Highcroft School

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

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Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

Policy Number:	EDU.POL.012	Policy Owner Job Role	Quality Manager
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		Applicable Services:	Education
Contributors	Rob Arrowsmith		
Mandatory Policy	Yes		
Note	This policy must not be amended without prior approval of the Education Director		

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1. Supporting Documents

This policy connects to the Behaviour policy (EDU.POL.027), the Positive Handling and Physical Intervention policy (EDU.POL.020), the Safeguarding Children in Education policy (EDE.POL.002), the Attendance policy (EDU.POL.005), the SEND policy (EDU.POL.022) and the Complaints policy (EDU.POL.034).

Related policies are held within RADAR in the School's policy folder.

2. Introduction

At Highcroft School, we provide specialist education for pupils whose needs sometimes show themselves in challenging behaviour. Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious sanctions that we use only when they are necessary to protect the education or welfare of the pupil or of others, and only when other strategies have been exhausted. This policy sets out the fair, transparent and consistent approach we take, and the standards we hold ourselves to.

3. Aim & Scope

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This policy applies to all staff, pupils, parents and carers at Highcroft School. It aims to:

- Make sure suspension and permanent exclusion are fair, proportionate and used only as a last resort.
- Set out a clear and consistent process for staff, pupils and families.
- Promote accurate recording and rigorous analysis of every suspension and exclusion.
- Support the reintegration of pupils after a suspension.
- Develop and evaluate alternatives to exclusion.
- Safeguard the welfare of pupils at risk of suspension or exclusion.

4. Abbreviations and Definitions

- Suspension means removing a pupil from normal lessons for a fixed period, served on site or at home.
- Permanent exclusion means removing a pupil from the school roll. We treat this as a last resort.
- Part-time timetable means a reduced timetable used only in exceptional cases to meet a pupil's needs, with a clear plan to return to full-time education.
- Unlawful suspension means sending a pupil home or preventing attendance without following the formal process.
- Off-rolling means removing a pupil from the roll, or encouraging a family to do so, primarily in the interests of the school rather than the pupil. This is prohibited.
- Managed move and off-site direction mean planned arrangements to support a pupil in another setting, used in the pupil's interests and with their support plan in place.

5. Policy Content

5.1 Principles and Approach

We do not operate a no exclusion policy as an end in itself, and we do not use exclusion to manage risk that should be met through support. Any decision is lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate, and takes account of the pupil's needs and circumstances. Suspension and exclusion are a last resort, used only when other strategies and support have been exhausted or when there is a serious risk to safety. We give particular care to pupils who are more vulnerable to exclusion, including those with SEND, looked after children and those with a social worker. We listen to the pupil's voice before finalising any decision, through a meeting or a written statement.

5.2 Suspension and Permanent Exclusion in Practice

Deciding to suspend or exclude

A suspension or permanent exclusion may be considered for serious or persistent breaches of the behaviour policy, for example serious physical aggression or violence, repeated high-risk behaviour that has not responded to other strategies,

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possession of an illegal substance or an offensive weapon, intentional damage or arson, or serious misuse of IT systems. Behaviour outside school can be grounds for a sanction. Following best practice, the school treats a fixed period suspension as normally one to five school days and recognises the principle that a pupil should not be suspended for more than 45 school days in a single academic year.

Suspension procedure

- We investigate thoroughly and give the pupil the opportunity to respond.
- The headteacher authorises the suspension and sets its length, recording the decision, date, time and reasons on Arbor.
- We notify parents or carers by phone on the same day and confirm in writing, setting out the reasons, the length, the work that will be provided, how parents may make representations to the proprietor and governors, and the date and time of the reintegration meeting.
- We mark the register with the correct code and keep a copy of the letter on the pupil's record.
- Where a suspension runs beyond the fifth consecutive school day, we arrange suitable full-time education for the pupil from the sixth day.
- We hold a reintegration meeting on the pupil's first day back to agree the support and behaviour plan going forward.

Permanent exclusion

Keys Group's expectation is that permanent exclusion will not normally be used. In exceptional circumstances where continued placement is no longer viable, alternative placement arrangements will be pursued through the placing authority and relevant stakeholders.

For a pupil with an EHCP or a pupil placed by a local authority, the headteacher and SENCO arrange an emergency review of the EHCP with the placing authority and seek an alternative placement, and the regional director or education director leads a full investigation and consults the local authority. The pupil remains the responsibility of the school for education and safeguarding until an alternative placement is confirmed. Ultimately, it is only upon the agreement of all stakeholders, coupled with written confirmation from the placing authority, if notice on the child's place at the school is to be served.

Part-time timetables

- A part-time timetable is used only in exceptional cases, for the shortest time necessary, and never to manage behaviour alone.
- It is agreed with parents or carers and has a documented plan and date for a return to full-time education from the outset.
- We inform the funding authority of the plan and the review date and consider informing the allocated social worker where a pupil is known to social care.
- The headteacher monitors the timetable weekly and reviews it at least fortnightly. A timetable without a clear return plan may amount to an unlawful suspension.

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Unlawful suspension and off-rolling

Unlawful suspension and off-rolling are prohibited. A pupil is only removed from the roll once the placing local authority has given the required written notice, normally 28 days, or in the limited circumstances approved by the regional director or education director. The school remains responsible for the pupil's education and safeguarding until the agreed end date.

Reviews and representations

Parents and carers may make representations about a suspension or permanent exclusion to the proprietor and governors, who consider them and review the decision. The independent review panel route in the statutory guidance applies to maintained schools and academies and not to independent schools, so where a family wishes to take a concern further it is dealt with through the school's complaints procedure and, for a placed pupil, with the placing local authority.

Alternative strategies to exclusion

We actively use restorative practice and mediation, managed moves and off-site direction with clear support plans, engagement with local support services such as educational psychology and family outreach, and curriculum and therapeutic adaptations.

Looked after children and pupils with SEND

Where suspension or exclusion is being considered for a looked after child, a child with a social worker or a child with an EHCP, we work with the local authority, the virtual school head and the allocated social worker, assess and record safeguarding risk, and make the reasonable adjustments needed so that the pupil is not placed at a substantial disadvantage.

5.3 Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

Suspensions, permanent exclusions, part-time timetables and internal arrangements are recorded on Arbor, with safeguarding matters recorded on CPOMS. Senior leaders review the data each month, looking at rates, patterns by pupil group and repeat incidents, and the proprietor and governors receive a report each term. Findings inform behaviour strategy, training and safeguarding plans.

Any pupil who receives more than one suspension within a term will automatically receive a leadership review of their support arrangements.

5.4 Equality and Inclusion

At Highcroft School, this policy is applied fairly and without discrimination, in line with the Equality Act 2010. We monitor the impact of this policy on pupils with protected characteristics and adapt our practice to remove disadvantage. Any concern that this policy disadvantages a pupil or group should be raised with the headteacher.

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6. Responsibilities

6.1 Pupils

Pupils are supported to understand the school's expectations and to take part in investigations and reintegration meetings in a way that is right for them.

6.2 Staff

Staff report incidents promptly and accurately, support investigations, and take part in reintegration and support planning.

6.3 Leadership

Only the headteacher may suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. The headteacher ensures the process is followed, that decisions are recorded with the date, time and rationale, and that data is analysed and acted on.

Leaders monitor suspension data by SEND type, looked-after status, social worker involvement, ethnicity and sex to identify and address any disproportionality.

6.4 Governance

The proprietor and governors receive reports on suspension and exclusion, monitor trends, consider any representations from parents, and hold leaders to account. The regional director or education director approves any removal of a pupil from the roll.

6.5 Parents and carers

Parents and carers engage promptly with communication and reintegration meetings, and support agreed behaviour and welfare plans at home.

6.6 Named leads

The headteacher at Highcroft School is Stephanie Goddard. The named designated safeguarding lead is Stephanie Goddard, and the named SENCO is Stephanie Goddard.

Training Requirements

Staff receive training on the behaviour policy, de-escalation and this policy, so that suspension and exclusion are well understood and consistently applied, and new staff cover this at induction.

7. Equality Impact Statement

All policies will be developed and implemented in a manner that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all individuals. Policies must align with relevant equality legislation and reflect the expectations and standards set by our regulatory bodies. They will demonstrate a commitment to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering an

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inclusive environment that respects and values the diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences of those we support, as well as our workforce.

8. Sources of Information / References

As an independent special school, Highcroft School is not bound by that statutory framework. Decisions to suspend or permanently exclude are made under the contract or placement agreement with parents, carers and the placing local authority. We choose to follow the principles of the DfE guidance as a measure of best practice, adapted to the independent school context, because it sets a fair and well understood standard for pupils and families. This policy also reflects:

- The statutory framework for suspension and permanent exclusion is set out in section 51A of the Education Act 2002, the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012, and the Department for Education statutory guidance Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England (July 2026). That framework, including the role of the governing board and the independent review panel, applies as a matter of law to maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units. The July 2026 guidance states that it does not apply to independent schools.
- The Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and not to discriminate.
- The Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015), where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care plan.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, on the safeguarding of pupils at risk of suspension or exclusion.
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE), where a part-time timetable is considered.

9. Version Control

This document can also be found in Radar. This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes. The next review date and version history are recorded in the control table above. The named owner for review at Highcroft School is the headteacher.

10. Appendices

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10.1 Appendix A: Suspension Notification Letter

This is the template the school uses to confirm a suspension in writing. Square bracket fields are completed for each pupil at the time of use.

Highcroft School
The Green
Cockfield
Bishop Auckland
County Durham

Dear [parent or carer name],

Re: Suspension of [pupil name], Year [year group], date of birth [date of birth]

We are writing to inform you that, following an investigation into the incident on [date of incident], [pupil name] has been suspended from [Insert school name here] for a fixed period of [number] school days. This decision has been taken under the school's behaviour policy because [brief description of the behaviour or breach].

The suspension begins on [start date] and ends on [end date]. [Pupil name] is expected to return to school on [return date].

The reasons for the suspension are: [reason one], [reason two], [any other relevant detail].

During the suspension, work will be provided through [arrangement for work] and should be completed at home. If the suspension is longer than five school days, suitable full-time education will be arranged from the sixth day.

You have the right to make representations about this suspension to the Proprietor and Governors. Representations should be made in writing to [contact for representations] by [date].

We expect you and [pupil name] to attend a reintegration meeting on [date] at [time] with [name and role] to reflect on what happened, agree behaviour targets and support, and plan next steps.

During the suspension, [pupil name] must not be present in a public place during school hours without good reason, for example a medical appointment. A copy of this letter and all related documents is held on the pupil's record in Arbor.

Yours sincerely,

[headteacher name],

Headteacher,

[Insert school name here]

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10.2 Appendix B: Reintegration Meeting Agenda and Action Plan

This structured agenda is used for the reintegration meeting on the pupil's first day back. It records the discussion and the agreed targets and support.

Pupil Reintegration Plan

Pupil: _____ **Year:** _____ **Date of Return:** _____

Key Adult: _____ **Review Date:** _____

Pre-Return Discussion

Attendees: _____

Key Concerns Identified:

What Will Help the Pupil Succeed:

First Day Back Plan

Area	Support/Adjustment	Responsible
Arrival	Meet and greet by key adult	
Registration	Check-in and wellbeing discussion	
Lessons	Modified expectations if required	
Break/Lunch	Safe space and named adult available	
Regulation	Time-out/pass available if needed	
End of Day	Review and positive feedback	

Individual Support

Known Triggers:

Early Signs of Distress:

Reintegration Action Plan

Parent/Carer Informed: ☐ Daily ☐ Twice Weekly ☐ End of Week

Outcome at Review:

Parent/Carer Signature: _____

Staff Signature: _____

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10.3 Appendix C: Unlawful Suspension and Off-Rolling Checklist

This checklist is used to confirm that any removal from the roll or restriction of attendance follows the formal process and is in the pupil's interests.

Check	Yes	No
Was the decision made under a recognised process, a fixed period suspension or a permanent exclusion?		
Has the headteacher's authorisation been recorded with date, time and rationale?		
Were parents or carers notified the same day by phone and in writing, with reasons, length and how to make representations?		
Is there a clear record of the governance body's role, including any meeting or decision?		
If a part-time timetable is in place, does it have a rationale, a review schedule and a date for return to full time?		
Has the pupil's safeguarding risk been assessed and recorded before any removal or timetable change?		
Were alternative strategies considered and recorded?		
Are multi-agency referrals or support services engaged where needed?		
Has the pupil's voice been heard before finalising any removal from the roll?		
Is there a reintegration or transition plan, even for a permanent move, covering academic, emotional and social support?		
Are all records saved in Arbor under the correct codes, with an audit trail for every step?		

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