

Suspension and Exclusion Policy 2022

Highweek Primary & Nursery school is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. We aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents and staff are treated fairly and with respect, and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities.

The Governing Board recognise that it is unlawful to take into account anyone's gender, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age, or sexual orientation. Full consideration has been given to this during the formulation of the above policy as it is the Governors' aim that no-one at Highweek should suffer discrimination, either directly or indirectly, or harassment on any of these grounds.

We aim to include, not exclude, and we approach all challenging behaviour in a supportive and positive way. We recognise that such behaviour can sometimes be symptomatic of a real deeper need for our support and understanding. All children can go through times of inappropriate behaviour, and we strive to never 'give up' on a child. We recognise that each person has a unique contribution to make to school life and we want to support them to achieve this.

A decision to suspend for a fixed period or exclude a pupil permanently, is seen as a last resort by the school. The physical and emotional health of our children and staff is our primary concern. We know that in some rare situations, suspension or exclusion may be necessary, if all other strategies have been exhausted.

The school is responsible for communicating to pupils, parents and staff its expectations of standards of conduct. A range of policies and procedures are in place to promote good behaviour and appropriate conduct. These are:

- Relational Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

No suspension or exclusion will be initiated without first exhausting other strategies or, in the case of a serious single incident, a thorough investigation.

Reasons for permanent exclusion:

"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."

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement
September 2022

Any suspension or exclusion will be at the Headteacher's discretion, in consultation with the Governing Board, as appropriate.

Suspension

A temporary suspension should be for the shortest time necessary. This may be for part of a day, a full day or a number of days.

Persistent or cumulative problems

Suspension for a period of time from half a day to 5 days for persistent or cumulative problems would be imposed only when the school had already offered and implemented a range of support and management strategies. These strategies are outlined in the Relational Behaviour Policy.

“A suspension may be used to provide a clear signal of what is unacceptable behaviour as part of the school’s behaviour policy and show a pupil that their current behaviour is putting them at risk of permanent exclusion. Where suspensions are becoming a regular occurrence for a pupil, headteachers and schools should consider whether suspension alone is an effective sanction for the pupil and whether additional strategies need to be put in place to address behaviour.”

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Single Incident

Temporary suspension may be used in response to a serious breach of school rules and policies or a disciplinary offence. In such cases, the Headteacher will investigate the incident thoroughly and consider all evidence to support the allegation, taking account of the school’s policies. The pupil will be encouraged to give his/her version of events and the Headteacher will check whether the incident may have been provoked, for example by bullying or racial harassment.

If necessary, the Headteacher will consult with senior leaders and the Chair of the Governing Board.

Permanent exclusion

A permanent exclusion is a very serious decision and the Headteacher will consult with the senior leadership team and the Chair of the Governing Board before enforcing it.

As with a suspension, it will follow a range of strategies and be seen as a last resort, or it will be in response to a very serious breach of school rules and policies or a disciplinary offence such as:

- serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff
- possession or use of an illegal drug on school premises
- persistent bullying
- persistent racial harassment
- offensive weapons/knives

The decision to exclude

If the Headteacher decides to exclude a pupil he/she will:

- ensure that there is sufficient recorded evidence to support the decision
- explain the decision to the pupil
- contact the parents/carers, explain the decision and ask that the child is collected
- send a letter to the parents confirming the reasons for the suspension or exclusion, whether it is a permanent or temporary exclusion
- the length of the exclusion and for the pupil's return
- ensure that appropriate work is set and that arrangements are in place for it to be marked
- plan how to address the pupil's needs and integration back into their class on his/her return
- plan a meeting with parents and pupil on his/her return.

Safeguarding

A suspension or an exclusion will not be enforced if doing so may put the safety of the pupil at risk. In cases where parents will not comply by, for example, refusing to collect the child, the child's welfare is the priority. In this situation, depending on the reason for suspension or exclusion, the school may consider an internal suspension until the end of the day, implementing the original suspension/exclusion decision from the time the child is collected from school, or, in more severe circumstances, the school may contact Social Services and/or the Police to safely take the pupil off site.

Behaviour outside school

Pupils behaviour outside school on school business e.g. on school trips or at sports fixtures, is subject to the School Relational Behaviour Policy. Unacceptable behaviour in such circumstances will be dealt with as if it had taken place in school.

Pupils with special educational needs and disabled pupils

The school must take account of any special educational needs when considering whether or not to exclude a pupil.

We have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010, as amended, not to discriminate against disabled pupils by excluding them from school for behaviour related to their disability. The Headteacher should ensure that reasonable steps have been taken by the school to respond to a pupil's disability so the pupil is not treated less favourably for reasons related to the disability. See details in the Relational Behaviour Policy.

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. This duty can, in principle, apply both to the suspensions and permanent exclusions process and to the disciplinary sanctions imposed. Under the Children and Families Act 2014, governing boards of relevant settings must use their 'best endeavours' to ensure the appropriate special educational provision is made for pupils with SEN, which will include any support in relation to behaviour management that they need because of their SEN.

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Marking attendance registers following suspension or exclusion

When a pupil is suspended temporarily or excluded, he/she should be marked as absent using Code E.

“When a pupil of compulsory school age is suspended or permanently excluded from a maintained school, pupil referral unit, academy, city technology college, or city college for the technology of the arts, alternative provision must be arranged from the sixth consecutive day of any suspension or exclusion. Where alternative provision is made schools should record this using the appropriate code for attending an approved educational activity.”

Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities

May 2022

Managed move

There are occasions when a managed move to another school benefits both the pupil concerned, and his or her school. If this is deemed appropriate and the parents are in agreement with this, the Devon agreed protocol for managed moves would be followed via this link <https://www.devon.gov.uk/supportforschools/services-and-contacts/education-inclusion-service>

Removal from the school for other reasons

The Headteacher may send a pupil home, after consultation with the pupil's parents/carers and a health professional as appropriate, if the pupil poses an immediate and serious risk to the health and safety of other pupils and staff, for example because of a diagnosed illness such as a notifiable disease. This is not exclusion and should be for the shortest possible time.

Procedure for appeal

If parents wish to appeal the decision to exclude, the matter will be referred to the Governing Board and handled through LA appeal procedure.

Equality Statement

This policy is compliant with the Equality Policy. This Policy is based on best practice to ensure a consistent and effective approach. The Governing Board and the Headteacher (Chair of Governors) have a particular responsibility to ensure that the processes are managed fairly, equitably, objectively and must not discriminate either directly or indirectly on the grounds of a person's race, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, disability, age, pregnancy and maternity or religion or belief.

Date: September 2022

Date of review and adoption by Governing Board:

Date for next review: September 2023