



Suspensions & Exclusions Policy

Reviewed by Head Teacher: Complete

Reviewed by Chair of Governors: Complete

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1. Purpose and aims

Beechview Academy is committed to providing a calm, safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment in which every pupil can learn and thrive. Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious disciplinary measures. They will be used lawfully, fairly, consistently and proportionately, while safeguarding the rights and welfare of pupils, staff and the wider school community.

- maintain the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community and protect pupils' education from serious disruption;
- reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion through high-quality behaviour support, early intervention and appropriate reasonable adjustments;
- ensure decisions are evidence-based, transparent and procedurally fair;
- give particular consideration to pupils with SEND, pupils with a social worker, looked-after and previously looked-after children, and other pupils who may be vulnerable to exclusion;
- ensure that no pupil is removed from school informally or unlawfully.

2. Statutory and Trust framework

This policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy, SEND Policy, Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy and Attendance Policy. It has regard to:

- Education Act 2002, including section 51A, and Education Act 2011;
- School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) (Application to Academies and Pupil Referral Units and Minor Amendments) Regulations 2026;
- DfE statutory guidance: Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement, effective 26 July 2026;
- Marlow Education Trust Framework for Exclusions and Suspensions Policy.

3. Definitions

Suspension. A temporary removal of a pupil from the school for disciplinary reasons. A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year.

Permanent exclusion. The most serious sanction, resulting in the pupil no longer being permitted to attend the school, subject to the statutory review process.

Internal removal / internal suspension. A school-based behaviour response in which a pupil is educated away from their usual class. This is not a statutory suspension and must be used in accordance with the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Off-site direction. A temporary placement at another educational setting to improve behaviour. This is distinct from suspension and permanent exclusion and must be arranged and reviewed in accordance with current legislation and statutory guidance.

Managed move. A voluntary, permanent transfer to another school, agreed by all parties and used only where it is in the pupil's best interests. It must never be used to avoid the statutory exclusion process.

4. Core principles

- Fairness and consistency - decisions will be based on clear evidence and due process.
- Safeguarding first - the welfare and safety of the pupil, other pupils and staff will be considered.
- Inclusion and equity - the school will consider SEND, disability, social care involvement, disadvantage and other relevant vulnerabilities.
- Transparency - pupils and parents/carers will receive clear information about decisions, reasons and rights of representation/review.
- Proportionality - suspension or permanent exclusion will be used only where warranted by the seriousness or persistence of behaviour.
- Lawfulness - informal exclusions, sending pupils home to 'cool off', or pressuring parents to remove a pupil from roll are not permitted.

5. Authority to suspend or permanently exclude

Only the Headteacher can suspend or permanently exclude a pupil on disciplinary grounds. In the Headteacher's absence, the person formally acting as Headteacher may exercise this power. A decision may relate to behaviour inside or outside school where there is a sufficient connection to the school and its behaviour policy.

6. Grounds for a decision

The Headteacher may suspend or permanently exclude a pupil in response to a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy, and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others.

Examples of behaviour that may warrant consideration include, but are not limited to:

- serious or repeated physical assault against a pupil or adult;
- serious verbal abuse, threatening behaviour, harassment or bullying, including discriminatory bullying;
- sexual violence, sexual harassment or other serious harmful sexual behaviour;
- possession, supply or misuse of illegal drugs or other prohibited substances;
- possession or use of a weapon or an item intended to cause injury;
- serious damage, arson or theft;
- persistent and defiant behaviour where appropriate support and sanctions have not secured improvement;
- behaviour that presents a significant risk to the pupil's own safety or to others.

This list is illustrative, not exhaustive. Each case will be considered on its individual facts.

7. Decision-making process

Before reaching a decision, the Headteacher will, so far as is reasonable and appropriate:

- ensure that an appropriate investigation has been undertaken;
- consider all available evidence and apply the civil standard of proof - the balance of probabilities;
- give the pupil an opportunity to present their account and take account of their age, understanding and communication needs;
- consider whether the behaviour may have been affected by bullying, harassment, safeguarding concerns, trauma, SEND or disability;
- consider whether reasonable adjustments have been made where the pupil is disabled and whether additional SEND support is required;
- consider relevant preventative and alternative strategies, including pastoral support, targeted intervention, external-agency support, off-site direction or a managed move where appropriate;
- consider the likely impact of the decision on the pupil, alongside the safety, education and welfare of the wider school community;
- record the reasons for the decision and the evidence considered.

A suspension cannot simply be 'converted' into a permanent exclusion. If further evidence arises, any subsequent decision must be made as a separate decision in accordance with the statutory framework.

8. Pupils with SEND and other vulnerable pupils

The school recognises the disproportionate national rates of suspension and permanent exclusion for some groups. The Headteacher will therefore give careful consideration to whether additional support, reasonable adjustments or alternative approaches are appropriate before exclusion, without compromising safety.

- Where a pupil has an EHC plan, the school will consider whether an early annual review should be requested and will involve the local authority where appropriate.
- Where a pupil is receiving SEN support, the school will consider whether provision remains appropriate and whether specialist advice or assessment is required.
- For looked-after children, previously looked-after children and pupils with a social worker, relevant professionals should be involved at the earliest appropriate stage.
- A pupil will not be suspended or permanently excluded simply because the school believes it cannot meet the pupil's SEND.

9. Safeguarding and keeping pupils apart

There may be circumstances in which pupils need to be kept apart for safeguarding reasons. Such arrangements are not to be used as informal exclusions. Any separate educational arrangements will be purposeful, time-limited where appropriate, recorded and reviewed at sufficient intervals to ensure that the education is achieving its objectives and that the pupil is benefiting from it.

10. Notification following suspension or permanent exclusion

The school will notify parents/carers without delay and will confirm the decision in writing. The written notification will include the reason, duration where applicable, the parent's responsibilities during the first five school days, arrangements for education, and the right to make representations and/or seek review.

The Headteacher will notify the Local Governing Body and local authority as required by law and statutory guidance, and will provide information to the Trust in accordance with Trust reporting arrangements. Where relevant, the social worker and/or Virtual School Head will also be informed.

11. Education during a suspension

For the first five school days of a suspension, the school will take reasonable steps to set and mark appropriate work. Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that the pupil is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.

Where a suspension is longer than five school days, the school will arrange suitable full-time education from the sixth school day. The school will communicate the location, start time and other necessary arrangements to parents/carers.

12. Permanent exclusion and alternative provision

Permanent exclusion is a last resort, but may be appropriate for a serious first or one-off offence where the statutory test is met, or following persistent breaches where appropriate support and interventions have not succeeded.

For a permanently excluded pupil, the local authority is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education from the sixth school day after the permanent exclusion takes effect.

13. Cancelling a suspension or permanent exclusion

Where permitted by the statutory framework, the Headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion before the governing board has met to consider whether the pupil should be reinstated. Where a decision is cancelled, the school will follow the statutory notification and record-keeping requirements, including informing relevant parties and offering the pupil an opportunity to return to school.

From the 2026/27 academic year, the school will ensure its management information and census processes accurately record cancellations and review outcomes where required by DfE data collections.

14. Reintegration following suspension

Following a suspension, the school will support a successful return to education. A reintegration meeting will normally be offered and will focus on restoring relationships, reviewing support, identifying barriers and agreeing practical steps to reduce the risk of recurrence. A pupil's return to school will not be made conditional on the parent/carer attending a meeting.

15. Governing board review and reinstatement

The Local Governing Body will fulfil all statutory duties to consider reinstatement. The exact duty and timescale depend on the length and circumstances of the suspension or permanent exclusion. Parents/carers may make representations in all cases. Where the governing board has the power or duty to consider reinstatement, it will act fairly and impartially and will consider whether the Headteacher's decision was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair.

- Permanent exclusions must be considered within the statutory timescale.
- Suspensions totalling more than 15 school days in a term, or which would result in a pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test, trigger the statutory governing board consideration requirements.
- For suspensions totalling more than 5 but not more than 15 school days in a term, the governing board must consider reinstatement if the parent makes representations requesting this.
- For suspensions totalling 5 school days or fewer in a term, the governing board must consider any representations but cannot direct reinstatement.

The governing board will ensure that placements directed off-site to improve behaviour, and separate arrangements used to keep pupils apart for safeguarding purposes, are reviewed at sufficient intervals.

16. Independent review of permanent exclusion

If the governing board upholds a permanent exclusion, parents/carers have the right to request an Independent Review Panel within the statutory deadline. The academy trust is responsible for arranging the panel. Parents may request the attendance of a SEND expert, regardless of whether the school recognises that the pupil has SEND. The governing board's decision letter will explain the process, deadline and available routes for raising discrimination concerns.

17. Pupil movement, off-site direction and managed moves

The school will ensure that any pupil movement is lawful, in the pupil's best interests and not used to avoid the statutory suspension or permanent exclusion process. Off-site direction for the purpose of improving behaviour will follow the legal framework applying to academies from 2026, including appropriate notification, educational planning and regular review. Managed moves will be voluntary and agreed with parents/carers, the receiving school and relevant professionals.

18. Records, monitoring and reporting

The school will maintain accurate, confidential records of suspensions and permanent exclusions, including:

- the reason(s), dates and number of sessions;
- evidence considered and the Headteacher's decision record;
- SEND status and other relevant contextual information;
- notifications, representations, governing board reviews and outcomes;
- any cancellation of a decision and the reason for cancellation;
- alternative provision and reintegration arrangements.

The Headteacher will report suspension and permanent exclusion information termly to the Trust and the Local Governing Body. Leaders and governors will monitor frequency, repeat suspensions, reasons, year groups and patterns by pupil group, including SEND, disadvantage, ethnicity, sex and social care status, and will challenge any disproportionate pattern.

The school will meet DfE school census requirements. From 2026/27 this includes relevant information about governing board and Independent Review Panel reviews, and from spring 2027 cancellation information where applicable.

19. Responsibilities

Headteacher

- make lawful, evidence-based and proportionate decisions;
- consider pupil voice, safeguarding, SEND, equality duties and alternatives;
- ensure prompt statutory notifications and suitable education;
- maintain accurate records and report termly to the Trust and governors.

Local Governing Body

- approve and review this policy annually;
- carry out statutory reinstatement reviews fairly and impartially;
- monitor data and challenge disproportionate patterns;
- assure itself that statutory, safeguarding and equality duties are being met.

Marlow Education Trust

- maintain the Trust framework and support compliance across schools;
- provide training and support for leaders and governors;
- monitor Trust-wide trends and intervene where necessary;
- arrange Independent Review Panels for permanent exclusions where required.

20. Equality, safeguarding and complaints

All decisions under this policy will be made with due regard to the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty, safeguarding duties and the Children and Families Act 2014. Discrimination claims relating to disability may be made to the First-tier Tribunal; other discrimination claims may be made through the appropriate legal route. General complaints about process should follow the school's complaints procedure where they are not matters reserved to the statutory exclusion review process.

21. Review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Local Governing Body and sooner where legislation, DfE statutory guidance or the Marlow Education Trust framework changes.

Appendix 1 - Headteacher decision checklist

- Is there a serious breach or persistent breaches of the Behaviour for Learning Policy?

- Would the pupil remaining in school seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others?
- Has the incident been investigated fairly and is the evidence sufficient on the balance of probabilities?
- Has the pupil's account been heard and recorded?
- Have safeguarding, bullying, discrimination, SEND, disability and reasonable adjustments been considered?
- Have appropriate preventative or alternative strategies been considered?
- Is the proposed sanction proportionate to the circumstances?
- Have all statutory notifications, work/alternative provision and record-keeping arrangements been prepared?

Appendix 2 - Key 2026 updates reflected in this policy

- Uses the current statutory terminology 'suspension' and 'permanent exclusion'.
- Aligns to DfE statutory guidance effective 26 July 2026.
- Reflects the 2026 legislation extending the off-site direction framework for improving behaviour to academies and pupil referral units.
- Adds clearer safeguards around separate arrangements used to keep pupils apart for safeguarding purposes and the need for governing board oversight/review.
- Clarifies cancellation, statutory review and Independent Review Panel processes.
- Strengthens SEND, equality, safeguarding and vulnerable-pupil considerations.
- Updates monitoring to reflect new 2026/27 school census requirements for exclusion reviews and cancellation information.