

# Willow School



## Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

Date: September 2024

Review Date: September 2025

## **Purpose**

In determining the Suspensions and Permanent Exclusion policy of Willow School, the safety of pupils and staff is of paramount importance. We are committed to following all statutory exclusions procedures to ensure that every child receives an education in a safe and caring environment.

## **Definitions**

'The school' means Willow School

'Suspension' is when a pupil is removed from the school for a fixed period. This was previously referred to as a 'fixed-term exclusion'.

Permanent exclusion is when a pupil is removed from the school permanently and taken off the school roll. This is sometimes referred to as an 'exclusion'.

## **Scope**

The School Management Team will ensure that the following procedures are followed. 4. The Policy Willow School is an inclusive school, committed in policy and practice to recognition of the equal value of each member of the community and to equality of opportunity for all.

## **The Decision to Suspend or Permanently Exclude**

A decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil will only be taken where allowing the pupil to remain in school would:

- Compromise the welfare and safety of the pupil or others in the school
- Seriously harm the education of the pupil or others in the school

A serious offence could by itself justify a student's exclusion. This may include, but it not limited to:

- Violence
- Swearing
- Racist or discriminatory behaviour
- Bullying
- Damage/vandalism
- Theft
- Fighting
- Possession of prohibited items
- Smoking/vaping
- Frequent high-level disruption to lessons
- Frequent high levels of non-compliance

The school expects the same standards of behaviour and behaviour management to apply when pupils are outside of school on offsite activities as when in school.

Only the Headteacher (or person acting as such in their absence) has the authority to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil and this authority may not be delegated.

Any decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil will only be taken, other than where there is an immediate threat to the safety of the pupil or others, following:

- An appropriate investigation of the behaviour that has led to the need to consider suspension or permanent exclusion
- Consideration of all the evidence
- Consultation with any other appropriate professionals including the placing Local Authority
- An opportunity for the pupil, where able, to give their version of events.

Wherever possible, the school will liaise with the placing Local Authority where it becomes apparent that there is a situation developing that may lead to suspension or permanent exclusion in order to work with the Local Authority and parents to resolve the difficulty. 5.6 The period of any suspension will be kept to the minimum deemed appropriate for any one episode.

### **Alternatives to Suspension/Exclusion**

Where feasible, the school will look at one or more of the following alternatives to suspension or permanent exclusion:

- Re-evaluating the behaviour guidelines of the child to seek to address the behaviour and issues exhibited. Behaviour guidelines to be reviewed by senior staff including staff not allocated to this pupil.
- Increased staffing to be provided with an application for increased funding to the Local Authority.
- Working in isolation from peers – removal of the pupil from the class to a designated area within the school with appropriate support.
- A managed move – if the behaviour of the pupil is such that the school can no longer meet the needs of the pupil, the school may request the placing Local Authority to initiate an interim review and/or to make alternative educational provision

### **Period of Suspension/Exclusion**

The period of suspension may be for:

- One or more fixed periods not exceeding a total of 45 school days in any one school year
- Permanent exclusions and any suspensions which result in the pupil being suspended for more than five school days (singly or cumulatively) in a term must immediately be reported to the governors and the Local Authority.
- Permanent exclusion
- A suspension may be converted into a permanent exclusion if the circumstances warrant.

The school will endeavour to provide suitable work for the child during the period of any suspension having regard to the teaching approach of the school.

### **Review of Exclusions**

The Headteacher will report any suspensions and permanent exclusions to the next Governing Body/Proprietor meeting following the suspension or permanent exclusion of a pupil.

### **Procedures for Suspending or Excluding a pupil**

The Headteacher will notify the parents by letter within one school day of any decision to suspend or permanently exclude. Where possible, immediate telephone contact will be made with the parents.

The written notification of suspension or permanent exclusion will advise:

- The period of suspension or whether this is a permanent exclusion
- The reason for suspension or permanent exclusion
- The parent's right to make representations about the suspension or permanent exclusion to the Governing Body/Proprietors and the date by which this should be received
- The parent's right to request copies of their child's school record
- Details of any alternative arrangements as relevant
- The parent's legal duty that their child does not access public spaces during school hours in the first 5 days of the exclusion.

In addition, within one school day the Headteacher will advise the following of any decision to suspend or permanently exclude:

- The Governing Body/Proprietors
- The Authority Contracts Officer at the placing Local Authority and look to convene an interim review meeting at the earliest opportunity.
- The pupil's social worker (if relevant)
- Pupil reintegration team

All suspension and permanent exclusion cases will be treated in strict confidence.

### **Cancelling suspensions and permanent exclusions**

The Headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion that has already commenced but this will only be done 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 will notified without delay
- Parents will be offered the opportunity to meet with the headteacher to discuss the cancellation
- The Headteacher will report to the Governing Body once per term on the number of cancellations

- The pupil will be allowed back in school

Where a suspension is extended or converted to a permanent exclusion, the Headteacher will write again to the parents explaining the reason.

The Governing Body/Proprietor has a duty to consider parents' representations about a suspension or permanent exclusion. It has a duty to consider the reinstatement of a suspended or permanently excluded pupil in certain circumstances.

### **Procedure for Appeal**

If parents wish to appeal against the decision of a permanent exclusion or a suspension of 5 days or more, the matter will be referred to the Governing Body/Proprietor.

Two members, who were not involved in the initial discussions with the Headteacher about possible permanent exclusion or suspension, together with one independent person, from a SEND background, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 20 school days.

Records relating to the decision to exclude, and the parents' complaint will be copied to all parties not later than two days prior to the hearing.

In no circumstances however will the school or its staff be required to divulge to parents or others any confidential information on, or the identities of, pupils or others who have given information which has led to the exclusion, or which the Director of Education has acquired during an investigation.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher, friend, or Parent Support Advisor.

Legal representation is not appropriate.

If possible, the panel of two members and one independent person will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation.

Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how this should be carried out.

After consideration of all the facts considered to be relevant, the panel will reach a decision on whether to uphold or rescind the permanent exclusion or suspension or make other recommendations.

This decision will be made within 10 school days of the hearing.

Parents will be informed in writing of the panel's decision and the reasons for this. The decision of the Panel will be final. The findings and any recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, Director of Education and Governing Body/Proprietor.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be updated as necessary to reflect best practice and to ensure compliance with any changes or amendments to relevant legislation.