



WOODBIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

September 2024

1. This policy operates in conjunction with the **Behaviour Policy, Preventing Bullying and Peer-on-Peer Abuse Policy** and **Code of Conduct**. The Code of Conduct is explained to all our students at the beginning of each year. It is displayed in all classrooms, printed on all student timetable cards and regularly referred to during form periods and assemblies. Parents/carers have a copy issued at the start of each school year.

This Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy is reviewed annually in light of both government guidance and guidance from LBR to ensure its continued pertinence. It is in line and should be read in conjunction with the Department for Education guidance *Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement – September 2023*.

2. **When do we suspend or exclude?**

Suspension (also called 'fixed-term exclusion') and permanent exclusion are sanctions used when others have not worked and / or when a serious offence has taken place. Serious offences which may warrant suspension or permanent exclusion include:

- Harmful sexual behaviour, including but not limited to sexualised comments, sexual touching (consensual or otherwise) and sexual assault
- Physical assault or physical violence
- Being in possession of a prohibited item, including but not limited to illegal drugs, alcohol, any weapon or any malicious substance that could be used as a weapon
- Behaving in a confrontational manner towards staff including the use of offensive language.
- Issue of threats and/or threatening behaviour towards other people, staff or students
- Being violent and aggressive to other people, staff or students
- Behaving in a dangerous way which puts the health and safety of others at risk
- Deliberately damaging the building or equipment
- Stealing or attempting to steal
- Smoking, vaping or being under the influence of drugs in or near the school,
- Being in possession of paraphernalia associated with smoking, vaping or drugs in school
- Bullying
- Defiance and disobedience
- Racial abuse and racist behaviour
- Disruptive behaviour
- Examination malpractice
- Bringing the school into disrepute
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour
- LGBT-phobic behaviour
- Inappropriate behaviour towards another person because of their religious beliefs
- Any other form of discriminatory behaviour

This is an indicative, but not exhaustive list. There will be other special circumstances and events when exclusion will be used.

Where it is deemed appropriate the school will contact the police.

In communications with parents and students, the school uses the term 'fixed-term exclusion' to describe suspensions.

2. **Who excludes or suspends?**

The Headteacher makes the decision to suspend or exclude. However, there may be occasions when the Headteacher is absent from school and then the Associate Headteacher or most senior Deputy Headteacher makes the decision.

3. Before exclusion or suspension are used

Notwithstanding the offences that lead to immediate exclusion or suspension, the school is committed to using a range of sanctions and support strategies to help students make the right decision.

These include:

- detentions set by subject teachers, Year Co-ordinators and the school's Senior Leaders;
- being on report to a Year-Co-ordinator or Senior Leader;
- internal exclusion where students are withdrawn from lessons and work in the school's Focus Room

4. SEND Students

The school recognises that some students with behavioural difficulties have additional needs and may need support. Students with special educational needs are referred to our SENCO in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice. Students with SEND may be offered a range of additional support, including mentoring, Inclusion Briefings and Student Profiles. Sanctions may be adjusted to take into account an individual student's needs.

5. Information and Communication

In all cases, when a student is excluded or suspended, parents/carers will be informed on the day prior to the exclusion beginning by phone, email or in person.

An exclusion or suspension letter, and any other appropriate information, will follow within 24-48 hours. The initial length of a suspension is determined by the Headteacher on the day prior. If the reason for suspension requires further investigation then the initial suspension may be extended pending the outcome of the investigation. Suspensions can be shortened, extended, or changed to permanent exclusion.

For longer suspensions, work will be provided for the student to complete. This should be brought to the school on the student's return. For suspensions of 6 days or more, suitable full-time education will be provided from the sixth day. For looked-after students, suitable full-time education will be provided from the first day.

The Governing Body has established clear procedures for dealing with permanent exclusions and keeps under review the use of exclusions by the school.

6. How long is a suspension or exclusion?

The law allows the Headteacher to issue a suspension (fixed term exclusion) of up to 45 days in a school year, after which the student would be permanently excluded from the school. If a suspension is longer than 5 days but not more than 15 days, parents/carers may request that the Governors Discipline Committee meets to consider the suspension. If a suspension is longer than 15 days or is a permanent exclusion, or brings the student's total number of days of suspension in the term to more than 15 days, the Governors Discipline Committee must meet in order to consider the matter. Parents/carers have the right to make representations to this committee either in writing or in person. For suspensions of up to 5 days the Governors Discipline Committee will only consider written representations.

7. Returning from suspension

Parents/carers will be required to attend a readmission meeting with the Headteacher or a Senior Leader to discuss the incident which led to the sanction and, where appropriate, any additional support that can be put in place to improve the student's behaviour. At the meeting the student will also be given counsel on how to avoid such incidents in future.

A student who has received a suspension will also undertake a day in the internal exclusion room upon their return. This is a normal condition of reintegration following suspension, although there may be occasions when this does not happen at the direction of the Headteacher.

8. Directing a student off-site for education to improve behaviour

The Governing body has delegated to the Headteacher the power to direct a student off-site for education to improve their behaviour. In doing so the school will ensure that parents/carers are given clear information about the placement, and how it will be reviewed.

Directions off site to improve behaviour can consist of a short-term placement of between three and ten days (usually called 'respite') at another school or pupil referral unit, or of a longer term directed placement at another school.

9. Permanent Exclusion

A decision to exclude a child permanently is a serious one. It will usually be the final step in a process for dealing with disciplinary offences following a wide range of other strategies, which have been tried without success. But in some circumstances it can be in response to a single serious incident or event. Permanent exclusion is an acknowledgement by the school that it has exhausted all available strategies for dealing with the child and is normally used as a last resort.

There are two reasons that a school can permanently exclude:

- In response to a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of the school's behaviour policy; **and**
- Where allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in school.

A 'serious breach' could include:

- a) Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff
- b) Harmful sexual behaviour, sexual abuse or sexual assault
- c) Supplying an illegal drug
- d) Carrying an offensive weapon

The school will consider whether or not to inform the police where such a criminal offence has taken place. The school will also consider whether or not to inform other agencies, e.g. Youth Offending Teams, social workers, etc.

These instances are not exhaustive, but indicate the severity of such offences and the fact that such behaviour can affect the discipline and well-being of the school community.

In cases where a head teacher has permanently excluded a student for the reasons above, the Secretary of State would not normally expect the Governing Body or an independent review panel to reinstate the student.

A meeting of a Governors' Discipline Committee will always be convened within 15 school days, to which a Local Education Authority representative is invited, for the exclusion to be considered. Parents/carers have the right to be present at this meeting, to bring representation with them, and to share their views on the exclusion. The Committee can either: decline to reinstate the student; or direct reinstatement of the student immediately or on a particular date. Parents/carers will be notified of the decision. Parents/carers have the right to appeal against this decision to an independent review panel.

Notwithstanding the fact that a student may have met one or more criteria for permanent exclusion, the school will always consider means of avoiding this if appropriate. Presently this includes managed moves to another school, respite placements in another school, and the requirement sought by the Headteacher for the student to be educated elsewhere. These practices are cohered by the Redbridge Inclusion Panel. This body meets once a month and there are representatives from all the secondary providers as well as other agencies present.

Reviewer: Steven Hogan (Headteacher)

Approval: Approved via Full Governing Body Chair's Action on 4th November 2024

Date of Next Review: Autumn 2025