



Bowness-on-Solway School

POLICY FOR EXCLUSIONS AND SUSPENSIONS

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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Ensure a fair, clear and lawful process for suspensions and exclusions.
- Maintain a safe, calm and supportive learning environment for all pupils.
- Protect the rights of pupils while supporting the wellbeing of the whole school community.
- Ensure decisions about suspensions and exclusions are taken in line with safeguarding duties, including Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Provide clarity for staff, pupils, parents and governors on the process and expectations.

2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on:

- DfE guidance: Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (2023).
- Sections 88–94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- The Children and Families Act 2014 (SEND).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, updated annually).

It should be read alongside the Whole School Behaviour Policy, Child Protection Policy and Procedures, and the Overarching Safeguarding Statement.

3. Definitions

- Suspension / Fixed-Term Exclusion (FTE): When a pupil is temporarily removed from school for a fixed period of time, usually a maximum on one week.
- Permanent exclusion: When a pupil is permanently removed from the school roll, usually as a last resort.
- Informal / unofficial exclusions: These are unlawful and will not be used by the school.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board:

- Reviews the headteacher's decisions in line with statutory requirements.
- Considers parents' representations.
- Ensures the policy complies with statutory guidance.

The Headteacher:

- Decides whether to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil.
- Ensures all decisions are lawful, reasonable and fair.
- Notifies parents, the local authority and governors without delay.
- Provides work for excluded pupils.
- Considers safeguarding, SEND and equality duties when making decisions.

Staff:

- Record and report serious incidents promptly.
- Work proactively to prevent suspensions/exclusions where possible.
- Support reintegration of pupils following suspension.

Parents/Carers:

- Support their child in meeting behaviour expectations.
- Attend reintegration meetings.
- Engage with governors if asked to make representations.

5. Procedures for Suspensions and Exclusions

- Decision-making: The headteacher will consider the seriousness of the incident, proportionality, the impact on others, and whether all other strategies have been exhausted.
- Notification: Parents will be informed in writing, with the reason, length, and arrangements for work.
- Work and reintegration: Pupils will be provided with learning tasks during suspension. Reintegration meetings will be held on return.
- Appeals and reviews: Parents have the right to make representations to the Governing Body, and in certain cases to an Independent Review Panel.
- Permanent exclusions: These will only be used as a last resort for serious breaches of the Behaviour Policy or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Parental Representations:

When a pupil is suspended or excluded, parents have the right to make representations to the Governing Board.

- For suspensions of 5 days or fewer in a term, governors must consider any representations made by parents but are not required to meet with them.
- For suspensions totalling more than 5 but fewer than 15 school days in a term, if parents make representations, the Governing Board must meet within 50 school days of being notified to consider the exclusion.
- For permanent exclusions, or suspensions exceeding 15 school days in a term, the Governing Board must meet to consider the exclusion within 15 school days of being notified.

At such meetings:

- Parents will be invited to attend and may bring a representative or friend.
- The headteacher will present the case for the suspension or exclusion, including evidence of behaviour incidents and strategies already tried.
- Parents will be given the opportunity to ask questions, present evidence, and make a case for reinstatement.
- Governors will consider whether the decision was lawful, reasonable, and fair, taking into account the interests of the pupil, other pupils, and staff.
- Governors may decide to uphold the exclusion or to reinstate the pupil immediately or on a specified date.

If the exclusion is upheld and it is permanent, parents have the right to request an Independent Review Panel (IRP). The IRP will consider whether the Governing Board's decision was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair. The panel cannot reinstate the pupil but may direct the Governing Board to reconsider its decision.

6. Supporting Pupils at Risk of Exclusion

The school is committed to early intervention and support, including:

- Pastoral support programmes.
- Individual behaviour plans / reports.
- Regular meetings with parents to review progress.
- Liaison with SENCO (currently the headteacher but this can be the Early Years Area SENCO in the case of a child who has not yet reached statutory school age) to ensure reasonable adjustments are made.

7. Safeguarding Considerations

- Safeguarding and welfare are central to all exclusion decisions.
- Any patterns of behaviour that may indicate underlying safeguarding concerns will be investigated.
- The school will always consider whether early help, pastoral support, or referral to external agencies is more appropriate than exclusion.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

- The headteacher reports termly to governors on use of suspensions and exclusions.
- Data will be analysed to identify patterns, including by pupil group (SEND, disadvantaged, looked-after children).
- Governors ensure no group is disproportionately affected.

9. Links with Other Policies

This policy is linked to the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Overarching Safeguarding Statement
- SEND Policy
- Equality Policy and Accessibility Plan