



# **Bracken Hill School**

## **Exclusion Policy**

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**Policy Type: Whole School**

This policy is reviewed biennially to ensure compliance with current regulations

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## **Introduction**

**The Governors of the school recognise that all staff play a vital role in achieving high standards and providing pupils with the best opportunities matched to their needs.**

The decision to exclude a pupil will be taken in the following circumstances:

- In response to a serious breach of the School's Behaviour Policy.
- If allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

Exclusion is an extreme sanction and is only administered by the Headteacher (or, in their absence, a senior leader acting in that role).

## **Terminology**

- The term 'suspension' is now used in place of 'fixed-term exclusion'.
- The term 'permanent exclusion' remains unchanged.
- The Headteacher has the authority to cancel an exclusion before the Governing Body meets to consider reinstatement. If an exclusion is cancelled, parents, the Governing Body, and the Local Authority must be notified promptly.

## **Rationale**

This policy is underpinned by the shared commitment of all members of the school community to achieve two key aims:

1. To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community and to maintain an appropriate educational environment in which all can learn and succeed.
2. To minimise the need for suspensions and permanent exclusions by implementing appropriate support strategies.

## **Reasons for Suspension or Exclusion**

Exclusion, whether suspension or permanent, may be used for any of the following, all of which constitute examples of unacceptable conduct and are infringements of the school's Behaviour Policy:

- Verbal abuse to staff and others.
- Verbal abuse to pupils.
- Physical abuse or attack on staff.
- Physical abuse or attack on pupils.
- Indecent behaviour.
- Damage to property.
- Misuse of illegal drugs.
- Misuse of other substances.
- Theft.

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- Serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff.
- Sexual abuse or assault.
- Supplying an illegal drug.
- Carrying an offensive weapon.
- Arson.
- Unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported and for which school sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying behaviour.

This is not an exhaustive list, and other serious misbehaviour may result in exclusion.

### **Suspension & Permanent Exclusion Procedure**

Most suspensions are of short duration (usually between one and three days). The Department for Education (DfE) regulations allow the Headteacher to suspend a pupil for one or more fixed periods not exceeding 45 school days in any one academic year.

The Governors have established arrangements to review promptly all permanent exclusions and suspensions exceeding 15 days in a school term or affecting a public examination.

Following a suspension, parents are contacted immediately where possible. A formal letter will be sent providing:

- Details of the suspension and the date it ends.
- Information on the right to make representations to the Governing Body and Local Authority.

A reintegration meeting will be held following a suspension, involving parents/carers, a senior leader, and relevant professionals as needed. Individual support may be provided to help the pupil reintegrate.

During a suspension, parents are responsible for ensuring the pupil is supervised and does not enter school premises.

The Senior Leadership Team will regularly analyse exclusion data to identify trends and ensure appropriate interventions.

### **Permanent Exclusion**

The decision to exclude a student permanently is a serious one. There are two main types of situation in which permanent exclusion may be considered:

- The first is a final, formal step in a concerted process for dealing with disciplinary offences following the use of a wide range of other strategies, which have been used without success. It is an acknowledgement that all available strategies have been exhausted and is used as a last resort. This would include persistent and defiant misbehaviour including bullying (which would include racist or homophobic bullying) or repeated possession and or use of an illegal drug on school premises.
- The second is where there are exceptional circumstances and it is not appropriate to implement other strategies and where it could be appropriate to permanently exclude a student for a first or 'one off' offence. These might include:

- Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff.
- Sexual abuse or assault.
- Supplying an illegal drug.
- Carrying an offensive weapon\*.
- Arson.

*\*Offensive weapons are defined in the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 as “any article made or adapted for causing injury to the person; or intended by the person having it with him for such use by him.”*

The school will consider police involvement for any of the above offences. These instances are not exhaustive but indicate the severity of such offences and the fact that such behaviour seriously affects the discipline and wellbeing of the school.

### **Additional Considerations for Pupils with EHCPs & SEND**

Bracken Hill School is committed to supporting pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), recognising that their behaviour may be linked to their special educational needs.

- Suspensions and exclusions for pupils with EHCPs should be avoided wherever possible.
- Before excluding, the school must review whether the pupil’s needs are being met and consider reasonable adjustments to prevent exclusion.
- The Local Authority and relevant professionals must be consulted before any exclusion of a pupil with an EHCP.
- The SENCO must be involved in all exclusion decisions concerning pupils with EHCPs and ensure:
  - Additional support has been explored.
  - Alternative interventions have been implemented where appropriate.
  - A review of the pupil’s EHCP is considered to better meet their needs and avoid further exclusions.
- If a suspension or permanent exclusion occurs, the Local Authority must be informed immediately to ensure alternative education is arranged.
- For suspensions exceeding five days, the school will work with the Local Authority to provide suitable full-time education from Day 6.

### **Behaviour Outside School**

Pupils’ behaviour outside school on school-related activities (e.g., visits, sports fixtures, work placements) is subject to the school’s Behaviour Policy.

- Poor behaviour in these settings will be dealt with as if it occurred on school premises.
- Behaviour outside school, including in the vicinity of the school or during the journey to and from school, may also result in exclusion if it impacts the school community.

### **Remote Access Meetings**

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- Governing Body meetings and Independent Review Panels (IRPs) may be conducted remotely if requested by parents and where appropriate.
- However, in-person meetings remain the preferred option and will be prioritised unless remote access is necessary and all parties agree.

### **Exercise of Discretion**

In reaching a decision, the Head Teacher will always look at each case on its own merits. Therefore, a tariff system, fixing a standard penalty for a particular action, is both unfair and inappropriate.

In considering whether permanent exclusion is the most appropriate sanction, the Head Teacher will consider:

- the gravity of the incident, or series of incidents, and whether it constitutes a serious breach of the school's Behaviour Policy.
- the effect that the student remaining in the school would have on the education and welfare of other students and staff.

Nonetheless, in the case of a student found in possession of an offensive weapon, whether there is an intention to use it or not, it is the school's usual policy in this particularly serious matter to issue a permanent exclusion.

In line with its statutory duty, these same two tests of appropriateness will form the basis of the deliberations of the Governors' Pupil Discipline Committee, when it meets to consider the Head Teacher's decision to exclude. This Committee will require the Head Teacher to explain the reasons for the decision and will look at appropriate evidence, such as the student's school record, witness statements and the strategies used by the School to support the student prior to exclusion.