

Hollingbourne Primary School



Suspension and Permanent Exclusions Policy

Policy Agreed: September 2023

Suspension and permanent exclusion policy

A decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, is seen as a last resort by the school while always bearing in mind our duty of care to pupils and staff.

The school is responsible for communicating to pupils, parents and staff its expectations of standards of conduct. A range of policies and procedures are in place to promote good behaviour and appropriate conduct.

The school will take account of any special educational needs and other vulnerabilities when considering whether or not to suspend a pupil. The Headteacher will ensure that reasonable steps have been taken by the school to respond to a pupil's disability/ vulnerability, so the pupil is not treated less favourably for reasons related to the disability. Reasonable steps will include:

- Differentiation in the school's Behaviour Policy
- Developing strategies to prevent the pupil's behaviour
- Requesting external help with the pupil ☐ Staff training

Where reasonable adjustments to policies and practices have been made to accommodate a pupil's needs and to avoid the necessity for suspension as far as possible, suspension may be justified if there is a material and substantial reason for it. A specific incident affecting order and discipline in the school may be such a reason.

Wherever possible, a proactive approach is taken by working with parents and creating Personal Support Plans (PSP) to prevent a suspension. Should a suspension take place, a PSP will be produced on the child's return to school.

No suspension will be initiated without having first exhausted other strategies or, in the case of a serious single incident, a thorough investigation.

Reasons for suspension:

- Serious breach of the school's rules or policies;
- Risk of harm to the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

Any exclusion will be at the recommendation of the Headteacher and the discretion of the Governors.

Suspension

A suspension will be used for the shortest time necessary to secure benefits without adverse educational consequences.

Suspension for a period of time from half a day to 5 days for persistent or cumulative problems would be imposed only when the school had already offered and implemented a range of support and management strategies. These could include:

- Discussion with the pupil
- Mentoring (adult support)
- Discussion with parents
- Setting targets and agreeing an individual action plan
- Checking on any possible provocation
- Mediation
- Counselling
- Internal seclusion
- Multi-agency support

Suspension will not be used for minor incidents (e.g. lateness, poor academic performance or breaches of uniform rules).

Single Incident

Suspension may be used in response to a serious breach of school rules and policies or a disciplinary offence. In such cases the Headteacher will investigate the incident thoroughly, usually via the management team, and will consider all evidence to support the allegation, taking account of the school's policies. The pupil will be encouraged, and if necessary be supported by familiar staff or parents, to give his/her version of events. A member of the Leadership Team will check to find out whether the incident may have been provoked, for example by bullying or harassment. If necessary the Headteacher will consult a governor, but not a governor who may have a role in reviewing the Headteacher's decision.

Permanent Exclusion

A permanent exclusion is a very serious decision and the Headteacher will consult with a governor before enforcing it. As with a suspension, it will follow a range of strategies and be seen as a last resort, or it will be in response to a very serious breach of school rules and policies, such as:

- Serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff
- Possession or use of an illegal drug on the school premises
- Carrying an offensive weapon
- Persistent bullying
- Racial harassment
- Persistent disruptive behaviour

The decision to exclude

If the Headteacher decides to exclude a pupil she will:

- Ensure that there is sufficient recorded evidence to support the decision
- Explain the decision to the pupil

- Contact the parents, explain the decision and ask that the child be collected
- Send a letter to the parents confirming the reason for the exclusion, whether it is a permanent or temporary exclusion, the length of the exclusion and any terms or conditions agreed for the pupil's return
- In cases of more than a day's exclusion, ensure that appropriate work is set and that arrangements are in place for it to be marked
- Plan how to address the pupil's needs on his/her return
- Plan a meeting with parents and pupil on his/her return
- Inform the Local Authority via logging on KELSI

A suspension will not be enforced if doing so may put the safety of the pupil at risk.

Behaviour outside School

Pupils' behaviour outside school, on school trips and sporting events is subject to the school's behaviour policy. Bad behaviour in such circumstances will be dealt with as if it had taken place in school. Please see our behaviour policy for more information.

Marking Attendance Registers following Exclusion

When a pupil is suspended, he/she will be marked as absent using Code E.

Removal from the School for Other Reasons

The Headteacher may send a pupil home, after consultation with the parents and a health professional as appropriate, if the pupil poses an immediate and serious risk to the health and safety of other pupils and staff, e.g. because of a diagnosed illness such as a notifiable disease. This will not be classed as a suspension and should be for the shortest possible time.

Procedure for Appeal

If parents wish to appeal against the decision to suspend/exclude, the matter will be referred to the governing body. Two governors, who were not involved in the initial decision to exclude, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within five days.

Records relating to the decision to suspend/exclude and the parents' complaint will be copied to all parties not later than two days prior to the hearing. In no circumstances however will the school or its staff be required to divulge to parents or others any confidential information on or the identities of pupils or others who have given information which has led to the suspension/exclusion or which the Headteacher has acquired during an investigation.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher, friend or Parent Support Advisor. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. If possible the governors will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, governors will decide how it should be carried out. After consideration of all the facts considered to be relevant, the governors will reach a decision on

whether to uphold or rescind the exclusion or make other recommendations. This decision will be made within ten days of the hearing.

Parents will be informed in writing of the governors' decision and the reasons for it. Their decision will be final. The governors' findings and any recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, Headteacher and governing body.

Parents are entitled to appeal against a governing body's decision if it has upheld the Headteacher's decision to permanently exclude their child; even if they did not make a case to, or attend, the governors' meeting.