United Through Jesus in Faith, Love and Learning

POLICY – SUSPENSIONS AND PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS

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SUSPENSIONS and PERMINANT EXCLUSIONS POLICY

This policy is based on the Department for Education statutory guidance *Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies, pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement*, which came into force on 26 July 2026

Introduction

At St Paul's, we hope that everyone will have a positive experience during their time at school. Our rules are rooted in Catholic Social Teaching, where we recognise the uniqueness of each individual, made in the image and likeness of God and therefore the need to treat everyone as we would like to be treated.
This policy deals with the principles and practice which inform the school's use of Suspension and Permanent Exclusion. It is underpinned by the shared commitment of all of us to ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community, as part of creating a calm, safe, and supportive environment in which pupils can learn and thrive.
Suspension, where a pupil is temporarily removed from the school, is an essential behaviour management tool that is set out in our behaviour policy. Permanent exclusion is extremely rare but may be necessary in extreme circumstances. This is to ensure that other pupils and teaching staff can work in safety and are respected.

St Paul's Catholic Primary School is committed to creating a calm, safe, inclusive and supportive environment in which all pupils can achieve. Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious sanctions and will only ever be used where they are lawful, reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

Before considering suspension or permanent exclusion, the school will seek to understand the underlying causes of behaviour and consider whether additional support, reasonable adjustments, pastoral intervention, early help or SEND provision could appropriately address the behaviour.

The school recognises that exclusion should not be viewed in isolation but as part of a wider graduated approach to meeting pupils' needs whilst maintaining the safety and welfare of the whole school community.

Types and Definitions of External Exclusions

Unlawful Exclusions

Informal or unofficial exclusions are unlawful — for example, sending a pupil home to 'cool off' — even if parents agree to the arrangement. Any time a pupil is removed from school on disciplinary grounds, the formal exclusion process must be followed. It is also unlawful to exclude a pupil for non-disciplinary reasons, such as special educational needs (SEN), disability, academic attainment, or failure to meet conditions before reinstatement (for example, attending a reintegration meeting). Exclusions carried out unlawfully that lead to the deletion of a pupil's name from the register constitute off-rolling, which is a serious breach of statutory duty. The school will never encourage parents to remove a child from school, educate at home or transfer schools as an alternative to following the statutory suspension or permanent exclusion process.

There are three types of External Exclusion:

- **Permanent Exclusion**
  This means that the Headteacher has decided that a child should not return to school. Permanent Exclusion will be used only 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 school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

- **Suspension (previously known as Fixed Term Exclusion)**
  A Suspension is for a set number of school days, between one and forty-five days in an academic year. External exclusions for indefinite periods are not lawful.
  The number of days will be set out in a letter sent to the parent/carer of the child by the Headteacher. The Exclusion is temporary and the child will return to school at the end of the Exclusion. The number of days stated relates only to school days and not weekends, holidays or teacher training days.

- **External Lunchtime Exclusion**
  This is where the decision is taken to exclude the child for the lunchtime period only. It is treated as a Suspension, equivalent to half a school day.

Where a child remains in school, but works away from their normal class or lessons, this is sometimes known as an "Internal Exclusion". Internal suspension (sometimes referred to as internal exclusion) is not a formal suspension or permanent exclusion. However, the school recognises that internal suspension should only be used where appropriate, should be proportionate, should not become a routine behaviour management strategy and should continue to provide pupils with suitable education, supervision and opportunities to reflect and reintegrate successfully.

Who excludes a pupil?

Only the Headteacher can decide to exclude a pupil from school or, if the Headteacher is absent, the Deputy Head may act on their behalf to exclude a pupil. When deciding the type/length of an Exclusion, the Headteacher will have regard to Exclusions guidance provided by the Local Authority.

When might a Headteacher Suspend or Permanently Exclude a Pupil?

As outlined in the School's Behaviour Policy, behaviours of the following types which are persistent or of a particularly serious nature, will be referred to the Headteacher who will consider whether a suspension may be appropriate:

- Deliberate use of physically aggressive behaviour, causing harm to another
- Verbal abuse against a pupil or member of staff
- Any intentional discriminatory behaviour
- Bullying (Several Times On Purpose)

This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other situations where the Headteacher makes the judgement that Suspension or Permanent Exclusion is an appropriate sanction. Our Behaviour Policy also states that persistent disregard of everyday rules which impacts on the learning of the rest of the class may result in suspension if it continues once other steps in the Behaviour Policy have been taken. This again will be the Headteacher's decision.

What happens? – Suspension

Following a decision to impose a Suspension, parents will be contacted immediately, where possible. Notifications should be in person or by telephone in the first instance to give parents an opportunity to ask any initial questions or raise concerns directly with the Headteacher. A letter will be given to the parents (or sent by post or by email) giving details of the Suspension and the date on which it ends.

The Local Authority (LA) must be notified without delay for all suspensions, regardless of length. Where the pupil has a social worker or is a looked-after child, the social worker and/or Virtual School Head must also be notified without delay. For suspensions of 5 days or fewer, the LA will be notified via SIMS.

For permanent exclusions and for suspensions of more than 5 days, a 'Notification of Pupil Exclusion' form must be completed and returned to West Berkshire. This form should also be completed if the suspension is for 5 days or under and results in the pupil missing a National Curriculum test. The governing board also need to be informed in these circumstances.

rents have a right to make representations to the Governing Body and the Local Authority as directed in the letter. The letter must also inform parents of their right to request that any governing board hearing is conducted via remote access (live video link), their right to request a copy of relevant school records, and — in the case of a permanent exclusion — their right to apply to an Independent Review Panel (IRP) and to make a claim under the Equality Act 2010 if they believe the exclusion involved unlawful discrimination.

During the course of a Suspension, where the pupil is to be at home, parents will be advised that the pupil is not allowed on the school premises, and that daytime supervision is their responsibility as

parents/guardians. They will also be advised that they may receive a penalty notice from the Local Authority if their child is present in a public place during school hours on the specified dates. If so, it will be for them to show reasonable justification.

It is important that, during a suspension, pupils still receive their education. The Headteacher will take steps to ensure that work is set and marked for pupils during the first five school days of a suspension. This is also explained in the letter. For any suspension that extends beyond five school days, the school will arrange suitable full-time alternative provision from the sixth school day. The school's legal duties to pupils with disabilities or SEN remain fully in force during any suspension.

A reintegration meeting will be held following the expiry of the suspension, and this will involve a member of the Senior Leadership Team and other staff where appropriate. During this meeting, the pupil will be helped to understand that they are valued and will be offered a fresh start, whilst also being helped to understand the effect of their behaviour on themselves and others, and reminded of the high expectations of behaviour as outlined in our behaviour policy. Parents will be included in this meeting. A pupil's failure to attend a reintegration meeting is not a lawful reason to delay or refuse their return to school.

The meeting will also consider any underlying factors that may have contributed to the behaviour, including safeguarding concerns, unmet special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), mental health or wellbeing needs, or other vulnerabilities. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments, pastoral support, behaviour support strategies or referrals to external agencies will be considered to reduce the likelihood of future suspensions.

Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), or receives SEND Support, the Headteacher and SENDCo will consider whether the existing provision remains appropriate and whether an early review of support or an interim annual review should be requested.

What happens? - Permanent Exclusion

A permanent exclusion is when a pupil is no longer allowed to attend a school (unless the pupil is reinstated). The decision to exclude a pupil permanently is a serious one and will only be taken:

- 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 pupil or others such as staff or pupils in the school

Parents, the LA, the governing board and, if relevant, Social Worker and / or Virtual School Head, will be informed as outlined above.

General factors the school considers before making a decision to exclude

Exclusion will not be imposed instantly unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of others in the school or to the pupil concerned. Before deciding whether to exclude a pupil permanently or to suspend them, the Head will:

- Ensure appropriate investigations have been carried out.
- Consider whether the behaviour may indicate unmet SEND, mental health, safeguarding or welfare needs.
- Consider whether additional reasonable adjustments are required under the Equality Act 2010.
- Consider the views of relevant staff who know the pupil well.
- Where appropriate, seek advice from the SENDCo, DSL or external professionals before making a decision.

- Consider all the evidence available to support the allegations taking into account other relevant policies

- Allow the pupil to give his/her version of events.

- Check whether the incident may have been provoked, for example by bullying or by racial or sexual harassment.

- Consider whether a suspension / permanent exclusion would make a child more vulnerable to harm because of safeguarding risks at home or in the community

  Vulnerable Groups and the Equality Act 2010
  The school must not discriminate against, harass, or victimise pupils because of a protected characteristic (sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy/maternity, or gender reassignment). These duties under the Equality Act 2010 apply when deciding whether to exclude a pupil. Where a pupil's behaviour results from a disability for which the school has not made appropriate reasonable adjustments, exclusion may constitute unlawful discrimination.
  Before considering exclusion for pupils with SEN or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, looked-after children, or pupils eligible for free school meals, the Headteacher will ensure that early intervention and additional support have been considered and fully documented, that any SEN provision has been implemented, and that alternative strategies have been explored. For looked-after children, the Virtual School Head must be notified without delay of any exclusion.
  For pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan, the Headteacher will also consider whether an early annual review of the EHCP should be requested where a suspension or permanent exclusion indicates that the current provision may no longer be appropriate.

Cancelling Exclusions

The Headteacher may cancel any exclusion that has already begun, but this should only be done where it has not yet been reviewed by the governing board. Where an exclusion is cancelled, then:

- Parents, the governing board, and the LA should be notified without delay and, if relevant, the social worker and Virtual School Head. The notification must also provide the reason for the cancellation;
- The governing board's duty to consider reinstatement ceases, and there is no requirement to hold a meeting to consider reinstatement;

- Parents should be offered the opportunity to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the circumstances that led to the exclusion being cancelled;
- Schools should report to the governing board once per term on the number of exclusions which have been cancelled. This should include the circumstances and reasons for the cancellation enabling governing boards to have appropriate oversight and
- The pupil will be allowed back into school.

The Governing Board

The Governors will review promptly all permanent exclusions from the school and all suspensions that would lead to a pupil being excluded for more than 15 days in a school term or missing a National Curriculum test. The Governors will review suspensions which would lead to a pupil being excluded for more than five days but not more than 15 days in a school term where a parent has expressed a wish to make representations. See Appendix 1 for further information.

Statutory timeframes are as follows: for permanent exclusions and suspensions that would exceed 15 school days in a term or result in a pupil missing a National Curriculum test, the governing board must meet within 15 school days of notification. For suspensions of more than 5 but not more than 15 school days in a term where a parent requests a hearing, the governing board must meet within 50 school days of notification. Parents have the right to request that any governing board hearing is conducted via remote access (live video link). For permanent exclusions, parents also have the right to apply to an Independent Review Panel (IRP) within 15 school days of the governing board's decision, and may request that a SEN expert attends the IRP if the pupil has SEN.

Considering suspensions and permanent exclusions

Responsibilities regarding suspensions and permanent exclusions are delegated to the Learning and Achievement Committee.

The Learning and Achievement Committee 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.

Monitoring and analysing suspensions and exclusions data

The governing board will review, challenge and evaluate the data on the school's use of suspension, exclusion, off-site direction to alternative provision, and managed moves.

The governing board will consider:

- How effectively and consistently the school's behaviour policy is being implemented
- The school register and absence codes
- Instances where pupils receive repeat suspensions
- Interventions in place to support pupils at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion
- Any variations in the rolling average of permanent exclusions, to understand why this is happening, and to make sure they are only used when necessary

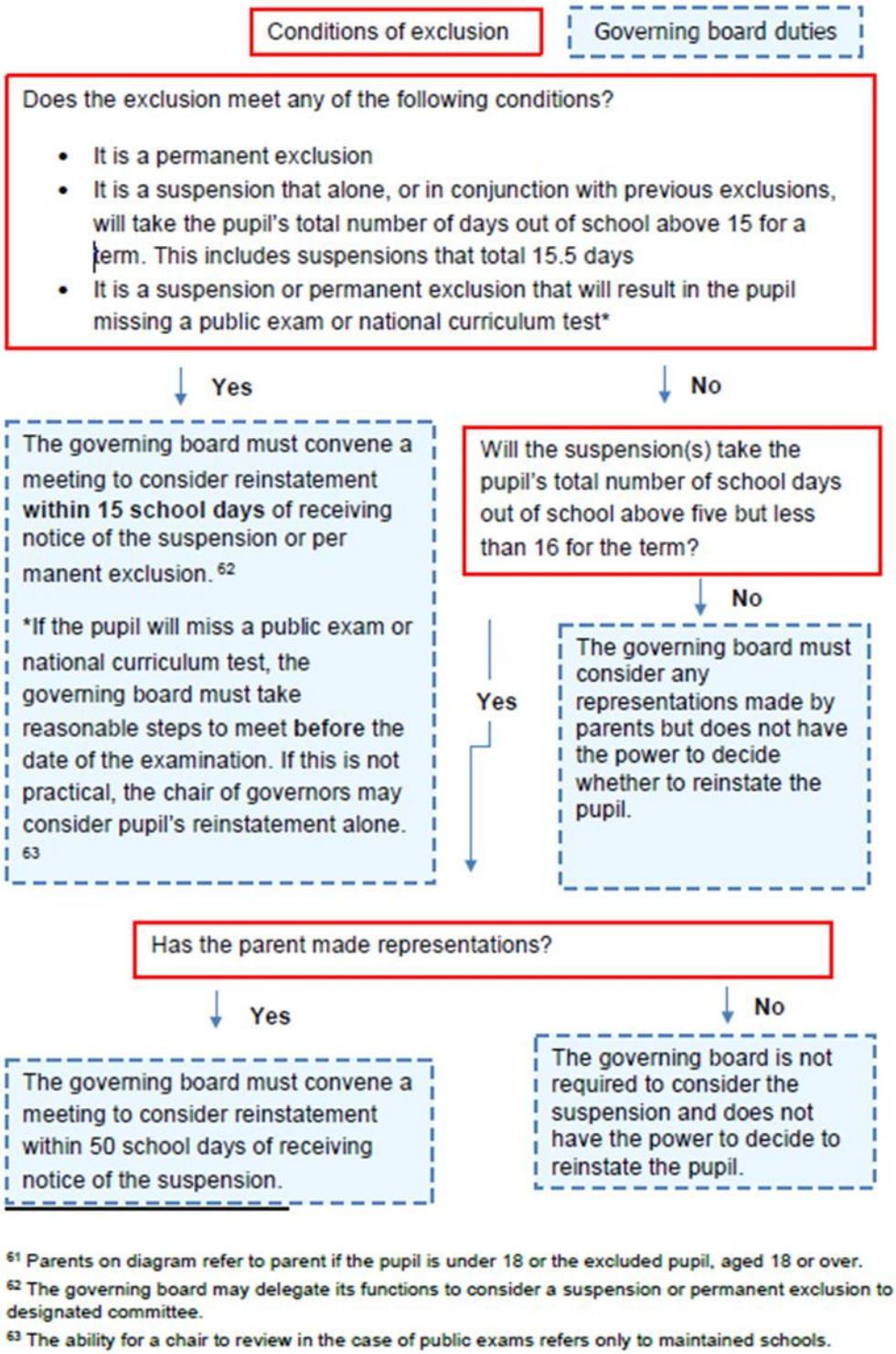
- Timing of moves and permanent exclusions, and whether there are any patterns, including any indications which may highlight where policies or support are not working
- The characteristics of suspended and permanently excluded pupils, and why this is taking place
- Whether the placements of pupils directed off-site into alternative provision are reviewed at sufficient intervals to assure that the education is achieving its objectives and that pupils are benefiting from it
- The cost implications of directing pupils off-site

Record Keeping and the Pupil Register

All suspensions and permanent exclusions must be formally recorded in line with statutory requirements. Every suspension, including lunchtime suspensions, must be confirmed to parents in writing. For permanent exclusions, a pupil's name must only be removed from the school register once the full statutory process is complete — that is, after the governing board has considered reinstatement (or the deadline for requesting such consideration has passed without a request), and where applicable after any IRP process has concluded. The school will report data on all exclusions, including cancelled exclusions, to the governing board each term.

Appendix 1 – from DfE's Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance, Sept 2023

A summary of the governing board's duties to consider reinstatement[61]



[61] Parents on diagram refer to parent if the pupil is under 18 or the excluded pupil, aged 18 or over.

[62] The governing board may delegate its functions to consider a suspension or permanent exclusion to a designated committee.

[63] The ability for a chair to review in the case of public exams refers only to maintained schools.