led to the cancellation of the exclusion, and the pupil will be allowed back into school without delay.

- 4.8. When a suspension or exclusion is cancelled, the school governance committee's duty to consider reinstatement ceases, and there is no requirement to hold a meeting to consider reinstatement.
- 4.9. Any days spent out of school as a result of a suspension or exclusion prior to it being cancelled will count towards the maximum 45 school days that a pupil can be suspended or excluded in an academic year. A permanent exclusion will not be cancelled if the pupil has already been suspended or excluded for more than 45 school days in an academic year or if they will have been so by the time the cancellation takes effect.
- 4.10. The headteacher/ head of school will report the number of suspensions and exclusions that have been cancelled, alongside the circumstances around and reasons for cancellation, to the school governance committee once per term, to allow governors to have appropriate oversight.
- 4.11. The headteacher/ head of school will not issue any 'informal' or 'unofficial' suspensions or exclusions, e.g. sending a pupil home to 'cool off', regardless of whether the parents have agreed to this. The headteacher/ head of school will not use the threat of suspension or exclusion as a means of instructing parents to remove their child from the premises.
- 4.12. All suspensions and exclusions will be formally recorded on the school's pupil information system.

5. Factors to consider when suspending or excluding a pupil

- 5.1. When considering the suspension or exclusion of a pupil, the headteacher/ head of school will:
 - Allow the pupil the opportunity to present their case once evidence has been collected.
 - Take into account any contributing factors that are identified after a case of poor behaviour has occurred, e.g. if the pupil's wellbeing has been compromised, or they have been subjected to bullying.
 - Take into consideration whether the pupil has received multiple suspensions or is approaching the legal limit of 45 suspended days per school year, and whether suspension is serving as an effective sanction.
 - Consider early intervention to address underlying causes of disruptive behaviour, including liaising with external agencies, to assess pupils who demonstrate consistently poor behaviour.

5.2. The headteacher/ head of school will consider what extra support may be available for vulnerable pupil groups whose suspension and exclusion rates are higher, to reduce their risk of suspension or exclusion, including the following:

- LAC
- Pupils eligible for FSM
- Pupils with SEND
- Certain ethnic groups

5.3. The headteacher/ head of school will consider avoiding exclusion for LAC, those with SEMH issues or pupils with an EHC plan. Where any member of staff has concerns about vulnerable pupil groups and their behaviour, they will report this to the headteacher, who will be likely to instigate a multi-agency assessment to determine whether the behavioural issues might be a result of educational, mental health or other needs and vulnerabilities.

5.4. Where SEND or SEMH issues are identified, an individual behaviour plan will be created using the graduated response outlined in the school's Behaviour Policy. If the pupil continues to endanger the physical or emotional wellbeing of other pupils or staff, despite exhausting the graduated response process, then suspension or exclusion may be considered. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, under no circumstances will a pupil with identified SEND or SEMH issues be suspended or excluded before the graduated response process has been completed.

5.5. Where a pupil with SEND or SEMH issues is excluded because of a SEND- or SEMH-related need that could not be met at the school, detailed records will be kept highlighting that these pupils are closely tracked and showing that the school has a close relationship with the pupil's next destination.

5.6. The headteacher/ head of school will do everything reasonable to work in conjunction with the parents of any pupil with additional needs to establish the most effective support mechanisms.

6. Preventative measures

6.1. Before taking a final decision to exclude, the headteacher/ head of school will usually consider whether it is in the best interests of all parties to initiate off-site directions or managed moves as preventative measures to exclusion.

6.2. Off-site direction

6.3. The headteacher/head of school may arrange for any registered pupil to attend at any place outside the school premises for the purpose of receiving educational provision intended to improve their behaviour.

6.4. The headteacher/ head of school will decide, in communication with the pupil and their parents, whether off-site direction is an appropriate solution to manage a pupil's

behaviour and avoid suspension or exclusion. Where all parties agree to this course of action, the school will work with the pupil and their parents to discuss and agree a plan for the off-site direction, including a proposed maximum period of time that the pupil will be at the alternative provision and any alternative options that will be considered once the time limit has been reached, e.g. managed moves.

- 6.5. If off-site provision is agreed, the school will notify parents in writing with information about the placement no later than two school days before the relevant start date.
- 6.6. The school will keep any off-site placements under review by holding review meetings at appropriate intervals deemed appropriate; parents and/or carers will be invited to each review meeting no later than six days before that date.
- 6.7. Reviews will be recorded in writing, including any decisions made regarding the placement.
- 6.8. Managed moves
Where it is thought to be in a pupil's best interest to transfer them to another mainstream school permanently, the headteacher/ head of school will discuss this with the parents of the pupil and the LA in line with local protocols.
- 6.9. The school will ensure that records are kept of any decision to initiate a managed move, including evidence that appropriate initial intervention has been carried out.
- 6.10. Parents who have concerns that a managed move is being forced on them or who are unhappy with a managed move will be referred to the Complaints Policy and Procedure.

7. Duty to inform parents

- 7.1. Following the headteacher's/ head of school's decision to suspend or exclude a pupil, they will immediately inform the parents, or the excluded pupil if they are 18 or older, in person or by telephone, supported by email communication, of the period of the suspension, or permanency of the exclusion, and the reasons behind this.
- 7.2. The headteacher/ head of school will inform the parents in writing (or electronically if written permission has been received from the parents for notices to be sent this way) of the following:
 - The reasons for the suspension or exclusion
 - The length of the suspension or permanency of the exclusion
 - Their right to raise any representations about the suspension or exclusion to the governing board, including how the pupil will be involved in this and how the representations will be made.
 - Their right to make a request to hold the meeting via remote access and how this request can be made.

- Their right to attend a meeting where there is a legal requirement for the governors to consider the suspension or exclusion, and the fact that they are able to bring an accompanying individual (but not a legal representative)
- The arrangements that have been made for the pupil to continue their education prior to the organisation of any alternative provision, or the pupil's return to school.
- Relevant sources of free, impartial information

7.3. Where the pupil is of compulsory school age, the headteacher/head of school will inform the parents by the end of the afternoon session that for the first five days of the suspension or exclusion (or until the start date of any alternative provision or the end of the suspension, where this is earlier), parents are legally required to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without justification, and that parents may receive a penalty fine if they fail to do so.

7.4. Where the headteacher/ head of school has arranged alternative provision, they will also inform the parents of the following:

- The start and end date for any provision of full-time education
- The address at which the provision will take place.
- Any information necessary for the pupil to identify the person they should report to on the starting date.

7.5. Where the headteacher/ head of school is unable to provide information on alternative provision by the end of the afternoon session, they will provide the information in a subsequent written notice without further delay, and within 48 hours of the pupil beginning the provision. If the alternative provision is due to begin before the sixth day of the suspension or exclusion, the headteacher/ head of school is able to give less than 48 hours of notice, with parental consent.

7.6. If the headteacher/ head of school has decided to suspend the pupil for a further fixed period following their original suspension, or to permanently exclude them, they will notify the parents without delay and issue a new suspension or exclusion notice to parents.

8. Duty to inform the school governance committee and the trust.

8.1. The headteacher/ head of school will inform the school governance committee (normally via the Chair) and the trust (normally via the CEO) without delay, of the following:

- Any permanent exclusions (including where a suspension is followed by a decision to permanently exclude the pupil)
- Any suspensions which would result in the pupil being suspended for more than 5 school days in a term (or more than 10 lunchtimes)

- Any suspensions or exclusions which would result in the pupil being absent from an examination or national curriculum test

8.2. For any suspensions and exclusions, other than those above, the headteacher/ head of school will notify the school governance committee once per term.

8.3. All notifications to the school governance committee and LA will include the reasons for suspension or exclusion and the duration of any suspension.

8.4. If a pupil who is suspended or excluded lives outside the LA in which the school is located, the headteacher/ head of school will notify the pupil's 'home authority'.

9. Duty to inform social workers and the virtual school head (VSH)

9.1. When a pupil has been suspended or excluded, the headteacher/ head of school will, without delay, notify the pupil's social worker, if they have one, and the VSH, if they are a looked-after child. This notification will include the period of any suspension and the reasons for suspension or permanent exclusion.

9.2. Social workers and/or the VSH will also be informed when a meeting of the school governance panel is taking place, and will be invited to attend the meeting should they wish to do so.

9.3. Social workers and VSHs will be allowed to join a school committee meeting or independent review panel via the use of remote access, as long as the arranging authority is satisfied they will be able to participate effectively, they can hear and be heard throughout the meeting, and their remote participation will not prevent the meeting being fair and transparent.

10. Arranging education for suspended and excluded pupils.

10.1. For any suspensions of more than five school days, the school will arrange suitable full-time education for the pupil, which will begin no later than the sixth day of suspension. Where a pupil receives consecutive suspensions, these will be regarded as cumulative, and full-time education will still have to be provided from the sixth day of suspension. For exclusions, full-time education will be provided for the pupil from the sixth day of exclusion.

10.2. The school will not arrange full-time education for any pupil who is currently in their final year of compulsory education, and who does not have any further public examinations to sit.

10.3. The school is aware that it is beneficial to pupils to begin their alternative education arrangements before the sixth day of suspension or exclusion; therefore, the school will always attempt to arrange alternative provision before the sixth day. Where it is not possible to arrange alternative provision during the first five days, the school will ensure that they take reasonable steps to set and mark work for the pupil.

10.4. If a pupil with SEND has been suspended or excluded, the school will ensure that:

- Any alternative provision is arranged in consultation with the pupil's parents.
- When identifying alternative provision, any EHC plan is reviewed or the pupil's needs are reassessed, in consultation with the pupil's parents.

11. Considering suspensions and exclusions

- 11.1. The school governance committee will consider any representations made by parents regarding suspensions and exclusions.
- 11.2. Parents and, where requested, a friend or representative (but not a legal representative) will be invited to attend any consideration of suspensions and exclusions and will be able to make representations.
- 11.3. Any meeting to consider reinstatement of a pupil will be arranged at a date and time convenient for all parties, and in compliance with any statutory time limits. Parents, and excluded pupils if they are over 18, will also be able to request that the meeting is held via remote access.
- 11.4. Where it is appropriate to the pupil's age and level of understanding, the pupil will also attend any consideration meeting, and will be enabled to make a representation on their own behalf if they desire to do so.
- 11.5. The school governance committee will consider the reinstatement of a suspended or excluded pupil, where:
 - The exclusion is permanent.
 - The suspension is fixed-period and would bring the pupil's total number of suspended school days to more than 15 in any given term.
 - The suspension or exclusion would result in the pupil missing a public examination.
- 11.6. In the case of a suspension where the pupil's total number of suspended days is more than 5 but less than 16 school days (this includes suspensions that exceed 15 school days by less than a whole day, e.g. one that totals 15.5 days) within a term, if parents make representations, the school governance committee will consider suspensions within 50 school days of receiving the notice of suspension. In the absence of any representations from parents, the school committee panel will consider the reinstatement on their own.
- 11.7. Where a suspension will take a pupil's total number of school days out of school above five but less than 15 for the term, and parents have not requested a panel meeting, the school governance committee will not be required to consider the pupil's reinstatement, but it will have the power to do so if it deems it appropriate.
- 11.8. Where a suspension will not bring a pupil's total number of days of suspension or permanent exclusion to more than five days in a term, the school governance committee will consider all representations made by parents; however, the

committee cannot direct the reinstatement of the pupil and it is not required to arrange a meeting with parents.

11.9. Where suspension or exclusion would result in a pupil missing a public examination, the panel will consider the suspension or exclusion before the test to decide whether the pupil should be reinstated in time to take the examination.

11.10. In light of the above, the panel will also consider whether it would be appropriate to allow the suspended or excluded pupil to enter the premises to take the examination.

11.11. When considering the reinstatement of a pupil, the panel will:

- Only discuss the suspension or exclusion with the parties present at the meeting.
- Ask for any written evidence prior to the meeting.
- Circulate any written evidence and information to all parties, at least five school days in advance of the meeting.
- Allow pupils and parents to be accompanied by a person of their choice to the meeting (but not a legal representative)
- Consider what reasonable adjustments need to be made to support the attendance and contribution of parties at the meeting.
- Identify the steps needed to enable and encourage the suspended or excluded pupil to attend the meeting and speak on their behalf, or how they may contribute personal views by other means if attendance is not possible.
- Consider the interests and circumstances of the pupil, including the grounds for suspension or exclusion.

12. Reaching a decision

12.1. After considering suspensions and exclusions, the panel will either:

- Decline to reinstate the pupil.
- Direct the reinstatement of the pupil immediately, or on a specified date.

12.2. If reinstatement would make no practical difference, e.g. if the pupil has already returned to school following a suspension or the parents make clear they do not want their child reinstated, the school governance committee will still consider whether the pupil should be officially reinstated, and whether the headteacher's/ head of school's decision to suspend or exclude the pupil was fair, lawful and proportionate, based on the evidence presented.

12.3. Governors will apply the civil standard of proof when responding to the acts relating to a suspension or exclusion, i.e. that on the 'balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that the facts are true.

12.4. To reach a decision, the school governance committee will:

- Identify the steps they intend to take to ensure that all parties involved will have the opportunity to participate and present their views.
- Ensure that minutes are taken of the meeting as a record of the evidence that was considered.
- Ask all parties to withdraw from the meeting before concluding their decision.
- Consider whether the suspension or exclusion of the pupil was lawful, proportionate and fair, taking into account the headteacher's/ head of school legal duties and any evidence that was presented to the governing board in relation to the decision.
- Record the outcome of the decision on the pupil's educational records, along with copies, which will be kept for at least six months.
- Make a note of their findings, where they have considered a suspension or exclusion but cannot reinstate the pupil.

13. Notification of considered suspensions and exclusions.

13.1. Governors will notify the parents of the suspended or excluded pupil, the headteacher/ head of school, and the LA of their decision following the consideration of a suspension or exclusion, in writing and without delay.

13.2. In the case of exclusion, where the governing board decides not to reinstate the pupil, they will notify the parents:

- That the exclusion is permanent.
- Of their right for it to be reviewed by an independent review panel.
- Of the date by which an application for review must be made.
- Of the name and address of whom the review application should be submitted to.
- That a request to hold the meeting via remote access can be made and how to do this.
- That any application should set out the grounds on which it is being made and that, where appropriate, this should include reference to how a pupil's SEND is considered relevant to the exclusion.

13.3. The school governance committee will also notify parents that, if they believe a suspension or exclusion has been issued as a result of discrimination, then they are required to make a claim under the Equality Act 2010 to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND), and that this should be within six months of when the discrimination allegedly took place.

13.4. After any conclusion, the school governance committee will notify the parents, and all other parties involved, of the decision that was made and the reasoning for this, in sufficient detail.

14. Removing excluded pupils from the school register

14.1. The headteacher/ head of school will remove pupils from the school register if:

- 15 school days have passed since the parents were notified of the school governance committee's decision not to reinstate the pupil and no application for an independent panel review has been received.
- The parents have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent panel review following an exclusion.

14.2. If an application for an independent panel review has been made within 15 school days, the headteacher/ head of school will wait until the review has been determined, or abandoned, and until the school governance committee has completed any reconsideration that the panel recommended or directed it to carry out, before removing the pupil from the school register.

14.3. If a pupil's name is to be removed from the register, the headteacher/ head of school will make a return to the LA, which will include:

- All the particulars which were entered in the register.
- The address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides.
- The grounds upon which the pupil's name is to be removed from the register.

14.4. Any return to the LA will be made as soon as the grounds for removal are met and no later than the date in which the pupil's name was removed.

14.5. If a pupil's name has been removed from the register and a discrimination claim is made, the pupil may be reinstated following a decision made by the First-tier Tribunal (SEND) or County Court.

14.6. Whilst a pupil's name remains on the admissions register, the appropriate code will be used to mark the pupil's attendance:

- Code B: Education off-site
- Code D: Dual registration
- Code E: Absent and not attending alternative provision

15. Independent review panel

15.1. The trust will review the governing board's decision not to reinstate an excluded pupil if the parents submit their application for this within the required time frame.

15.2. The trust will constitute an independent review panel of three or five members that represent the following categories:

- A lay member to chair the panel. This individual will not have worked in any school in a paid capacity.
- A current or former school governor who has served for at least 12 consecutive months in the last 5 years.
- A headteacher/ head of school or individual who has been a headteacher/ head of school within the last 5 years.

15.3. Parents are required to submit their applications within:

- 15 school days of the school governance committee's notification of their decision.
- 15 school days of the final determination of a discriminatory claim made under the Equality Act 2010.

15.4. Any application made outside of the above timeframe will not be reviewed. Parents are able to request an independent panel review even if they did not make a case to, or attend, the governing board's initial consideration of the exclusion.

15.5. Parents can request that independent review panels take place via remote access.

15.6. The trust will adhere to all statutory guidelines when conducting an independent panel review, as outlined in the DfE's statutory guidance.

16. The duties of the independent review panel

16.1. The role of the panel is to review the school governance committee's decision not to reinstate an excluded pupil. In reviewing the decision, the panel will consider the interests and circumstances of the excluded pupil, including the circumstances in which the pupil was excluded, and have regard to the interests of other pupils and people working at the school. The panel will apply the civil standard of proof, rather than the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

16.2. Following the review, the panel will do one of the following:

- Uphold the decision
- Recommend that the school governance committee reconsiders reinstatement
- Quash the decision and direct that the governing board reconsiders reinstatement

16.3. The panel's decision does not have to be unanimous and can be decided by a majority vote. It is binding on the pupil, parents, trust board and headteacher/head of school.

17. Conducting panels via remote access

17.1. Parents, or excluded pupils if they are 18 or older, will be able to request that exclusion hearings or independent review panels are held via remote access; however, parents and pupils will be made aware that this is not the default option and that meetings will normally be held face-to-face

17.2. Where remote meetings are agreed, they will be held in accordance with timelines for face-to-face meetings.

17.3. If there are technological or internet issues during a remote meeting which compromises the ability for participants to be seen or heard or prevents the meeting from being held fairly and transparently and it is not reasonably practicable to resolve, a face-to-face meeting will be arranged without delay.

17.4. When holding meetings or panels via remote access, the governing board or LA will:

- Comply with relevant equalities legislation.
- Enable access to support which the parent is entitled to, including the presence of a friend (but not a legal representative)
- Confirm with all participants that they have access to the technology that will allow them to participate in the meeting or panel.
- Ensure all the participants will be able to put across their point of view and/or fulfil their function.
- Ensure the remote meeting or panel can be held fairly and transparently.

18. Reconsidering reinstatement following a review

18.1. Where the independent review panel instructs the governing board to reconsider their decision not to reinstate a pupil, they will do so within 10 school days of being given notice of the review panel's decision.

- 18.2. The school is aware that if, following an instruction to reconsider, the school governance committee does not offer to reinstate the pupil, then the school will be required to make a payment of £4,000 directly to the LA area in which the school is located.
- 18.3. Where the independent review panel recommends that the governing board should reconsider their decision not to reinstate a pupil, they will do so within 10 school days of being given notice of the review panel's decision. The school is aware that if, following a recommendation to reconsider, the school governance committee does not offer to reinstate the pupil, it will not be subject to a financial adjustment. If, following reconsideration, the school committee offers to reinstate the pupil but the parents decline, no adjustment will be made to the school's budget.
- 18.4. Following reconsideration, the school governance committee will notify the parents, headteacher/ head of school and the trust of their reconsidered decision and the reasons for this.

19. Criminal investigations

- 19.1. The headteacher/ head of school will not postpone taking a decision to suspend or exclude a pupil due to a police investigation being underway, or any criminal proceedings that are in place.
- 19.2. Particular consideration will be given by the headteacher/ head of school when deciding to suspend or exclude a pupil where evidence is limited by a police investigation, to ensure that any decision made is fair and reasonable.
- 19.3. If the school governance committee is required to consider the headteacher's/ head of school's decision in these circumstances, they will not postpone the meeting and will make a decision based on the evidence available.

20. Training requirements

- 20.1. The trust will ensure that all independent review panel members and clerks have received training within the two years prior to the date of the review. Training will cover:
- The requirements of the legislation, regulations and statutory guidance governing suspensions and exclusions.
 - The need for the panel to observe procedural fairness and the rules of natural justice.
 - The role of the chair of a review panel.
 - The role of the clerk to a review panel.
 - The duties of headteachers/ head of school, school governance committees and the panel under the Equality Act 2010.

- The effect of section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the need to act in a manner compatible with human rights protected by that Act.

20.2. Clerks will also have an up-to-date understanding on developments in case law which are relevant to suspension and exclusion.

21. **Using data**

21.1. The headteacher/ head of school will ensure that all data regarding suspensions and exclusions is collected and provided to school governance committee on a termly basis. The governing board will review this data regularly in order to:

- Consider the level of pupil moves and the characteristics of pupils who are moving on any permanent exclusions to ensure that this is only being used as a last resort.
- Gather information on pupils who are taken off the roll and those who are on the roll but attending education off-site.
- Determine whether there are any patterns of suspensions and exclusions
- Consider the effectiveness and consistency in implementing the Behaviour Policy.
- Understand any variations in the rolling average of permanent exclusions to ensure they are only used when necessary.
- Understand the characteristics of suspended and excluded pupils and evaluate equality considerations.
- Gather information on where pupils are receiving repeat suspensions.
- Evaluate interventions in place to support pupils at risk of suspension and exclusion, including where there are patterns which may indicate that certain policies and support measures are or are not working.
- Analysing whether the placements of pupils directed off-site into alternative provision are reviewed at sufficient intervals to assure that the education is achieving its objectives.

22. **Monitoring and review**

22.1. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Academy in conjunction with the Trustees. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **by 01/09/26**

