



Purpose of this Policy

It is the policy of Norton CEVC Primary School to try to deal with all behavioural issues in line with our core Christian Values of wisdom, respect, community and compassion. We do this in a positive way, employing a wide range of strategies, including those specifically designed to avoid such issues reaching the point of exclusion

We believe in inclusivity and look to the guidance of 'Valuing all God's Children' in everything we do. All children at Norton CEVC Primary School are treated with dignity and respect at all times.

This policy is designed to briefly outline the school's approach to exclusions within the statutory framework as defined in The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2023. It outlines only where the school applies its own additional guidance and policies, which complement and reinforce the statutory guidance: DfE (2024) 'Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66be0d92c32366481ca4918a/Suspensions_and_permanent_exclusions_guidance.pdf

Principles

Suspension is a sanction used by the school only in cases deemed as serious breaches of the School Behaviour Policy. A student may be at risk of suspension from school for:

- Physical assault against a pupil
- Physical assault against an adult
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a pupil
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult
- Use, or threat of use, of an offensive weapon or prohibited item that has been prohibited by a school's behaviour policy
- Bullying
- Racist abuse
- Abuse against sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Abuse relating to disability
- Continuous disruption to learning
- Intentional damage to school property

A fixed term suspension from the school can only be authorised by the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher acting on their behalf. In exceptional circumstances, in the absence of the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher, the most senior teacher on-site is authorised to give a fixed term suspension after discussions with the Headteacher and this would be confirmed by email, the same day, through the head. If none are available to authorise the exclusion a decision should be deferred until the opportunity for authorisation is available.

In the case of a Permanent Exclusion, this can only be authorised by the Headteacher and must only be done after consulting the Chair of Governors of the intention to impose this sanction, although the final decision rests with the Headteacher of the school.

The school seeks to reduce the number of incidents leading to suspensions by promoting a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and discipline within the school.

The school regularly monitors the number of Fixed Term suspensions to ensure that no group of students is unfairly disadvantaged through their use and that any underlying needs of individuals are being fully met.

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 pupil of compulsory school age excluded permanently, in coordination with the school.
- Reviewing and reassessing pupils' 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 board not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil where required.
- Arranging for the independent review panel hearing to be held via remote access where requested by parents or excluded pupils aged 18 and over.
- Arranging the hearing without delay at a time, date and venue convenient for all parties.
- Ensuring the independent review panel consists of three or five members as appropriate, which represent the required categories.
- Ensuring all panel members and the clerk have received training within the two 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 suspensions and exclusions within the last 12 months.
- Arranging suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age who is suspended, where required.
- Considering parents' representations about suspensions and exclusions within 15 school days of receiving notice if the appropriate requirements are met.
- Where a suspension or exclusion would result in a pupil missing a public examination or test, considering the suspension or exclusion before this date.
- Considering whether it would be appropriate for a pupil to be permitted onto the school 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.
- Arranging for the representation meeting to take place via remote access where requested by parents or excluded pupils aged 18 and over.
- Adhering to its responsibilities to consider the reinstatement of pupils.
- Considering the interests and circumstances of the suspended or excluded pupil, including the circumstances in which they were suspended or excluded, and have due regard to the interests of others at the school.
- 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 exclusion.
- Ensuring clear minutes are taken of the representation meeting.

- Noting the outcome of the representation meeting on the pupil's education record, along with copies of relevant papers for future reference.
- Notifying the pupil's parents, the headteacher and the LA of its decision and the reasons for it, without delay.
- Appointing a clerk to provide advice to the relevant panel and parties to the review on procedure, law and statutory guidance on suspensions and exclusions.
- Where appropriate, informing parents of where to apply for an independent review panel.
- Informing parents of relevant sources of information.
- Ensuring a pupil's name is removed from the school admissions register, where appropriate.
- Reconvening within 10 school days to reconsider reinstatement of a pupil where directed to do so by the suspensions and exclusions review panel.
- Using data to evaluate the school's practices regarding intervention, suspension and exclusion.

The Clerk to the suspensions and exclusions review panel is responsible for:

- 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 school 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 pupils can benefit from the opportunities provided by education and to minimise potential suspensions and exclusions.
- Applying the civil standard of proof when establishing the facts in relation to a suspension or exclusion.
- Complying with their statutory duties in relation to pupils with SEND when administering the suspension or 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 pupil has suffered bereavement, experienced bullying or has a mental health issue.
- Considering the use of a multi-agency assessment for a pupil who demonstrates persistent disruptive behaviour.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of suspensions and exclusions as sanctions, e.g. if a pupil 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 pupils, particularly those with SEND, those eligible for FSM, LAC and those from certain ethnic groups.
- Engaging effectively with parents in supporting the behaviour of pupils with additional needs.
- Determining whether a pupil 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 pupil should be reinstated. Withdrawing any suspensions or exclusions that have not been reviewed by the governing board, 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 pupil.
- Ensuring they have considered their legal duty of care when sending a pupil home following a suspension or exclusion.

- Making the decision to suspend or exclude based on the evidence available at the time, regardless of any police investigation and/or criminal proceedings.
- Notifying a pupil's parents without delay where the decision is taken to suspend or exclude the pupil, including the days on which the parents must ensure the pupil is not present in a public place at any time during school hours, as well as any other necessary information statutorily required.
- Ensuring that all information provided to parents is clear and easily understood.
- Notifying the governor responsible and LA of their decision to exclude a pupil where appropriate, as well as the pupil's home authority if required.
- Notifying the governing board once per term of any exclusions in the headteacher's report to governors.
- Organising suitable work for excluded pupils where alternative provision cannot be arranged.

Factors to consider when suspending or excluding a pupil

When considering the suspension or exclusion of a pupil, the headteacher will:

- Allow the pupil 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 pupil's wellbeing has been compromised, or they have been subjected to bullying.
- Take into consideration whether the pupil has received multiple suspensions or is approaching the legal limit of 45 suspended days per school 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 pupils who demonstrate consistently poor behaviour.

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

- LAC
- Pupils eligible for FSM
- Pupils with SEND
- Certain ethnic groups

The headteacher will consider avoiding excluding LAC, those with SEMH issues or pupils with an EHC plan. Where any member of staff has concerns about vulnerable pupil 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.

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

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

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

Notification of Suspension

Parents will be notified as soon as possible of the decision to suspend a student and the reason for the suspension. This will be done on the day of the suspension being authorised by either direct phone contact or a face-to-face meeting. A written confirmation of the reason(s) for the suspension will be sent to parents the same day.

In the case of a Permanent Exclusion, parents will be notified by the Headteacher in a face-to-face meeting. This can happen after an 'in the first instance' fixed term suspension which can be changed into a permanent one after investigation/consideration.

A student who has been suspended will have the reason for his/her suspension explained to them by a member of staff so that they understand the nature of their misbehaviour.

The school will work to put in place a programme for the pupil on his/her return. This will include input from staff at the school, parents if appropriate, and any other appropriate bodies e.g. SES, ELSA, Family Support Practitioner, Attendance Service or the Local Authority. Should it be decided for whatever reason that the matter needs to be put in the hands of another agency e.g. the incident leads to the discovery that there is a safeguarding issue, the school will continue to monitor the situation and work closely with that agency. It is hoped that in most cases following suspension, the child will be able to return to school and that further input will promote in him/her a more positive attitude and a subsequent improvement in behaviour.

All students returning from a Fixed Term suspension are required to attend a reintegration meeting, accompanied by a parent. This meeting will seek to establish practical ways in which further suspension can be avoided and behaviour modified to acceptable standards in partnership between student, parent and school.

Occasionally, the school may suggest a temporary reduced timetable to reduce the likelihood of another Fixed Term suspension. The decision to do this can only be taken by the Headteacher and it must be in agreement with parents. There must be a clear staged plan to return to a full time timetable as soon as possible. Clear steps that state the criteria for success and the increased times will be clearly stated. These are signed each day by a member of SLT and shared with the parent so they are kept fully informed of the progress their child is making.

Permanent Exclusions

The school will usually only permanently exclude a child as a last resort, after trying to improve the child's behaviour through other means. However, there are exceptional circumstances in which a Headteacher may decide to permanently exclude a pupil because of ongoing issues or even for a 'one-off' incident.

If their child has been permanently excluded, parents will be made aware that:

- the school's governing body is required to review the Headteacher's decision and they may meet with them to explain the parents/carers views on the exclusion
- if the governing body confirms the exclusion, they can appeal to an independent appeal panel organised by the local authority
- the school must explain in a letter how to lodge an appeal
- the local authority must provide full-time education from the sixth day of a permanent exclusion
- if a pupil has a social worker, or if a pupil is looked-after, the headteacher must also without delay after their decision, notify the social worker and/or VSH, as applicable.
- When headteacher suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, they must also notify the local authority, without delay. Legislative changes mean that this must be done regardless of the length of a suspension.

Appeals

All correspondence regarding an exclusion from the school will inform parents of their right to appeal to the Governing Body against the decision to exclude. This procedure is clearly set out in the statutory guidance. The person who should be contacted to initiate an appeal is the Chair of Governors of the school (Contact details are on the school website)

Relationship to other school policies

The Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy as well as other relevant school policies, particularly the Special Educational Needs Policy (Including Children who are Looked After) and the Equality Plan. It also has a close inter-relationship with the Attendance Policy.

Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents and carers about this policy when children join our school.

We will review this policy every year to ensure that we are in line with local and national policy.

Review Date: October 2026