

Exclusion and Suspension Policy

Written by: Kaycee Fordham Date: February 2018
Approved by: College of Management Date:
Council of Trustees Date:

History of review: This is the first policy of its kind.

Date for next review: February 2019

Policy Statement

South Devon Steiner School expects every pupil to behave in an appropriate and considerate way whilst at school. The school has four behaviour policies across the full age range of the school (Kindergarten, Classes 1-3, Classes 4-8 and Classes 9-12), which set out the school's expectations, and its procedures for addressing behavioural issues. The aim of these policies and procedures is to help young people to become personally responsible for their actions, in an age appropriate way.

This policy deals with the issue of exclusion, which the school categorises as any time when any pupil is asked to remain at home, regardless of their age, or is sent home by the school on disciplinary grounds.

Exclusion can be temporary for a fixed term (suspension) or permanent (expulsion). The school will never informally exclude a pupil i.e. send a pupil home 'to cool off'. Any exclusion of a pupil, even for short periods of time or for particular parts of the school day, will be formally recorded.

Procedure

The decision to exclude a pupil must be lawful, reasonable and fair. The school has a statutory duty not to discriminate against pupils on the basis of protected characteristics, such as disability or race, and will also give particular consideration to the fair treatment of pupils from groups who are vulnerable to exclusion.

The SLT, upon considering an exclusion, must also consider whether a MASH referral is appropriate, in relation to the behaviour demonstrated by the pupil. Such considerations will be guided by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Government supports schools in using exclusion as a sanction where it is warranted. However, permanent exclusion can only be used as a last resort. A decision to exclude a pupil will only be taken:

- When a pupil has seriously and/or persistently breached the school's behaviour policy, and/or
- Where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

Scope

This policy relates to **all pupils** at the school and affects all staff.

Aims

The school acknowledges that, as a last resort, in order to effectively address incidents of serious misbehaviour, and/or to safeguard the welfare of the pupil or others in the school, it must consider the temporary and/or permanent exclusion of pupils on its roll.

The aim of this policy, is to provide clarity around the reasons for exclusion of any kind, and the correct procedures for implementing exclusion. It also provides parents with the information they are entitled to, under Part 6: Provision of Information, of the Independent School Standards.

Decision to exclude a pupil

- The final decision to exclude a pupil can only be made by a member of the School Leadership Team (SLT), in close consultation with the teacher(s) involved in the disciplinary matter.
- A recommendation to the SLT for exclusion of any kind, will usually come from the Class teacher, Sponsor or subject teacher of the pupil(s) concerned.
- Recommendations for exclusion will usually (but not always) follow a period of discussions and/or correspondence between parents and the school regarding the pupil's behaviour, and consultation between teaching colleagues in the weekly departmental and collegiate meetings.
- Pupils are automatically excluded for the school day following the receipt of a second reflection form during any one half term, or consecutive six week period (Behaviour Policy – Classes 4-8, Behaviour Policy – Classes 9-12).

When a pupil is excluded

A member of the SLT must inform both parents of the pupil concerned, providing the following information:

- Why the school has decided to exclude the pupil
- The steps taken to try to avoid exclusion
- The arrangements for setting and marking the pupil's work during their absence from school
- The parents' right to state their case to the School Management Team or Trustees
- The parents' right to see their child's school record.

Types of Exclusion

There are two types of exclusion:

- Fixed Period (suspension) – no more than 15 school days in a term
- Permanent Exclusion (expulsion).

Fixed Period Exclusion

A fixed period exclusion should be used only after a **serious breakdown in behaviour**, such as those set out in the Behaviour Policies for Classes 9-12 and 4-8 (including but not limited to the receipt of 2 reflection forms within a half term), the Serious Behaviour Incident Policy and the Boarding Policy.

If a pupil is excluded for a fixed period, the school will inform the parents immediately of:

- The reason for the exclusion
- The date when the pupil may return
- Their right to put their case in writing to the College of Management, SLT or Trustees.

Prior to Permanent Exclusion (expulsion)

- If a pupil's behaviour has become untenable or the teaching staff feel that the pupil is not benefiting from the education offered by the school, then in the first instance, this will be discussed with the parents.
- Minutes will be taken during this meeting and all parties will receive a copy of these.
- If, after the meeting the child remains in the school, the parents will be made fully aware, in writing, if an expulsion is to be the next likely step.

Permanent Exclusion (expulsion)

- If a pupil is to be permanently excluded, the school will inform the parent(s) at once, by telephone if possible, of the exclusion and the specific reason for it.
- The school will also provide parents with details of any relevant previous warnings, fixed period exclusions or other disciplinary measures.
- Parents will be told of their right to put their point of view to the College of Management, SLT or Trustees in writing.
- If parents wish to receive further information or appeal against the decision to exclude their child, a meeting will be arranged in which the School Leadership Team/Trustees will hear the case for exclusion from the teachers and the appeal from the parent(s).
- When the discussion has taken place, the School Leadership Team/Trustees will make their decision and will confirm this in writing, giving their reasons.
- If the School Leadership Team/Trustees decides that the pupil should return to school, parents will be given the date of return in writing.
- Exclusion whether fixed term or permanent, may be used for any of the following, all of which constitute examples of unacceptable behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.
 - Persistent disregard of the school's expectations in relation to appropriate behaviour.
 - Verbal abuse
 - Physical abuse actual or threatened
 - Indecent behaviour
 - Damage to property
 - Use/possession/supply of illegal drugs
 - Misuse of other substances
 - Theft
 - Sexual abuse or assault
 - Carrying an offensive weapon
 - Unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported and for which school sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the pupil's behaviour.
 - Where the parents of a pupil or a pupil have caused undue harassment of staff
 - The behaviour of the parents is judged by the school to be unreasonable and affects, or is likely to affect, adversely the pupil or other pupils' progress at the school, the wellbeing of school employees or the reputation of the School.
 - Where the pupil of the parent/parent(s) continued relationship with the school is not compatible with the aims and objectives of Steiner education (required withdrawal).

The school will not attempt to 'convert' a fixed term exclusion, into a permanent exclusion. However, in exceptional cases, usually where further evidence has come to light, a further fixed-period exclusion may be issued to begin immediately after the first period ends; or a permanent exclusion may be issued to begin immediately after the end of the fixed period.

Note: South Devon Steiner School does not endorse any method of physical punishment of pupils. The school will implement the appropriate disciplinary procedures against members of staff who have been found to have hit, smacked, shaken or physically intimidated pupils in their care. All disciplinary action in relation to pupils, should have a clear pedagogical purpose and value.

Controls

- Teachers to adhere to behaviour policies when dealing with behavioural issues.
- Teachers to ensure that minutes are taken and filed during all meetings in relation to behaviour management.
- SLT members to thoroughly consult with teachers, ensuring the school holds a comprehensive understanding of the behavioural issues informing the recommendation for exclusion, and that such information is in line with the relevant legislation and guidance surrounding exclusion of a pupil, prior to taking the decision to exclude a pupil.

Information/advice/guidance

- DfE publication: Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) in England (September 2017)
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/641418/2017083_1_Exclusion_Stat_guidance_Web_version.pdf
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools Guidance for Governing Bodies (published July 2013)
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/463484/Behaviour_and_discipline_in_schools_guidance_for_governing_bodies.pdf

Compliance

- Independent school standards, December 2014
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/pdfs/uksi_20143283_en.pdf

References

- Behaviour Policy for Kindergarten (Guidelines for Supporting Positive Behaviour in Kindergarten)
- Behaviour Policy Classes 1-3
- Behaviour Policy Classes 4-8
- Behaviour Policy Classes 9-12
- Serious Behaviour Incident Policy
- Boarding Policy
- Concerns and Complaints Policy