



## Exclusion Policy

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## 1. Introduction and Policy Aims

Weston Secondary School is committed to inclusion. We strive to challenge and support every pupil, nurturing individual talent. However, for some serious incidents of poor behaviour (such as verbal or physical abuse to another member of the school community, or a serious one-off incident), the Headteacher may resort to excluding pupils, either for a suspension (previously known as a fixed-period exclusion) or permanently.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there are systematic and consistent procedures and expectations regarding the exclusion of any pupil from our school.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- our Teaching and Learning policy which outlines how we challenge our pupils to achieve
- our Behaviour and Expectations policy that explains how we help our pupils make the correct choices
- our Special Educational Needs and Inclusion policy which states our responsibilities and procedures in supporting any pupils who have been identified as having additional learning needs.

Our school aims to ensure that:

- The exclusions process is applied fairly and consistently
- The exclusions process is understood by independent Hamwic governors, staff, parents and pupils
- Pupils in school are safe and happy
- Pupils do not become NEET (not in education, employment or training)

## 2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on statutory guidance from the Department for Education: [Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement – guidance May 2023 \(applies from 1 September 2023\)](#)

It is based on the following legislation, which outline schools' powers to exclude pupils:

- Section 52 of the [Education Act 2002](#), as amended by the [Education Act 2011](#)
- [The School Discipline \(Pupil Exclusions and Reviews\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)
- Sections 64-68 of the [School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#)

In addition, the policy is based on:

- Part 7, chapter 2 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), which looks at parental responsibility for excluded pupils
- Section 579 of the [Education Act 1996](#), which defines 'school day'
- The [Education \(Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#), as amended by [The Education \(Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2014](#)

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Please note that schools should also consult and follow their Local Authorities' guidance on exclusions.

## 3. Definition

For the purpose of exclusions, the school day is defined as any day on which there is a school session. Therefore, INSET or staff training days and unforeseen school closures do not count as a school day.



## 4. The decision to exclude

Only the Headteacher can exclude a pupil from school. If the Headteacher is off school-site at the time of a serious incident where exclusion may be a proportionate sanction, as good practice, an attempt should be made by the senior member of staff with delegated responsibility to speak to the Headteacher and consult before a decision to exclude is made. The decision must be lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate. A decision to permanently exclude will be taken as a last resort. The decision must have regard to duties under the Equality Act 2010.

A decision to exclude a pupil will be taken only:

- In response to serious or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and
- Where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others such as staff or pupils in the school.

Before deciding whether to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, the Headteacher will:

- Consider all the relevant facts and evidence, including whether there were any mitigating contributory factors (e.g. bullying, mental health issues and consider early intervention measures/use of multi-agency assessments.)
- Enable the pupil an opportunity to present their version of events.
- Have due regard to the following (in accordance with the DfE guidance):
  - for groups with high exclusion rates (students with SEN; students eligible for Free School Meals; Looked After Children; students from different ethnic groups; students who have English as an Additional Language);
  - that additional support or alternative placement may be required for a student with an EHCP or a Looked After Child; and;
  - that the permanent exclusion of a student with a EHCP or a Looked After Child should, as far as reasonably possible, be avoided.

The decision to exclude will only be taken for a disciplinary reason and all exclusion decisions will be formally recorded.

## 5. Cancelling an exclusion

The Headteacher can cancel any permanent exclusion that has already began (or one that has not yet begun), but this can only happen when the governing board has not yet met to consider whether the pupil should be reinstated. Where an exclusion is cancelled:

- The Headteacher will notify the parents/carers, the governing board, the local authority and the pupil's social worker and Virtual School Headteacher as applicable, without delay. This notification will provide the reason for the cancellation.
- The governing board's duty to consider reinstatement ceases, and there is no requirement to hold a meeting to consider reinstatement.
- Parents/carers will be offered the opportunity to meet the Headteacher to discuss the circumstances that led to the exclusion being cancelled which should be arranged without delay.
- The pupil will be allowed back into the school from which they were excluded without delay, following a reintegration meeting with the Headteacher or relevant member of the school Senior Leadership Team.
- Any days spent out of school as a result of any exclusion, prior to the cancellation, will count towards the maximum of 45 days permitted in any school year.



A permanent exclusion cannot be cancelled if the pupil has already been excluded for more than 45 school days in a school year or if they have been so by the time the cancellation takes effect.

## 6. Roles and responsibilities

### 6.1 Actions taken following a serious incident

- Written details of the incident are collected from those involved before any decision is made. Statements will be taken from students as well as any adults that were present.
- The parent/carer is telephoned by a relevant member of staff (Key Stage Mentor, Head of Year, Senior Leader) to outline the incident
- In the case of pupils with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), all information will be logged and discussed with the Local Authority SEN team without delay.
- As a result of the investigation, it may be determined that an internal suspension (Referral / SLT Isolation) on school site may be appropriate. Parents will be informed by phone call and letter to confirm arrangements for this. Students will be given school work to complete as well as time to reflect upon the behaviour and the choices that were made.

### 6.2 The Headteacher

#### Informing parents

The Headteacher will immediately provide the following information to the parents of an excluded pupil:

- The reason(s) for the exclusion (by phone to ensure parents understand why the school has taken this decision and what happens next)
- A letter will follow providing:
  - Confirmation of the details of the incident, the reasons for the exclusion and, if appropriate, how the pupil will be reintegrated back into school;
  - The length of a suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent;
  - Information about parents' rights to make representations about the exclusion to the governing board and how the pupil may be involved in this;
  - Where there is a legal requirement for the independent governing board to meet to consider the reinstatement of a pupil, and that parents have a right to attend a meeting, be represented at a meeting (at their own expense) and to bring a friend.

The Headteacher will also notify parents by the end of the afternoon session on the day their child is excluded that for the first 5 school days of an exclusion, or until the start date of any alternative provision where this is earlier, parents are legally required to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without a good reason. Parents may be given a fixed penalty notice or prosecuted if they fail to do this.

For the first five days of a suspension, the school will set work appropriate to the pupil's age and ability. This work should allow the child to keep up with their peers and should be marked. Work can be given through online/remote learning sites. Where a student is given a suspension of six days, the school has a duty to arrange suitable off-site full-time educational provision from and including the sixth day of suspension. The school will set work as described above for the initial five days following a permanent exclusion.

The Headteacher may impose a suspension which may lead to a permanent exclusion, depending on the outcome of an on-going investigation and/or further consideration of the case. If this is a possibility it will be referred to in the letter to parents notifying them of the suspension. If a permanent exclusion is



subsequently imposed, this is a separate exclusion event. Therefore, if a permanent exclusion follows a five-day suspension, the responsibility of the school for the first five days of the permanent exclusion would be to set work as described above and not find suitable alternative provision. However, it is acknowledged that there are benefits in arranging alternative provision to begin as soon as possible after an exclusion and this will be implemented where possible. In the case of a looked after child, the school and the local authority should work together to arrange alternative provision from the first day following the exclusion.

If alternative provision is being arranged, the following information will be included when notifying parents of an exclusion:

- The start date for any provision of full-time education that has been arranged for the pupil during the exclusion.
- The start and finish times of any such provision, including the times for morning and afternoon sessions, where relevant
- The address at which the provision will take place; and
- Any information required by the pupil to identify the person they should report to on the first day.

Where this information on alternative provision is not reasonably ascertainable by the end of the afternoon session, it may be provided in a subsequent notice, but it will be provided no later than 48 hours before the provision is due to start. The only exception to this is where alternative provision is to be provided before the sixth day of an exclusion, in which case the information can be provided with less than 48 hours' notice with parents' consent.

### **Informing the governing board, local authority and Trust**

The Headteacher will immediately notify the independent governing board, the local authority and Hamwic Education Trust of:

- A permanent exclusion, including when a suspension is followed by a decision to permanently exclude
- A suspension of any length
- Suspensions which would result in the pupil missing a public examination

For a permanent exclusion, if the pupil lives outside the local authority in which the school is located, the Headteacher will also immediately inform the pupil's 'home authority' of the exclusion and the reason(s) for it without delay.

If a child is looked after, the Virtual School Headteacher must also be informed of a suspension or permanent exclusion without delay. If a child has a social worker, they must also be informed of a suspension or permanent exclusion straight away.

Exclusion notifications to the Hamwic Education Trust should be sent to the Education Access Officer, Claire Shaw [claire.shaw@hamwic.org](mailto:claire.shaw@hamwic.org)

### **6.3 The governing board**

Responsibilities regarding exclusions are delegated to a Governors Discipline Committee (GDC) (which should comprise a minimum of three governors). The Academy Trust will source and use governors from other Trust LGBs to form an independent panel of 3 governors.

The GDC has a duty to consider the reinstatement of an excluded pupil (see section 6).



Education provision does not have to be arranged for pupils permanently excluded in the final year of compulsory education who do not have any further public examinations to sit.

## 6.4 The Local Authority

For permanent exclusions, the local authority is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education to begin no later than the sixth day following the date the exclusion was issued.

## 7. Considering the reinstatement of a pupil

A Governors' Discipline Committee (GDC) will consider the reinstatement of an excluded pupil within 15 school days of receiving the notice of the exclusion if:

- The exclusion is permanent
- It is a suspension which would bring the pupil's total number of school days of exclusion to more than 15 days in a term
- It would result in a pupil missing a public examination

If requested to do so by parents/carers, the GDC will consider the reinstatement of an excluded pupil within 50 school days of receiving notice of the exclusion if the pupil would be excluded from school for more than 5 school days, but less than 15, in a single term.

Where an exclusion would result in a pupil missing a public examination, the GDC will consider the reinstatement of the pupil before the date of the examination. If this is not practicable, the GDC will consider the exclusion instead and decide whether or not to reinstate the pupil.

In advance of the meeting, the Headteacher will prepare a school evidence pack as documentary evidence for the decision to exclude. This will also be sent to the Team Manager for Inclusion Services at the relevant local authority who may submit a written and/or verbal report to the committee offering advice and guidance based on the evidence provided.

The school evidence pack that is sent to all parties in advance of the GDC meeting will include:

- A profile sheet including basic information about the student
- An overview of the case including a detailed account and evidence of the reason(s) for the exclusion
- Confirmation that the current DfE exclusion guidance has been adhered to
- Where relevant, details of any behaviour modification strategies and supportive interventions which have been used (including the consideration of the use of off-site direction and alternative provision)
- An indication of how the sanction applied is consistent with the School's Relationship/Behaviour Policy
- Alternative sanctions that were considered (if applicable)
- In the case of a student with SEN, or a looked-after or disabled student, that the relevant DfE guidance was considered before the decision to exclude was taken
- That in reaching the decision, equal opportunity legislation was complied with.

The GDC can either:

- Uphold the decision to exclude the pupil, or
- Direct reinstatement of the pupil immediately, or on a particular date

In reaching a decision, the GDC will consider whether the exclusion was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair and whether the Headteacher followed their legal duties. They will decide whether or not a fact is true 'on the balance of probabilities', which differs from the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt', as well as any evidence that was presented in relation to the decision to exclude.



Minutes will be taken of the meeting by a fully trained clerk, and a record of evidence considered kept. The clerk will remain present to make a record of the GDC's decision making discussion, which will clearly state how decisions have been reached. The outcome of the GDC will also be recorded on the pupil's educational record.

The GDC will notify, in writing, the Headteacher, parents and the local authority of its decision, along with reasons for its decision, without delay.

Where an exclusion is permanent, the GDC decision will also include the following:

- The fact it is permanent
- If the decision has been upheld, notice of parents' right to ask for the decision to be reviewed by an independent review panel, and:
  - The date by which an application for an independent review must be made
  - The name and address to whom an application for a review should be submitted
  - That any application should set out the grounds on which it is being made and that, where appropriate, reference to how the pupil's SEN are considered to be relevant to the exclusion
  - That, regardless of whether the excluded pupil has recognized SEN, parents have a right to request an SEN expert attend the review
  - Details of the role of the SEN expert and that there would be no cost to parents for this appointment
  - That parents must make clear if they wish for an SEN expert to be appointed in any application for a review
  - That parents may, at their own expense, appoint someone to make written and/or oral representations to the panel, and parents may also bring a friend to the review
- That if parents believe that the exclusion has occurred as a result of discrimination, they may make a claim under the Equality Act 2020 to the first-tier tribunal (special educational needs and disability), in the case of disability discrimination, or the county court, in the case of other forms of discrimination. A claim of discrimination made under these routes should be lodged within 6 months of the date on which the discrimination is alleged to have taken place.

## 8. An Independent Review Panel

If parents apply for an independent review, the Hamwic Education Trust will arrange for an independent panel to review the decision of the governing board not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil. This will be accessed via the relevant Local Authority.

Applications for an independent review must be made within 15 school days of notice being given to the parents by the GDC of its decision to not reinstate a pupil.

A panel of 3 or 5 members will be constituted with representatives from each of the categories below:

- 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;
- School governors who have served as a governor for at least 12 consecutive months in the last 5 years, provided they have not been teachers or School Leaders during this time
- Headteachers or individuals who have been a Headteacher within the last 5 years

Where a 5-member panel is constituted, 2 members will come from the school governor category and 2 members will come from the School Leader category. A person may not serve as a member of a review panel if they:

- Are a member/Director of the Hamwic Education Trust or governing board of the excluding school





- Are the Headteacher of the excluding school, or have held this position in the last 5 years
- Are an employee of the Hamwic Education Trust, or the governing board, of the excluding school (unless they are employed as a Headteacher at another school)
- Have, or at any time have had, any connection with the Hamwic Education Trust, school, governing board, parents or pupils, or the incident leading to the exclusion, which might reasonably be taken to raise doubts about their impartiality
- Have not had the required legal IRP training within the last 2 years.

A trained Clerk will be appointed to the panel.

The independent review panel will decide one of the following:

- Uphold the governing board's decision
- Recommend that the governing board reconsiders reinstatement
- Quash the governing board's decision and direct that they reconsider reinstatement (only when the decision is judged to be flawed)

The panel's decision can be decided by a majority vote. In the case of a tied decision, the chair has the casting vote.

An independent review panel does not have the power to direct a governing board to reinstate an excluded pupil. However, where a panel decides that a governing board's decision is flawed when considered in light of the principles of judicial review, it can direct a governing board to reconsider its decision.

The panel will then be expected to order that the school must make an additional payment of £4,000 if it does not offer to reinstate the pupil.

Whether or not a school recognises a pupil as having Special Educational Needs (SEN), all parents have the right to request the presence of a SEN expert at a review meeting. The SEN expert's role is to advise the review panel, orally, in writing or both, impartially, of the relevance of SEN in the context and circumstances of the review. For example, they may advise whether the school acted reasonably in relation to its legal duties when excluding the pupil.

The Independent Review Panel's decision is final and binding on all parties. There is no further right of appeal against the decision of an Independent Review Panel. A parent/guardian may seek a Judicial Review of an Independent Review Panel's decision an application to do this should be made within three months of the panel's decision.

If the parent/guardian believes that there has been maladministration in the conduct of the review hearing this should be raised with the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

## 9. Requests for remote access meetings for GDC or IRP meetings

Parents/carers can request the GDC or IRP meeting is held via the use of remote access, provided certain conditions are met. These are:

- That all participants have access to the technology which will allow them to hear and speak throughout the meeting, and to see and be seen, such as via a live video link;
- All participants will be able to put across their point of view or fulfil their function
- The remote meeting can be held fairly and transparently

Meetings held via the use of remote access will not be the default option and face to face meetings will always be encouraged. If the governing board or arranging authority are not satisfied that a remote meeting



can be held fairly and transparently, then they will consult with parents/carers to decide how a face-to-face meeting can be arranged.

If Social Workers or the Virtual School Headteacher are joining a meeting that, as a whole, is taking place in person, they will be allowed to join via the use of remote access should they wish to do so.

If there is an extraordinary event or unforeseen circumstances, such as an outbreak of infectious illness/disease, which means that it is not reasonably practicable for a GDC or IRP to be held in person; then this meeting may be held using remote access even if the parent has not asked for the meeting to be remote.

## 10. School registers

A pupil's name will be removed from the school admissions register if:

- 15 school days have passed since the parents were notified of the exclusion panel's decision to not reinstate the pupil and no application has been made for an independent review panel, or
- The parents have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent review panel

Where an application for an independent review has been made, the governing board will wait until that review has concluded before removing a pupil's name from the register.

Where alternative provision has been made for an excluded pupil and they attend it, code B (education off-site) or code D (dual registration) will be used on the attendance register.

Where excluded pupils are not attending alternative provision, code E (absent) will be used.

## 11. Returning from a suspension

Following a suspension, a re-integration meeting will be held involving the pupil, parents and a relevant member of staff (Key Stage Mentor, Head of Year, member of Senior Leadership Team, Headteacher). If the school wishes, the Education Access Officer or another member of the Managed Service team will be available to also attend the re-integration meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure the child knows they are a valued member of the school and to positively consider how they can be helped to modify their behaviour going forward.

The following measures may be implemented when a pupil returns from a suspension:

- Agreeing a behaviour contract
- Restorative intervention with other students and/or staff
- Reviewing and agreeing revised support interventions
- Putting a pupil 'on report'

All pupils have the right to a full-time education. Any part-time timetable used to support integration must only be put in place in exceptional circumstances and follow the process below:

- Agreement from parents
- Agreement from the local authority where a child has an EHCP
- Time-limited to return to full time education within six weeks
- A clear plan agreed on the 1<sup>st</sup> day following the exclusion showing how the time in school will increase
- At least fortnightly meetings to review progress against the reintegration plan with child, parents and other appropriate agencies



## 12. Monitoring arrangements

The Education Access Officer monitors the number of exclusions every term and reports back to the Headteacher and the Hamwic Education Trust Board of Directors. They also liaise with the local authority to ensure suitable full-time education for excluded pupils.

This policy is reviewed by the Hamwic Education Trust annually to ensure compliance with current statutory guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the schools within the Hamwic Education Trust.

## 13. Links with other policies

This exclusion policy is linked to our;

- Behaviour and Expectations policy
- SEN policy

