



HOE VALLEY SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS POLICY

Person Responsible:	Head Teacher
Date Adopted:	September 2015
Date of last review:	Summer 2023
Date of next review:	Summer 2024

To be read in conjunction with the Behaviour for Learning Policy

1. PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR AND EARLY INTERVENTION

Permanent exclusion will be the last resort after a range of measures have been attempted to improve the student's behaviour.

2. MANAGING BEHAVIOUR AT HOE VALLEY SCHOOL (HVS)

HVS has policies, procedures and staff training in place to promote good behaviour and prevent poor behaviour. The Behaviour for Learning policy is widely publicised so that students, school staff and parents/carers are aware of the standards of behaviour expected of students and the range of sanctions that can be imposed. The school will apply the behaviour policy in a consistent, rigorous and non-discriminatory way and all areas of its application will be monitored routinely to satisfy legal requirements under the Equality Act of 2010.

The school believes that effective policies, procedures and training minimise the number of students at risk of either permanent exclusion or suspensions. For those at risk of suspension, additional preventative measures employed could include:

- Intensive contact with parents and carers
- A change of teaching or tutor group
- Alternative provision such as off-site provision (where appropriate).
- Temporary or part-time placement at the North West Surrey Short Stay School where preventative programmes can be provided
- A managed move (MM) or a targeted alternative provision (TAP) to another school, with the consent of all parties involved; this can be successful for students at risk of exclusion and as an alternative to suspensions or a permanent exclusion
- Internal exclusion (isolation) can be used to defuse situations that require a student to be removed from the classroom but may not require removal from the school premises. This is supervised by the Inclusion Manager and her team.
- Mediation through a third party is an approach that may lead to a satisfactory outcome, particularly where there has been conflict between two parties, e.g. a student and a teacher, or two students
- Consideration by the Head of Personalisation, with colleagues, of possible interventions within the school such as ELSA and one to one mentoring.
- Assessment of Special Educational Needs, including possible placement in a special school

- Allocation of a key intervention worker such as The Inclusion and Student Engagement Supervisors or member of the Behaviour Support or Youth Services
- Referral to a specific support service, such as the Education Welfare Service, Children's Services or the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Other appropriate off-site provision
- Working with the Behaviour Support team from Surrey County Council

The School believes that the behaviour of students at risk of suspension is sometimes driven by complex combinations of social, emotional and health problems, so the involvement of a range of external partners is part of our approach.

3. REMOVING STUDENTS FROM THE SCHOOL SITE AND THE DECISION TO SUSPEND

There are three sets of circumstances in which individual students may be required to leave the HVS site, namely where:

- There is sufficient evidence that a student has committed a disciplinary offence and that allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the school. In these circumstances the student may be excluded from school for a fixed period or permanently.
- A student is accused of a serious criminal offence but the offence took place outside the school's jurisdiction. In these circumstances the Head Teacher may decide that it is in the interests of the individual concerned and of the school community as a whole for that student to be educated off site for a certain period, subject to review at regular intervals.
- For medical reasons, a student's presence on the school site represents a serious risk to the health or safety of that student, other students or school staff. In these circumstances a Head Teacher may send the student home after consultation with the student's parents/carers.

These are the only circumstances in which students may be required to leave the school site.

3.1 The decision to suspend

A decision to exclude a student permanently will be taken only in the event of serious and/or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy and allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the school.

A decision to suspend a student for a fixed period will be taken, on a balance of probabilities, only in response to serious or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy, including persistent disruptive behaviour, where these are not serious enough to warrant permanent exclusion and lesser sanctions such as detentions are considered inappropriate, or where a student is accused of a serious criminal offence but the offence took place outside the school's jurisdiction, or for medical reasons.

Individual fixed period suspensions will be for the shortest time necessary, bearing in mind that suspensions of more than a day or two may make it difficult for the student to reintegrate into the school afterwards.

Only the Head Teacher or the Deputy Head teacher under the direction of the Head Teacher can suspend a student.

A decision to exclude a student permanently is a serious one and will only be taken where the basic facts have been clearly established on the balance of probabilities. It will 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. It is an acknowledgement by this school that it has exhausted all available strategies for dealing with the student and will be used as a last resort.

There will, however, be exceptional circumstances where, in the Head Teacher's judgement, it is appropriate to permanently exclude a child for a first or 'one off' offence.

These may include:

- Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff
- Sexual abuse or assault;
- Supplying an illegal substance; or the possession of illegal substances; or carrying an offensive weapon

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.

3.2 Factors which will be considered before making a decision to suspend

Suspension will not be imposed in the heat of the moment, unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of others in the school or the student concerned. Before deciding whether to suspend a student, either permanently or for a fixed period, the Head Teacher will:

- Ensure that a thorough investigation has been carried out
- Consider all the evidence available to support the allegations, taking account of the school's behaviour and equal opportunities policies, and, where applicable, the Equality Act 2010 (as amended)
- Allow and encourage the student to give their version of events
- Check whether the incident may have been provoked, for example by bullying, or by racial or sexual harassment
- If necessary, consult others, including the Chair of Governors.

3.3 Standard of proof

The standard of proof to be applied is the balance of probabilities, i.e. if it is more probable than not that the student did what he or she is alleged to have done, the Head Teacher may suspend the student.

Where a police investigation leading to possible criminal proceedings has been initiated, the evidence available may be very limited. However, it may still be possible for the Head Teacher to make a judgment on the balance of probabilities on whether to suspend the student.

4. WHEN SUSPENSION IS NOT APPROPRIATE

Suspension should not be used in the case of:

- Minor incidents (for example, failure to complete homework)
- Poor academic performance
- Lateness or truancy

- Breaches of school uniform rules or rules on appearance (for example, relating to jewellery, body-piercing, hairstyles), except where these are persistent and in open defiance of such rules
- Discrimination, within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010

In every instance where a student is sent home for disciplinary reasons, the Head Teacher will formally record and specify the length of the suspension.

5. INFORMING RELEVANT PARTIES

Once the decision has been taken to suspend a student, the Head Teacher will promptly notify the following parties:

5.1 The parents/carers

Parents/carers must be notified without delay and informed of:

- the reason for the suspension
- the period of the suspension
- their right to make representation to the Board of Governors about the suspension
- how to make the representations
- that for the first five days of an suspension parents/carers are legally required to ensure their child is not in a public place during school hours
- what arrangements have been made to enable the student to continue their education

5.2 Board of Governors

The Head Teacher will notify the Chair of Governors (on behalf of the Board of Governors) without delay in the following circumstances:

- a permanent exclusion (including where a suspension is made permanent)
- exclusions where a suspension would result in a student being suspended for five or more school days in any one term
- suspensions which would result in a student missing a public examination or national curriculum test

The Head Teacher will promptly notify the Chair of Governors of all other suspensions. When notifying the Chair of Governors of suspensions, the notification should include the reasons for suspensions and the duration.

In all cases, the Head Teacher should notify the Chair of Governors within 24 hours.

5.3 Local Authority

The Head Teacher will notify the Local Authority without delay in the following circumstances:

- a permanent exclusion (including where a suspension is made permanent)
- exclusions where a suspension would result in a student being suspended for five or more school days in any one term
- suspensions which would result in a student missing a public examination or national curriculum test

- On a termly basis, the Head Teacher will notify the Local Authority of any other suspensions. Such notifications should include the reasons for the suspension and the duration. In the case of a permanent exclusion, if the student lives outside of Surrey then the Head Teacher will also notify the student's 'home authority'.

6. CONSIDERATION OF AN EXCLUSION BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors will consider the reinstatement of a student following suspension in the following circumstances:

- the exclusion is permanent
- the suspension will result in the student having been excluded for 15 days or more in any one term
- the suspension will result in the student missing a public examination or national curriculum test the exclusion will result in the student being suspended for more than 5 but less than 15 days in any one term and the parent/carer of the student requests such consideration.

6.1 Composition

The Board of Governors will authorise a committee of three governors to carry out such consideration on their behalf. In the interest of independent governance, the Board will initially seek to form the committee with Governors who do not have children studying at the School. It should be noted, however, that this may not be possible in all cases, and therefore governors with children at the School may be used where necessary, but they should ensure they are independent of the case at hand.

6.2 Timing

The committee will meet within 15 school days of a permanent exclusion in the case of any of the first three circumstances above, and within 50 school days otherwise. Where the suspension will result in the student missing a public examination or national curriculum test, the committee will make all reasonable efforts to meet prior to the examinations, and where this is not possible the Chair of Governors will consider the suspension independently prior to the examinations taking place.

6.3 The Panel Meeting

Wherever practical, the committee will aim to meet in person. In exceptional circumstances, however, it may be necessary to meet remotely, such as via video conferencing.

The parents / carers of the student can decide whether or not the student attends the committee meeting.

The parents / carers of the student can choose to be accompanied in the committee meeting by a friend / representative, should they so wish.

6.4 Behaviour

Everyone attending the committee meeting (including school staff, governors, the student and the parents / carers and their representatives) are expected to behave in an appropriate manner, in keeping with the values of the School.

Of particular relevance are the values of courtesy and integrity. Abusive, disruptive, disrespectful or threatening behaviour / language will not be tolerated. The Chair of the Committee will address such behaviour and request the individual(s) to modify their behaviour and comply with the expected standards for the meeting. In the event of repeated incidences of unacceptable behaviour / language, the Chair of the Committee (at their sole discretion) may ask the individual concerned to leave the meeting.

6.5. Decision

The committee, on behalf of the Board of Governors, having considered representations from all parties, including the parent/carer and the Head Teacher, may either uphold the permanent exclusion or direct the student to be reinstated (“Reinstatement”)

The Board of Governors will notify the parent/carer, Head Teacher and Local Authority of their decision without delay (and no later than the end of the third working day after the day of the panel meeting). The notification should cover the decision taken and the reasons for that decision.

In the event of a decision to reinstate, the notification should additionally include:

- The date of reinstatement (either immediate or a specified date in the future)
- Guidance on the reintegration of the student into the school

The governors forming the committee should use best efforts to ensure that one member attends the reintegration meeting. If this is not possible, a member of the committee should discuss the decision with the Head Teacher in advance of the reintegration meeting, to ensure clarity of understanding on the rationale for the decision and how to manage any future issues that may fall under the scope of this policy.

Where a suspension does not result in a student being suspended for more than 5 days in any one term, parents may still make representations to the Board of Governors by contacting the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will consider any such representations, but does not have the power to direct reinstatement of the student in these circumstances.

7. DUTY TO ARRANGE AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL

Parents / carers are entitled to request an independent review of the decision of the Board of Governors not to reinstate a permanently excluded student, provided they have made an application within the legal timeframe. In such cases, the School must arrange for an independent review panel hearing to review the decision of the Board of Governors not to reinstate a permanently excluded student. The legal timeframe is:

- within 15 school days of parents being notified of the Board of Governors’ decision to uphold a permanent exclusion

- where an application has been made within this timeframe, within 15 school days of the final determination of a claim of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the exclusion.

Any application made outside of the legal timeframe must be rejected by the School.

The review must begin within 15 school days of the date that the School received the parent's request to review.

7.1 Appointing Panel Members

The panel will consist of three members as follows:

- a lay member to chair the panel who has not worked in any school in a paid capacity, disregarding any experience as a school governor or volunteer
- a school governor who has served as a governor for 12 consecutive months within the last 5 years, provided they have not been teachers or Head Teachers during that time. They may not be a member/director of the School, an employee of the School, or have had any connection with the School, parent, student or incident leading to the exclusion, which might reasonably raise doubts about their impartiality
- an individual who is currently or had been a Head Teacher in the last 5 years. They may not be the Head Teacher of the School or anyone who has held that position in the last 5 years, a member/director of the School, an employee of the School, or have had any connection with the School, parent, student or incident leading to the exclusion, which might reasonably raise doubts about their impartiality

Every care will be taken to avoid bias, and prospective panel members will be asked to declare any potential conflict of interests at an early stage. All panel members should have received appropriate exclusions training within the previous two years. If requested by parents in their application for a review, the School must appoint an SEN expert to the panel, even where the School does not recognise that the student has SEN. The SEN expert should be a professional with first-hand experience of the assessment and support of SEN, as well as an understanding of the legal requirements on schools in relation to SEN and disability.

7.2 Duties of the Independent Review Panel

The role of the panel is to review the Board of Governors' decision not to reinstate a permanently excluded student. In reviewing the decision, the panel must consider the interests and circumstances of the excluded student, including the circumstances in which the student was excluded, and have regard to the interests of other students and people working at the school. The panel will apply a standard of proof on the balance of probabilities. Following its review, the panel can decide to:

- uphold the decision to exclude;
- recommend the Board of Governors reviews its decision; or
- quash the decision and direct the Board of Governors considers the exclusion again.

The independent review panel's decision is binding on the student, parents, Board of Governors, Head Teacher, Local Authority and School.

Following the review, the panel must provide written notice to all parties without delay, such notice to include

- the panel's decision and reasons for it
- where relevant, details of any financial readjustment / payment to be made if the Board of Governors subsequently decides not to offer to reinstate a student; and
- any information that must be recorded on the student's educational record to reflect the decision

7.3 Board of Governors duty to reconsider a permanent exclusion following a review

Where the panel directs or recommends that the Board of Governors reconsiders their decision, the Board of Governors must convene to do so within 10 school days of being given notice of the panel's decision. The Board of Governors will authorise a committee of three governors to carry out such consideration on their behalf. Where possible, for continuity, the Board of Governors will use best efforts to maintain the same composition as the committee that participated in the original review. It should be noted that this may not always be possible, especially given the short timescales involved. In the case of a recommended or a directed review, the Board of Governors must notify the parents, Head Teacher and local authority of their reconsidered decision and the reasons for it without delay (and no later than the end of the third working day after the meeting to reconsider the decision).

8. REMOVAL OF STUDENTS FROM THE SCHOOL IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

There may be exceptional circumstances in which the Head Teacher needs to remove students from the school site when suspension would be inappropriate. An example is where a student is accused of committing a serious criminal offence which took place outside the Head Teacher's jurisdiction or where there may be insufficient evidence to warrant suspension.

A Head Teacher can authorise leave of absence for a fixed period, with the parents'/carers' agreement, or, exercising powers if so delegated by the Board of Governors under section 29(3) of the Education Act 2002, can arrange for the student to be educated elsewhere.

9. REMOVAL OF STUDENTS ON MEDICAL GROUNDS

The Head Teacher may send a student home, after consultation with that student's parents/carers and a health professional (for example, a school nurse) as appropriate, where because of a diagnosed illness (e.g.: a notifiable disease) he or she poses an immediate and serious risk to the health and safety of him/herself or other students and staff.

10. PROCEDURES FOLLOWING A SUSPENSION

The Head Teacher will issue the relevant notifications as set out in section 5 above.

- Work will be set for the student during the period of the suspension
- All students will receive a reintegration meeting where it is expected that the student and parent/carer will attend. The purpose of the reintegration meeting is to assist the

reintegration of the student and promote the improvement of his/ her behaviour. It provides an opportunity to:

- Emphasise the importance of parents/carers working with the school to take joint responsibility for their child's behaviour;
- Discuss how behaviour problems can be addressed and set appropriate targets;
- Explore wider issues and any circumstances that may be affecting the child's behaviour;
- Reach agreement on how the child's education should continue, how best they can be reintegrated and what measures could be put in place to prevent further misbehaviour.

APPENDIX 1

AGENDA FOR BOARD OF GOVERNORS' COMMITTEE MEETING

The following agenda will be followed for the Governors' committee meeting to consider a permanent exclusion:

1. The Governors' Committee gathers on its own, together with the clerk. The pre-agreed Chair sets out expectations for the meeting.
2. The Head Teacher, parents, student and local authority representative (if any) then enter, as equals.
3. The Chair introduces all present and explains their roles. The order of the meeting should be outlined, together with expected standards of behaviour.
4. The Head Teacher outlines the case for exclusion. A member of staff with particular knowledge of the student and/or the exclusion may also contribute.
5. Governors, parents and the local authority representative (if any) are invited to ask questions of the school.
6. Parents, their representative and student present their case.
7. Governors, Head Teacher and local authority representative (if any) are invited to ask questions of the parents and/or student.
8. The local authority representative (if present) gives a county wide perspective of the exclusion.
9. All present are invited to ask questions of the local authority representative.
10. Head Teacher sums up the case for exclusion.
11. Parents and student sum up their case.
12. All leave, except the clerk who remains to advise the Governors' Committee by referring to his/her notes and to support with the wording of the decision letter.