

# High Tunstall College of Science



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## Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

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|---------------------------|---|--|
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| Responsibility for Review | - | Assistant Headteacher – Behaviour & Pastoral |

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## Statement of intent

At High Tunstall College of Science, we understand that good behaviour and discipline is essential for promoting a high-quality education.

Amongst other disciplinary sanctions, the college recognises that suspension and permanent exclusion of students may be necessary where there has been a serious breach, or consistent breaches, of the college's Behavioural Policy. Suspending or excluding a student may also be required in instances where allowing the student to remain in college would be damaging to the education and welfare of themselves or others; in all cases, suspending or excluding students should only be used as a means of last resort.

The college has created this policy to clearly define the legal responsibilities of the headteacher, governing body and Hartlepool Borough Council (LA) when responding to student suspension and permanent exclusions, to ensure that they are dealt with both fairly and lawfully, and in line with DfE statutory guidance. This policy also aims to secure a student's right to an education despite having been excluded, by ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place.

A “**suspension**” is defined as the temporary removal of a student from the college for behaviour management purposes. A student may be suspended for one or more fixed periods, up to a maximum of forty-five (45) school days in a single academic year. A suspension does not have to be for a continuous period.

A “**permanent exclusion**” is defined as the permanent removal of a student from the college, in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the college's Behaviour Policy and where allowing the student to remain in college would seriously harm the education or welfare of the students or staff in the college.

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007
- Equality Act 2010
- The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) (Amendment and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2023
- The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

This policy also has due regard to statutory and non-statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2024) 'Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE (2024) 'Behaviour in schools'
- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following college policies:

- Behavioural Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

The LA is responsible for:

- Having due regard to the relevant statutory guidance when carrying out its duties in relation to the education of LAC.
- Arranging suitable full-time education for any student of compulsory school age excluded permanently, in coordination with the college.
- Reviewing and reassessing students' needs in consultation with their parents where they have an EHC plan and are excluded permanently, with a view to identifying a new placement.
- Arranging for an independent review panel hearing to review the decision of the governing body not to reinstate a permanently excluded student where required

- Arranging the hearing without delay at a time, date and venue convenient for all parties
- Ensuring the independent review panel consists of three (3) or five (5) members as appropriate, which represent the required categories
- Appointing a clerk to provide advice to the relevant panel and parties to the review on procedure, law and statutory guidance on suspensions and permanent exclusions
- Ensuring all panel members and the clerk have received training within the two (2) years prior to the date of the review
- If requested by parents, appointing a SEND expert to attend the panel and covering the associated costs of this appointment.

The governing body is responsible for:

- Providing information to the Secretary of State and LA about any suspension and permanent exclusions within the last 12 months
- Arranging suitable full-time education for any student of compulsory school age who is suspended
- Considering parents' representations about suspension and permanent exclusions within fifteen (15) school days of receiving notice if the appropriate requirements are met
- Where a suspension or permanent exclusion would result in a student missing a public examination or test, considering the suspension or permanent exclusion before this date
- Considering whether it would be appropriate for a student to be permitted onto the college premises to sit the public examination or test
- Arranging the representation meeting at a time and date convenient to all parties, but in compliance with the statutory time limits
- Adhering to its responsibilities to consider the reinstatement of students
- Considering the interests and circumstances of the suspended or excluded student, including the circumstances in which they were suspended or permanently excluded, and have due regard to the interests of others at the college
- Using the civil standard of proof (based on the 'balance of probabilities', it is more than likely that the fact is true) when establishing the facts relating to a suspension or permanent exclusion
- Ensuring clear minutes are taken of the representation meeting
- Noting the outcome of the representation meeting on the student's education record, along with copies of relevant papers for future reference
- Notifying the student's parents, the headteacher and LA of its decision and the reasons for it, without delay
- Where appropriate, informing parents of where to apply for an independent review panel
- Informing parents of relevant sources of information

- Ensuring a student's name is removed from the college admissions register, where appropriate
- Reconvening within ten (10) school days to reconsider reinstatement of a student were directed to do so by the suspension and permanent exclusions review panel
- Using data to evaluate the college's practices regarding intervention, suspension and permanent exclusion.

The clerk to the suspensions and permanent exclusions review panel is responsible for [Where not appointed, the responsibilities should be assumed by the LA]:

- Informing the appropriate individuals that they are entitled to:
  - Make written representations to the panel
  - Attend the hearing and make oral representations to the panel
  - Be represented
- Circulating copies of relevant papers at least five (5) college days before the review to all parties
- Giving all parties details of those attending and their role, once the position is clear
- Attending the review and ensuring that minutes are produced in accordance with instructions from the panel within the timeframe of the policy.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementing good levels of discipline to ensure all students can benefit from the opportunities provided by education and to minimise potential suspensions and permanent exclusions
- Applying the civil standard of proof when establishing the facts in relation to a suspension or permanent exclusion
- Complying with their statutory duties in relation to students with SEND when administering the suspension or permanent exclusion process, as outlined in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Considering any contributing factors that are identified after an incident of poor behaviour has occurred, e.g., if a student has suffered bereavement, experienced bullying or has a mental health issue
- Considering the use of a multi-agency assessment for a student who demonstrates persistent disruptive behaviour
- Reviewing the effectiveness of suspensions and permanent exclusions as a sanction, e.g. if a student has received multiple suspensions or is approaching the legal limit for suspensions in an academic year
- Considering what extra support may be needed to identify and address the needs of individual students, particularly those with SEND, those eligible for FSM, LAC and those from certain ethnic groups.
- Engaging effectively with parents in supporting the behaviour of students with additional needs

- Determining whether a student will be suspended or excluded on disciplinary grounds
- Adhering to their responsibilities when cancelling an exclusion before the governing board has met to consider whether the student should be reinstated. Withdrawing any suspensions or exclusions that have not been reviewed by the governing board, where appropriate
- Withdrawing any suspensions or permanent exclusions that have not been reviewed by the governing body, where appropriate
- Ensuring any decision to suspend or exclude is lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate
- Complying with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 when deciding whether to suspend or exclude a student
- Ensuring they have considered their legal duty of care when sending a student home following a suspension or permanent exclusion
- Making the decision to suspend or permanently exclude based on the evidence available at the time, regardless of any police investigation and/or criminal proceedings
- Notifying a student's parents without delay where the decision is taken to suspend or permanently exclude the student, including the days on which the parents must ensure the student is not present in a public place at any time during college hours, as well as any other necessary information statutorily required
- Ensuring that all information provided to parents is clear and easily understood
- Notifying the governing body and LA of their decision to suspend or permanently exclude a student where appropriate, as well as the student's home authority if required
- Notifying the governing body once per term of any suspensions or permanent exclusions in the Headteacher's report for governors
- Organising suitable work for suspended or permanently excluded students where alternative provision cannot be arranged.

### **3. Grounds for suspension or permanent exclusion**

The college will only suspend or permanently exclude a student where it is absolutely necessary, and where all other possible disciplinary sanctions, as detailed in the college's Behaviour Policy, have failed to be successful.

The following examples of behaviour may underline the college's decision to suspend or permanently exclude a student:

- Physical assault against a student
- Physical assault against an adult
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a student
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult

- Use, or threat of use, of an offensive weapon or prohibited item
- Bullying
- Discriminatory abuse, e.g. racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or ableist abuse.

Students can be suspended on a fixed-period basis, e.g., up to forty-five (45) school days within a year or be permanently excluded. Similarly, students can be permanently excluded following a suspension, where further evidence is presented. In all cases, the headteacher will decide whether a student will be subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion, depending on what the circumstances warrant.

The college has the power to direct a student off-site to improve their behaviour.

#### **4. The Headteacher's power to suspend and permanently exclude**

Only the Headteacher has the power to suspend or permanently exclude a student from the college and is able to decide whether this is on a suspension or permanent exclusion as appropriate. All suspensions and exclusions will only be issued on disciplinary grounds.

The Headteacher is able to suspend students from the premises where their behaviour is disruptive during lunchtime. All lunchtime suspensions will be counted as half of a college day. The Headteacher is able to consider a student's disruptive behaviour outside of the college premises as grounds for suspension or permanent exclusion, in accordance with the college's Behaviour Policy.

When sending a student home following any suspension or permanent exclusion, the headteacher will ensure that they exercise their duty of care at all times and will always inform the parents.

Any decision made to suspend or permanently exclude a student will be lawful, proportionate and fair, with respect to legislation relating directly to suspensions and permanent exclusions and the college's wider legal duties, including the ECHR. At all times, the Headteacher will take into account their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years', ensuring that they do not discriminate on any grounds, e.g., race, sex, disability, and will not increase the severity of a student's suspension or permanent exclusion on these grounds.

The Headteacher will apply the civil standard of proof when responding to the facts relating to a suspension or permanent exclusion, e.g., that 'on the balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that the facts are true.

The Headteacher may cancel any suspension or permanent exclusion that has already begun; however, this power will only be used if the suspension or permanent exclusion has not already been reviewed by the governing body.

Where a suspension or permanent exclusion is cancelled, the Headteacher will notify the student's parents, the governing body, the LA, and, where relevant, the virtual school head (VSH) and the student's social worker. The notification will also provide the reason for the cancellation. The Headteacher will offer the student's parents the opportunity to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the circumstances that led to the cancellation of the suspension or permanent exclusion, and the student will be allowed back into college.

When a suspension or exclusion is cancelled, the governing board's duty to consider reinstatement ceases, and there is no requirement to hold a meeting to consider reinstatement.

Any days spent out of college as a result of a suspension or exclusion prior to it being cancelled will count towards the maximum forty-five (45) College days that a student can be suspended or excluded in an academic year. A permanent exclusion will not be cancelled if the student has already been suspended or excluded for more than forty-five (45) College days in an academic year or if they will have been so by the time the cancellation takes effect.

The Headteacher will report the number of suspensions and permanent exclusions that have been cancelled, alongside the circumstances around and reasons for cancellation, to the governing body once per term, to allow the governing body to have appropriate oversight.

The headteacher will not issue any 'informal' or 'unofficial' suspension or permanent exclusions, e.g. sending a student home to 'cool-off', regardless of whether the parents have agreed to this. The Headteacher will not use the threat of suspension or permanent exclusion as a means of instructing parents to remove their child from the premises.

All suspension or permanent exclusions will be formally recorded on the college's MIS.

## **5. Factors to consider when suspending or permanently excluding a student**

When considering the suspension or permanent exclusion of a student, the Headteacher will:

- Allow the student the opportunity to present their case once evidence has been collected
- Take into account any contributing factors that are identified after a case of poor behaviour has occurred, e.g., if the student's wellbeing has been compromised, or they have been subjected to bullying
- Take into consideration whether the student has received multiple suspensions or is approaching the legal limit of forty-five (45) suspended days per college year, and whether suspension is serving as an effective sanction

- Consider early intervention to address underlying causes of disruptive behaviour, including liaising with external agencies, to assess students who demonstrate consistently poor behaviour.

The Headteacher will consider what extra support may be available for vulnerable student groups whose suspension rates are higher, to reduce their risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, including the following:

- LAC
- Students eligible for FSM
- Students with SEND
- Certain ethnic groups.

The Headteacher will consider avoiding permanently excluding LAC students, those with SEMH issues or students with an EHC plan. Where any member of staff has concerns about vulnerable student groups and their behaviour, they will report this to the headteacher, who will instigate a multi-agency assessment to determine whether the behavioural issues might be a result of educational, mental health or other needs and vulnerabilities. The full assessment procedures are outlined in the college's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

Where SEND or SEMH issues are identified, an individual behaviour plan will be created using the graduated response outlined in the college's Behaviour Policy. If the student continues to endanger the physical or emotional wellbeing of other students or staff, despite exhausting the graduated response process, then suspension or permanent exclusion may be considered. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, under no circumstances will a student with identified SEND or SEMH issues be suspended or permanently excluded before the graduated response process has been completed.

Where a student with SEND or SEMH issues is permanently excluded because of a SEND- or SEMH-related need that could not be met at the college, detailed records will be kept highlighting that these students are closely tracked and showing that the college has a close relationship with the student's next destination.

The Headteacher will work in conjunction with the parents of any student with additional needs to establish the most effective support mechanisms.

## **6. Preventative measures**

Before taking a final decision to permanently exclude, the Headteacher will consider whether it is in the best interests of all parties to initiate off-site directions or managed moves as preventative measures to permanent exclusion.

### **Off-site direction**

Under the Education Act 2002, the governing body may require any registered student to attend at any place outside the college premises for the purpose of receiving educational provision intended to improve their behaviour.

The governing body and the headteacher will decide, in communication with the student and their parents, whether off-site direction is an appropriate solution to manage a student's behaviour and avoid suspension or permanent exclusion. Where all parties agree to this course of action, the college will work with the student and their parents to discuss and agree a plan for the off-site direction, including a proposed maximum period of time that the student will be at the alternative provision and any alternative options that will be considered once the time limit has been reached, e.g. managed moves.

The governing body will notify parents, and the LA if the student has an EHC plan, in writing with information about the placement no later than two school days before the relevant day.

The college will keep any off-site placements under review by holding review meetings at intervals deemed appropriate by the governing body; the governing body will ensure, where possible, that review meetings are convened at a time suitable for the student's parents and will invite parents in writing to each review meeting no later than six days before that date. Where parents request, in writing, that the governing body hold a review meeting, the governing body will arrange review meetings in response, as soon as is reasonably practicable, unless there has been a review meeting in the previous ten (10) weeks.

The governing body will decide at each review meeting whether the arrangement will continue and for what period of time; the meeting will also decide arrangements for further reviews. Reviews will be recorded in writing, including any decisions made regarding the placement.

## **7. Duty to inform parents**

Following the Headteacher's decision to suspend or permanently exclude a student, they will immediately inform the parents, in person or by telephone, supported by written communication, of the period of the suspension, or permanency of the exclusion, and the reasons behind this.

The Headteacher will inform the parents in writing (or electronically if written permission has been received from the parents for notices to be sent this way) of the following:

- The reason(s) for the suspension or permanent exclusion
- The length of the suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent
- Their right to raise any representations about the suspension or permanent exclusion to the governing body, including how the student will be involved in this and how the representations will be made
- Their right to make a request to hold the meeting via remote access and how this request can be made

- Their right to attend a meeting where there is a legal requirement for the governing body to consider the suspension or permanent exclusion, and the fact that they are able to bring an accompanying individual
- The arrangements that have been made for the student to continue their education prior to the organisation of any alternative provision, or the student's return to college
- Relevant sources of free, impartial information.

Where the student is of compulsory school age, the Headteacher will inform the parents by the end of the afternoon session that for the first five (5) days of the suspension or permanent exclusion (or until the start date of any alternative provision or the end of the suspension, where this is earlier), parents are legally required to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during college hours without justification, and that parents may receive a penalty fine if they fail to do so.

Where the Headteacher has arranged alternative provision, they will also inform the parents of the following:

- The start and end date for any provision of full-time education
- The address at which the provision will take place
- Any information necessary for the student to identify the person they should report to on the starting date.

Where the Headteacher is unable to provide information on alternative provision by the end of the afternoon session, they will provide the information in a subsequent written notice without further delay, and within 48 hours of the student beginning the provision. If the alternative provision is due to begin before the sixth day of the suspension, the headteacher is able to give less than forty-eight (48) hours of notice, with parental consent.

If the Headteacher has decided to suspend the student for a further fixed period following their original suspension, or to permanently exclude them, they will notify the parents without delay and issue a new suspension notice to parents.

## **8. Duty to inform the governing body and LA**

The Headteacher will inform the governing body, without delay, of the following:

- Any permanent exclusions (including where a suspension is followed by a decision to permanently exclude the student)
- Any suspensions which would result in the student being suspended for more than five (5) school days in a term (or more than ten (10) lunchtimes)
- Any suspensions or permanent exclusions which would result in the student being absent from an examination or national curriculum test.

For any suspensions, other than those above, the Headteacher will notify the governing body once per term.

The Headteacher will inform the LA of all suspensions or permanent exclusions, regardless of their length, without delay.

All notifications to the governing body and LA will include the reasons for suspension or permanent exclusion and the duration of any suspension.

If the student who is suspended lives outside the LA in which the college is located, the Headteacher will notify the student's 'home authority'.

## **9. Duty to inform social workers and the virtual school head (VSH)**

When a student has been suspended or permanently excluded, the Headteacher will, without delay, notify the student's social worker, if they have one, and the VSH, if they are a looked-after child. This notification will include the period of any suspension and the reasons for suspension or permanent exclusion.

Social workers and/or the VSH will also be informed when a meeting of the governing body is taking place and will be invited to attend the meeting should they wish to do so.

Social workers and/or the VSH will be allowed to join a governing board meeting or independent review panel via the use of remote access, as long as the arranging authority is satisfied, they will be able to participate effectively, they can hear and be heard throughout the meeting, and their remote participation will not prevent the meeting being fair and transparent.

## **10. Arranging education for suspended and permanently excluded students**

For any suspensions of more than five (5) school days, the governing body will arrange suitable full-time education for the student, which will begin no later than the sixth day of suspension. Where a student receives consecutive suspensions, these will be regarded as cumulative, and full-time education will still have to be provided from the sixth day of suspension. For permanent exclusions, full-time education will also be provided for the student from the sixth day of exclusion.

The governing body will not arrange full-time education for any student who is currently in their final year of compulsory education, and who does not have any further public examinations to sit.

The governing body is aware that it is beneficial to suspended and permanently excluded students to begin their alternative education arrangements before the sixth day of exclusion; therefore, the governing body will always attempt to arrange alternative provision before the sixth day. Where it is not possible to arrange alternative provision during the first five days, the college will ensure that they take reasonable steps to set and mark work for the student.

If a student with SEND has been suspended or permanently excluded, the governing body will ensure that:

- Any alternative provision is arranged in consultation with the student's parents, who are able to request preferences
- When identifying alternative provision, any EHC plan is reviewed or the student's needs are reassessed, in consultation with the student's parents.

## **11. Considering suspensions and permanent exclusions**

The governing body will consider any representations made by parents regarding suspensions and permanent exclusions.

Parents and, where requested, a friend or representative, the Headteacher, and a member of the LA will be invited to attend any consideration of suspensions and permanent exclusions and will be able to make representations.

Any meeting to consider reinstatement of a student will be arranged at a date and time convenient for all parties, and in compliance with any statutory time limits.

Where it is appropriate to the student's age and level of understanding, the student will also attend any consideration meeting and will be enabled to make a representation on their own behalf if they desire to do so.

The governing body will consider the reinstatement of a suspended or permanently excluded student, where:

- The exclusion is permanent
- The suspension is fixed period and would bring the student's total number of suspended college days to more than fifteen (15) in any given term
- The suspension or permanent exclusion would result in the student missing a public examination.

In the case of a suspension where the student's total number of suspended days is more than five (5) but less than sixteen (16) college days (this includes suspensions that exceed fifteen (15) college days by less than a whole day, e.g., one that totals fifteen & a half (15.5) days within a term, if parents make representations, the governing body will consider suspensions within fifty (50) college days of receiving notice of suspension. In the absence of any representation from parents, the governing body will consider the reinstatement on their own.

Where a suspension will take a pupil's total number of college days out of college above five (5) but less than fifteen (15) for the term, and parents have not requested a governing board meeting, the governing board will not be required to consider the student's reinstatement, but it will have the power to do so if it deems it appropriate.

Where a suspension will not bring a student's total number of days of suspension or permanent exclusion to more than five (5) days in a term, the governing body will consider all representations made by parents; however, the governing body cannot direct the reinstatement of the student and it is not required to arrange a meeting with parents.

Where suspension would result in a student missing a public examination, the governing body will consider the suspension or permanent exclusion before the test to decide whether the student should be reinstated in time to take the examination.

If it is not practicable for a sufficient number of governors to consider the decision before the examination, the chair of governors, or the vice chair of governors, will consider the suspension alone and decide whether or not to reinstate the student.

In light of the above, the governing body will also consider whether it would be appropriate to allow the suspended student to enter the premises to take the examination.

When considering the reinstatement of a suspended student, the governing body will:

- Only discuss the suspension or permanent exclusion with the parties present at the meeting
- Ask for any written evidence prior to the meeting
- Circulate any written evidence and information to all parties, at least five (5) college days in advance of the meeting

- Allow students and parents to be accompanied by a person of their choice to the meeting
- Consider what reasonable adjustments need to be made to support the attendance and contribution of parties at the meeting
- Identify the steps needed to enable and encourage the suspended or permanently excluded student to attend the meeting and speak on their behalf, or how they may contribute personal views by other means if attendance is not possible
- Consider the interests and circumstances of the student, including the grounds for suspension or permanent exclusion.

## 12. Reaching a decision

After considering exclusions and permanent exclusions, the governing body will either:

- Decline to reinstate the student
- Direct the reinstatement of the student immediately, or on a specified date.

If reinstatement would make no practical difference, e.g. if the student has already returned to college following a suspension or the parents make clear they do not want their child reinstated, the governing body will still consider whether the student should be officially reinstated, and whether the Headteacher's decision to suspend or permanently exclude the student was fair, lawful and proportionate, based on the evidence presented.

The governing body will apply the civil standard of proof when responding to the facts relating to a suspension or permanent exclusion, i.e. that on the 'balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that the facts are true.

To reach a decision, the governing body will:

- Identify the steps they intend to take to ensure that all parties involved will have the opportunity to participate and present their views
- Ensure that minutes are taken of the meeting as a record of the evidence that was considered
- Ask all parties to withdraw from the meeting before concluding their decision
- Consider whether the suspension or permanent exclusion of the student was lawful, proportionate and fair, taking into account the headteacher's legal duties and any evidence that was presented to the governing body in relation to the decision
- Record the outcome of the decision on the student's educational records, along with copies, which will be kept for at least six (6) months
- Inform the LA of the outcome
- Make a note of their findings, where they have considered a suspension or exclusion but cannot reinstate the student.

### **13. Notification of considered suspensions and permanent exclusions**

The governing body will notify the parents of the suspended or permanently excluded student, the headteacher and the LA of their decision following the consideration of a suspension or permanent exclusion, in writing and without delay.

In the case of a permanent exclusion, where the governing body decides not to reinstate the student, they will notify the parents:

- That the exclusion is permanent
- Of their right for it to be reviewed by an independent review panel
- Of the date by which an application for review must be made
- Of the name and address of whom the review application should be submitted to
- That a request to hold the meeting via remote access can be made and how to do this
- That any application should set out the grounds on which it is being made and that, where appropriate, this should include reference to how a student's SEND is considered relevant to the suspension
- That, regardless of whether a student has been identified as having SEND, the parents have a right to require the governing body to ensure a SEND expert attends the review
- Of the role of the SEND expert that will attend the review, and that the parents will not be charged for this
- That they are required to make it clear if they wish for a SEND expert to attend the review
- That they may appoint someone at their own expense to make representations to the panel.

The governing body will also notify parents that, if they believe a suspension or permanent exclusion has been issued as a result of discrimination, then they are required to make a claim under the Equality Act 2010 to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND), and that this should be within six (6) months of when the discrimination allegedly took place.

After any conclusion, the governing body will notify the parents, and all other parties involved, of the decision that was made and the reasoning for this, in sufficient detail.

### **14. Removing permanently excluded students from the college register**

The headteacher will remove students from the college register if:

- Fifteen (15) college days have passed since the parents were notified of the governing body's decision not to reinstate the student and no application for an independent panel review has been received

- The parents have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent panel review following a permanent exclusion.

If an application for an independent panel review has been made within fifteen (15) college days, the headteacher will wait until the review has been determined, or abandoned, and until the governing body has completed any reconsideration that the panel recommended or directed it to carry out, before removing the student from the college register.

If a student's name is to be removed from the register, the Headteacher will make a return to the LA, which will include:

- All the particulars which were entered in the register
- The address of any parent with whom the student normally resides
- The grounds upon which the student's name is to be removed from the register.

Any return to the LA will be made as soon as the grounds for removal are met and no later than the date in which the student's name was removed.

If a student's name has been removed from the register and a discrimination claim is made, the student may be reinstated following a decision made by the First-tier Tribunal (SEND) or County Court.

Whilst a student's name remains on the admissions register, the appropriate code will be used to mark the student's attendance:

- Code B: Education off-site
- Code D: Dual registration
- Code E: Absent and not attending alternative provision.

## **15. Independent review panel**

The LA will review the governing body's decision not to reinstate a permanently excluded student if the parents submit their application for this within the required time frame.

The LA will constitute an independent review panel of three (3) or five (5) members that represent the following categories:

- A lay member to chair the panel. This individual will not have worked in any college or school in a paid capacity
- A current or former college governor who has served for at least twelve (12) consecutive months in the last 5 years
- A headteacher or individual who has been a headteacher within the last five (5) years.

Parents are required to submit their applications within:

- Fifteen (15) school days of the governing body's notification of their decision
- Fifteen (15) school days of the final determination of a discriminatory claim made under the Equality Act 2010.

Any application made outside of this timeframe will not be reviewed. Parents are able to request an independent panel review even if they did not make a case to, or attend, the governing body's initial consideration of the permanent exclusion.

Parents can request that independent review panels take place via remote access.

The LA will adhere to all statutory guidelines when conducting an independent panel review, as outlined in the DfE's statutory guidance.

## **16. Appointing a SEND expert**

If requested by parents in their application for an independent review panel, the LA will appoint a SEND expert to attend the panel and covers the associated costs of this appointment. Parents have a right to request the attendance of a SEND expert at a review, regardless of whether the college recognises that their child has SEND.

The LA will make arrangements to indemnify the SEND expert against any legal costs and expenses reasonably incurred as a result of any decisions or actions connected to the review and which are taken in good faith.

An individual will not serve as a SEND expert if they have, or at any time have had, any connection with the LA, college, parents or student, or the incident leading to the permanent exclusion, which might reasonably be taken to raise doubts about their ability to act impartially; however, an individual is not taken to have such a connection solely because they are an employee of the LA.

The SEND expert will be a professional with first-hand experience of the assessment and support of SEND, as well as an understanding of the legal requirements on schools in relation to SEND. Examples of suitable individuals might include educational psychologists, specialist SEND teachers, SENCOs and behaviour support teachers.

Recently retired individuals are not precluded from fulfilling this role; however, during interview, the LA will assess the knowledge of such individuals in order to ensure that they have a good understanding of current practice and the legal requirements on schools in relation to SEND.

Whilst individuals are not automatically taken to be partial simply because they are an employee of, or contracted by, the LA, they will not have had any previous involvement in the assessment or support of SEND for the permanently excluded student, or siblings of the permanently excluded student. The LA will request that prospective SEND experts declare any conflict of interest at the earliest opportunity.

The final decision on the appointment of a SEND expert is for the LA to make, but it will take reasonable steps to ensure that parents have confidence in the impartiality and capability of the SEND expert. Where possible, this will include offering parents a choice of SEND expert. In order to meet its duties within the statutory time frame, the LA will consider maintaining a list of individuals capable of performing the role of SEND expert in advance of a request.

The LA will determine the amount of any payment in relation to the appointment of the SEND expert, such as financial loss, travel and subsistence allowances.

## **17. The role of a SEND expert**

The SEND expert's role is analogous to an expert witness, providing (orally and/or written) impartial advice to the panel on how SEND might be relevant to the permanent exclusion. The SEND expert will base their advice on the evidence provided to the panel. The SEND expert's role does not include making an assessment of the student's SEND.

The focus of the SEND expert's advice will be on whether the college's policies which relate to SEND, or the application of these policies in relation to the permanently excluded student, were legal, reasonable and procedurally fair. If the SEND expert believes that this was not the case, they will, where possible, advise the panel on the possible contribution this could have made to the circumstances of the student's permanent exclusion.

Where the college does not recognise that a student has SEND, the SEND expert will advise the panel on whether they believe the college acted in a legal, reasonable and procedurally fair way with respect to the identification of any SEND that the student may potentially have, and any contribution that this could have made to the circumstances of the student's permanent exclusion.

The SEND expert will not criticise a college's policies or actions simply because they believe a different approach should have been followed or because another school might have taken a different approach.

## **18. Appointing a clerk**

The LA will decide whether to appoint a clerk to the independent review panel, or to make alternative arrangements to administer the panel.

Where a clerk is appointed, the LA will ensure that the clerk did not serve as clerk to the governing body when the decision was made not to reinstate the student.

## **19. The role of a clerk**

The clerk's role is to provide advice to the panel and parties to the review on procedure, law and statutory guidance on permanent exclusions.

The clerk will:

- Identify, in advance of the meeting, whether the permanently excluded student wishes to attend the panel hearing, taking reasonable steps to enable the student to feedback their views, irrespective of their attendance
- Identify, in advance of the meeting, whether any alleged victims of the incident leading up to the permanent exclusion wish to attend the panel hearing, taking reasonable steps to enable them to feedback their views, irrespective of their attendance
- Ensure that the panel is able to hear from any witnesses to the incident leading to the permanent exclusion, taking into account the fact that some of these people may be students at the college. Students under 18 will not be allowed to appear in person without parental consent
- Inform the parents, headteacher, governing body and the LA, that they are entitled to make oral and written representations to the panel, attend the hearing, and be represented
- Ensure that all parties are:
  - Provided with copies of relevant papers at least five (5) school days before the review, notifying the panel if any requested documents have not been provided in case the panel wishes to adjourn until a later date
  - Informed about who is attending the meeting, and what their roles are.
- Attend the review and ensure that minutes are produced in accordance with instructions from the independent review panel.

Where a clerk is not appointed, the LA will undertake the functions outlined above.

## **20. The duties of the independent review panel**

The role of the panel is to review the governing body's decision not to reinstate a permanently excluded student. In reviewing the decision, the panel will consider the interests and circumstances of the permanently excluded student, including the circumstances in which the student was permanently excluded, and have regard to the interests of other students and people working at the college. The panel will apply the civil standard of proof, rather than the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

Following the review, the panel will do one of the following:

- Uphold the decision
- Recommend that the governing body reconsiders reinstatement
- Quash the decision and direct that the governing body reconsiders reinstatement.

The panel's decision does not have to be unanimous and can be decided by a majority vote. It is binding on the student, parents, the governing body, headteacher and the LA.

## **21. Conducting governing board meetings or independent review panels via remote access**

Where a parent or student makes a request correctly in line with instructions set out in the Headteacher's or governing board's written notification, the governing board or LA will hold the meeting via the use of remote access.

Remote meetings and panels will be held in accordance with timelines for face-to-face meetings.

Where a request for a meeting to be held via remote access is not made, or the parent or student does not state a preference, the meeting or panel will be held in person unless it is not practicable to do so.

If there is a reason related to extraordinary events or unforeseen circumstances, e.g., an outbreak of an infectious illness, which means it is not reasonable for a meeting or panel to be held in person, it may be held via remote access.

Meetings will only be held via remote access if the governing board or LA is satisfied that that the meeting can be held fairly and transparently. If this cannot be done, the governing board or LA will consult with the parent to discuss how a face-to-face meeting can be arranged that will be convenient for them.

If there are technological or internet issues during a remote meeting which compromises the ability for participants to be seen or heard or prevents the meeting from being held fairly and transparently and it is not reasonably practicable to resolve, a face-to-face meeting will be arranged without delay.

When holding meetings or panels via remote access, the governing board or LA will:

- Comply with relevant equalities legislation
- Enable access to support which the parent is entitled to, including the presence of a friend
- Confirm with all participants that they have access to the technology that will allow them to participate in the meeting or panel
- Ensure all the participants will be able to put across their point of view and/or fulfil their function
- Ensure the remote meeting or panel can be held fairly and transparently.

Where a suspension or exclusion began before 1 September 2023 and a governing board meeting has not yet been held, the Headteacher will notify the parent, either

on 1 September or as soon as possible afterwards, that they can ask the governing board to hold the meeting via the use of remote access.

This also applies if an exclusion began before 1 September 2023 and the parent is entitled to make representations but has not yet done so.

The Headteacher's notification will explain how requests must be made and to whom and that requests must be made within three (3) college days of the notification.

Where an exclusion began before 1 September 2023 and an independent review panel has not yet been held, the governing board must notify the parent, either on 1 September 2023 or as soon as possible that they can ask the independent review panel to hold the meeting via the use of remote access.

This also applies if an exclusion began before 1 September 2023 and the parent is entitled to apply for an independent review panel but has not yet done so. The notification will explain how requests must be made and to whom and that requests must be made within three (3) college days of the notification.

## **22. Reconsidering reinstatement following a review**

Where the independent review panel instructs the governing body to reconsider their decision not to reinstate a student, they will do so within ten (10) college days of being given notice of the review panel's decision.

The college is aware that if, following an instruction to reconsider, the governing body does not offer to reinstate the student, then a four-thousand-pound (£4,000) adjustment will be made to the college's budget.

Where the independent review panel recommends that the governing body should reconsider their decision not to reinstate a student, they will do so within ten (10) college days of being given notice of the review panel's decision. The college is aware that if, following a recommendation to reconsider, the governing body does not offer to reinstate the student, it will not be subject to a financial adjustment. If, following reconsideration, the governing body offers to reinstate the student, but the parents decline, no adjustment will be made to the college's budget.

Following reconsideration, the governing body will notify the parents, the Headteacher and the LA of their reconsidered decision and the reasons for this.

## **23. Criminal investigations**

The Headteacher will not postpone taking a decision to suspend/permanently exclude a student due to a police investigation being underway, or any criminal proceedings that are in place.

The Headteacher will give particular consideration when deciding to suspend/permanently exclude a student where evidence is limited by a police investigation, to ensure that any decision made is fair and reasonable.

If the governing body is required to consider the Headteacher's decision in these circumstances, they will not postpone the meeting and will make a decision based on the evidence available.

## **24. Training requirements**

The LA will ensure that all independent review panel members and clerks have received training within the two (2) years prior to the date of the review.

Training will cover:

- The requirements of the legislation, regulations and statutory guidance governing exclusions
- The need for the panel to observe procedural fairness and the rules of natural justice
- The role of the chair of a review panel
- The role of the clerk to a review panel
- The duties of headteachers, governing body and the panel under the Equality Act 2010
- The effect of section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the need to act in a manner compatible with human rights protected by that Act.

Clerks will also have an up-to-date understanding on developments in case law which are relevant to suspension and permanent exclusion.

## **25. Using data**

The Headteacher will ensure that all data regarding suspensions and permanent exclusions is collected and provided to the governing body on a termly basis. The governing body will review this data regularly in order to:

- Consider the level of student moves and the characteristics of students who are moving on any permanent exclusions to ensure that this is only being used as a last resort
- Gather information on students who are taken off the roll and those who are on the roll but attending education off-site
- Consider the effectiveness and consistency in implementing the Behaviour Policy
- Understand any variations in the rolling average of permanent exclusions to ensure they are only used when necessary
- Understand the characteristics of suspended and permanently excluded students and evaluate equality considerations
- Gather information on where students are receiving repeat suspensions
- Evaluate interventions in place to support students at risk of suspension and exclusion, including where there are patterns which may indicate that certain policies and support measures are or are not working.

- Analysing whether the placements of students directed off-site into alternative provision are reviewed at sufficient intervals to assure that the education is achieving its objectives.

## **26. [Updated] Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Headteacher - Behaviour & Pastoral in conjunction with the governing body. The next scheduled review date for this policy is October 2026.

All members of staff will be required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

## Appendix A

### Reviewing the Headteacher's suspension or permanent exclusion decision

