



Suspension and Exclusion Policy

March 2024

Version 2.1

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Governors and the Headteacher of Sonning Common Primary School are committed to the promotion of good behaviour so that pupils are able to follow the curriculum and achieve their full potential. Suspension and Exclusion are the most drastic step that the school can take because it runs against a **commitment to inclusion**. It is therefore used sparingly for the most serious cases of unacceptable behaviour:

- *to protect the education or welfare of the pupil or others,*
- *to support school discipline,*
- *to act as a clear statement to all pupils that certain behaviour is unacceptable,*
- *to ensure that parents/carers know of the behaviour and are involved in controlling it.*

1.2 Only the Headteacher (or a named senior member of staff in the absence of the Headteacher) may exclude a pupil. **Local Authority procedures and the law on suspension and exclusions are followed at all times.**

2 Types of Suspension and Exclusion:

2.1 **Lunchtime** - Pupils whose behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive may be suspended from the school premises for the duration of the lunchtime period. In such cases the legal requirements in relation to suspension, such as the headteacher's duty to notify parents, still apply. Lunchtime exclusions are counted as half a school day for statistical purposes and in determining whether a governing body meeting is triggered.

2.2 **Internal** – when a pupil is internally suspended away from their year group. An internal suspension will be made as soon as possible following the incident. The pupil will be supervised by a senior member of staff for the duration of the suspension. Internal suspensions will be reported to parents.

2.3 **Fixed Term** – when the pupil's date of return is decided in advance of the suspension and the parents/carers are told in advance the reason and the date on which the pupil is expected to return to the school. The Headteacher can suspend a pupil for up to 45 days in any one school year.

2.4 **Permanent** - when a pupil who presents a significant Health and Safety risk is not allowed to return to the school. Permanent Exclusion is usually the final step in the process for dealing with disciplinary offences. It is an acknowledgement by the school that it has exhausted all available strategies for dealing with the pupil. The Headteacher can decide that a fixed term exclusion will be made permanent.

3 Reasons for Suspension and Exclusion

3.1 The following are considered as reasons for suspension and exclusion:

- *Disruptive behaviour*
- *Offensive language – racist, sexist, swearing – to staff and/or pupils*
- *Physical violence to staff and/or pupils*
- *Unwillingness to accept sanctions*
- *Persistent bullying*
- *Leaving school premises without permission*
- *Damage to property – vandalism, arson, theft*
- *Substance abuse – tobacco, alcohol, drugs, solvents.*

3.2 Suspension and Exclusion is not appropriate for dealing with minor behaviour incidents or poor educational performance.

4 Avoiding Suspension / Exclusion:

4.1 At Sonning Common Primary School staff use a range of strategies to avoid the need for suspension and exclusion. These include:

- *Time out from class*
- *Time out in another class*
- *Alternative sanctions*
- *Interviewing the pupil and the parents/carers*
- *Identifying special educational needs*
- *Issuing a formal warning*
- *Drawing up a Pastoral Support Plan with help from the Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Outreach Service or the Educational Psychology Service*
- *Consulting the Education Social Work Service and other support agencies*

5 Before considering suspension or exclusion:

5.1 Before reaching a decision to suspend or exclude, the Headteacher

- *considers all the relevant facts and available evidence to support the allegations made, taking into account the school's Values, Behaviour and Equal Opportunities Policies and the need to apply them consistently;*
- *listens to the pupil's version of events;*
- *checks whether the incident may have been provoked;*
- *consults witnesses and relevant staff.*

5.2 If the Head teacher is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the pupil did what is alleged and that exclusion is the appropriate sanction, the Headteacher excludes the child.

6 When a pupil is suspended or excluded

6.1 Once the Headteacher excludes a pupil, the parents/carers are notified immediately, by telephone if possible. Within one school day, a letter follows to notify the parents/carers of

- *the reasons for the suspension or exclusion;*
- *the nature and length of the suspension or exclusion;*
- *the name and contact number of the Local Authority officer who can provide advice on the suspension and exclusions process;*
- *how the parents/carers can make representations about the suspension or exclusion to the Discipline Committee of the School Governors.*
- *that for the first five school days of a suspension (or until the start date of any alternative provision where this is earlier) parents are legally required to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, and that parents may be given a fixed penalty notice or prosecuted if they fail to do so.*
- *Parents must be informed where a fixed period suspension has been extended or converted to a permanent exclusion. In such cases the headteacher must write again to the parents explaining the reasons for the change and providing any additional information required.*

6.2 The Discipline Committee, comprising three of the school governors, meets following an exclusion when required by law. They review the incident and hear representations from parents/carers. The Headteacher is not a member, but is entitled to be represented. The Clerk to the Discipline Committee makes detailed minutes which can be used later at an Independent Appeals Panel.

6.3 The Headteacher must inform the Discipline Committee and the Children, Young People and Families Directorate (Local Authority) of the type and length of a suspension or exclusion within one day of making the order to exclude.

7 Meetings of the Discipline Review Committee:

7.1 A meeting will take place if:

- *Parents/carers appeal against suspensions of 5 days or less. The Committee will ensure that the correct procedures have been followed but cannot direct reinstatement of the child.*
- *Parents/carers appeal against suspensions of 5 to 15 days for which the Committee must meet from 6 to 50 days after the order to exclude. The Committee can direct reinstatement if the suspension is between 6 and 45 days on either separate occasions within one year or within one fixed period.*
- *Permanent exclusions for which the Committee must meet in 6 to 15 days from the order to exclude. The parents/carers, the Head teacher and a representative of the Local Authority must be invited to attend.*

7.2 The Committee considers written evidence clearly attributed and signed and may call witnesses to the incidents which caused the exclusion. The Headteacher attends the meeting to clarify points and answer questions relating to events leading to the exclusion. The representative of the Local Authority advises on arrangements for the continuing education of the child during the period of reinstatement. The Discipline Committee members only make the decision to uphold the exclusion or to reinstate the child. Parents/carers or others attending are asked to withdraw while the decision is taken. Within one school day the Clerk to the Discipline Committee writes to the parents/carers to inform them of

- *the decision of the Discipline Committee to uphold the exclusion or to reinstate the child and the reasons for making it.*
- *the address of the Clerk to the Independent Appeals Panel of the Local Authority should they wish to make an appeal against the decision of the Discipline Committee.*
- *the date by which the appeal should be lodged to the Independent Appeals Panel, up to 15 school days after they receive the Discipline Committee's decision in writing.*

7.3 Minutes of the Discipline Committee meetings are confidential, but will be forwarded to the Independent Appeals Panels of the Local Authority.

7.4 In exceptional cases further appeals may be heard in Judicial Reviews in the High Court.

8 The education of suspended pupils:

8.1 When a pupil is suspended for more than a day, work is set and marked by school staff. If a pupil is excluded for more than 15 consecutive days the Headteacher plans how the pupil's education will continue during the period of suspension, how the pupil's problems can be addressed and makes arrangements for the pupil's reintegration into school at the end of the suspension.

9 Reintegration into school:

9.1 The Headteacher convenes a planning meeting to make the necessary preparations for the pupil's return to school after a prolonged suspension. Parents/carers and a representative from the Local Authority are invited. A Support Plan, which may include the provision of additional support, is drawn up with targets and a review date.

9.2 Reintegration into another school or educational setting. If parents/carers apply to an Independent appeals Panel, an Individual Reintegration Action Plan is finalised at a Post Exclusion Case conference. The plan will, wherever possible, include steps to be taken to assess and integrate the pupil onto a new setting. The Education Officer allocated to the pupil is responsible for this plan.

10 Further Information:

- 10.1 This policy is based on the 'Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England' A guide for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion. (September 2017) and [School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- 10.2 Requests_for Independent Appeal Panel hearings should be sent to The Clerk to the Independent Appeals Panel, County Hall, New Road, Oxford. OX1 1ND.

11 Dissemination

- 11.1 The Policy is available on the school web site and a paper copy can be obtained from the school office on request.

12 Reviewing the Policy

- 12.1 This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Head teacher and monitored by the Chair of Governors to ensure that the Policy is relevant and up to date.