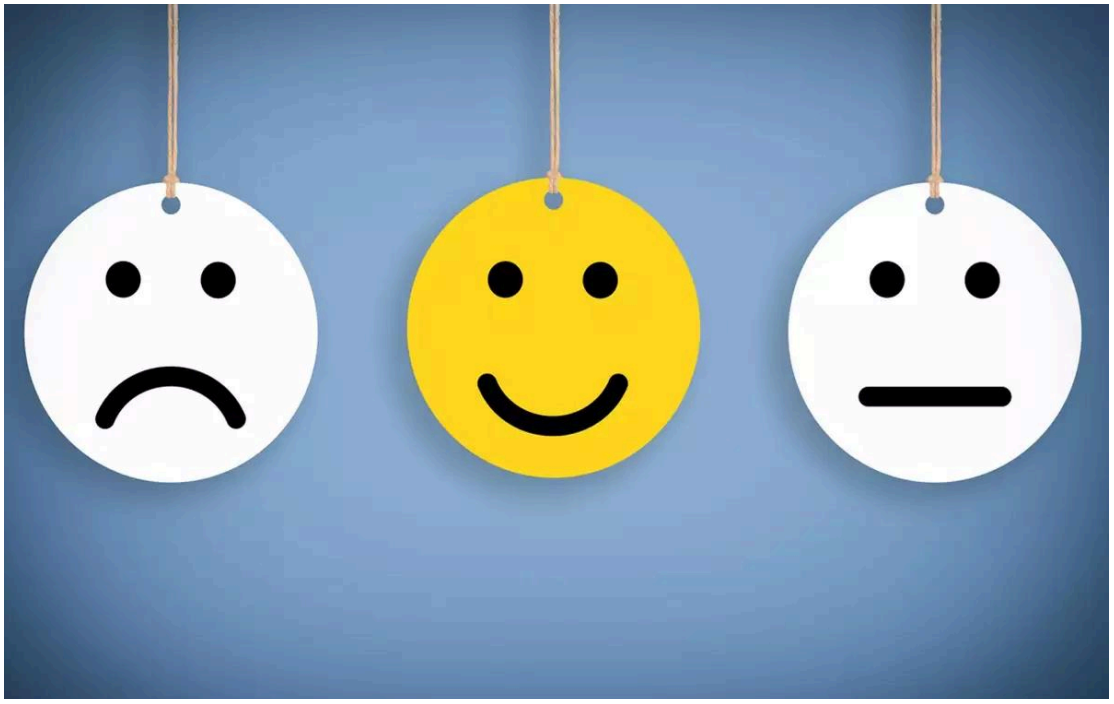
Suspension and Exclusion Policy



The Stour Federation

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1. INTRODUCTION AND CORE PRINCIPLES

We believe that in order for our children to achieve their maximum potential, and to enable effective teaching and learning to take place, the highest standard of behaviour in all aspects of school life is essential. Each member of staff has responsibility for upholding standards of behaviour in our schools, both within their classroom, around our school sites and whilst supervising children outside of our schools, as well as implementing each school's individual behaviour policy fairly and consistently.

Our expected standards of behaviour are clearly communicated to children, staff and parents in the relevant sections of behaviour policies and home-school agreements for individual schools.

This policy outlines the statutory framework and trust-wide procedures governing suspensions, permanent exclusions, off-site directions, managed moves, and safeguarding separations across all academies within The Stour Federation Multi Academy Trust.

Our vision is for all staff, children, and families to learn, grow, and succeed together. Good discipline in schools is essential to ensure that all children can benefit from the opportunities provided by education. The Trust fully supports headteachers in using suspension and permanent exclusion as essential behaviour management tools where warranted to maintain a calm, safe, and supportive environment.

This policy must be read alongside the following statutory guidance, trust policies, and local authority frameworks:

- DfE Statutory Guidance: Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (2026).
- DfE Statutory Guidance: Behaviour in Schools guidance (2024).
- DfE Statutory Guidance: Mobile Phones in Schools guidance (2026).
- DfE Statutory Guidance: Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- DfE Statutory Guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026).
- DfE Statutory Guidance: Working together to improve school attendance (2026).
- Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Managed Moves and Off-Site Direction Guidance.
- Warwickshire Education Entitlement Team (EET) Suspension & Exclusion Local Offer.
- Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy, Attendance Policy, Mobile Phone and Wearable Technology Policy.
- Individual School Behaviour Policies.

Any decision of a Headteacher, Local Academy Council (LAC), or Independent Review Panel (IRP) must be made in line with the principles of administrative law - namely that the decision is:

- **Lawful:** Complying with all legal duties under the Education Act 2002, School Discipline Regulations 2012 (as amended), Equality Act 2010, and Children and Families Act 2014.
- **Reasonable:** Acting rationally, considering all relevant factors, and disregarding irrelevant matters.
- **Procedurally Fair:** Following clear, unbiased, and transparent procedures, allowing representations, and adhering to natural justice.

- **Proportionate:** Proportionate to the severity of the misbehaviour and used as a last resort in permanent exclusion cases.

When establishing facts in relation to a suspension or permanent exclusion decision, the Headteacher must apply the civil standard of proof - 'on the balance of probabilities'. This means that the Headteacher should accept that an incident occurred if it is more likely that it happened than that it did not happen. The criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt' does not apply.

2. HEADTEACHER POWERS AND DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

Only the Headteacher, Acting Headteacher, or Head of School (by virtue of Regulation 21 of the School Discipline Regulations 2012) has the legal authority to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil on disciplinary grounds. This power cannot be delegated to deputy headteachers or other senior leaders.

Factors to Consider Before Making a Decision
Before deciding whether to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, the Headteacher must:

- **Consider Facts & Evidence:** Conduct a thorough investigation, gather written witness statements, and analyze all available physical or digital evidence.
- **Pupil Voice:** Allow the pupil to give their version of events, considering their age, understanding, and any communication needs.
- **Provocation Check:** Assess whether the misbehaviour was provoked (e.g. racial or sexual harassment, bullying).
- **SEND & Vulnerabilities:** Evaluate whether underlying SEND, mental health, or safeguarding vulnerabilities contributed to the behaviour.
- **Graduated Response:** Review prior interventions, pastoral support plans, and multi-agency assessments.

Cancellation of Exclusions (Rescinding an Exclusion)
The Headteacher has the statutory power to cancel any suspension or permanent exclusion that has already begun (or has not yet begun), provided the Local Academy Council (LAC) discipline committee has not yet met to consider whether the pupil should be reinstated.

Statutory Protocol for Cancelled Exclusions
Where an exclusion is cancelled:

1. The Headteacher must notify the parents, the Local Academy Council, the Local Authority (WCC EET), and (where applicable) the Social Worker and Virtual School Head (VSH) without delay. The notice must state the specific reasons for cancellation.
2. Written cancellation notices may only be delivered electronically if parents have provided explicit prior written agreement.
3. Parents must be offered an immediate meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the circumstances surrounding the cancellation.
4. The pupil must be allowed back into school without delay.
5. Any days spent out of school prior to cancellation count towards the maximum 45 school days permitted in a single academic year.
6. Headteachers must report all cancelled exclusions to the LAC termly.

3. SUSPENSION PROCEDURES AND EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

A suspension is a temporary removal of a pupil from school premises on disciplinary grounds. A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year.

Key Suspension Rules

- Suspensions can be for full days or parts of a day (e.g. lunchtime suspensions count as 0.5 school days).
- The law does not allow for extending a suspension or 'converting' a suspension into a permanent exclusion. If further evidence comes to light, a second suspension or permanent exclusion may be issued to begin immediately after the first period ends.
- During the first 5 school days of a suspension, the Headteacher must ensure work is set and marked. Accessible online pathways (e.g., Google Classroom, Oak National Academy) should be utilised.
- For suspensions exceeding 5 consecutive school days, the LAC has a statutory duty to arrange suitable full-time Alternative Provision (AP) starting no later than the 6th school day.
- For Looked-After Children (LAC) and pupils with an allocated social worker, joint school/LA coordination for AP must commence from Day 1 wherever possible.

Attendance Registration Coding

Schools must maintain accurate attendance registers in compliance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024:

- **Code D (Dual Registered):** Used when a pupil attends alternative provision at another school where they are dual-registered.
- **Code B (Off-Site Educational Activity):** Used when attending approved off-site educational activities (non-school providers).
- **Code E (Exclusion Absence):** Used when a pupil is suspended or permanently excluded and no AP is yet in place.

4. PERMANENT EXCLUSION, SAFEGUARDING SEPARATIONS AND OFF-ROLLING

A permanent exclusion is a final resort, used only when all other preventative strategies have failed or for a single extraordinary breach.

Statutory criteria for Permanent Exclusion

The decision to permanently exclude a pupil can only be taken:

1. In response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's positive behaviour policy; AND
2. Where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

Examples of serious misbehaviour include (non-exhaustive): physical assault against a pupil or adult; verbal abuse or threatening behaviour; use or threat of an offensive weapon or prohibited item; bullying; racist, sexual, disability, or homophobic abuse.

Separation of Pupils for Safeguarding Purposes (KCSiE)

Under the July 2026 DfE Statutory Guidance and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), schools have formal recognition for the temporary, non-disciplinary physical separation of pupils following allegations of child-on-child harm, sexual violence, or harassment.

Key Statutory Rules for Safeguarding Separations:

- Physical separation is NOT an exclusion on disciplinary grounds.
- Under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to arrange suitable education for the separated pupil if the school or parent does not do so.
- The Headteacher, in conjunction with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), must notify parents and the LAC without delay. Separation must be essential, time-limited, and regularly reviewed.
- Schools must explicitly document compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010.

Unlawful Off-Rolling Restrictions
The Stour Federation Multi Academy Trust strictly prohibits off-rolling. Ofsted defines off-rolling as "the practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the school rather than the pupil."

Unlawful off-rolling practices include:

- Pressuring parents to electively home educate (EHE) or transfer schools under threat of permanent exclusion.
- Placing pupils on part-time timetables for behavioural management purposes.
- Moving pupils to off-site AP when not in their best educational interests.
- Sending pupils home informally ('cooling off' periods) without registering a formal suspension.

5. PREVENTATIVE MEASURES: OFF-SITE DIRECTION AND MANAGED MOVES

Before considering permanent exclusion, Headteachers must evaluate preventative behavioural interventions.

Off-Site Direction Framework
Off-site direction is a temporary measure governed by Section 29A Education Act 2002 and The Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) (Application to Academies and PRUs) Regulations 2026.

- Off-site direction must be used solely to improve future behaviour, never as a sanction or punishment for past misconduct.
- LACs must provide written notice to parents (and LA if the pupil holds an EHCP) at least 2 school days prior to commencement. Notice must detail address, contact person, placement duration, objectives, and morning/afternoon session times.
- Pupils are recorded using Code D on the attendance register.
- Written invitations to review meetings must be sent at least 6 days prior to the meeting. Written decision notices must be issued within 6 days post-review.
- Parents or the LA (for EHCP pupils) may request a review in writing, which must be held unless a review occurred in the preceding 10 weeks.

Managed Moves Framework
A managed move is a voluntary, planned 4-way agreement between the home school, receiving school, admission authority, and parents that leads to a permanent transfer.

- Must be agreed by parents, home headteacher, receiving headteacher, and admission authority.
- The pupil remains on the home school's roll until the managed move becomes permanent.

- If a pupil holds an EHCP, the LA SENDAR team must be consulted prior to proposing a move, and formal statutory EHCP amendment procedures must be followed.
- Schools must complete WCC Annex A (Request Form), Annex B (Parental Consent), Annex C (Pupil Voice), and Annex D (Managed Move Plan).
- Trial managed moves or trial admissions are explicitly prohibited.

6. PUPILS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISIBILITIES (SEND)

The Trust has statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 (reasonable adjustments) and Children and Families Act 2014 ('best endeavours').

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
Where a pupil with an EHCP demonstrates persistent disruptive behaviour or is at risk of suspension/exclusion:

1. The school must contact WCC SENDAR at an early stage.
2. The school must consider requesting an early statutory EHCP Annual Review prior to making any exclusion or managed move decision.
3. Multi-agency support packages and alternative provision placements must be evaluated.

SEND Pupils Without an EHCP
For pupils with identified SEND but no EHCP, the school must review current support packages with external specialists (e.g. WCC Specialist Teaching Service) and consider requesting a statutory EHC needs assessment.

7. SOCIAL WORKERS, LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC AND PLAC)

Education is a vital protective factor for vulnerable children. Headteachers must balance safety with protective oversight.

- Whenever a decision to suspend, exclude, or direct off-site is made, the Headteacher must inform the allocated Social Worker and Virtual School Head (VSH) without delay.
- Social workers and VSHs must be notified as soon as a managed move is contemplated.
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Looked-After Children must be reviewed termly, and an interim PEP review must be convened immediately upon exclusion risk.

8. COMMUNICATING DECISIONS AND WARWICKSHIRE WORKFLOWS

All notifications must be issued without delay in person or via telephone, followed immediately by statutory written notice.

Letters to Parents and Carers
Warwickshire Local Authority provides model letter templates for Headteachers which must be used in their communications with parents. These can be found at
https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/school-attendance/school-exclusions/3

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Submission Workflows
The Stour Federation Multi Academy Trust adheres strictly to WCC Education Entitlement Team (EET) submission rules:

1. All suspensions and permanent exclusions must be notified to WCC immediately via the online Exclusion/Suspension Notification form.
2. On Day 1 of a permanent exclusion, the school must submit a fully completed Primary or Secondary Learner Information Form (LIF) alongside a copy of the exclusion letter to exclusions@warwickshire.gov.uk.

9. LOCAL ACADEMY COUNCIL GOVERNANCE AND REVIEW

The Local Academy Council holds school leaders accountable for lawful exclusion usage.

Category	LAC Meeting Trigger	Statutory Deadline
Permanent Exclusion OR Suspension > 15 days in a term OR missing a Public Exam/SAT	Mandatory meeting required in all cases.	Within 15 school days of notification
Suspension 5.5 to 15 school days in a single term	Meeting required ONLY if parents submit written representations	Within 50 school days of notification
Suspension 1 to 5 school days in a single term	LAC must consider representations; cannot direct reinstatement	No statutory meeting required

All LAC reinstatement meetings and Independent Review Panels (IRPs) must be held in person as standard.

Remote access meetings (live video link) are permitted ONLY if formally requested in writing by parents or adult pupils AND the LAC is satisfied that the meeting can be conducted fairly and transparently.

If internet/technological failures occur or safeguarding concerns arise, the meeting MUST revert to an in-person format immediately.

Social Workers and Virtual School Heads retain the statutory right to join meetings remotely regardless of whether the main meeting is held in person.

10. INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL (IRP) AND FINANCIAL ADJUSTMENTS

If the LAC upholds a permanent exclusion, parents have the right to apply for an Independent Review Panel (IRP) within 15 school days.

The IRP consists of 3 or 5 members (Lay Chair, Current/Former Governor with 12 months' service in the last 5 years, and Current/Former Headteacher within the last 5 years). All panel members and clerks must have completed statutory training within the preceding 2 years.

If an Independent Review Panel quashes the LAC's decision and directs reconsideration, and the Local Academy Council decides NOT to offer reinstatement to the pupil within 10 school days of notification, the IRP panel WILL order a financial readjustment / payment of £4,000 against the academy trust, payable directly to Warwickshire County Council.

11. REINTEGRATION STRATEGIES

Following any suspension, off-site direction, cancelled exclusion, or safeguarding separation, the academy must implement a robust reintegration strategy.

Reintegration meetings must offer a fresh start, foster belonging, and establish clear behavioral expectations.

Part-time timetables must not be used to manage behaviour, must be time-limited, and require formal parent agreement.

A pupil cannot be prevented from returning to the mainstream classroom simply because parents are unable or unwilling to attend a reintegration meeting.