

Suspension & Permanent Exclusion Policy

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0.1	September 2026	New Trust wide policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's other policies and guidance documents.

In addition, it should also be read in conjunction with the following guidance and legislation from the Department for Education...

- [Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and PRUs in England \(May 2026\)](#) (Referred to throughout this policy as 'DfE Guidance').
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(September 2026\)](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [DfE's Searching, Screening and Confiscations Guidance \(July 2023\)](#)
- Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) Regulations 2026

A suspension is used to refer to what legislation calls an exclusion for a fixed period of time. A permanent exclusion is when a pupil is no longer allowed to attend a school (unless reinstated). For further details on this, see Appendix 3.

We Put Students First

This document is intended to give a clear indication to all stakeholders of the typical circumstances within which the Head of School/Headteacher will consider using the powers to suspend and the procedures that will be followed in exercising them.

All students are entitled to an education where they are protected from disruption and can learn in a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment. The Headteacher or Head of School will use suspension and permanent exclusion in response to serious incidents or in response to persistent poor behaviour.

We Have High Expectations

The circumstances that may warrant a suspension or permanent exclusion to occur can be found on page 14 [Paragraph 16] of the DFE guidance noted above. Whilst having regard to the circumstances of each individual incident, the Head of School/Headteacher will be likely to consider the use of a suspension in the following instances:

- Physical assault against another student
- Physical assault against an adult
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a student
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult
- Use of, or threatening to use, an offensive weapon or prohibited item (as defined by our rewards and behaviour policy)
- Bullying
- Racist abuse
- Abuse against sexual orientation, gender reassignment or all protected characteristics
- Persistent disruption to the school environment and others' learning
- Total non-compliance or repeated noncompliance of the year team or senior leadership team
- Sexual harassment
- Acts of vandalism
- Conduct that is likely to bring the school into disrepute (including a false or malicious allegation against a member of staff)
- Smoking offences
- Returning to the school site during an suspension following a previous warning/ offence
- Failure to engage positively in a return from suspension meeting
- Drug/Alcohol related behaviours

This list is not exhaustive but is designed to give an indication of the behaviour for which a suspension may be considered. The severity and frequency of incidents will be looked at and the length of the suspension will reflect this. In the case of a one-off incident that is deemed to be extremely severe, a permanent exclusion may be applied instead of a suspension.

A suspension will usually last from 0.5 to 5 days in length in order to minimise the disruption to learning that results from extended absence within schools. Occasionally, a longer suspension of between 6 and 45 days may be given. The school has a duty to arrange education from the sixth day of a fixed period of a suspension of more than 5 days.

The exact length of the suspension will depend on a variety of factors:

- Number of incidents that have occurred and are being considered
- Severity of incident(s)
- History of previous incidents or suspensions and/or referrals to the Alpha Centre. Repeated suspensions for similar incidents may increase in length if progress is not evident.

Each incident will be considered and dealt with individually and only the Head of School/Headteacher, or Deputy Headteacher in their absence, can suspend a student. Should both the Head of School/Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher be absent, this decision can be made by another member of the Senior Leadership Team and subsequently reviewed by the Head of School/Headteacher.

There may be an occasion when a student is temporarily removed from site to keep pupils apart for safeguarding reasons. This is not a suspension and will not be used as a behaviour sanction. Instead, it is a choice that will be used in exceptional safeguarding cases only and will be clearly recorded on a school's safeguarding software.

Making the decision to permanently exclude a student is a serious one, and a decision that is not taken lightly. It can be as a result of a one-off incident, or as the final consequence for persistently disruptive behaviour following a range of unsuccessful positive behaviour interventions.

The list of serious one-off incidents can include, but isn't limited by, the following...

- Serious actual, or threatened violence against another student or member(s) of staff
- Carrying a weapon
- Supplying an illegal drug
- Sexual abuse, assault or harassment
- Possession and use of drugs
- Serious breach of health and safety – including setting off and/or tampering with the fire alarm

For those students at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the school will put additional support or intervention measures in place as a graduated response to try and stop suspension or permanent exclusion. These can be either supportive intervention or sanctions. For a detailed list of these, please see each school's Behaviour For Learning or Behaviour & Rewards Policy.

One of the additional support or intervention measures that may be put in place is an Off-Site Direction (OSD). An OSD is a formal measure by which a Head of School/Headteacher or head of school requires a pupil to attend provision at another setting for the purpose of improving behaviour, while the pupil remains on the roll of the original school. It is a proactive intervention rather than a disciplinary exclusion and may be used as an alternative to suspension or as part of a reintegration strategy. All OSDs must be approved by a member of the local governing committee. When used, this intervention will be preceded by a written notification to parents (setting out the reason, placement details and review arrangements) as well as appropriate information-sharing between schools. All OSDs will be for a maximum period of 16 weeks, and will include formal review meetings every 6 weeks. Student voice will be collected as part of this formal review process. At the end of an OSD, this will either be made into a permanent Managed Move, or the student will return to the host school. A student will not be permanent excluded for returning to their host school.

We Act With Integrity

There are clear procedures in the school for investigating incidents that occur. This involves the collection of statements as well as reviewing CCTV, where appropriate. Where possible, statements will be collected on the same day from the student, victim, other witnesses and staff. Where necessary, witness statements will be made anonymous if this information needs to be presented to governors in a review meeting. Following a full investigation, the Head of School/Headteacher will review what has taken place and use the 'balance of probabilities' to draw conclusions.

It is sometimes necessary to suspend a student for a short period of time pending further investigation into an incident, or consideration of the evidence collected. Where possible, the student's voice will be collected as part of the decision-making process. Within 24 hours, the Head of School/Headteacher will make the decision to:

- Not extend the suspension further (although another sanction may be applied if appropriate);
- Issue an additional suspension in light of the investigation's findings; or
- Issue a Permanent Exclusion to begin immediately after the end of the suspension, due to additional information emerging from the conducted investigation.

The decision to suspend will be taken:

- Only by the Headteacher/Head of School or by delegated authority to the Deputy Headteacher;
- On all the evidence available at the time; and
- On the balance of probabilities.

There are a range of preliminary factors that will be borne in mind when deciding on the outcome of an investigation, and the decision to suspend, permanently exclude, or another outcome as outlined in the school's Behaviour For Learning or Behaviour and Rewards Policy. These will include...

- Student's age and health;
- Student's response to the incident;
- Previous behaviour record;
- Any unmet SEND need;
- Any contributing factors;
- Any extenuating circumstances;
- Severity and frequency of the behaviour;
- Likelihood of the behaviour re-occurring;
- Effects on learning and progress;
- Effects on the school community;
- Health and safety implications for staff and other students; and
- Where the incident happened and how visible it was to other students, parents and the wider community.

Parents/carers will be informed by telephone on the day that the decision to suspend has been taken. This decision will be communicated in writing and a letter posted or emailed by the school in accordance with the guidance.

If a suspension will prevent a student from taking a public examination, arrangements will be made for the exam to be taken if there is not another opportunity for the student to sit the exam.

During a suspension, the suspended student is not permitted to be on or directly outside the school site at any time. An additional suspension may be issued to students who are in breach of this regulation. In addition, suspended students should not be in a public place during school hours, which includes directly outside the school site. A parent may receive a fixed penalty fine if their child is found in a public place without good reason. If a suspended student is found in breach of these regulations then the matter will be reported to the Local Authority.

The school will provide work for students who are suspended from 1 to 5 days. Parents are expected to contact the school to arrange to receive this work. For suspensions of 6 or more days, the school will organise education off site.

The decision to permanently exclude a student will only ever be taken when it meets the legal criteria established above through the DFE's guidance. Should we have concerns that a child's behaviour may escalate to a permanent exclusion, there are a range of interventions that we will engage to try and mitigate this eventuality. A primary focus of this work will be the Early Help Assessment and Review Framework and further information about this can be found on our website.

Off-rolling is the practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion, primarily in the interests of the school rather than the pupil, for example to improve academic outcomes or behaviour data. Leverhulme Academy Trust is committed to ensuring that off-rolling does not occur under any circumstances. Decisions about suspension, managed moves, or off-site direction will always be made in the best interests of the pupil, with full transparency, proper recording, and in accordance with statutory guidance. The school will not encourage or pressure parents to remove their child from the roll, nor will it use informal or unlawful exclusions. All pupil movement will follow appropriate legal processes, including adherence to the School Admissions Code and fair access protocols where relevant. Any decision affecting a pupil's placement will be supported by clear evidence, consideration of safeguarding, SEND and equality duties, and, where appropriate, the views of the pupil and their family, ensuring that actions are lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

Please review the DFE's Guidance on ways in which a person with parental responsibility can contact the governors to review the Head of School/Headteacher's decision to suspend a student.

Appendix 1: Additional Support Available to Families Regarding Suspensions & Permanent Exclusion

Parents have the right to make representations about a suspension or permanent exclusion decision to the Local Governing Committee (LGC). If you wish to make representations please contact **the school via telephone** as soon as possible. The LGC have the power to:

- Uphold suspensions or permanent exclusion if they believe that the evidence presented indicates that, on the balance of probabilities, the student was involved in the incident(s); or
- Overturn the suspension or permanent exclusion if they believe there is not enough evidence to confirm that, on the balance of probabilities, the student was involved in the incident. This can result in the direct reinstatement of the student either immediately or on a specified date.

The LGCs do not have the power to reduce or increase the length of any suspension that the Head of School/Headteacher has applied. If the governors uphold a permanent suspension, then the parent/carer has the right to request an independent appeal meeting. This can occur by contacting the clerk to the Permanent Exclusion Meeting.

Parents can also contact a number of other services to support with regards to a child's suspension or permanent exclusion:

- You should be aware that if you think the suspension relates to a disability your child has, and you think disability discrimination has occurred, you have the right to appeal, and/or make a claim to the **First Tier Tribunal – Tel: 01325 392760**
- Every local area has a SENDIAS service who provide information, advice and support to children and young people with SEND, including on exclusions. Details of our local service can be found here: [SENDIAS Service](#).
- Coram's Child Law Advice service can be accessed through their website <https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/school-exclusion/> or contacted on 0300 330 5485.
- ACE education run a limited service and information can be found on the website: <http://www.ace-ed.org.uk/>.
- Independent Provider of Special Education Advice (known as IPSEA – www.ipsea.org.uk) is a registered charity. It offers free and independent information, advice and support to help get the right education for children and young people with all kinds of special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities.
- Parents may also wish to source local independent advice at Parent Partnership by contacting Cheryl Wyatt on 01204 848722.

Appendix 2: Student Reintegration Following a Suspension

Following a suspension, our aim is to reintegrate students quickly and effectively into mainstream school. The reintegration process is an important part of any suspension, as it supports the student to reflect on the conduct that led to suspension, and to re-align themselves with our values and expectations. Student reintegration follows three steps:

1. Students returning to school after a suspension are expected to attend a return from suspension meeting at the school with their parent/carer. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that the student has a successful return to school by reminding the students of the school's expectations and identifying the support or intervention that is needed. Parents or designated carers are required to attend the reintegration meeting. Where a parent / carer does not attend, the decision to re-admit the student into general lessons may be delayed and he or she may be kept removed from mainstream education until an alternative meeting has been conducted.
2. An appropriate reintegration plan will be considered following any period of suspension for a child. This will likely include an alternate, on-site, reintegration process. The purpose of this is to ensure that students have an opportunity to reflect formally on their behaviour, as well as to obtain individual intervention and support to allow their positive reintroduction to mainstream school.
3. Once a student has successfully completed their allocated reintegration period, they will be allowed to attend mainstream classes. In addition to this, they may be placed on a form of **behaviour monitoring**. These may include, but are not limited to:
 - Use of a report card with personalised targets leading to personalised rewards;
 - Daily contact with a designated pastoral professional in-school;
 - Mentoring by a trusted adult or a local mentoring charity; and/or
 - Regular reviews with the pupil and parents to praise progress being made and raise and address any concerns at an early stage.

For repeat offenders receiving numerous suspensions the school will use stages of intervention, as outlined in the school's Behaviour for Learning/Behaviour & Rewards Policy to support the individual.

Appendix 3: Making the Decision to Permanently Exclude a Student

“The government supports schools in using permanent exclusion as a sanction when warranted as part of creating a calm, safe and supportive environment in which students can learn and thrive. To achieve this, permanent exclusions are sometimes a necessary part of a functioning system where it is accepted that not all student behaviour can be amended or remedied by pastoral processes, or consequences within a school (DfE Guidance, (Page 11)”.

A permanent exclusion is when a student is no longer allowed to attend a school (unless the student is reinstated). The decision to exclude a student permanently will only be made by the Head of School/Headteacher, and made in line with the two-fold test as noted in the DfE’s guidance on the matter:

1. Was the Head of School/Headteacher’s decision to permanently exclude in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school’s behaviour and rewards policy? **and**
2. If allowing the student to remain in school, would this seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the school?

The above test does not apply to suspensions, but only the decision to permanently exclude a student. The criminal standard of proof (“beyond all reasonable doubt”) does not apply in these instances, but instead, the Head of School/Headteacher and LGC should apply the balance of probabilities: “is it more likely than not that events took place as alleged?” This is confirmed in the DfE’s guidance [Para 3].

In addition to the two-fold test as noted above, the LGC must also be satisfied that four criteria have been met in line with administrative law [Para 122 DfE Guidance]:

Was the decision to permanently exclude lawful? To provide a positive answer to this question, the following questions must be affirmatively answered:

- Did the Head of School/Headteacher make the decision to permanently exclude the child?
- Was the suspension issued correctly? A suspension must not be a result of the school being unable to meet a student’s needs; and the threat of suspension must not be used as a way of influencing parents to remove their child from the school.
- Was the parent notified of the suspension appropriately and in a timely manner?
- Did the parent receive confirmation in writing without delay?
- Was the suspension coded correctly in the register?
- Were parents notified of their right to make representations to the LGC?
- Is it clear that the suspension does not relate to a child’s SEND?
- Is it clear that policies applied did not discriminate against the student?
- Is it clear that, where possible, action has been taken to support and address any underlying causes of behaviour including SEND?
- Was the Head of School/Headteacher’s actions or decisions so procedurally unfair or flawed that justice was clearly not done?

Was the decision to permanently exclude reasonable? Questions to consider in lieu of this test are as follows, and must all be answered affirmatively:

- Was the decision a reasonable exercise of the Head of School/Headteacher's power to permanently exclude?
- Was the incident investigated and facts gathered before a decision made?
- Were all relevant factors taken into account appropriately, and given appropriate weight in the decision?
- Were all irrelevant factors discounted or rendered trivial by other factors in the decision?
- Is it clear that the child's behaviour hasn't arisen as a result of bullying/discrimination or another mitigating factor? If it has, is it still reasonable to suspend/exclude given the circumstances of all involved?
- Was the decision by the Head of School/Headteacher one which no reasonable Head of School/Headteacher, acting within the four corners of their jurisdiction, and given all the facts, would have taken?
- Was there a suitable alternative to suspension available that would have the same outcome in terms of managing disruptive behaviours but a less detrimental impact on all the students concerned?

Was the decision to permanently exclude a fair one? Questions to consider in response to fairness are below and must be answered affirmatively:

- Have all those involved (where practical) been given an opportunity to give their version of events?
- Has everyone involved in the incident been dealt with equally (particularly taking into account any SEND, personal or social needs that may affect them)?
- Has the process been properly administered in a timely manner from start to finish?
- Did everyone receive all the documents, including the evidence, in a good time before any meeting?
- Are members of the governing body meeting to review this decision sufficiently impartial?

Was the decision to exclude a proportionate one? This is a test of the decision made and the answers to the questions below need to be affirmative.

- Does the student's behaviour (taking into account all extenuating and aggravating circumstances) warrant the sanction applied?
- Have other incidents of a similar nature been dealt with in the same way previously? If not, are the reasons for handling this situation differently valid?

Appendix 4: Order of Proceedings at a Permanent Exclusion Panel Meeting

Protocols & Procedures

1. The Panel Chair introduces the panel, those in attendance, and checks everyone has received all information in a timely manner. Confirmation that all documentation is taken as 'read'.
2. The Panel Chair asks each member of the panel if they are able to hear the case impartially.
3. The chair introduces the reason for meeting:
 - a. Review the Head of School/Headteacher's decision to permanently exclude [child's name].
 - b. Receive input from parents
 - c. Check that the decision to permanently exclude meets the two fold test
 - d. Check that the decision to permanently exclude is lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate in line with the DfE's guidance on suspensions and permanent exclusions.

Head of School/Headteacher's Representations

4. The Head of School/Headteacher is asked by the Panel Chair for their reasons for permanent exclusion.
 - a. The Panel Chair is to ensure there is no interruption of the Head of School/Headteacher.

5. The Head of School/Headteacher can then be questioned by parents with regard to the decision they have made.
 - a. The Panel Chair asks the parents/carer(s) if they wish to ask any questions of the Head of School/Headteacher that relate to the reasons for the permanent exclusion or the events that led to the permanent exclusion. All questions come through the Panel Chair.
 - b. The Panel Chair must ensure that...
 - i. Questions are asked and not statements about the student.
 - ii. Questions are relevant to the reason for the permanent exclusion and/or the events that led to the permanent exclusion.
 - iii. Questions are about any SEND provision or intervention for their child.

6. The Head of School/Headteacher is questioned by the Governing Body Panel.
 - a. The Panel Chair asks the panel if they have any questions for the Head of School/Headteacher. These questions are to come through the Chair of the Panel. The Chair decides if they are relevant questions.
 - b. The Chair makes sure two-fold test and four-fold lawful test questions are answered as part of this aspect of the proceedings.
 - c. The Chair is to ensure that these are questions to the Head of School/Headteacher only. The Head of School/Headteacher can then delegate these to other attendees should this be deemed appropriate.

Parent's Representations

7. The parent(s)/carer(s), or the excluded pupil or their representatives, may make representations to the Governing Body Panel. a. The Panel Chair asks the parents/carers if they want to make any representations to the Governing Body Panel. b. The Chair is to ensure that: i. No one interrupts and if they do remind them that we are at the point in the order of proceedings where the parent is presenting their case.
8. Unless there are strong reasons to refuse, the Panel chair should allow the excluded pupil to make a statement if they wish.
9. The parent(s)/carer(s), or the excluded pupil, are questioned by the Head of School/Headteacher. a. The Panel Chair asks the Head of School/Headteacher if they have any questions for the parent(s)/carer(s) or their representatives. b. These questions are to come through the Chair of the Panel. The Chair decides if they are relevant questions.
10. The parent(s)/carer(s), or the excluded pupil, and/or their representatives and/or any witnesses are questioned by the Governors. a. The Panel Chair asks the Governor Panel if they have any questions for the parent(s)/carer(s) or their representatives. b. These questions are to come through the Chair of the Panel. The Chair decides if they are relevant questions.
Summing Up
11. Summing up by the Head of School/Headteacher. a. The Panel Chair asks the Head of School/Headteacher to sum up
12. Summing up by the parent(s)/carer(s), or the excluded pupil. a. The Panel Chair asks the parent(s)/carer(s) or their representatives to sum up
Deliberations & Decision of the Committee
13. Everyone but the clerk and governing board panel leave the meeting leaving any confidential papers behind if physically present. 14. The Clerk communicates the decision made by the governing board relating to the permanent exclusion to all relevant parties.