

Student Suspension and Exclusion Policy

Approved By	Trust Board	Date:	13/02/2026
Author	Director of Safeguarding and Attendance	Date:	01/09/2025
Board Ratification	Outcomes	Date:	
Joint Negotiating Council (JNC) consultation (where applicable)	N/A		
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1. Statement of Intent

The Respect Collaboration Trust is committed to ensuring that all pupils are educated in a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment where high standards of behaviour enable effective teaching and learning. Good behaviour and discipline are essential for promoting high-quality education and safeguarding the welfare of pupils and staff.

The Trust recognises that, while suspension and permanent exclusion are necessary disciplinary measures in some cases, they must only be used as a last resort when:

- There has been a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of a school's Behaviour Policy; and/or
- Allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil, other pupils, or staff.

The Trust is committed to applying these sanctions fairly, consistently, and lawfully in line with statutory guidance, while also ensuring that pupils' right to an education is protected through appropriate arrangements for continuity of learning.

2. Legal Framework

This policy and all School/Trust processes relating to exclusions are informed by Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units in England ("DfE Guidance") 2024

This policy has due regard to the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- 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
- European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Statutory guidance:

- DfE (2024) *"Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement"*
- DfE (2024) *"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"*.

This policy should be read alongside, but not limited to, the Trust's:

- Behaviour Policy

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Pupil Code of Conduct.
- Equalities Policy

3. Definitions

Suspension: The temporary removal of a pupil from 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.

Exclusion: The permanent removal of a pupil from school in response to serious or persistent breaches of the Behaviour Policy and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

This policy is underpinned by the Trust's vision of "*never give up*", which ensures that all decisions are guided by principles of fairness, inclusion, and safeguarding.

4. Encouraging Positive Behaviour

High standards of behaviour and discipline are expected inside and outside of each school and classroom. Each school has a behaviour policy that details these standards and this is communicated clearly to pupils, families, staff and other stakeholders.

All staff are accountable for implementing high expectations and for challenging behaviour which prevents effective teaching and learning.

All staff are expected to support all pupils appropriately to achieve high standards of behaviour, work and dress.

The Trust seeks the support of parents in upholding the standards in each school and values a partnership with home.

Each School will take appropriate action under this policy and their behaviour protocol where a pupil's behaviour falls below the expected standard and adversely impacts on the academy and any member of the Respect community.

5. Equality

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, each school makes reasonable adjustments to the application of the policy where the behaviour is due to a reason related to a child's special educational needs or disability, thereby ensuring that children with SEND are not placed at a disadvantage or unlawfully discriminated against.

Staff seek to identify the underlying cause of any unacceptable behaviour, for example an unmet special educational need, and to put in place measures to address the cause, ensure that the pupil receives appropriate support and prevent the behaviour re-occurring.

Staff will also seek to identify any 'triggers' for pupils displaying challenging behaviours to prevent the challenging behaviour persisting or worsening.

6. Suspensions and Exclusions

Respect Collaboration Trust is fully aware of its duties not to discriminate against, harass or victimise pupils due to their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or because of pregnancy or gender reassignment. For disabled pupils, each School will make reasonable adjustments to its policies and practices to ensure disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.

Where there are serious incidents of poor behaviour or persistent breaches of this policy, the Headteacher may resort to either a suspension or an exclusion.

All suspensions and exclusions are monitored by the school, Director of Safeguarding and Attendance and Director of Education. Each term reports will be made to the School and Trust Board.

Where an excluded pupil is due to sit an external examination, suitable arrangements will be made to ensure the pupil can still sit the examination.

Before taking a suspension or an exclusion decision, the Headteacher will also have due regard to the following (in accordance with the DfE Guidance):

- For groups with high exclusion rates (pupils with SEN, pupils eligible for Free School Meals, looked after children, pupils whose ethnicity is Gypsy, Roma, Travellers of Irish Heritage or Black Caribbean) any extra support required to identify and address the needs of the pupil
- What additional support or alternative placement may be required for a pupil with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a looked after child
- That the permanent exclusion of a pupil with an EHCP or a looked after child should, as far as reasonably possible, be avoided.
- The decision to suspend or exclude will only be taken for a reason related to behaviour and all decisions will be formally recorded.

In line with the DfE's SEND Code of Practice, where an academy has concerns about the behaviour, or risk of exclusion, of a child with additional needs and a pupil with an EHCP it should, in partnership with others (including the local authority as necessary), consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required. This should involve assessing the suitability of provision for a pupil's SEN. Where a pupil has an EHCP schools should consider requesting an early annual review or interim/emergency review. For those pupils who are SEND-K, a co-production meeting (professionals and families meeting) should be arranged to discuss the additional support and strategies which may need to be considered.

Suspensions

If a decision is taken to suspend a pupil (i.e. for a fixed term)

- The parent must be contacted by the Headteacher as soon as possible and the decision confirmed in writing.
- The letter will outline any relevant incident(s), the reason for, and duration of the suspension and the parent's right to make representation about the suspension or request a meeting with trustees/ governors – GDC Governance Disciplinary Committee.
- A meeting is set up between the parent/carer and pupil on return from a suspension with a senior member of staff.

Governance Disciplinary Committee (GDC)

This committee should be made up of three trustees / governors

They should be trained and fully independent of the case under consideration.

The chair should be experienced in the process. They should receive along with all other parties at the meeting all relevant paperwork well in advance of the Suspension/15 Day or Exclusion meeting.

Re-integration meeting.

Following this meeting:

- The pupil is reinstated
- The pupil may be placed on report or another appropriate temporary sanction
- Behaviour support adjustments will be reviewed or support as agreed at the re-integration meeting
- A record of the suspension and details from the meeting will be placed on the pupil's file.

Suspensions Totalling More Than 15 Days

In accordance with the requirements set out in the DfE Guidance, the school will arrange for a GDC to meet to consider reinstatement of the pupil if the suspension would bring the total number of school days of suspension to more than 15 days in a term, or if the suspension would result in the pupil missing a public examination

If requested to do so by parents, the GDC must also consider the reinstatement of an excluded pupil if that pupil would be excluded from school for more than five (5) school days but not more than fifteen (15) in a single term.

Where a pupil is suspended for fewer than five (5) days in a single term, the GDC will consider any parental representations but will not meet and cannot direct reinstatement.

Use of Alternative Provision (AP)

Where a pupil is at risk of exclusion or requires additional support to access education, the Headteacher may direct the pupil to attend Alternative Provision (AP) to improve behaviour, engagement, or wellbeing. This decision will be made in consultation with parents/carers and relevant professionals, ensuring the placement is:

- Suitable for the pupil's needs
- Regularly reviewed
- Aligned with the pupil's long-term educational goals

AP placements must be clearly recorded, with written notification provided to parents/carers. They should reflect any support outlined in the pupil's Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan or SEN Support arrangements

The Trust is committed to ensuring that all AP settings:

- Meet quality standards
- Provide a safe, inclusive learning environment
- Carry out daily attendance monitoring and follow-up
- Conduct regular safeguarding checks in line with statutory guidance

These measures help ensure that pupils placed in AP continue to receive appropriate education and support in a secure and well-regulated setting.

Decision to Permanently Exclude

Permanent exclusion will be a last resort and the decision to permanently exclude will only be taken by a Headteacher

- in response to a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of this policy and
- where allowing the pupil to remain in the school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school

The following behaviour is regarded as completely unacceptable and may result in a decision to exclude, including on a permanent basis, depending on the circumstances:

- Physical assault against another pupil
- Physical assault against a member of staff or any other adult
- Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour towards another pupil
- Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour towards a member of staff or any other adult
- Any form of bullying
- Racist abuse
- Sexual misconduct or assault
- Drug and alcohol related incidents
- Damage to property (including arson)
- Theft
- Carrying an offensive weapon
- Malicious allegations against members of staff

- Racist, sexist, homophobic or other forms of discriminatory behaviour
- Persistent, disruptive behaviour
- Serious incidents that bring the school or trust into disrepute
- Other (only in exceptional circumstances).

Respect Collaboration Trust will do everything possible to avoid the permanent exclusion of a Looked after Child.

Each school is expected to be proactive and work with the young person, carers, the virtual school and social workers to do everything reasonable to avoid excluding a Looked After Child

Permanent Exclusion Processes

The processes that the school must undertake following a decision to permanently exclude follows precisely the DfE guidance in this area.

If a Headteacher is considering a permanent exclusion this must be discussed with the Director of Education and the Director of Safeguarding and Attendance.

When the decision has been reached to permanently exclude a pupil, a GDC will review the case within fifteen (15) school days of the exclusion. The panel will ensure they consider the facts of the case and representations at the meeting carefully before making a decision either to reinstate or decline to reinstate the pupil.

If, following the completion of the exclusion review process, a pupil who was permanently excluded is to be re-instated, the process of re-integration will require careful planning. A re-integration plan may also involve carrying out a risk assessment and implementing measures to reduce identified risks.

The school will formalise re-integration plans, where actions, expectations and consequences are made clear in writing and may include a parental contract. Should a further exclusion become necessary, this could be used to demonstrate that a sound integration plan was put in place and rigorously applied.

If the decision to permanently exclude is upheld, parents/carers have the right, as described in DfE guidance, to request that the decision of the GDC be reviewed by an Independent Review Panel.

Independent Review Panels (IRP)

Will be impartial and constituted in accordance with the detailed provisions of the DfE Guidance. The Trust will ensure that Independent Review Panel members are experienced and trained in this role and consist of:

- A lay member: Someone without experience in school governance or management, to provide a community perspective.
- A school governor: A person who has served as a governor or head teacher within the last five years.

- An experienced head teacher: Someone who has been a head teacher within the past five years.

Where requested by the parent, a SEN expert will be appointed and paid by the Trust to advise the IRP

The Independent Review Panel may decide to:

- Uphold the GDC's decision
- Recommend that the GDC considers reinstatement
- Quash the decision and direct the GDC to reconsider reinstatement.

The IRP's decision is final and binding on the school, pupil and parent. The IRP does not have the authority to direct the reinstatement of a pupil.

A parent may not appeal to the Commissioner for Local Administration (the Local Government Ombudsman) about maladministration as the Commissioner's remit is limited to considering the conduct of appeal panels constituted by Local Authorities.

Should a school not offer reinstatement even when the IRP has quashed the decision the school must pay the LA £4,000.

Parent's Responsibilities

There is a duty on parents to ensure that an excluded pupil of compulsory school age is not in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, or a fixed penalty could be imposed by the local authority. Parents will also be warned in the exclusion letter that failing to comply with their duties in this regard may form part of a case for a parenting order to be issued by the magistrates' court.

Continuing Education During a Suspension or Exclusion Period

For the first five days of a suspension the school will set appropriate work for a pupil's age and ability and make arrangements for this to be collected and returned for marking.

Where a pupil is given a suspension of six (6) days or longer, the school has a duty to arrange suitable off-site full-time educational provision from and including the sixth day of exclusion as day one.

- With reference to permanent exclusions, the School will set work as described above for the five days following a permanent exclusion.
- Provision for pupils with SEND will be made in consultation with parents and in line with their EHC plan.
- Ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and SEND Code of Practice.
- Informing parents, the Trust, LGC, the LA, and (where appropriate) the Virtual School Head and social worker without delay.
- Making provision for suitable education from day 1 (for short suspensions) and by day 6 (for longer suspensions and exclusions).

- Ensuring exclusions are never used informally or unofficially.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Trust Board

The Trust Board holds ultimate accountability for ensuring compliance with statutory duties and the consistent application of this policy across all schools in the Trust.

The Trust Board will:

- Approve and monitor the implementation of this policy.
- Hold the Trust and Headteachers accountable for compliance.
- Monitor Trust-wide suspension and exclusion data (including by SEND, ethnicity, FSM, and LAC status) to ensure fairness, proportionality, and to identify trends.
- Commission external reviews or audits where concerns arise.
- Consider parental representations about suspensions and exclusions in line with statutory timescales.
- Decide whether to reinstate a pupil following a suspension or exclusion where legally required.
- The GDC formed by the Trust Board must work with the clerk to ensure minutes and decisions are clearly recorded and communicated.

Director of Safeguarding, Attendance and Behaviour and will:

- The Director of Safeguarding, Attendance and Behaviour must report to the School and Trust Board termly on suspensions and exclusions
- Support schools to maintain appropriate educational environments consistent with safety, wellbeing and behaviour expectations
- Ensure exclusions align with safeguarding and statutory processes

Headteachers

Headteachers are responsible for:

- Implementing and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline within their school.
- Consulting with the Director of Education and Director of Safeguarding , Behaviour and Attendance, before deciding on suspensions or exclusions.
- Deciding whether to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, using the civil standard of proof ("balance of probabilities").
- Ensuring all decisions are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair, and proportionate.
- Considering relevant contextual factors such as bereavement, bullying, mental health, SEND, and safeguarding concerns.
- Complying with the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of practice
- Arranging suitable education provision:
 - From day 1 for short-term suspensions.
 - By day 6 for longer suspensions and permanent exclusions.
 - Ensuring exclusions are never used informally or unofficially.

Notification Duties

Exclusions:

Headteachers must promptly inform the Trust, Local Governing Committee (LGC), the Local Authority (LA), and where applicable the Virtual School Head and the pupil's social worker in the following circumstances where:

- A permanent exclusion is issued.
- A suspension exceeds 5 school days in a term (or 10 lunchtimes).
- A suspension or exclusion would result in the pupil missing a public examination or national test.

Informing Parents/Carers of:

- The reason for the suspension or exclusion.
- The duration (for suspensions) or permanency (for exclusions).
- Their rights to make representations and request a meeting.
- Arrangements for education during the suspension or exclusion, including the LA responsibility for education from Day 6 of a permanent exclusion.
- Relevant sources of impartial advice and support.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Work in partnership with schools to support their child's behaviour and re-integration.
- Ensure their child is not in a public place during school hours for the first 5 days of a suspension (unless reasonable justification is provided)

Clerk to Trustees – Governance Professional

The Clerk will:

- Provide impartial advice on law, policy, and procedure.
- Be the contact point for the process
- Work with the Headteacher to contact LA / home authorities , VSH, Social worker
- Undergo training to ensure they can support this process
- Circulate papers to all parties within statutory timescales.
- Provide copies of relevant policies : SEND , Behaviour , Suspensions and Exclusions
- Record minutes of meetings, working with the GDC to ensure minutes and decisions are clearly recorded and communicated.
- Support the process with IRP if convened

10. Monitoring and Reporting

The school will:

- Monitor suspension and exclusion data by school, demographic groups, SEND, and safeguarding categories.
- Report termly to the Trust Board.
- Publish anonymised suspension and exclusion data annually in line with statutory requirements.
- Use data to evaluate the effectiveness of behaviour strategies and ensure equitable practice across all schools.

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Trust Board, or sooner if there are changes to legislation or statutory guidance.