Meadowhead School and Sixth Form

Suspension & Permanent Exclusion Policy 2026-2027

This is a policy of Meadowhead School and Sixth Form.

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1. Introduction

Good behaviour in school is essential to ensure that all students benefit from the opportunities provided by education. At Meadowhead School, students are encouraged to "Make a Difference" both in their chosen careers and as citizens and the principles of being Ready to learn, Respectful, and Safe embody the good character expected in students. The Government supports Headteachers in using fixed term suspensions or permanent exclusions to establish high standards of behaviour and maintain the safety of the school community / as a sanction where it is warranted.

Meadowhead School is committed to following all statutory exclusions procedures to ensure that every child receives an education in a safe and caring environment.

Meadowhead School aims to:

- Ensure that the suspension and permanent exclusion process is applied fairly and consistently
- Ensure that students in school are safe and happy
- Prevent students from becoming NEET (not in education, employment, or training)
- Ensure all suspensions and permanent exclusions are carried out in line with the principles of administrative law; i.e. that the decision is: lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate

This policy seeks to achieve these goals by adhering to the relevant guidelines and legal frameworks. It also outlines where the school applies additional guidance which complement and reinforce the statutory guidance.

2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE): Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and student referral units in England, including student movement - from July 2026

It is based on the following legislation, which outlines schools' powers to exclude students:

- Section 51a of the Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011
- The School Discipline (Student Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012

In addition, the policy is based on:

- Part 7, chapter 2 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which sets out parental responsibility for excluded students
- Section 579 of the Education Act 1996, which defines 'school day'
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Students) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended by The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Students) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014

The Suspension and Permanent Exclusion policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy and SEND Policy.

Definitions

Suspension – when a student is removed from the school for a fixed period.

Permanent exclusion – when a student is removed from the school permanently and taken off the school roll. This is sometimes referred to as an exclusion.

The school will not use informal or unlawful exclusions, including sending a pupil home without formally recording a suspension. Reintegration will not be conditional on attendance at meetings.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Fixed term suspension or a permanent exclusion are sanctions used by the school only in cases deemed as serious breaches of the Behaviour Policy. Only the Headteacher can suspend or permanently exclude a student on disciplinary grounds. The decision can be made in respect of behaviour inside or outside of school. A student may be suspended for one or more fixed periods (up to 45 school days in a single academic year), or permanently excluded. The Headteacher will only use permanent exclusion as a last resort.

If a student is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the school will inform the parents/carers and, if applicable the allocated social worker or the virtual school Headteacher as early as possible, in order to work together to consider what factors may be affecting the student's behaviour, and what further support can be put in place to improve the behaviour.

A decision to suspend a student will be taken only:

- In accordance with the school's behaviour policy
- To provide a clear signal of what is unacceptable behaviour
- To show a student that their current behaviour is putting them at risk of permanent exclusion

A decision to permanently exclude a student will be taken only:

- 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 such as staff or students in the school.

A student may be at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion for:

- Physical assault against a student or adult
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a student or adult
- Use, or threat of use of an offensive weapon or prohibited item that has been prohibited
- Bullying
- Racist abuse
- Abuse against sexual orientation or gender identity
- Inappropriate use of social media or online technology
- Sexual misconduct

- Drug or alcohol related incident
- Damage to property
- Theft
- Persistent disruptive or defiant behaviour
- Abuse relating to disability

This list is not exhaustive.

Before deciding whether to suspend or exclude a student, the school will conduct a thorough investigation into the incident(s). The Headteacher will then consider all the relevant facts and evidence on the balance of probabilities, including whether the incident(s) leading to the exclusion were provoked.

Having agreed that the offence committed fits one or more of the above criteria further considerations will influence any decision about the length of suspension or whether it is to be permanent, these include:

- The student's previous record, including past suspensions, which may require an escalation in the length of the suspension.
- The threat to the health, safety and welfare of the school community
- The effect on other students or staff
- The threat to school standards and behaviour
- The impact on the school's reputation
- Precedents in similar cases (when appropriate)
- Whether all alternative solutions have been explored, such as:
    - For suspension, detentions or other sanctions provided in the behaviour policy
    - For exclusion, the Engagement Centre or off-site direction

The school will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and Children and Families Act 2014, ensuring that decisions to suspend or exclude do not discriminate unlawfully. The school will make reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND or disabilities and will consider whether unmet needs contributed to behaviour

Wherever possible, the Headteacher will not reach their decision until they have heard from the student, and will inform the student of how their views were considered when making the decision.

Where suspensions have become a regular occurrence, the Headteacher will assess whether they remain an effective sanction and whether additional strategies need to be implemented to address behaviour issues.

4. Notification of a Suspension or Permanent Exclusion

If the Headteacher decides to suspend or permanently exclude the student, parents/carers will be informed, either in person or by telephone, of the period of the suspension or the fact that it is permanent and the reason(s) for it, without delay. Written confirmation of the reason(s) for the suspension will be sent to parents/carers as early as possible. Written notification will include all information required by statutory guidance, including parents' rights to make representations to the governing board, request remote access meetings, be represented at meetings, and details of any alternative education provision. Parents will be provided with details of independent sources of advice, including SENDIAS, Coram Child Law Advice, and IPSEA.

The Headteacher will, without delay, notify the:

- Governing Board/Board of Trustees (for suspensions which take a student's total number of days suspended to over 5 in a term, over 15 days in a term, over 45 days in an academic year or the exclusion is permanent)
- The Headteacher will notify the local authority without delay of all suspensions and permanent exclusions, regardless of length

- Student's social worker and/or virtual school head (VSH) where applicable

(The social worker/VSH will be invited to meetings about the suspension or permanent exclusion. This is to ensure that the student's background and/or circumstances, safeguarding needs, risks and welfare are considered).

The Headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion if it has not yet been reviewed by the governing board/board of Trustees. If a suspension or permanent exclusion is cancelled, parents/carers will be informed immediately, along with the reason for the cancellation.

Safeguarding

To safeguard students and maintain school routine, suspensions will typically last up to one day, although the school reserves the right to suspend a student for up to five days in total for each incident, and up to 45 days in an academic year. In some cases, suspensions will be followed by time in a separate provision in school to provide opportunity for restorative practice.

Parents/carers will be notified that for the first 5 school days of any exclusion, they are legally required to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without a good reason. Failure to comply may result in a fixed penalty notice or prosecution.

The school will maintain regular contact with the student and, if necessary, ensure that they have daily contact with a designated pastoral professional during the exclusion period. In some cases, a member of the safeguarding team or attendance team will conduct a home visit to check on the student's well-being.

Continuity of Learning

During the first 5 days of a suspension or permanent exclusion, the school will ensure that achievable and accessible work is set and marked for the student. If the student has a special educational need or disability, reasonable adjustments will be made to the provision where necessary.

For suspensions exceeding five school days, or for permanent exclusion, the governing board will ensure that suitable full-time education is arranged from the sixth school day

5. Internal Suspensions

In some circumstances, the school may decide that an internal suspension is an appropriate alternative to suspension from school. A formal internal suspension is treated with the same level of seriousness and follows the same procedures as a suspension from school; however, the student remains on the school site for the duration of the suspension.

Students receiving an internal suspension are expected to attend school in full uniform at the normal start of the school day. They will spend the day in the school's Internal Suspension Room (ISR), where they will complete appropriate schoolwork under staff supervision.

The internal suspension day is slightly longer than the normal school day. Students complete a C3 detention as part of the sanction and will therefore remain in school until 3.15pm. Parents/carers will be informed of this when they are notified of the internal suspension and the reasons for it.

As with a suspension from school, a reintegration meeting with parents/carers will take place following an internal suspension. The purpose of this meeting is to reflect on the incident that led to the suspension, identify any contributing factors and agree clear expectations and targets for the student's successful reintegration into mainstream lessons. Any additional support or intervention required to reduce the likelihood of further incidents will also be considered as part of this process.

6. Temporary Removal from Site for Safeguarding Reasons

In exceptional circumstances, the school may temporarily prevent a student from attending the school site for safeguarding reasons. This is **not** a suspension or exclusion and will only be used where it is necessary to separate students to manage a safeguarding risk and where no reasonable alternative arrangements can be made on site.

Such decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and informed by professional judgement and, where appropriate, advice from external agencies.

Parents/carers will be informed of the reasons for the decision without delay, and the governing board will be notified. Arrangements for the student's education during this period will be made in accordance with statutory guidance. The school will support the student's reintegration when it is safe and appropriate for them to return.

7. Returning from a Suspension

Following suspension, the school will put in place a reintegration strategy to help the student reintegrate successfully into school life. This strategy will provide the student with a fresh start, help them understand the impact of their behaviour, teach them to meet high expectations in line with the school's culture, build engagement with learning and foster a renewed sense of belonging.

Reintegration meetings

A reintegration meeting will be held with the student and their parent/carer following a suspension. The meeting will establish practical strategies to avoid further suspensions and improve behaviour. The student is expected to actively participate in the meeting which will include discussing the impact of their behaviour on others. The school will communicate that the student is valued and that their past behaviour should not be an obstacle for future success / does not preclude future success.

If the student is unremorseful, the Headteacher may refuse readmission and impose further sanctions.

All returning students and their parents/carers are expected to attend the reintegration meeting. However, students who do not attend will not be prevented from returning to school. In such cases, their timetable may be temporarily adjusted until all issues relating to the incident have been appropriately addressed and resolved. In the event that parents/carers cannot or do not attend the reintegration meeting, the meeting will/can proceed with the student and relevant members of staff.

Post Incident Learning and Pastoral Support Plans

Following a suspension or internal suspension, students may be required to complete a post-incident intervention with a Behaviour Manager. The purpose of this intervention is to support the student to reflect on the incident, understand the impact of their behaviour and develop strategies to reduce the likelihood of further incidents.

Post-incident learning will be tailored to the individual student and may include supporting emotional awareness, restorative practices, behavioural reflection and identifying appropriate strategies for managing similar situations in the future.

The Year Team will create a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) for any student who receives more than one suspension. The plan will identify areas of concern, appropriate support and agreed strategies and targets to help the student make positive and sustained improvements in their behaviour.

The PSP will be reviewed regularly by the Year Team to monitor progress, evaluate the effectiveness of support and identify any further intervention required.

8. Permanent Exclusion

A decision to permanently exclude a student will be taken only:

- 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 such as staff or students in the school.

Only the Headteacher can make the decision to permanently exclude a student. Once the decision is made, the student and parents will be informed in writing, in person or by telephone where this is not possible.

A Governor/Trustee Panel will meet to hear the case of a permanent exclusion. The school and parents will be given the opportunity to present their cases, and after reviewing the evidence, the panel will decide whether to either uphold the Headteacher's decision to permanently exclude the student, or direct the students' reinstatement, either immediately or by a particular date. The panel will be made up of at least 3 governors/trustees, with representation from the parents, the Headteacher and, wherever possible, a Local Authority representative. All parties will be notified by the Governance Professional of the date and time of the meeting and as far as is possible, all parties will receive all relevant paperwork five school days before the Governor/Trustee Panel is due to meet.

Parents/Carers can request a governor/trustee panel meeting to be held remotely, but this will not be a default option. The governing board/board of trustees must hold the meeting remotely if the parent/carer has made the request correctly as set out in the letter from the Headteacher notifying parents of the permanent exclusion. Where a remote meeting is not requested, the meeting must be held in person.

If a student has a social worker and/or is a child looked after, the social worker and/or virtual school Headteacher may attend the meeting remotely if they wish to do so even if the meeting as a whole is taking place in person.

In cases of extraordinary or unforeseen circumstances, which mean it is not practicable for the meeting to be held in person, the meeting may be held remotely even if parents/carers have not made this request.

Where parents/carers dispute the decision of the panel not to reinstate a permanently excluded student, they can ask for the decision to be reviewed by an Independent Review Panel. The independent review panel cannot direct that the student be reinstated but they can recommend or direct that the decision is reconsidered by the governing board/board of trustees.

All relevant documentation for permanent exclusions will be forwarded to the Local Authority immediately. A risk assessment and referral form will be completed and sent to the appropriate Local Authority officer to arrange suitable education for the student from the sixth day of the exclusion.

9. Appeals

All correspondence regarding fixed term suspensions or permanent exclusion will inform parents of their right to appeal to the Governing Body/Board of Trustees against the decision to fixed term suspend or permanently exclude. The procedure is clearly set out in the statutory guidance. The Governance Professional should be contacted to initiate any appeal against a suspension/permanent exclusion decision

10. The Governing board/Board of Trustees

Considering suspensions and permanent exclusions

Responsibilities regarding suspensions and permanent exclusions are delegated to the Governing Body Disciplinary Committee (GBDC). It has a duty to consider the reinstatement of a suspended or permanently excluded student in certain circumstances.

The Governing Body Disciplinary Committee has a duty to consider parents/carers'/the student's representations about a suspension or permanent exclusion.

Monitoring and Analysing suspension and exclusion data

The school regularly monitors the number of fixed term suspensions and permanent exclusions to ensure that no group of students is unfairly disadvantaged through their use and that any underlying needs of individuals are being fully met. Reports are sent to the Local Authority and presented to the Governing Body/board of trustees at least termly.

The governing board/board of trustees will review, challenge and evaluate the data on the use of suspension and permanent exclusions.

The governing board/board of trustees will consider:

- How effectively and consistently the school's behaviour policy is being implemented
- Instances where students receive repeat suspensions
- Interventions in place to support students at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion data
- Any variations in suspension or permanent exclusion data to understand why this is happening
- Identify patterns and trends in the data that may highlight where support is not working
- The characteristics of suspended or permanently excluded students

The local authority (LA)

For permanent exclusions, the LA will arrange suitable full-time education to begin no later than the sixth school day after the first day of the exclusion.

For students who are looked after or have social workers, the LA and the school will work together to arrange suitable full-time education to begin from the first day of the exclusion.

11. Links with other policies

- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Home School Agreement and Code of Conduct