



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Suspensions and Exclusions Policy

Through our loving God

We follow in the footsteps of St Joseph

Who helps us to be gentle, caring and hardworking.

As we learn together, we love, value and welcome everyone.

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Policy owner: Headteacher

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Purpose and legal framework

- Purpose
- To set out St Joseph's Catholic Primary School's approach to using suspension and permanent exclusion only as last-resort sanctions, ensuring decisions are lawful, fair, proportionate and in the best interests and safety of all pupils and staff.
- To provide clear processes for headteacher decision-making, communication, governance oversight and support for reintegration.
- Legal framework and guidance (England)
- This policy takes account of current legislation and statutory guidance, including (but not limited to):
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance (updated 2024 and subsequent updates)
- Behaviour in Schools guidance
- The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012
- Equality Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Data protection legislation (UK GDPR/Data Protection Act)

School context, vision and principles

Context and values

- St Joseph's is a 1-form entry Voluntary Aided Catholic Primary with a thriving Pre-School. We have small class sizes (≈ 20), higher-than-average numbers of children with SEND and low numbers of disadvantaged pupils (PP).
- Our vision and Gospel values: create excellence for Catholic families; all children achieve full potential academically, socially, morally and spiritually. We are gentle, caring and hardworking; we love, value and welcome everyone.

Principles

- Exclusion is used only as last resort after other strategies have been tried and recorded.
- All decisions will be lawful, reasonable, proportionate and non-discriminatory.
- We prioritise early intervention, restorative practice and multi-agency working to reduce exclusions.
- The welfare and safeguarding of the excluded pupil and the whole school community are paramount.

Scope and definitions

Scope

3. This policy covers suspensions (fixed-term suspensions) and permanent exclusions for pupils on roll, including any arrangements relating to Pre-School children where appropriate (and in line with the governing arrangements for maintained early years provision).

Definitions

- Suspension (fixed-term): temporary removal of a pupil from school for a set period.
- Permanent exclusion: a pupil is removed from the school roll permanently (subject to local authority/academy trust procedures).
- Managed move: a planned move to another school with consent of all parties, as a durable means to avoid permanent exclusion.
- Off-site direction: directing a pupil to another setting or alternative provision for a set period.

Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher

- Make lawful decisions on suspension and permanent exclusion.
- Ensure all reasonable steps and alternative strategies are considered and recorded prior to exclusion (except in incidents warranting immediate removal for safety).
- Notify parents, governing body, and the local authority in accordance with statutory timescales and content requirements.
- Ensure return-to-school reintegration plans, risk assessments and provision during exclusion.

Governing body

- Consider representations and whether to reinstate an excluded pupil (as required by statutory guidance).
- Ensure the school's policy is up to date, published and implemented.
- Uphold fair processes for review.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Ensure safeguarding considerations influence exclusion decisions and that child protection arrangements continue during exclusion.

SENCo / Inclusion Lead

- Ensure SEND status and needs are considered in decision-making and that appropriate provision, assessments and referrals are in place.

Class teachers and support staff

Implement behaviour policy, use early interventions and record incidents.

Contribute to evidence if exclusion is being considered.

Parents/carers

- Receive clear communications, attend meetings and support reintegration.

Local authority/Diocese

- Support with alternative provision, managed moves, policy interpretation and statutory processes.

Pupils

Expected to adhere to behaviour code and engage with reintegration plans.

Behaviour management, alternatives to exclusion and early intervention

- Universal classroom strategies (first-line)
- High expectations, consistent routines and explicit teaching of behaviour.
- Restorative approaches, adapted pedagogy, reasonable adjustments and positive reinforcement.
- Regular monitoring of pupils with SEND or vulnerability.
- Targeted interventions
- Pastoral support plans (PSPs), individual behaviour plans (IBPs), mentoring, counselling, small-group work, Nurture approaches.
- Adjustments to timetable, supervised time-out and internal seclusion (where lawful and recorded).
- Managed moves and short-term alternative provision where appropriate.
- Early multi-agency work
- Convene professionals (SEN team, social care, health services, Virtual School Head if looked-after) to address drivers of behaviour.
- Use of reasonable force
- Follow DfE guidance on use of reasonable force; incidents must be recorded and parents informed.

Grounds for suspension and permanent exclusion

- Typical grounds for suspension (examples)
- Persistent disruptive behaviour despite targeted interventions.
- Significant one-off incidents that pose risk to safety, but where reinstatement may be appropriate after sanction and support.
- Typical grounds for permanent exclusion.
- Serious breach or repeated breaches of behaviour policy, including violence, sexual misconduct, supply/possession of illegal drugs, or behaviour that poses an unmanageable safeguarding risk to others.
- When all reasonable alternatives have been exhausted and the pupil remains a risk to the safety or education of others.
- Contextual decision-making
- Headteacher must consider intent, frequency, impact, age and understanding (including for younger children), SEND, safeguarding risk, and any mitigating circumstances.

Procedures for suspension (fixed-term)

- Prior to suspension
- Attempt de-escalation and implement reasonable adjustments.
- Record incident and previous interventions.
- Undertake a risk assessment if appropriate.
- Decision and length
- Headteacher decides on the length and proportionate sanction. Individual suspensions should be used sparingly and normally no longer than necessary.
- Total days absent by suspension in any one term should follow statutory limits and guidance; cumulative impact is monitored.
- Immediate suspensions for safety.
- If pupil's presence in school represents an immediate risk, the headteacher may suspend without delay; parents should be notified in person or by telephone first.
- Notification to parents
- Provide written notice (letter/email) as soon as possible and no later than the same day where possible. Notification should set out:
 - The reason(s) for suspension (clear factual detail)
 - The duration and dates of suspension
 - Arrangements for the pupil's education during suspension (work set and attendance expectations)
 - Right of representation to the governing body where multiple suspensions occur as defined in statutory guidance
 - Welfare and safeguarding arrangements including contact details for school support
 - Consider accessibility: language, disability, EAL needs.
- During the suspension
- The school remains responsible for setting and monitoring work for shorter suspensions in line with guidance; parents are expected to ensure pupil completes work.
- For suspensions of more than 5 school days (or local thresholds), the local authority must be informed and arrangements for alternative education must be made.
- Reintegration meeting
- A planned meeting on return to school involving pupil, parents and relevant staff to agree a reintegration plan, targets and any adjustments.
- Document the reintegration plan, including support and monitoring.

Procedures for permanent exclusion

- Preconditions
- Permanent exclusion is lawful only when the headteacher judges that a pupil has committed a serious breach of the behaviour policy and reinstatement is not appropriate.
- Check statutory requirements and consult where required (e.g., local authority, Diocese).
- Decision process
- Headteacher to: gather evidence, witness statements, chronology of interventions, consider alternatives, consult key staff and ensure fairness.
- Inform parents immediately (phone/in person) then send formal notice in writing (statutory content).
- Formal notification
- Written notice must include:
 - The reasons for permanent exclusion with necessary details
 - The date it takes effect
 - Information about the right to make representations to the governing body and the right to an independent review (as applicable)
 - Information about arrangements for the pupil's education until placement is secured
 - Information on how to access the governing body's review process

After decision

- Immediately notify the local authority and follow their procedures for placement and support.
- Ensure safeguarding responsibilities continue (liaise with social worker, Virtual School Head if looked-after).
- The governing body will arrange a meeting to consider representations and the duty to consider reinstatement.

Communication and notifications

To parents

- Use prompt phone communication followed by clear written notification covering statutory content.
- Provide translation or accessible formats as needed.

To governing body

- Notify governors of exclusions and provide required information for representation/reinstatement consideration.

To local authority and other statutory bodies

- Notify LA immediately for permanent exclusions and for suspensions surpassing statutory thresholds; engage with LA for alternative provision or managed moves.

To staff and pupils

- Communicate appropriate information to staff to manage safety and continuity of learning; do not disclose protected or sensitive personal information inappropriately.
- Template letters and timescales
- The school will maintain up-to-date templates for short-term suspension, cumulative suspensions, and permanent exclusion letters in line with statutory guidance.

Support for excluded pupils and reintegration

- Reintegration planning
- Every return from suspension must include a reintegration meeting and written plan with clear targets, responsibilities and timetable.
- Alternative provision and managed moves
- The school will work with LA and receiving schools to arrange managed moves or AP where appropriate and with parental consent.
- Manage transitions so education continues and safeguarding remains in place.
- Special educational needs, assessment and provision
- If pupil has known SEND, consider whether the school has failed to make reasonable adjustments. If an EHCP exists, notify LA and involve SEN teams.
- Work set during exclusion
- The school will set and mark work as appropriate for the length of suspension following statutory arrangements.
- Support mechanisms post-exclusion
- Mentoring, counselling, small group interventions, PSP/IBP reviews, referrals to external agencies and multi-agency meetings.

Safeguarding, SEND and equality considerations

Safeguarding

- Exclusion decisions must not compromise child protection. Maintain contact with social worker and relevant agencies. Ensure safe arrangements exist for excluded pupils.
- SEND and EHCPs
- Consider SEND Code of Practice when suspending/excluding. Where behaviour is related to SEND, more careful consideration and additional support are required. Notify LA if pupil has an EHCP; any permanent exclusion for an EHCP pupil triggers additional LA responsibilities.

Equality

- Monitor exclusions for disproportionality (e.g., by ethnicity, SEND, PP status, gender) and take action to address identified disparities consistent with the Equality Act 2010.

Younger children and Early Years

- For Pre-School and Reception aged children, exercise extreme caution using suspensions; consider developmental factors and ensure curriculum continuity and family support.

Recording, monitoring, reporting and data analysis

- Central exclusion log
- Maintain a secure central exclusion register containing full details of all incidents, interventions, notifications and outcomes.
- Monitoring and reporting
- Headteacher to report exclusions termly to the governing body with anonymised trend data (by reason, duration, year group, SEND/PP/protected characteristics).
- The governing body will scrutinise patterns, challenge disproportionality and review effectiveness of alternatives to exclusion.
- External reporting
- Comply with LA statutory returns and DfE reporting requirements.
- Use of data
- Use data to inform school improvement priorities (attendance, curriculum adaptations, staff training and interventions).

Review, representation and independent review panels (IRPs)

Governing body review

- Parents may make representations about fixed-term suspensions and must be given the opportunity to raise concerns if thresholds are met (statutory guidance outlines when representation is required).
- For permanent exclusions, governors must consider representations and decide whether to reinstate.
- Independent review
- Parents have the right to request an IRP in certain circumstances; the school will cooperate with the IRP process and provide required documentation.
- Decision timelines
- Follow statutory timescales for meetings, decisions and panel arrangements.

Training, staff support and resources

- Training for staff
- Regular training on behaviour management, de-escalation, SEND needs, restorative practice, record-keeping, safeguarding and lawful use of restraint.
- Support for staff after incidents
- Debriefing, counselling and occupational health referrals as required.
- Resources
- Maintain up-to-date templates, flowcharts and checklists for exclusion processes and notification obligations.

Policy review and quality assurance

- Review cycle
- Policy to be reviewed annually or sooner in response to statutory changes, inspection findings or notable incidents.
- Quality assurance
- Governing body to receive termly monitoring reports and annual policy effectiveness review.
- School improvement links
- Findings from exclusion monitoring will feed into the School Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities (attendance, attainment, SEND support, writing curriculum alignment and early years transition).

Appendices

Checklist – steps before suspension

1. Establish the facts

- ☒ Investigate the incident thoroughly.
- ☒ Obtain written statements where appropriate.
- ☒ Speak to the pupil and allow them to give their account.
- ☒ Consider any witness evidence.
- ☒ Ensure decisions are based on the balance of probabilities.

2. Check the behaviour policy

- ☒ Confirm that the behaviour breached the school's published behaviour policy.
- ☒ Check that the proposed sanction is consistent with procedures and previous similar incidents.

3. Consider whether suspension is necessary

- The DfE states that suspension should generally be used where other strategies have been exhausted or where the seriousness of the incident warrants removal from school. [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#), [\[hedingham....sex.sch.uk\]](#)

Ask:

- Is this a serious breach of the behaviour policy?
- Would keeping the pupil in school seriously harm the education or welfare of others?
- Are there any alternative sanctions available?

4. Consider safeguarding implications

- ☒ Is the pupil at risk if sent home?
- ☒ Is there a social worker involved?
- ☒ Is the pupil looked after or previously looked after?
- ☒ Would alternative arrangements be safer?

5. Consider SEND and vulnerabilities

- The DfE requires schools to consider whether underlying needs may have contributed to the behaviour. [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#), [\[hedingham....sex.sch.uk\]](#)
- Check:
 - SEND register
 - EHCP status
 - Emerging SEND concerns
 - Disabilities under the Equality Act
 - Mental health needs
- Any reasonable adjustments that should have been made

6. Consider discrimination risks

- ☒ Could the decision be discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010?
- ☒ Have reasonable adjustments been made for a pupil with disabilities?
- ☒ Is there evidence that protected characteristics have been appropriately considered?

7. Review previous interventions

- ☒ Behaviour support plans
- ☒ Pastoral support
- ☒ Early Help involvement
- ☒ Graduated response
- ☒ External agency support
- ☒ Risk assessments

8. Decide whether the length is proportionate

- ☒ Is the number of days reasonable?
- ☒ Is it the shortest period necessary?
- ☒ Is a lunchtime suspension sufficient rather than a full day?

9. Ensure procedural compliance

- Only the headteacher (or acting headteacher) can suspend a pupil.
[\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](#), [\[gov.uk\]](#)
- Before issuing: ☒ Notify parents without delay.
- ☒ Prepare the suspension letter.
- ☒ Record the reasons clearly.
- ☒ Inform governors and the local authority where required.

10. Plan reintegration before the pupil returns

- ☒ Arrange a reintegration meeting.
- ☒ Identify support needed on return.
- ☒ Review behaviour plans.
- ☒ Consider pastoral or SEND support.