



## **Exclusions and Suspensions Policy**

## Contents

1. Introduction .....	2
2. Ethos statement.....	2
3. Scope/ aims.....	3
4. Definitions and responsibilities.....	3
5. General approach to behaviour and exclusions .....	5
6. Informing parents about suspension/exclusion .....	6
7. Notification about suspensions and exclusions.....	7
8. Duty to arrange education for suspended/ excluded pupils .....	7
9. Cancelling suspensions/ exclusions .....	8
10. Reintegration .....	8
11. Academy Council review .....	9
12. Independent Review Panels.....	13
13. Monitoring exclusions.....	13
14. Our Ethos and Values.....	13
Appendix A: Roles and responsibilities .....	14
Appendix B: Timeline .....	16
Appendix C: Suggested evidence requirements for panel hearing .....	17
Appendix D: Supporting documentation .....	19
History of most recent Policy changes.....	20

## 1. Introduction

The Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (DBAT) is a multi-academy trust with a faith designation and a Christian religious ethos that is both distinctive and inclusive. Distinctive in the sense that all decisions about the nature and purpose of the Academy are taken through the lens of Christian values, inclusive in the sense that all students and staff are equally valued for their uniqueness in the eyes of God and their belonging to the school community.

## 2. Ethos statement

### **Vision**

The Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (DBAT) shares the Church of England’s Vision for Education 2016, “Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good”, which includes four basic elements wisdom, hope, community and dignity. We aim to deliver values-led education with the very best outcomes for children and young people.

## **Purpose**

To provide high quality education enabling young people to flourish and grow: spiritually, in love and in understanding.

## 3. Scope/ aims

- 3.1 The policy sets our guidelines and circumstances under which a pupil/student may be suspended or permanently excluded from a DBAT school and applies to all Trust schools, including those who may be below or above compulsory school age. The policy is available on each school website and can be made available in large print or other accessible formats if required.
- 3.2 In this policy, the term Headteacher also applies to any person formally appointed as Acting/Interim Headteacher.

### **Relationship to other policies**

- 3.3 The policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy as well as other relevant school policies, particularly the Special Educational Needs Policy, the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and the Equality Policy.
- 3.4 It also has a close inter-relationship with the Anti-Bullying Policy and Attendance Policy.

### **Guidance and Legislation**

- 3.5 This policy is drafted to be compliant with the latest statutory guidance: Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (September 2023).
- 3.6 This policy contains a summary of the statutory guidance and is not intended to provide a full account of all the guidance content which should be read alongside this policy.
- 3.7 The non-statutory government guidance Behaviour in Schools (September 2022) is also relevant.
- 3.8 This policy takes account of our public sector equality duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

## 4. Definitions and responsibilities

### **4.1 Suspension**

A suspension is where a pupil is removed from the school temporarily, i.e. for a set period of time. A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year). A suspension does not have to be for a continuous period, and can be for part of a school day (e.g. lunchtime).

## 4.2 Exclusion

Exclusion is where a pupil is no longer allowed to attend the school (unless they are reinstated).

## 4.3 The responsibilities of the Head

- Only the Headteacher or someone acting in the role of Head can authorise suspension or permanent exclusion.
- All suspensions should be reported to and discussed with the Hub Director of Learning, where possible before they are actioned. The purpose of this discussion is to be assured that all possible alternatives to suspension have been fully explored.
- Only the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Executive Director of Learning (EDL) can approve the (permanent) exclusion of a pupil.
- A pupil can only be (permanently) excluded in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the Academy's behaviour policy, where allowing the pupil to remain in the Academy would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the Academy.
- A pupil whose disruptive behaviour takes place at lunchtime may be suspended for the lunchtime period only. This is counted as a half-day suspension.
- Behaviour out of school can be grounds for suspension or exclusion.
- It is essential that the Head conducts a thorough investigation of all cases where suspension or exclusion is proposed, to establish the facts, including giving the pupil an opportunity to provide their account of what has taken place.
- In establishing the facts, the Head must use "on the balance of probability it is most likely the facts are true" as the burden of proof rather than "beyond reasonable doubt".
- The decision to suspend or exclude a pupil must be lawful, reasonable and fair. Schools have a statutory duty not to discriminate against pupils on the basis of protected characteristics, such as disability or race. Heads should give particular consideration to the fair treatment of pupils from groups who are vulnerable to ensure that behaviour policies do not discriminate against such pupils.
- Before suspension or exclusion, the Head must check whether the pupil is subject to a Child Protection Plan, Early Help, social worker involvement or Virtual School Head support (VSH). Careful consideration will be given as to whether the level of risk to the pupil could be increased by suspension or exclusion. If the pupil has social worker involvement or VSH, then the social worker/ VSH lead for Looked-After Children as well as the DSL should be part of any discussions about possible suspension or exclusion.
- In considering the suspension or exclusion of a pupil with special educational needs, the Head must ensure they fulfil their duties under the SEND Code of Conduct and make every effort to engage the parents in the process.
- Alternatives to suspension or exclusion will be considered as set out in the Behaviour in Schools guidance. These alternative solutions may include an off-site direction or managed move.
- The Head may withdraw a suspension or exclusion that has not been reviewed by the Academy Council. This might occur if new information comes to light that may cause a review the original decision.

- If a pupil is sent home from the Academy during the school day (suspension or exclusion) the Headteacher must take account of their legal duty of care.
- The Head should follow any Local Authority procedures that apply in their area in terms of notification and involvement of external services and support.

#### 4.4 'Off-rolling'

Off-rolling is unlawful. Whenever a pupil is made to leave school, or forbidden from attending school, on disciplinary grounds, this must be done in accordance with the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012 and with regard to relevant parts of this guidance.

Ofsted defines off-rolling as:

*“The practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without a formula, suspension or permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school roll, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the pupil.”*

We will not suspend or exclude pupils unlawfully by directing them off site, or not allowing pupils to attend school.

Under no circumstances will DBAT sanction an Academy’s use of ‘informal’ or ‘unofficial’ exclusions, such as sending a pupil home ‘to cool off’. As referenced above, such exclusions are unlawful, regardless of whether they occur with the agreement of the pupil’s parents/ carers.

Other examples that constitute off-rolling may include the following:

- Because the pupil has special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) that the school feels unable to support
- Due to poor academic performance
- Because they have not met a specific condition, such as attending a reintegration meeting
- By exerting undue influence on a parent to encourage them to remove their child from the school

4.5 DBAT, the Academy Council and the Head shall follow and have regard at all times to the latest guidance on behaviour and exclusions issued by the Department for Education currently “Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from mainstream schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement” (September 2023).

## 5. General approach to behaviour and exclusions

5.1 The Board of Trustees of the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (“DBAT”) is ultimately accountable for the behaviour and safety of all pupils at the academies run by DBAT (the “Academies”).

5.2 Day-to-day responsibility for the behaviour and safety of pupils within each of the Academies is delegated to the Academy Council or Head (as appropriate). This includes:

- preparing and/or implementing an effective behaviour policy and relevant related policies and procedures e.g. Anti-Bullying, Attendance, Drug Misuse, Equality and Diversity, Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural policies
- monitoring the effectiveness of the Academy's behaviour policy and related policies

5.3 DBAT Academies have strong values that are taught and referred to regularly. Respect for others features strongly: it protects individuals and is based on Christian principles that feature in many aspects of social life. DBAT Academies seek to be inclusive whenever possible. Poor behaviour may be the result of inappropriate provision so faced with persistent poor behaviour an Academy should do its utmost to establish and address the cause rather than applying sanctions to the symptoms.

5.4 DBAT Central Team and our Academies believe that, in general, suspensions or exclusions are not an effective means to help a pupil adjust their behaviour to enable learning and provide a safer environment within the Academy. However, DBAT supports its Academies in using formal suspension or exclusion where it is warranted. Part 6, below, details some situations that may give rise to a suspension or exclusion being considered. This is always as a last resort, when there is clear evidence that systematic approaches have been tried without achieving the necessary results.

## 6. Informing parents about suspension/exclusion

6.1 The Head must inform the parents in writing without delay, including:

- The reason for the suspension/exclusion
- Whether it is a suspension (and if so for how long) or a permanent exclusion
- The parents' right to make representations to the Academy Council and how they can do so
- Where there is a legal right for Academy Councils to consider the suspension/exclusion the parent's legal right to attend the meeting and bring a friend
- What arrangements will be made for the pupil to continue their education during the period of suspension including any alternative provision
- If the suspended pupil is of compulsory school age then for the first five days of the suspension or until the pupil returns to school or alternative provision starts the parent is responsible for ensuring that the pupil is not present in any public space during school hours.

6.2 A model letter for this (and all other steps of the process) is provided in Policy Connect: [Exclusion and Suspension](#)

6.3 This written notification may be delivered to the parent at their last known address or posted to it. Heads are encouraged in addition to the written communication to phone, text or email to ensure the information reaches parents quickly.

6.4 The information should be clear, easy to understand and should take account if the parents' first language is not English. It should also draw their attention to the sources of free and impartial advice outlined in the guidance.

6.5 National Guidance sets out following examples of the types of circumstances that may warrant a suspension or permanent exclusion:

- Physical assault against a pupil
- Physical assault against an adult
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a pupil
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult
- Use, or threat of use, of an offensive weapon or prohibited item that has been prohibited by a school's behaviour policy
- Bullying
- Racist abuse
- Abuse against sexual orientation or gender reassignment
- Abuse relating to disability

## 7. Notification about suspensions and exclusions

7.1 The Head shall, prior to any decision on whether a pupil should be given a Suspension, will discuss the case with the Hub Director of Learning wherever possible and practical. Any decision to permanently exclude MUST be agreed IN ADVANCE by either the EDL or CEO of the Trust.

7.2 Heads are required to notify the relevant Local Authority without delay regarding all suspensions or exclusions, regardless of their length.

7.3 Following a decision given under 7.1 above, the Head of an Academy shall, without delay, notify the Chair of the Board of Trustees (via the Trust's Governance Officer) and the Chair of the Academy Council of the following:

- a permanent exclusion (including where a suspension is made permanent)
- suspensions which would result in the pupil being suspended for more than five school days (or more than ten lunchtimes) in a term
- suspensions which would result in the pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test

7.4 For all other suspensions the Head must provide a written report to the Chair of the Board of Trustees and the Chair of the Academy Council of the Academy once a term.

7.5 This report must include:

- the reasons for the suspension/exclusion
- the duration of any suspension
- the age, gender and ethnicity of a pupil
- whether they would be considered disadvantaged e.g. in receipt of the Pupil Premium, Looked After, or have identified Special Educational Needs

## 8. Duty to arrange education for suspended/ excluded pupils

8.1 DBAT believes in the importance of minimising the disruption that exclusion can cause to a pupil's education. We therefore strongly encourage our Academies to take all possible steps to set and mark work for suspended pupils, regardless of the length of the suspension. We also encourage our Academies to exercise their discretion to allow a suspended pupil on to

the Academy's premises for the purpose of undertaking public examinations or national curriculum tests, unless doing so would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the Academy.

8.2 For a suspension of more than 5 school days, the Academy Council has a legal duty to arrange suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age. This provision must begin no later than the 6th day of the suspension.

8.3 For permanent exclusions, the local authority must arrange suitable full-time education for the pupil to begin no later than the 6th day of the exclusion.

## 9. Cancelling suspensions/ exclusions

9.1 The headteacher can cancel any suspension or exclusion that has already begun (or one that has not yet begun), but this can only happen when the Academy Council has not yet met to consider whether the pupil should be reinstated.

9.2 Where an exclusion is cancelled:

- The headteacher must notify the parents, the Academy Council, the LA and the pupil's social worker and VSH as applicable, without delay.
- The notification must also provide the reason for the cancellation.
- The Academy Council's duty to consider reinstatement ceases, and there is no requirement to hold a meeting to consider reinstatement.
- Parents (or the suspended/excluded pupil if they are 18 years or older) should be offered the opportunity to meet the headteacher to discuss the circumstances that led to the cancellation, without delay.
- The pupil must be allowed back into the school from which they were excluded without delay.
- Any days spent out of school as a result of any exclusion, prior to the cancellation will count towards the maximum of 45 school days permitted in any school year.

9.3 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 will have been so by the time the cancellation takes effect.

## 10. Reintegration

### **Reintegration strategy**

10.1 Following suspension, the school will put in place a strategy to help the pupil reintegrate successfully into school life and full-time education.

10.2 Where necessary, the school will work with third-party organisations to identify whether the pupil has any unmet special educational and/or health needs.

10.3 The following measures may be implemented, as part of the strategy, to ensure a successful reintegration into school life:



- Maintaining regular contact during the suspension and welcoming the pupil back to school
- Daily contact in school with a designated pastoral professional
- Mentoring by a trusted adult or Trust chaplain
- Regular reviews with the pupil and parents to praise progress being made and raise and address any concerns at an early stage
- Informing the pupil, parents and staff of potential external support

10.4 The strategy will be regularly reviewed and adapted where necessary throughout the reintegration process in collaboration with the pupil, parents, and other relevant parties.

### **Reintegration meeting**

10.5 The school will explain the reintegration strategy to the pupil in a reintegration meeting before or on the pupil's return to school. During the meeting the school will communicate to the pupil that they are getting a fresh start and that they are a valued member of the school community.

10.6 The pupil, parents, a member of senior staff, and any other relevant staff will be invited to attend the meeting. The meeting can proceed without the parents in the event that they cannot or do not attend.

10.7 This meeting will seek to establish practical ways in which further exclusion can be avoided and behaviour modified to acceptable standards in partnership between student, parent, and school.

## 11. Academy Council review

### **Responsibility to convene an Academy Council Review Panel**

11.1 It shall be the responsibility of the Clerk to the Academy Council to convene a Review Panel within 15 school days of a request being made by parents.

11.2 Whether or not it is requested by the pupil's parents/carers, a Review Panel must be convened to consider the reinstatement of a suspended pupil within 15 school days of receiving notice of the suspension where:

- a permanent exclusion has been issued (including where a suspension is made permanent)
- suspensions which would result in the pupil being suspended for more than 15 school days (or more than 10 lunchtimes) in a term
- suspensions which would result in the pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test

11.3 If requested to do so by the pupil's parents/ carers, a Review Panel must be convened (within 50 school days of receiving the notice of suspension) to consider reinstatement if a pupil has been excluded for more than five school days, but not more than 15, in a single term.

11.4 In the case of a suspension which does not bring the pupil's total number of days of suspension to more than 5 in a term, the Academy Council must consider any representations made by parents/ carers, but it cannot direct reinstatement and is not required to arrange a meeting with parents/ carers.

11.5 Where suspension would cause a pupil to miss a public examination or a national curriculum test the Academy Council is required to consider the case before the date of the examination or test if at all possible. If this is not practicable then the Chair of the Academy Council may consider the suspension independently and decide whether or not to reinstate the pupil.

### **Members of the Review Panel**

11.6 Unless otherwise specified by the Board of Trustees, a Review Panel convened under paragraph 11.2 above shall be made up of two Academy Council members and where possible one DBAT Trustee, none of whom have had any prior involvement in the matter.

11.7 If no Director is available their place may be taken by a DBAT officer or failing that a Local Foundation Academy Council Member.

11.8 A Review Panel convened under paragraphs 11.3 and 11.4 above shall be made up of three Academy Council Members only, with no prior involvement in the matter.

11.9 The Clerk shall appoint one of these members to be the Chair of the Board Review Panel.

11.10 Members of the Review Panel should be advised not to discuss the suspension/exclusion with any party outside of the meeting or to ask for any additional written evidence in advance of the meeting.

### **Parties attending Review Hearing**

11.11 The parents/ carers of the pupil and the Head of the Academy shall be invited to the Review Meeting and allowed to make representations.

11.12 Parents/ carers should be informed of their right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend, relative, advocate or interpreter.

11.13 Where possible, the suspended/excluded pupil should be enabled and encouraged to attend the meeting and speak on their own behalf, taking into account the pupil's age and understanding. Where this is not appropriate, the excluded pupil should be given the opportunity to feed in their views by other means such as setting their views out in writing.

11.14 The Review Panel is under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses but may do so and/ or may take written statements into account. Should either party wish to bring witnesses to the hearing, the names of these witnesses shall be provided to the Clerk to the Academy Council at least 5 school days before the hearing. The party calling the witness is responsible for informing the witness of the time, date and location of the hearing.

- 11.15 Where a pupil under the age of 18 is invited to be a witness, the party seeking to bring the witness should first seek the consent of that pupil's parents and confirm to the Clerk that consent has been given. The Clerk should ensure that the parents are invited to accompany their child to the hearing.
- 11.16 Every effort will be made to arrange the meeting for a time and date that is convenient to all parties but in compliance with the relevant statutory time limits set out above.
- 11.17 The Clerk to the Academy Council is responsible for ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made where needed to support the attendance and contribution of all parties at the meeting (for example where a parent or pupil has a disability in relation to mobility or communication that impacts upon their ability to attend the meeting or to make representations).
- 11.18 The Review Panel meeting can now be held via the use of remote access (for example, live video link) for suspension and permanent exclusions if requested by the parents, provided certain criteria are satisfied. See National Guidance for further details.
- 11.19 The Virtual School Head and the pupil's social worker can join the Review Panel meeting by remote access.

#### **Information to be provided in advance**

- 11.20 As soon as reasonably practicable and in any event at least 5 school days before the hearing, the Head and parents of the suspended/excluded pupil shall be sent written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing, together with brief details of the Review Panel members who will be present.
- 11.21 The Head and the parents of the suspended/excluded pupil should provide to the Clerk the names of all witnesses and copies of all documents, written evidence or information which they wish the Panel to consider at least 7 school days before the hearing. The Panel reserves the right not to consider any documentation presented by either party less than 5 school days prior to the hearing. This information and copies of these documents shall be provided to the other party at least 5 school days before the hearing.

#### **Conduct of the hearing**

- 11.22 The Clerk to the Academy Council shall ensure that clear minutes are taken of the hearing as a record of the evidence that was considered by the Review Panel. Copies of these minutes shall be made available to all parties on request.
- 11.23 The hearing will be conducted in such a way as to ensure that all those present have the opportunity to present their case, ask questions and make comments in an appropriate manner. The meeting will allow for:
- The Head to explain the reasons for the suspension/exclusion and the parents to set out their response
  - The opportunity for both parties to ask questions of each other about the suspension/exclusion

- Panel members to have an opportunity to question both the Head and the parents
- Any party to call witnesses (subject to the prior approval of the Panel) and all parties having the right to question any witnesses
- Final statements by both the Head and the parents

11.24 When establishing the facts in relation to a suspension or exclusion decision the Review Panel must apply the civil standard of proof; i.e. 'on the balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that a fact is true rather than the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

11.25 The Review Panel should consider:

- whether the Head's decision to exclude the pupil was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair, taking account of the head teacher's legal duties
- the interests and circumstances of the suspended/excluded pupil, including the circumstances in which the pupil was suspended or permanently excluded
- the interests of other pupils and people working at the school

11.26 After the hearing all other parties will withdraw, the Review Panel will then consider their decision and inform all parties of their decision in writing without delay and within at least 5 school days. The Panel can (by a majority if necessary):

- Uphold the suspension or exclusion; or
- Direct reinstatement of the pupil immediately or on a particular date

11.27 The Panel must write to the parents without delay ensuring that the reasons for their decision are set out in sufficient detail to enable all parties to understand why the decision was made.

11.28 When the Panel upholds a suspension or exclusion, it must draw the parent's attention to their right to appeal to an Independent Review Panel and the free sources of information to enable them to decide whether to do this.

11.29 In the case of a permanent exclusion the letter to the parents must also include the prescribed information as set out in the Department for Education guidance, including the deadlines for lodging an appeal and the parents' right to have an SEN expert appointed to attend the Panel.

11.30 When a permanent exclusion has been upheld then the Head must remove the pupil's name from Academy's admissions register if 15 days have elapsed since the parents were notified and no appeal has been lodged or they have indicated in writing they do not wish to appeal. If an appeal is lodged the pupil must remain on the register until the appeal has been reviewed using code B or D if they are attending alternative provision and E if they are not.

11.31 In cases where the Academy Council considers parents' representations but does not have the power to direct a pupil's reinstatement, they should consider whether it would be appropriate to place a note of their findings on the pupil's educational record.

## 12. Independent Review Panels

- 12.1 If applied for by parents within the legal time frame, the Trust must, at their own expense, arrange for an independent review panel hearing to review the decision of an Academy Council not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil.
- 12.2 If this situation were to arise the Head must immediately contact DBAT's Governance Officer who will arrange for the panel to be set up.
- 12.3 Detailed guidance on the operation of Independent Review Panels is set out in Part 8 of the DfE Guidance "Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement" (September 2023).
- 12.4 The Independent Review Panel meeting can now be held via the use of remote access (for example, live video link) for suspension and permanent exclusions if requested by the parents, provided certain criteria are satisfied. See National Guidance for further details.

## 13. Monitoring exclusions

- 13.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 Academies must not discriminate against pupils. Certain groups of pupils appear to be statistically more likely to be suspended or excluded. It is very important for Academies to keep and analyse accurate data about the pupils they exclude.
- 13.2 The Head should use the termly reports to present to the Academy Council an annual analysis of suspensions/exclusions with an explanation of ways any groups might appear to be over-represented. This will provide important evidence for the Academy's compliance with the Equality Act.

## 14. Our Ethos and Values

As identified at the opening of this policy, our structure and approach here is underpinned by our Christian ethos and values, focused on an ethos that is both distinctive and inclusive.

In our adoption and subsequent adaptation of this policy we have asked ourselves two clear questions: "Is this policy and practice underpinned by our vision and values?" and "What is the impact of our vision and values on those subject to the policy?". This is a key focus of our ongoing development of policy and practice.

## Appendix A: Roles and responsibilities

### Head

- Make every effort to ensure everything possible has been done to support prior to exclusion/suspension
- Only the Head (or Acting Head) can make the decision to exclude or suspend a pupil
- Contact HDL wherever possible or practical to discuss a suspension. Share relevant paperwork with the HDL
- Contact EDL or CEO before making a decision to permanently exclude
- Must notify parent(s) of exclusion/ suspension without delay (by telephone then in writing (using template letters)
- Can cancel any exclusion in line with new statutory guidance
- Inform AC and LA without delay (and 'home' LA if different) of all suspensions (regardless of length) and permanent exclusions
- Arrange alternative provision where necessary and in line with policy requirements, and update school register accordingly
- Provide the Clerk with all information required to enable the review panel to take place
- Produce the pack of supporting evidence no later than 5 school days before the meeting and inform Clerk that it is ready
- Ensure hard-copy pack is sent to parent(s)
- Attend the panel meeting
- Arrange for response letter to be sent hard-copy to parent(s)
- Inform LA of the decision within 5 days and ensure the pupil's school record and register is updated accordingly

### Executive Director of Learning

- Consider the case for permanent exclusion in advance of final decision being made. (This may also be the CEO)

### Hub Director of Learning

- Discuss cases for suspension with the Headteacher and ensure all possible alternatives have been explored. If it is not possible to do this before the suspension is instituted, this discussion should take place as soon as possible afterwards.
- Provide support where necessary to Head around the process, ensuring the Head is acting lawfully and in line with DBAT policy

### Panel Chair

- Ensure they fully understand the role and remit of the panel
- Review all evidence in advance of meeting
- Chair the panel meeting
- With other panel members, consider the evidence and decide whether to uphold the exclusion/ suspension or to reinstate the pupil
- With support of the Clerk, draft the response letter (use template letters available)
- Maintain confidentiality

### Panel Member

- Ensure they fully understand the role and remit of the panel
- Review all evidence in advance of meeting
- Take an active part in the panel meeting
- With other panel members, consider the evidence and decide whether to uphold the exclusion/ suspension or to reinstate the pupil
- Maintain confidentiality

### Clerk

- Convene a review panel within 15 school days (use template letters)
- Circulate pack to panel and parent(s) at least 5 days before the meeting
- Take minutes of review panel meeting
- Support Chair to draft response letter (use template letters available)
- Circulate response letter to parent(s) and Head
- Save minutes confidentially and circulate to panel, Head or parent(s) if requested
- Inform DBAT's Governance Officer immediately if an Independent Review Panel is requested by parent(s) (the review must be within 15 school days of receiving the letter)

## Appendix B: Timeline

Use the suspension/exclusions policy and this timeline to plot the course of the process.

Activity	Date by which this must happen	Additional notes
Consideration of suspension: Head discusses case with HDL		Before decision to suspend, where possible; if not, as soon as possible afterwards
Consideration of permanent exclusion		MUST get agreement of EDL/CEO in advance of decision to permanently exclude
Suspension/Exclusion is decided by the Headteacher after full consideration of the facts and all possible alternatives		
Head notifies parents		In person (if not possible, by telephone) and then in writing without delay (same day)
Head notifies relevant LA		Without delay using LA processes
Head notifies Chair of Academy Council, Clerk and Chair of Board of Trustees (Not required for all categories of exclusion/suspension – see policy for more detail)		Without delay via email and using online form
Clerk organises review panel		Within 15 school days of suspension/exclusion
Pack is sent to panel and parents		5 school days before the review panel
Panel writes to all parties to inform of the decision		Without delay and within at least 5 school days of panel meeting
Parent may appeal to Independent Review Panel		No later than 15 school days of receiving the decision letter



## Appendix C: Suggested evidence requirements for panel hearing

- Evidence must be collated with numbered pages, sections, and a list of contents.
- Documents included must indicate the name and role of staff completing the document, the name of the pupil and dated.
- Supporting evidence from school must be sent to all parties at least 5 school days in advance.
- Please ensure all electronic documents (e.g. downloaded from school sites) can be accessed and read by panel members.
- Packs should be viewed by the Hub Director of Learning before circulation.

A copy of the invitation letter(s) sent to parents confirming the date and time of the panel meeting, together with a copy of the agenda notifying the names of the panel members.	
Copies of the letter(s) advising the parent/carer of the permanent exclusion/ suspension – this must be sent to everyone with parental responsibility, even if the child does not live with them. A note should be added if the parent/carer was also telephoned.	
A copy of the Head’s report giving details of the reason for the permanent exclusion/ suspension, including a summary of their time at the school and timeline of all relevant interventions.	
Witness Statements (if there are any) from staff and students re. any significant incidents. CCTV footage or photographic evidence may also be provided	
Evidence that the pupil’s views have been sought – this could be through a transcript of an interview with the pupil or a written statement – these should be signed and dated by the pupil.	
Provide details of the pupil’s Special Education Needs or disabilities, or any other risk factors which may be contributing to the pupil’s behaviour. If the child has an EHCP, include a copy of the plan and details of any reviews. OR A statement, from the SEND lead, that the pupil does not have SEND.	
Copies of any documented support plans, including regular reviews, e.g. Individual Education Plans, Pastoral Support Plans, Behaviour Support Plans. Records of any intervention strategies and the reasonable adjustments implemented by the school, including records of the outcomes and impacts, and evidence that the strategies have been regularly reviewed.	
Details of any reintegration meetings following suspensions – include minutes and actions from the meeting, when they were reviewed, what impact this had.	
Details of other agencies that have been involved - include copies of any assessment reports or recommendations, e.g. Ed Psych, S2S, SRB Outreach Teams or Inclusion Team reports	
A copy of the behaviour log, especially if there has been a history of persistent disruptive behaviour etc. Copies of any ABC reports (if available) to identify triggers.	
Information on previous suspensions and copies of the notification letters.	
Copies of any Risk Assessments and Risk Management Plans, including reviews.	

Information on whether a Family Support Plan or referral to Early Help has been offered or implemented and details of any other support given.	
Attendance reports – where attendance has been low, how has it been addressed? I.e. copies of letters sent home; SAM minutes if relevant to the child and situation	
Copies of all relevant policies, e.g. Behaviour; SEND Policy; Drugs Policy; Safeguarding Policy; Anti-Bullying Policy	

## Appendix D: Supporting documentation

- 1) Template letters and guidance documents for Heads, Clerks and panel members can be found on Policy Connect: [Exclusion and Suspension](#)
- 2) Links to relevant websites and resources:
  - Most recent statutory guidance:  
[Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement](#)
  - Guidance for schools regarding behaviour policies:  
[Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff 2022](#)
  - Guidance for parents regarding behaviour, suspension and exclusion:  
[A guide for parents on school behaviour and exclusion](#)

## History of most recent Policy changes

Date	Page	Change(s) made	Origin of Change (e.g. TU request, change in legislation)
Oct 2021	All	Changes to names for Head of School, Academy Council Updates from 2017 guidance	DBAT Scheme of Delegation DfE Guidance 2017
Jan 2022	P2, section 1.4	Changed to reflect approach and language outlines in Behaviour policy	Behaviour policy 2021 and Pivotal approach to language used
	Page 2/3, section 1.5 Page 4, section 3	Changed to reflect Scheme of Delegation – only CEO/ EDL can approve exclusion	Scheme of Delegation 2021
	All	Change ‘governors’ to ‘Academy Council members’	Consistency of terminology
	Page 3, section 1.5	Added phrase to highlight that Local Authority procedures must also be followed in terms of involvement and notification	DfE Guidance 2017
	Page 4, section 1.9	Added clause which states that Fixed Term Exclusion is the same as suspension	DfE terminology change September 2021
	Page 13	Level of policy set to Level 1	CEO guidance
June 2023	Section 10	Change ‘governing body’ to ‘Academy Council’	Consistency of terminology
	Section 3	Policy scope and aims set out	Greater clarity and in line with DfE Guidance 2023
	Section 4	More detail provided concerning ‘off-rolling’	Greater detail in line with DfE Guidance 2022
	Section 4.1	Where Social Worker is mentioned, Virtual School Head (VSH) also added	Update in line with DfE Guidance 2023
	Section 9	Reintegration strategy and reintegration meeting added	Policy detail to reflect practice
	Whole document	Remove references to Principal and change to Head Change references to Main Board to Board of Trustees	In line with current role titles
	Whole document	Reference to DfE Guidance September 2023	Updated DfE guidance
	Appendices	Included to provide further guidance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Timeline</li> <li>• Checklist for evidence pack</li> <li>• Supporting documentation</li> </ul>	Further support and guidance
September 2023	Whole document	Suspension used throughout replacing ‘fixed term exclusion’	New guidance

	Section 3.2	Updated to include Interim Head	To reflect current role titles
	Section 3.5 and whole document	Referral to updated DfE policy guidance (September 2023)	New DfE guidance (September 2023)
	Section 4	Added definitions of suspension and exclusion	For clarity
	Section 4.3, 7.1 and Appendix A	Updated guidance on who can approve suspensions and exclusions	To reflect current Scheme of Delegation and for clarification of role of HDL and EDL
	Section 6.5	Inclusion of list of possible reasons for suspension/exclusion from National Guidance	The list was referred to in Section 5 but had not been included.
	Section 7.2 – 7.3	Updated guidance on who to inform, including that LA is now required to be informed of ALL suspensions regardless of length (and permanent exclusions as previously)	New guidance and to reflect practice
	Section 9 and Appendix A	Cancelling a suspension/exclusion	New section reflecting latest guidance
	11.3 – 11.4	Clarification of the responsibilities of the Academy Council	For clarity
	11.18 and 12.4	Option for remote meetings by parental request	New guidance
	Appendix D	Links to relevant statutory and supporting guidance	Further support and guidance
	Whole document	Suspension used throughout replacing 'fixed term exclusion'	New guidance
June 2024	Whole document	Footer updated with new registered address	Change in registered address

Policy Owner	<b>Education Directorate</b>
Policy Approval	<b>Education Committee</b>
Date Adopted	<b>October 2021</b>
Review Date	<b>September 2023</b>
Next Review Date	<b>September 2024</b>
Level	<b>Level 1</b>
<i>DBAT Policy levels:</i>	
LEVEL 1	DBAT policy for adoption (no changes can be made by the Academy Council; the Academy Council must adopt the policy)
LEVEL 2	DBAT policy for adoption and local approval, with areas for the Academy to update regarding local practice (the main body of the policy cannot be changed)

LEVEL 3	DBAT model policy that the Academy can adopt if it wishes
LEVEL 4	Local policy to be approved by the Academy Council