

# The Darent Federation of Schools

## Suspension and permanent exclusion policy



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# Suspension and permanent exclusion policy

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to following all statutory suspension and permanent exclusion procedures to ensure that every child receives an education in a safe, caring, and inclusive environment.

Our schools aim to:

- Ensure that the suspension and exclusion process is applied fairly, consistently, and lawfully
- Help governors, staff, parents and pupils understand the suspension and exclusion process
- Ensure that pupils and staff are safe and that learning is not disrupted
- Prevent pupils from becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training)
- Ensure suspensions and permanent exclusions are used only when necessary and as a last resort

The Federation recognises that behaviour is often a communication of unmet need. We are committed to early intervention, restorative practice, and reasonable adjustments, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or other vulnerabilities, in order to prevent exclusion wherever possible.

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## A note on off-rolling

'Off-rolling' is a form of gaming and occurs where a school removes a pupil from the school roll, or pressures parents to do so, without following the statutory exclusion process, or prevents a pupil from attending school without formal suspension or exclusion.

The Federation will not:

- Remove pupils from roll without a formal permanent exclusion
- Encourage parents to withdraw pupils to avoid exclusion
- Use suspension, exclusion, managed moves, or part-time timetables to improve performance data or inspection outcomes

Any such practice would be unlawful and contrary to Ofsted expectations.

## 2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the most recent statutory guidance from the Department for Education:

Suspensions and permanent exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (September 2023, updated 2024).

It also takes account of:

- Section 51A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended)
- The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Part 7, Chapter 2)
- Education Act 1996 (Section 579)
- Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) Regulations 2007 (as amended)
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Ofsted School Inspection Handbook
- Kent County Council inclusion and exclusion guidance

## 3. Definitions

**Suspension** – A fixed-period exclusion from school.

**Permanent exclusion** – The removal of a pupil from the school roll.

**Parent** – Any person who has parental responsibility or care of the child.

**Off-site direction** – When a governing body directs a pupil to attend alternative provision temporarily to improve behaviour.

**Managed move** – A voluntary agreement for a pupil to move permanently to another school, agreed by all parties including parents and the receiving school. Managed moves will never be used as a substitute for exclusion or to avoid accountability.

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## 4. Roles and responsibilities

### 4.1 The Executive Headteacher

Only the Executive Headteacher, or Head of School acting under delegated authority, may suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, and only on disciplinary grounds.

Permanent exclusion will be used only as a last resort.

A decision to suspend or exclude will be taken only:

- In response to serious or persistent breaches of the Behaviour Policy, and
- Where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Before making a decision, the Executive Headteacher will:

- Consider all available evidence on the balance of probabilities
- Allow the pupil to give their version of events, with appropriate support
- Consider whether behaviour may be a manifestation of unmet SEND or disability
- Consider whether reasonable adjustments, support, and external agency involvement have been implemented and reviewed
- Consider vulnerability, including whether the pupil has a social worker or is looked after
- Consider alternatives such as early help, pastoral intervention, off-site direction, or managed move

Suspension or exclusion will not be used:

- Because a pupil has SEND the school feels unable to meet
- Due to poor academic performance
- Because a pupil has not met conditions such as attending a reintegration meeting

### Informing parents

Parents will be informed without delay of any suspension or permanent exclusion and provided with all statutory information in writing, including rights of representation, duties during exclusion, and arrangements for education.

### Informing governors and the local authority

The Executive Headteacher will notify the Governing Body and Kent Local Authority without delay of all suspensions and permanent exclusions, in line with statutory requirements.

### Pupils with social workers or who are looked after

Where a pupil has a social worker or is looked after, the relevant professionals will be informed at the earliest opportunity and invited to contribute to decision-making and review meetings.

### Cancelling suspensions or exclusions

The Executive Headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion before it is reviewed by the Governing Body. All relevant parties will be informed without delay.

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## 4.2 The Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Consider representations from parents
- Decide on reinstatement where required
- Ensure fair process and procedural justice
- Monitor patterns and trends in suspensions and exclusions
- Scrutinise data by vulnerability and protected characteristics

Responsibilities will be delegated to a committee of at least three governors.

## 4.3 The Local Authority

Kent County Council will arrange suitable full-time education from the sixth school day following permanent exclusion, or earlier for pupils who are looked after or have a social worker.

## 5. Considering reinstatement

The Governing Body will meet within statutory timescales to consider reinstatement where required and will ensure that meetings are conducted fairly, transparently, and with due regard to the pupil's circumstances, safeguarding, and welfare.

Meetings may be held remotely at parents' request, subject to fairness and access.

## 6. Independent review panels

Parents may request an independent review panel in line with statutory guidance. The Local Authority will arrange the panel and ensure all members are appropriately trained.

The panel may uphold, recommend reconsideration, or quash the Governing Body's decision.

## 7. School registers

Pupils will be removed from roll only in accordance with statutory requirements. Attendance will be recorded appropriately until removal is lawful.

## 8. Returning from suspension - Reintegration strategy

The school will implement a reintegration plan designed to support a successful return to school, including:

- Restorative approaches
- Pastoral support
- External agency involvement where appropriate
- Regular review meetings

Part-time timetables will not be used to manage behaviour and will only be used where lawful, time-limited, and in the pupil's best interests.

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## **Reintegration meetings**

Reintegration meetings will emphasise a fresh start and reaffirm that the pupil is a valued member of the school community.

## **9. Remote access to meetings**

Parents may request remote meetings. All statutory and procedural requirements will apply equally to remote and in-person meetings.

## **10. Monitoring arrangements**

The Federation will collect and analyse data on suspensions, exclusions, attendance, off-site provision, and managed moves.

Data will be reviewed termly by the Executive Headteacher and reported to governors, with particular attention to early intervention, proportionality, and equality.

## **11. Links with other policies**

This policy links with:

- Behaviour Policy
- Physical Intervention Policy
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report

## **Appendix 1: Independent review panel training**

All panel members and clerks must have received appropriate training within the last two years, covering statutory requirements, procedural fairness, equality duties, and human rights obligations.