



Policy Issues and Updates

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Whole Document – New	1	September 2023
2 Update to appeals	2	September 2024

This Policy has been approved by the Senior leaders and Director.

The policy will be reviewed annually unless circumstances arise requiring an early review.

Approved: September 2024

Signature: 

Planned Review Date: August 2026

CHANCES MENTORING SUSPENSION POLICY

Principles

This policy and procedure document is intended to give a clear indication to staff, parents and pupils of the circumstances within which the Head of Centre will use their powers to suspend pupils and the procedures that will be followed in exercising them.

NB The Head of Centre alone has the authority to *permanently exclude* a pupil.

Fixed Period Suspensions

Whilst always to take into consideration the circumstances of a particular case the Head of Centre, will be likely to use fixed term suspensions in the following kinds of cases. This list does not list every offence for which fixed term suspensions may be used but gives an indication of the kinds of case where it will be used:

- bullying, harassment or abuse (including on the grounds of gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation);
- persistent defiance of school authority or disruption of teaching and learning;
- acts of vandalism or minor physical violence;
- using alcohol on the school sites;
- conduct likely to bring the school's reputation into disrepute.

The length of the suspension will be proportionate to the gravity of the offence and will usually last between 2 – 5 days. In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate for a pupil to serve a fixed term suspension of more than 5 days. For a suspension of more than five school days, the Head of Centre must arrange suitable, full-time education.

Permanent Exclusion

Permanent exclusion will be reserved for offences that will have a seriously damaging effect on the life of the schools, the well-being of other pupils or of staff or seriously and persistently interfere with teaching and learning in the school. This can include but is not limited by:

- serious violence which creates fear and anxiety among staff or pupils;
- possession of an offensive weapon on the school site;
- possession, using or dealing in illegal drugs on the school site;
- persistent defiance of school authority or disruption of teaching and learning;
- persistent bullying, harassment or abuse (as above);
- theft;
- conduct likely to bring the school's reputation into disrepute.

Modifying a suspension

A suspension may be extended or made permanent where:

- it was necessary to suspend the pupil in order to complete the investigation freely;
- the pupil has also been reported to the police and the result of that investigation provides additional evidence to the schools.

NB It is essential that if new evidence comes to light the suspended pupil/student is given the opportunity to respond to it before the suspension is extended or made permanent.

The investigation

- the investigation will not be undertaken by the person who will decide on the suspension unless

circumstances dictate this;

- witness statements will be recorded, signed and dated;
- anonymity will not be promised unless this is the only way to obtain a statement. The statement will be signed and dated in the normal way but the name will be withheld;
- the person accused of any offence will be given the opportunity to give his/her own side of the story and respond to statements made by others. It is not necessary that there is a face-to-face confrontation.

NB It is important that all parties recognise that less reliance can be placed on anonymous statements.

Decision

- The decision to suspend will only be taken by the Head of Centre;
- The decision will be taken on all the evidence available at the time; and the decision will be taken on the balance of probability. Where the offence alleged is a criminal act the standard of proof will be that it is *distinctly more probable than not* that the pupil committed it;
- When applying suspensions the relevant staff will take due regard of special circumstances regarding pupils with SEND needs;
- In cases involving acts of violence the following factors will be taken into consideration by the Head of Centre and relevant members of SSMT. As regards aggravating factors: the extent or severity of any injuries sustained. In terms of mitigating factors: the level of intent, premeditation or lack of, a pupil's previous behaviour record, provocation and contrition.

Informing

Parents or carers will be informed of the decision; it will be confirmed within 48 hours.

Reintegration

Pupils returning to school after a fixed period suspension will attend a reintegration meeting organised by the Head of Centre.

Appeals

- If parents/carers wish to appeal a decision that has been made to permanently exclude them, the Head of Centre should invite them to write a reason as to why. Parents/carers are not able to appeal against a fixed period suspension.
- The hearing by the Appeals Committee (Head of Centre and Director) will take place as soon as is practicable.

Provision of information regarding suspensions

For certain suspended pupils, information which will be supplied on request to prescribed bodies or persons is:

- the suspension start date;
- the type of suspension;
- the reason for the suspension; and
- the number of sessions to which the suspension applies.