

Suspensions and Exclusions Policy

(new policy as significant updates to reflect changes to school processes September 2024)

Reviewed:	September 2025
Reviewed by (SLT Lead):	Deputy Headteacher - Behaviour, Attendance and Culture
Approved by:	Local Governing Body
Displayed:	Website / Staff Handbook
Next Review	September 2026 (or earlier dependant on relevant guidance)

1. Purpose, aims and principles

Gosford Hill School is committed to creating an environment where exemplary behaviour and conduct is fundamental to the school and our students being at the heart of the community because they receive an excellent educational experience and are equipped to become resilient, lifelong learners.

In order to support this vision, this policy aims to:

- Ensure that the suspensions and exclusions process is applied fairly and consistently.
- Help governors, staff, parents/carers and students understand the suspension and exclusion process.
- Ensure that students in school are safe and happy.
- Prevent students from becoming a student who is not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- Ensure that all suspensions and permanent exclusions are carried out lawfully.

This policy is based on statutory guidance from the Department for Education: [Suspensions and permanent exclusions](#).

It is based on the following legislation, which outlines school's powers to exclude students:

- Section 52 of the Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011.
- The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012.

In addition, the policy is based on:

- Part 7, chapter 2 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2005](#)
- Section 578 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- The [Education \(Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#), as amended by [The Education \(Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2014](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [The School Inspection Handbook](#)

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

The structures, systems and routines for behaviour, suspensions, and exclusions at Gosford Hill School are built upon the following principles:

- Everyone has the right to an education and deserves this right.
- Good behaviour is a curriculum - we must teach students how to behave, not just tell them.

- Certainty is more important than the severity of a sanction.
- We are what we repeatedly do - excellence is a habit so consistency is crucial.
- Students need to know that they belong and that adults believe in them.
- Success is the greatest motivator.
- The intervention to prevent repeat behaviour is as important, if not more important, than the sanction.
- High expectations matter for all - reasonable adjustments support individuals, not lower standards.

2. Definitions and expectations

Gosford Hill School expects that all students demonstrate our school values of **Responsible, Respectful** and **Resilient**. Following incidents where these values are not demonstrated, the Headteacher may consider their responsibility to ensure the safety of the school community and whether the threshold for suspension or exclusion has been met.

Throughout this policy, there are some key terms referred to, which are defined below:

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

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

Off-site direction - is when the school's governors require a student to attend another education setting temporarily, to improve their behaviour.

Parent/carer - is any person who has parental responsibility and any person who has care of the child.

Managed move - is when a student is transferred to another school permanently. All parties, including parents/carers and the admission authority for the new school, should consent before a managed move occurs. The decision can be made in respect of behaviour inside or outside of school. The Headteacher will only use permanent exclusion as a last resort.

3. Decision to suspend or permanently exclude

Only the Headteacher, or Acting Headteacher, can suspend or permanently exclude a student from school on disciplinary grounds.

A decision to suspend or permanently exclude a student will be taken only:

- In accordance with the school's behaviour policy.
- To provide a clear signal of what is unacceptable behaviour.
- To show a student that their current behaviour is putting them at risk of permanent exclusion.

A decision to suspend or permanently exclude a student will be made following an incident involving one of the following behaviours as linked to our behaviour policy:

- Physical assault against a student or adult.
- Verbal or threatening abuse towards a student or adult.
- Use, or threat of use, of an offensive weapon or prohibited item that has been banned.
- Bullying.
- Racist or extremist abuse including sexism or ableism.

The list above is not exhaustive and is intended to offer examples, rather than to be complete or definitive. Depending on the specific circumstances of the behaviour the headteacher may issue a suspension or permanent exclusion for behaviour that occurs outside the school premises and outside of school hours.

Where suspensions have become a regular occurrence, the Headteacher will consider whether suspensions alone are an effective sanction and whether additional strategies need to be put in place to address behaviour issues.

A decision to permanently exclude a student will be taken only:

- In response to a serious or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy, **and**
- If allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Before deciding to suspend or permanently exclude, the Headteacher will:

- Consider all the relevant facts and evidence on the balance of probabilities, including whether the incident(s) leading to the exclusion were provoked
- Provide an opportunity for the student to give their version of events
- Consider any special educational needs (SEND) or particular factors that increase the student's vulnerability (eg. the student has a social worker or is a child that we care for (previously looked-after or LAC)).
- Consider whether alternative solutions have been explored such as internal sanctions, off-site directions or managed moves.

4. Summary of roles, responsibilities and leadership

This policy is approved by the Governing Board of Gosford Hill School. This board is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness and holding the Headteacher to account for its implementation. Beyond this board, the responsibilities of individuals and groups are outlined below:

Person or people	Roles and responsibilities
The Headteacher	The Headteacher (or Acting Headteacher) is the only person who can make a decision to exclude. • The decision will be made in lines with the principles of administrative law - ie the legislation relating directly to suspensions and permanent exclusions. Decisions will therefore be lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate. • In making their decision the headteacher will use the civil standard of proof i.e 'on the balance of probabilities'. • The headteacher will take account of their legal duty of care when sending a child home after an exclusion. • The headteacher will make reasonable efforts to take the pupil's view into account before they make a decision to exclude and take any contributing factors identified into account after an incident of misbehaviour. Following a decision to suspend or permanently exclude the headteacher will: • Informing parents/carers (or the student where they are aged 18 or older). • Informing the governing board, local authority (LA), or other appropriate external agencies. • Providing education during the first 5 days of a suspension or permanent exclusion.

	- Ensuring that students are successfully supported with reintegration to the school following a suspension. - Where appropriate, taking the decision to cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion. - Ensuring that the school environment encourages positive behaviour. - Supporting necessary staff to implement this policy, including through regular training and continual professional development.
The Designated Senior Leader with responsibility for behaviour	- Strategic leadership of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy. - Ensuring that the school environment encourages positive behaviour. - Supporting necessary staff to implement this policy, including through regular training and continual professional development. - Leading the daily operation of this policy and the key staff who implement it. - Monitoring the implementation of this policy, and use of suspensions to effectively manage behaviour.
The Governing Board	- Consider suspensions and permanent exclusions. - Monitor and analyse suspensions and exclusions data.
The Local Authority (LA)	- Arrange suitable full-time education to begin from the sixth school day of a permanent exclusion. - For students who we care for, work to arrange alternative provision sooner than the sixth day where possible.

5. The role and responsibilities of the Headteacher

The role and responsibilities of the Headteacher, summarised in Section 4, are explained in further detail below. Only the Headteacher, or Acting Headteacher, can suspend or permanently exclude a student from school on disciplinary grounds.

Informing parents/carers

If a student is at risk of suspension or exclusion, the parents/carers will be informed as soon as possible, in order to work together to consider what factors may be affecting the student's behaviour and any further support that can be put in place to improve that behaviour.

Following a decision to suspend or exclude, the parents/carers will be informed, in person or by telephone, of the period of suspension or exclusion and the reason(s) for it, without delay.

The parents/carers will also be provided with the following information in writing, without delay (no later than the following school day following notice of the decision):

- The reason(s) for suspension or permanent exclusion.
- The length of suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent.
- Information about the parents/carers/student's right to make representations about the suspension or permanent exclusion to the governing board, and where the student is attending alongside parents/carers, how they may be involved in this.
- How any representations should be made.
- Where there is a legal requirement for the governing board to hold a meeting to consider the reinstatement of a student, and that parents/carers/the student have a right to attend the meeting, be represented at the meeting (at their own expense) and bring a friend.

- That parents/carers/the student have the right to request that the meetings be held remotely, and how and to whom they should make this request.
- If the student is of compulsory school age, for the first 5 school days of an exclusion (or until the start date of any alternative provision or the end of the suspension, where this is earlier), the parents/carers are legally required to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without a good reason. This will include specifying on which days this duty applies. Parents/carers may be given a fixed penalty notice or prosecuted if they fail to do this
- Where alternative provision is being arranged, the following information will be included, no later than 48 hours before the start date of the provision:
 - The start date for any provision of full-time education that has been arranged.
 - The start and finish times of any such provision, including the times for morning and afternoon sessions, where relevant.
 - The address at which the provision will take place.
 - Any information the student needs in order to identify the person they should report to on the first day.

If the Headteacher cancels a suspension or permanent exclusion, they will notify the parents/carers without delay, and provide a reason for the cancellation.

Informing the governing board, local authority and other external agencies

The Headteacher will, without delay, notify the governing board, the local authority and relevant external agencies (such as a social worker or virtual school head), without delay of the following elements (where appropriate):

- The decision to suspend or permanently exclude a student, including the reason(s) and length.
- Any suspension or permanent exclusion that would result in a student being suspended or permanently excluded for a total of more than five school days (or ten lunchtimes) in a term.
- Any suspension or permanent exclusion that would result in a student missing a national curriculum test or public examination.
- Any suspension or permanent exclusion that has been cancelled, including the reason for cancellation.
- The intention to invite representatives to any meeting of the governing board about the suspension or permanent exclusion.

Providing education during the first 5 days of a suspension or permanent exclusion

During the first 5 days of a suspension, the Headteacher must ensure that achievable and accessible work is set for the student, with staff feedback provided as appropriate. Gosford Hill School makes use of Google Classroom and online platforms (eg. Sparx maths, Educake or Seneca) for this purpose. If the student has a special educational need or difficulty, or access to online platforms is a barrier, the Headteacher will make reasonable adjustments as necessary.

Where appropriate, for example where the student is a child we care for, the school will work with the local authority to arrange alternative provision as soon as possible.

6. The role and responsibilities of the Governing Board

The role and responsibilities of the Governing Board, summarised in Section 4, are explained in further detail below.

The governing board has a duty to consider the reinstatement of a suspended or excluded student within specific timeframes according to the type of exclusion or the number of suspensions issued in a term. During this, the governing board must consider parents/carers representations.

For any suspensions of more than 5 school days, the Governing Board will arrange suitable full-time education for the student, starting no later than the sixth day of the suspension.

Provision does not have to be arranged for students in the final year of compulsory education who do not have any further public examinations to sit.

Monitoring and analysing suspension and exclusion data

The Governing Board will review, challenge and evaluate the data on the schools use of suspension, exclusion, off-site direction to alternative provision, and managed moves. The board will consider:

- How effectively and consistently the school's behaviour policy is being implemented.
- The school register and absence codes.
- Instances where students receive repeat suspensions.
- Interventions in place to support students 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 that may highlight where policies or support are not working.
- The characteristics of suspended and permanently excluded students, and why this is taking place.
- Whether the placements of students directed off-site into alternative provision are reviewed at sufficient intervals to assure that the education is achieving its objectives and that students are benefiting from it.
- The cost implications of directing students off-site.

Within 14 days of receiving a request, the governing board will provide the Secretary of State, the River Learning Trust or the Local Authority with information about any suspensions or permanent exclusions in the last 12 months.

7. Considering the reinstatement of a student

The Governing Board will consider and decide on the reinstatement of a suspended or permanently excluded student within 15 school days of receiving the notice of the suspension or exclusion if:

- The exclusion is permanent.
- It is a suspension that would bring the student's total number of days out of school to more than 15 in a term.
- It would result in a student missing a public exam or National Curriculum test.

Where the student has been suspended, and the suspension does not bring the student's total number of days of suspension to more than 5 in a term, the Governing Board must consider any representations made by parents/carers. However, it is not required to arrange a meeting with parents/carers and it cannot direct the Headteacher to reinstate the student.

Where the student has been suspended for more than 5, but not more than 15 school days, in a single term, and the parents/carers make representations to the board, the Governing Board will consider and decide on the reinstatement of a suspended student within 50 school days of receiving notice of the suspension. If the parents/carers do not make representations, the board is not required to meet and it cannot direct the Headteacher to reinstate the student.

Where a suspension or permanent exclusion would result in a student missing a public exam or National Curriculum test, the Governing Board will, as far as reasonably practicable, consider and decide on the reinstatement of the student before the date of the exam or test. If this is not practicable, the Governing Board may consider the suspension or permanent exclusion and decide whether or not to reinstate the student.

The following parties will be invited to a meeting of the governing board and allowed to make representations or share information:

- Parents/carers, or the student if they are 18 or older (and, where requested, a representative or friend).
- The student, if they are aged 17 or younger and it would be appropriate to their age and understanding (and, where requested, a representative or friend).
- The Headteacher and necessary school staff who are able to provide relevant information.
- The student's social worker, if they have one.
- The Virtual School Head, if the student is a child we care for.

Governing Board meetings can be held remotely at the request of parents/carers, or student, if they are 18 or older.

The Governing Board will try to arrange the meeting within the statutory time limits set out above and must try to have it at a time that suits all relevant parties. However, its decision will not be invalid simply on the grounds that it was not made within these time limits.

Where the Governing Board has a right to consider reinstatement, it can either:

- Decline to reinstate the student, or
- Direct the reinstatement of the student immediately, or on a particular date.

In reaching a decision, the Governing Board will consider:

- Whether the decision to suspend or permanently exclude was lawful, reasonable, and procedurally fair.
- Whether the Headteacher followed the school behaviour policy and legal duties.
- Whether allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the welfare of the pupil or others such as staff or pupils in the school.
- Any evidence that was presented to the governing board.

They will decide whether or not a fact is true 'on the balance of probabilities'. The clerk will be present when the decision is made. Minutes will be taken of the meeting, and a record kept of the evidence that was considered. The outcome will also be recorded on the student's educational record, and copies of relevant papers will be kept with this record.

The Governing Board will notify, in writing, the following stakeholders of its decision, along with reasons for its decision, without delay:

- The parents/carers, or the student if they are 18 or older.
- The Headteacher.
- The student's social worker, if they have one.
- The Virtual School Head, if the student is a child we care for.
- The local authority.

Where an exclusion is permanent and the Governing Board has decided not to reinstate the student, the notification of decision will also include the following:

- The fact that it is a permanent exclusion.
- Notice of parents/carers'/the student's (if they are 18 or older) right to ask for the decision to be reviewed by an independent review panel.
- The date by which an application for an independent review must be made (15 school days from the date on which notice in writing of the governing board's decision is given to parents/carers).
- The name and address to which an application for a review and any written evidence should be submitted.
- That any application should set out the grounds on which it is being made and that, where appropriate, it should include reference to how the student's special educational needs (SEN) are considered to be relevant to the permanent exclusion.
- That, regardless of whether the excluded student has recognised SEN, parents/carers have a right to require the River Learning Trust to appoint an SEN expert to advise the review panel.
- Details of the role of the SEN expert and that there would be no cost to parents/carers for this appointment.
- That parents/carers must make clear if they wish for an SEN expert to be appointed in any application for a review.
- Parents/carers may, at their own expense, appoint someone to make written and/or oral representations to the panel, and parents/carers may also bring a friend to the review.
- That, if parents/carers believe that the permanent exclusion has occurred as a result of unlawful discrimination, they may make a claim under the Equality Act 2010 to the first-tier tribunal (special educational needs and disability), in the case of disability discrimination, or the county court, in the case of other forms of discrimination. Also, that any claim of discrimination made under these routes should be lodged within 6 months of the date on which the discrimination is alleged to have taken place.

8. Independent review

If parents apply for an independent review, the River Learning Trust will arrange for an independent panel to review the decision of the governing board not to reinstate a permanently excluded student.

Applications for an independent review must be made within 15 school days of notice being given to the parents by the governing board of its decision to not reinstate a student. A panel of 3 or 5 members will be constituted with representatives from each of the categories below. Where a 5-member panel is constituted, 2 members will come from the school governors category and 2 members will come from the Headteacher category.

- A lay member to chair the panel who has not worked in any school in a paid capacity, disregarding any experience as a school governor or volunteer.
- School governors who have served as a governor for at least 12 consecutive months in the last 5 years, provided they have not been teachers or headteachers during this time.
- Headteachers or individuals who have been a headteacher within the last 5 years.

A person may not serve as a member of a review panel if they:

- Are a member of the River Learning Trust or governing board of the excluding school.
- Are the headteacher of the excluding school, or have held this position in the last 5 years.
- Are an employee of the River Learning Trust or the governing board of the excluding school (unless they are employed as a headteacher at another school).

- Have, or at any time have had, any connection with the River Learning Trust school, governing board, parents or student, or the incident leading to the exclusion, which might reasonably be taken to raise doubts about their impartiality.
- Have not had the required training within the last 2 years.

A clerk will be appointed to the panel.

The independent panel will decide one of the following:

- Uphold the governing board's decision.
- Recommend that the governing board reconsiders reinstatement.
- Quash the governing board's decision and direct that they reconsider reinstatement (only when the decision is judged to be flawed).

The panel's decision can be decided by a majority vote. In the case of a tied decision, the chair has the casting vote.

9. School registers

A student's name will be removed from the school admissions register if:

- 15 school days have passed since the parents were notified of the exclusion panel's decision to not reinstate the student and no application has been made for an independent review panel, or
- The parents have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent review panel

Where an application for an independent review has been made, the governing board will wait until that review has concluded before removing a student's name from the register.

Where alternative provision has been made for an excluded student and they attend it, code B (education off-site) or code D (dual registration) will be used on the attendance register. Where excluded students are not attending alternative provision, code E (absent) will be used.

10. Returning from suspension

The process of returning to school following a suspension, or cancelled suspension or exclusion, is known as reintegration. The purpose of this process is to ensure that students can successfully return to school life and full-time education. Where appropriate, the school will work with external agencies as part of this strategy.

Our reintegration strategy may include:

- Maintaining regular contact during the suspension or off-site direction.
- Regular contact with a designated contact in school.
- Mentoring by a trusted adult.
- Regular reviews with the parent/carer to praise progress or address concerns at an early stage.
- Informing the student, parents/carers and staff of potential external support.
- Identifying and agreeing to any internal or external interventions that may be used to support full-time access to education.

Reduced timetables, if used as part of a phased return to school will be put in place for the minimum time necessary to meet the cognitive and learning needs of students.

Reintegration meetings

A crucial part of the reintegration process is a meeting with the student and their parents/carers before, or on return to school to discuss an appropriate reintegration strategy. The meeting can proceed without the parents/carers in the event that they cannot or do not attend.

The school expects all students and their parents/carers to attend this meeting, but students who do not attend will not be prevented from returning to the classroom.

Where necessary, these meetings will be planned to support parents/carers schedules and may be held remotely over the phone or via video calls.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The Designated Senior Leader with responsibility for behaviour manages the number of suspensions and exclusions throughout the academic year, reporting back to the Senior Leadership Team, Headteacher and Governing Board. As part of this analysis they are responsible for evaluating the use of suspensions and exclusions at a school level, as well as the impact on identified groups and demographics including year group, time, SEND, pupil premium and student characteristics.

Appendix 1: Incident form

The form below is used internally by staff who have responsibility as part of the suspensions and exclusions process. This form is used to ensure that the policy outlined above is applied consistently.

INCIDENT FORM

Date _____ Student name _____ Form _____

Attendance _____ Prev. suspensions _____ Positive / negative points _____ SEND / CWCF status _____

Summary of Incident	Incident checklist	Init.
	Student and witness voice	
	Review student context: eg. Bromcom / CPOMS / SEND	
	Incident reviewed by HOP/AHOP	
	Incident considered by SENDCo	
	Incident considered by DSL	
	Decision (CBN/NSS)	
	Sanction: _____	
	Date: _____	
	Signed: _____	
	Contact home	
Contact: _____		
Date / time: _____		
Email / phone: _____		
	[S] Reintegration booked	
	Date / time: _____	
	Lead staff: _____	
	[S] Send letter email and post (NC)	
	Logged on Bromcom	
	Welfare email (where appropriate)	
	[S] Reintegration completed	
	Scanned and logged on CPOMS	
Review dates calendared		

Sanction reason		
Responsible - Drug or alcohol [DA] Responsible - Damage [DA] Responsible - Theft [TH] Responsible - Weapon / prohibited item [CW] Responsible - Social media / online [MT] Responsible - Public health [PH]	Respectful - Physical assault [PP / PA] Respectful - Verbal abuse [VP / VA] Respectful - Bullying behaviour [B] Respectful - Racist / sexist conduct [RA / SM] Respectful - Sexual discrimination [LG] Respectful - Disability discrimination [DS]	Resilient - Persistent disruptive [DB] Resilient - Failed detention [DB] Resilient - Failed internal suspension [DB] Resilient - Truancy [DB]

Appendix 2: Readmission meeting form

The form below is the template used to ensure consistency of reintegration meetings for all staff who lead these meetings with students and their parents/carers.

REINTEGRATION MEETING

Date _____ Student name _____ Form _____

Parents/carers present _____ Staff present _____

Notes of discussion:	
Student reflection on the incident	
Parent / carer reflection on the incident	
New or emerging barriers to successful engagement in school life	
School reflection on the incident including potential further intervention(s)	

Does the student understand the reasons for the sanction?	YES	NO
Do the parents/carers understand the reasons for the sanction?	YES	NO
Does the student understand how to avoid repeating the incident?	YES	NO
Does the student and their parent/carer know their key indicators (attendance, behaviour)	YES	NO

Actions / targets arising from the meeting	Who	When
1.		
2.		
3.		