Title	Exclusion Policy
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1 Introduction

1.1 Wootton Park Academy Trust's exclusion policy aims to set out the process that will be followed and the additional considerations around suspensions and exclusions that the Trust will apply. Good behaviour and self-discipline lead to effective learning and help prepare children and young people for life beyond the school gate.

1.2 Where Wootton Park Academy Trust's approaches towards behaviour management have been exhausted, then suspensions and permanent exclusions will sometimes be necessary as a last resort. This is to ensure that other learners and teaching staff are protected from disruption and can learn in safe, calm, and supportive environments.

1.3 The Trust will always have regard to the Statutory Guidance on Suspensions and Exclusions (August 2024) when making decisions on suspensions and exclusions and will follow the law, as set out in the relevant School Discipline (Learner Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulation 2012 (as amended).

1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the behaviour policy, safeguarding policy and the SEND policy for the School.

2 Application of policy

2.1 This policy applies to all members of the School community. The Trust will apply suspensions and exclusions in accordance with this policy and ensure that its contents are relayed to all staff, parents and learners.

3 Types of exclusion

Suspensions and permanent exclusions are different:

3.1 Suspensions (previously called fixed-term exclusions) are where a learner is prevented from attending the school for a fixed period. At the end of the period, they are expected to return to school following a reintegration meeting. A learner may receive a maximum of 45 days of suspension in an academic year before being permanently excluded.

3.2 Permanent exclusions are where, subject to a decision of the governing board to reinstate the learner to the school, the learner is prevented from attending the school again. A decision to permanently exclude will only be taken in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy, and where allowing the learner to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the learner or others, such as staff or learners, in the school.

4 Roles and responsibilities

All members of the School community are expected to follow this policy. Roles, responsibilities and expectations of each section of the School community are set out in detail below.

4.1 The Executive Principal / Head of School

All decisions to suspend or permanently exclude a learner will be taken by either the Head of School or the Executive Principal after considering all the circumstances. Every decision made will be proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour with reference to the Trust's behaviour policy.

4.2 The Trustees

The Trust Board is responsible for forming committees to review exclusions and suspensions when it is required to do so, it is requested by parents, or it is, in its view, prudent to review an individual decision. In each case, the decision of the relevant committee formed by the governing board will be to decide whether to uphold the exclusion or suspension, or instead to reinstate the learner to the school.

4.3 Parents

Parents will be informed without reasonable delay of any suspension or exclusion and there is an ability to make representations in regard to any suspension or exclusion decision. Details will be provided on the rights parents have with every letter that is sent from the Executive Principal / Head of School.

4.4 Learners

All learners of the school are expected to follow the expectations regarding their behaviour to ensure that all learners can learn and participate in school life effectively. Where those expectations are breached, the behaviour policy will apply.

5 CCTV, witness evidence and learner views

5.1 The Trust uses Close Circuit Television (CCTV) within its premises. This is to provide a safe and secure environment for learners, staff and visitors. If behavioural incidents are recorded on CCTV, the footage may be viewed as part of the investigation and the content considered before imposing a sanction. If CCTV is relied upon for a decision on a suspension or exclusion, then it will be shown in some format (redacted as necessary) at any governor review meeting. Please see the Trust's CCTV statement and privacy notices for more information.

5.2 Where witness evidence is relied upon, whether that be from a learner or a staff member, the statement(s) will be provided at any trustee's review meeting. All statements will be signed and dated unless the Executive Principal/Head of School has good reason to protect the anonymity of the relevant witness. Reasons may include threats of reprisals.

5.3 Before taking a decision to suspend or exclude and where appropriate, the Executive Principal or the Head of School will take the learners views into account, considering these in light of their age and understanding, and inform the learner about how their views have been factored into any decision made. Where relevant, the learner will be given support to express their view, including through advocates such as parents or, if the learner has one, a social worker. The Executive Principal or the Head of School will also take account of any contributing factors identified after an incident of misbehaviour has occurred including SEND needs, safeguarding risks etc.

6 Reintegration strategy meetings following suspension or off-site direction

6.1 Where a learner is suspended or is directed to be educated off-site, upon return to the school both the learner and parents will be invited to a reintegration strategy meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- offer the learner a fresh start;
- help them understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others;
- teach them to how meet the high expectations of behaviour in line with the school culture;
- foster a renewed sense of belonging within the school community; and
- build engagement with learning,

so that further suspensions are not needed. School staff will work with the learner to understand what led to the behaviour and to establish if any changes can be made or further support implemented from a pastoral or practical perspective that might reduce the chance of repeat behaviours. Previous behaviour is not seen as an obstacle to future success.

6.2 The Trust uses various measures to support a learners successful reintegration including:

- daily contact with a designated pastoral professional in-school;
- use of a report card with personalised targets leading to personalised rewards;
- ensuring the learner receives academic support upon return to catch up on any lost progress;
- planned pastoral interventions;
- mentoring by a trusted adult or a local mentoring charity;
- regular reviews with the learner and parents to praise progress being made and raise and address any concerns at an early stage; and

- informing the learner, parents and staff of potential external support.

6.3 Whilst reintegration meetings are highly encouraged by the Schools within the Trust, learners will not be prevented from being admitted to the School or being put in mainstream classes because a meeting has not taken place.

7 Cancelling a suspension or exclusion

7.1 A suspension or exclusion can be cancelled by the Executive Principal / Head of School as long as the suspension or exclusion has not been considered by the trustees. In relation to an exclusion, it cannot be cancelled if the total time the learner was excluded or suspended that academic year would be over 45 days at the point of the decision to cancel the exclusion.

7.2 Where a suspension or exclusion is cancelled, the relevant parties will be informed by the Executive Principal/Head of School in accordance with the Statutory Guidance on Suspensions and Exclusions.

8 Suspensions before a permanent exclusion

8.1 In exceptional circumstances, learners may receive a suspension prior to a permanent exclusion. For each decision, the Executive Principal or the Head of School will send the relevant letter setting out the rights of parents. A suspension cannot be converted into a permanent exclusion and so any subsequent permanent exclusion would be a fresh decision due to commence immediately after the suspension had ended. Exceptional circumstances may include where further evidence has come to light, or where the incident was serious and time is required to fully investigate the circumstances and consider alternatives.

9 Directing off-site and managed moves

9.1 Before taking any decision to permanently exclude a learner, the Executive Principal or the Head of School will consider whether a direction to attend alternative provision and/or a managed move as part of a planned intervention would be a reasonable alternative that should be considered. (A managed move is a permanent transfer to another school, agreed upon by the parent, learner, and both schools, to provide a fresh start for the learner and can prevent a permanent exclusion).

9.2 In the case of directing a learner off-site to alternative provision, the aim of any direction is for it to be used as a short-term measure as part of the school's behaviour management strategy to improve a learners behaviour where in-school interventions and/or outreach have been unsuccessful or are deemed inappropriate. While parental consent is not needed, discussions would take place with parents to feed in their views about the options.

9.3 For a managed move to take place, there needs to be agreement between the School, the parents and the new school that a managed move should occur. Before a managed move is agreed to, the learner should attend the new school for a set period to ensure that the new school would be suitable for them. We will share relevant information with the new school and check that they have an integration strategy. At the end of this period, the relevant parties (including the parents) will review the placement before a decision is taken about whether the move becomes permanent. The DfE's parent guidance is clear that a direction off-site to another school could be used initially and then become a permanent managed move if everyone was in agreement. Whilst the intention of a managed move is a permanent transfer of a learner from one school to another, this is described as a "process" in the Statutory Guidance.

10 Independent review panels (IRPs)

10.1 The Trust uses the local authority to arrange IRPs on the Trust's behalf, and requests where a permanent exclusion decision has been upheld should be made to the Appeals Team, Democratic Services, West Northamptonshire Council, One Angel Square, Angel Street, Northampton. NN1 1DN or email to AppealsTeam.NCC@westnorthants.gov.uk within 15 school days.

10.2 Further details on the role and powers of IRPs can be found in Part Ten of the Statutory Guidance on Exclusions.

11 Reconsideration by the Trust Board

Where an IRP either recommends reconsideration or quashes the initial decision of the trust board, the decision will be considered within 10 school days. This may involve a rehearing with oral evidence given by the Trust and parents or may be a reconsideration with only the relevant trust board members

12 Remote Meetings

12.1 Any trustees meeting and/or an IRP meeting may be conducted remotely where the parents request for it to be conducted remotely and the meeting can be fairly held remotely, with all participants having access and are able to make representations. A meeting may also take place remotely where there is an extraordinary event or unforeseen circumstance that means it's not reasonably practicable to hold the meeting in person. Such events can include, but are not limited to, floods, fire, and an outbreak of an infectious disease.

12.2 In addition, where a child's social worker or the virtual school head are due to attend a meeting, they may join an in-person meeting remotely as long as it can be fairly accessed, the technology is available, and everyone would be able to make representations. and the clerk present.

13 Complaints

If parents have any concerns or complaints over the application or implementation of this policy or feels that they are being pressured into a managed move, they should raise their concerns with a staff member or the Executive Principal in accordance with the Trust's complaints policy. If the concern relates to an exclusion, the statutory procedure set out in the exclusions statutory guidance will be followed.

14 Equality impact

The Trust does all it can to ensure that its policies do not discriminate against learners or others, either directly or indirectly, in line with any Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics. This includes race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and sex. Before bringing this policy into effect the school consulted stakeholders on this policy to gain their views and responses. The consultation responses have informed this policy.

15 Monitoring arrangements

The governors review data on suspensions and exclusions to ensure that the use of suspensions and exclusions is appropriate. The following are monitored by the governors/trustees to ensure the processes and support for learners are appropriate:

15.1.1 the interventions put in place for learners at risk of suspension and permanent exclusion

15.1.2 the processes in place for determining and reviewing directions to alternative provision and that such placements are reviewed at sufficient intervals to assure that the education is achieving its objectives and that learners are benefiting from it

15.1.3 full-time educational provision for learners of compulsory school age from the sixth consecutive school day of a suspension, in particular checking the provision is suitable and quality-assured to ensure that:

(a) any previous placements have been evaluated, including support for any applicable SEND;

(b) there is a process in place to monitor the learner's attendance and behaviour at the provision

(c) the correct attendance code is being used

(d) the learner's child protection file and any other information relevant to the learner's safeguarding and welfare has been securely transferred to their new setting as early as possible

15.1.4 whether there is any variation within the year on suspensions and permanent exclusions and the characteristics of learners

15.1.5 the cost implications of directing children to be educated off-site in alternative provision and whether there are any patterns to the reasons or timing of moves

(a) whether the school register and absence codes have been recorded correctly

(b) how the behaviour policy is applied and specifically its consistency

(c) the circumstances in which learners receive repeat suspensions

(d) whether Personal Education Plans for looked after children have been reviewed on a termly basis