

Suspension and exclusion policy

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1. Aims

Church Stretton School is committed to using suspension and permanent exclusion lawfully, reasonably, fairly and proportionately, and to ensuring that every pupil receives education in a safe, calm and supportive environment.

The school aims to:

- apply the statutory suspension and permanent exclusion process fairly and consistently;
- ensure pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors understand the process and their rights and responsibilities;
- protect the education, welfare and safety of pupils and staff;
- use early support, reasonable adjustments and appropriate interventions to reduce the need for exclusion where possible;
- ensure permanent exclusion is used only as a last resort where the statutory test is met;
- avoid unlawful exclusions and off-rolling;
- ensure pupil movement, including off-site direction and managed moves, is used only in accordance with the law and in the pupil's best interests; and
- support successful reintegration following suspension, cancelled exclusion, off-site direction or safeguarding separation.

1.1 Off-rolling and unlawful exclusions

Any time a pupil is made to leave school, or is forbidden from attending school, on disciplinary grounds, the formal statutory exclusion process must be followed. This includes suspensions for part of a school day.

The school will not unlawfully exclude a pupil, including by:

- sending a pupil home for disciplinary reasons without formally recording a suspension, even with parental agreement;
- excluding a pupil because the school feels unable to meet their SEND, because of academic attainment or ability, or because a condition such as attendance at a reintegration meeting has not been met;
- placing a pupil on a part-time timetable for behavioural reasons;
- pressuring a parent to electively home educate or move their child under threat of permanent exclusion;
- moving a pupil to alternative provision where this is not in the pupil's best interests; or
- removing a pupil from the admission register without following the relevant registration requirements.

Any concern that a parent has been pressured into a move or that statutory exclusion procedures have not been followed may be raised through the school's complaints procedure.

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy has been updated with regard to the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement', July 2026, effective from 26 July 2026.

It is informed by the following legislation and statutory frameworks:

- Education Act 2002, including section 51A, as amended by the Education Act 2011;
- School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, including sections 89 and 100;
- Education Act 1996, including sections 19 and 579;
- Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended in 2014 and as modified/amended by the Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) (Application to Academies and Pupil Referral Units and Minor Amendments) Regulations 2026;
- Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) Regulations 2010, as amended and applied to academies and pupil referral units by the 2026 Regulations;
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice;
- Human Rights Act 1998; and
- relevant safeguarding duties, including Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This policy should be read alongside the DfE guidance on Behaviour in Schools, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, Arranging Alternative Provision, and the school's safeguarding and SEND policies.

3. Definitions

- Suspension: exclusion for a fixed period. A suspension may be for one or more fixed periods, including part of a school day, up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year.
- Permanent exclusion: exclusion on disciplinary grounds where the pupil is no longer allowed to attend the school unless reinstated.
- Exclusion: in this policy, a disciplinary suspension or permanent exclusion. It does not include a pupil being kept away from the premises for a non-disciplinary safeguarding reason.
- Parent/carer: any person with parental responsibility and any person who has care of the child. Where practical, all those with parental responsibility should be involved.
- Relevant person: the parent where the pupil is under 18; the excluded pupil where they are aged 18 or over.
- Off-site direction: a temporary requirement for a pupil to attend another education setting to improve future behaviour. It is not a punishment for past misconduct.
- Managed move: a voluntary, planned and permanent transfer to another mainstream school, agreed by all relevant parties and used only where it is in the pupil's best interests.
- Cancelled exclusion: an exclusion cancelled by the headteacher before the governing board has met to consider reinstatement.
- Alternative provision (AP): suitable education arranged away from the school, including provision required from the sixth school day of qualifying suspensions or permanent exclusion.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The headteacher

Only the headteacher (or deputy headteacher in their absence) may suspend or permanently exclude a pupil on disciplinary grounds. Behaviour outside school may be considered where the school's behaviour policy applies.

Any decision must be lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate. When establishing facts, the headteacher will apply the civil standard of proof: on the balance of probabilities.

Before deciding to suspend or permanently exclude, the headteacher will, where appropriate:

- consider all relevant facts and evidence, including any contributing or mitigating factors;
- allow the pupil to give their account and take the pupil's views into account in light of age and understanding;
- support the pupil to express their views through an advocate where needed;
- consider whether SEND, disability, mental health, vulnerability, safeguarding circumstances, a social worker, looked-after status or other relevant factors may have contributed;
- consider the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010, including reasonable adjustments, and its duties under the Children and Families Act 2014;
- consider whether appropriate support and alternative strategies have been tried or are appropriate; and
- take account of the school's duty of care when sending a pupil home.

4.2 Suspension

Suspension may be used as an essential behaviour-management tool where warranted. Where suspensions become regular, the headteacher will consider whether suspension alone is effective and what additional strategies or support are required.

The total period of suspension must not exceed 45 school days in one academic year. The school will maintain a reliable record of this total, including relevant suspensions received at another school where known.

A suspension cannot simply be extended or converted into a permanent exclusion. Exceptionally, where further evidence comes to light following investigation and the headteacher determines that the initial sanction was insufficient, a further suspension may be issued to begin immediately after the first ends, or a permanent exclusion may be issued to begin immediately after the suspension ends. Each decision must be made and notified separately in accordance with the statutory process.

4.3 Permanent exclusion

A permanent exclusion will only be taken:

- in response to a serious breach 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 the pupil or others, including staff or pupils.

Permanent exclusion will be used only as a last resort.

4.4 Informing parents/carers

Where a pupil is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the headteacher will seek to inform parents/carers as early as reasonably possible so that factors affecting behaviour and further support can be considered.

When an exclusion is imposed, parents/carers will be informed without delay of the decision, period and reason(s), and will receive written notification without delay. The written notice will include, as applicable:

- the reason(s) for the suspension or permanent exclusion;
- the length of a suspension or the fact that the exclusion is permanent;
- the right to make representations to the governing board and how to do so;
- where a governing board meeting is required, the right to attend, be represented at their own expense and bring a friend;
- the pupil's right to be involved where appropriate to age and understanding;
- the right to request remote access to a governing board meeting and how to make the request;
- for a pupil of compulsory school age, the parent's duty during the first five school days to ensure the pupil is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, and the possible consequences of failing to comply; and
- details of alternative provision where arranged, including start date, times, address and reporting arrangements, or these details as soon as they are available within the statutory timescale.

4.5 Informing the governing board, local authority, social worker and Virtual School Head

The headteacher will notify the governing board without delay of:

- any permanent exclusion;
- any suspension that would result in the pupil being suspended for more than five school days in a term;
- any exclusion that would result in the pupil missing a public examination or National Curriculum test; and
- any cancelled exclusion, including the reason for cancellation.

The local authority will be notified without delay of every suspension and permanent exclusion, regardless of length. For a permanent exclusion of a pupil who lives in another local authority, the pupil's home authority will also be informed without delay.

Where a pupil has a social worker, or is looked after, the social worker and/or Virtual School Head (VSH) will be informed as early as possible where the pupil is at risk of exclusion and without delay when an exclusion decision is made. They will be invited to relevant governing board meetings.

4.6 Cancelling an exclusion

The headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion that has begun or has not yet begun, but only before the governing board has met to consider reinstatement. On cancellation:

- parents/carers, the governing board, local authority and, where relevant, social worker and VSH will be notified without delay and given the reason;
- the governing board's duty to consider reinstatement ceases;
- the pupil will be allowed back into school without delay;
- parents/carers will be offered a meeting with the headteacher to discuss the circumstances, arranged without delay; and
- days spent out of school before cancellation will count towards the 45-school-day annual maximum.

A permanent exclusion cannot be cancelled where the pupil has already exceeded, or would exceed by the time cancellation takes effect, the 45-school-day annual limit.

4.7 Education during the first five school days

During the first five school days of a suspension, and during the first five school days following a permanent exclusion where the pupil is not attending alternative provision, the school will take reasonable steps to set and mark achievable and accessible work. Reasonable adjustments will be made for pupils with SEND or disabilities.

For looked-after children and pupils with a social worker, the school will work with the local authority to consider suitable education from the first day wherever possible.

4.8 Safeguarding separation: non-disciplinary absence from the premises

In rare circumstances, it may be necessary to temporarily forbid a pupil from attending the school premises for safeguarding reasons, for example to keep pupils physically apart following an allegation of harm. This is not a disciplinary exclusion.

Any such decision will be made case by case, led by the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), and will take account of Keeping Children Safe in Education, the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and public-law principles of reasonableness, rationality and procedural fairness.

Parents/carers will be told why the pupil is temporarily unable to attend the premises. The governing board will be notified without delay. This measure will be used only where separation is essential and cannot practicably be achieved while allowing the relevant pupil(s) to remain on site. The school will work with the local authority and relevant agencies to ensure education is arranged and the arrangement is reviewed.

5. Pupil movement: off-site direction and managed moves

5.1 General principles

Off-site direction and managed moves may be used as preventative measures where appropriate, but they are distinct from suspension and permanent exclusion. The pupil will be supported to share their views and will be kept informed about how those views have been taken into account.

Any use of alternative provision will be based on the pupil's individual support needs, including SEND and health needs, and will support a broad and balanced education.

5.2 Off-site direction

Off-site direction is a temporary placement at another education setting to improve future behaviour. It will not be used as a sanction or punishment for past misconduct and should normally follow unsuccessful or inappropriate in-school interventions or outreach.

The governing board/academy trust will ensure the statutory requirements for off-site direction are met. Planning will include clear objectives, a proposed maximum period, a reintegration plan and regular review.

Parents/carers (or a pupil aged 18 or over) and, where the pupil has an EHC plan, the local authority, will receive written notice as soon as practicable and no later than two school days before the placement begins. The notice will include the placement address, reporting arrangements, duration, reasons, objectives and relevant session times.

Reviews will be frequent enough to establish whether the placement is meeting its objectives. Relevant parties will be invited to contribute in accordance with statutory requirements. The school will ensure appropriate information sharing in advance, including attainment information, risk assessment and effective support/risk-management strategies.

Where the pupil attends another school as part of an off-site direction and is registered there, attendance will be recorded using Code D at the directing school. Other off-site provision will be recorded using the appropriate attendance code in line with current attendance regulations and guidance.

5.3 Managed moves

A managed move is a voluntary, planned and permanent transfer to another mainstream school. It must be agreed by all relevant parties, including parents/carers and the admission authority of the new school, and must be in the pupil's best interests.

There is no lawful concept of a 'trial managed move' or 'trial admission'. Where a temporary placement is required to improve behaviour, the off-site direction process should be used.

Before a managed move, the school will evidence appropriate initial intervention and ensure relevant information is shared with the receiving school and local authority as appropriate. For a pupil with an EHC plan, the local authority will be contacted before any proposed managed move and the statutory process for amending the plan will be followed where agreement is reached.

A pupil will not be permanently excluded because a parent/carer or pupil refuses to agree to a managed move. The school will not pressure a family into a managed move. Once a managed move becomes permanent, the pupil will be removed from the original school's admission register and registered at the new school in accordance with admissions and registration law.

6. Governing body responsibilities

Responsibilities regarding individual suspensions and permanent exclusions are delegated to the pupil disciplinary committee, acting on behalf of the Local Governing Body within the Trust's scheme of delegation.

The governing board will:

- consider parents' representations about suspensions and permanent exclusions;
- consider reinstatement where the statutory thresholds require it;
- ensure suitable full-time education is arranged for a compulsory-school-age pupil from the sixth consecutive school day of a suspension lasting more than five school days, including where consecutive suspensions cumulatively exceed five days;
- collaborate with the local authority where a suspended pupil may be eligible for free home-to-school travel to the alternative provision;
- ensure the statutory process for off-site direction is followed and reviewed;
- routinely challenge and evaluate data about suspensions, permanent exclusions and pupil movement; and
- provide required information to the Secretary of State and, where applicable, the local authority within statutory timescales.

6.1 Monitoring and use of data

The governing board will routinely challenge and evaluate what the school's data indicates about pupil movement, including permanent exclusion, removal from the admission register, off-site direction, managed moves and safeguarding separation.

It will consider:

- effectiveness and consistency of the behaviour policy;
- the admission and attendance registers and use of absence codes;
- repeat suspensions and the 45-day annual maximum;
- interventions for pupils at risk of exclusion;
- patterns in the timing and reasons for permanent exclusions and pupil moves;
- the characteristics of affected pupils, including SEND and protected characteristics;
- whether off-site direction and safeguarding-separation arrangements are reviewed often enough and are benefiting pupils;
- attainment, progress, attendance, safeguarding and wellbeing data;
- cost implications of off-site provision; and
- recent data and benchmarking that may identify successes, disparities or root causes requiring action.

7. Considering reinstatement

The pupil disciplinary committee will consider and decide on reinstatement within 15 school days of receiving notice if:

- the exclusion is permanent;
- a suspension would bring the pupil's total number of school days suspended to more than 15 in a term; or
- the exclusion would result in the pupil missing a public examination or National Curriculum test.

For a suspension that does not bring the pupil's total to more than five school days in a term, the governing board must consider any representations made by parents/carers but is not required to arrange a meeting and cannot direct reinstatement.

Where the pupil has been suspended for more than five but not more than 15 school days in a term and parents/carers make representations, the governing board will consider and decide on reinstatement within 50 school days of receiving notice. If no representations are made, it is not required to meet and cannot direct reinstatement.

Where an exclusion would cause a pupil to miss a public examination or National Curriculum test, the governing board will, so far as reasonably practicable, consider reinstatement before the date of the examination or test.

The following will be invited to a meeting and allowed to make representations or share information, as applicable:

- parents/carers and, if requested, a representative or friend;
- the pupil, where appropriate to age and understanding, and any requested representative or friend;
- the headteacher;
- the pupil's social worker, if they have one; and
- the VSH, if the pupil is looked after.

The governing board will consider whether the headteacher's decision was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair; whether legal duties were followed; safeguarding and welfare; and all relevant evidence. Facts will be decided on the balance of probabilities. Minutes and a record of evidence will be kept.

The governing board may decline to reinstate or direct reinstatement immediately or on a specified date where it has power to do so. The decision and reasons will be notified in writing without delay to all required parties.

8. Independent review

Where the governing board declines to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil, its written decision will explain the right to apply for an Independent Review Panel (IRP), the 15-school-day application deadline, where and how to apply, the right to request an SEN expert at no cost, and relevant routes for discrimination claims.

If a valid application is made, the Trust will arrange and fund an independent review in accordance with the statutory requirements. A panel of three or five suitably independent and trained members will be constituted.

The IRP may:

- uphold the governing board's decision;
- recommend that the governing board reconsiders reinstatement; or
- quash the decision and direct reconsideration where the decision was flawed when considered against the principles applicable to judicial review.

The panel will consider the pupil's interests and circumstances and the interests of other pupils and staff. Where present, it will have regard to representations from the SEN expert, social worker and VSH. New evidence may be presented, but the school may not introduce new reasons for the permanent exclusion or the decision not to reinstate.

9. School admission and attendance registers

A permanently excluded pupil's name will remain on the admission register until the statutory review process permits removal. The school will not backdate removal.

The pupil's name will be removed when:

- 15 school days have passed since parents/carers were notified of the governing board's decision not to reinstate and no IRP application has been made; or
- parents/carers have stated in writing that they will not apply for an IRP.

Where a timely IRP application has been made, the school will wait until the review is determined or abandoned and any required governing board reconsideration is complete before removing the pupil from the register.

When a pupil's name is removed because of permanent exclusion, the school will make the required return to the local authority as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the date of removal, including the information required by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

While a permanently excluded pupil remains on roll, attendance will be recorded using the appropriate statutory code. Where no alternative provision has been made, Code E will be used. Where the pupil attends alternative provision, an appropriate code such as Code B or Code D will be used depending on the arrangement.

10. Returning to school and reintegration

Following suspension, cancelled exclusion, off-site direction or safeguarding separation, the school will support the pupil to reintegrate successfully into school life and full-time education.

The reintegration strategy will be tailored to the pupil and may include:

- regular contact during absence and a positive welcome back;
- a designated pastoral professional or key worker;
- personalised targets and a report card;
- academic support and arrangements to catch up on lost progress;
- planned pastoral interventions or mentoring;
- regular review with the pupil and parents/carers;
- external or multi-agency support, including early help where appropriate;
- reasonable adjustments and SEND support; and
- de-escalation strategies such as a time-out card where appropriate.

A reintegration meeting will normally take place before or at the beginning of the pupil's return. The school will make clear that the pupil is valued and is being offered a fresh start. The meeting may proceed without parents/carers if they cannot or do not attend. A pupil will never be prevented from returning to school because a reintegration meeting has not taken place.

Part-time timetables will not be used to manage behaviour. Any temporary part-time timetable used for another lawful reason will be exceptional, time-limited, regularly reviewed and recorded using the appropriate attendance code.

11. Remote access to meetings

Parents/carers may request that a governing board reinstatement meeting or IRP is held by remote access. Face-to-face meetings remain the default and should be encouraged. A remote meeting may proceed where the statutory conditions for fairness, transparency and effective participation are met.

All participants must be able to hear, speak, see and be seen and to participate fully. Social workers and VSHs may join remotely where the conditions are met. If technical problems materially compromise participation or fairness and cannot be reasonably resolved, the meeting will be rearranged in person without delay.

12. Monitoring arrangements

The school will collect and analyse data on attendance, suspensions, permanent exclusions and pupil movement. Analysis will include whole-school, year-group, vulnerable-group and protected-characteristic perspectives and will be used to identify patterns, disparities and areas where policy or support may need to change.

The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) will report relevant analysis to the Headteacher and Local Governing Body each term. The Trust and school will consider patterns across the wider Trust where appropriate.

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner where legislation, statutory guidance or local arrangements materially change. Each review will be presented to the Local Governing Body for ratification.

13. Links with other policies and guidance

- Behaviour Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- SEND Policy and Information Report;
- Attendance Policy;
- Equality information and objectives;
- Complaints Policy.

Appendix 1: Independent Review Panel training

The Trust must ensure that all IRP members and clerks have received the required training within the two years before the date of the review.

Training must cover:

- the primary legislation, regulations and statutory guidance governing disciplinary suspensions and permanent exclusions, including how judicial-review principles apply to IRP decision-making;
- procedural fairness and the rules of natural justice;
- the roles of the chair and clerk;
- duties under the Equality Act 2010;
- relevant duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 and SEN provision; and
- the effect of section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the need to act compatibly with protected rights.

Appendix 2: Key 2026 updates incorporated into this policy

- Reference to the July 2026 DfE statutory guidance effective from 26 July 2026 and the 2026 Regulations applying off-site-direction requirements to academies and pupil referral units.
- Clearer distinction between disciplinary exclusion and temporary separation from school premises for safeguarding purposes.
- Expanded off-rolling examples, including informal send-homes, behavioural part-time timetables and inappropriate moves to alternative provision.
- Clarification that further evidence may justify a separate consecutive suspension or permanent exclusion after an initial suspension; an existing suspension itself cannot simply be extended or converted.
- Expanded statutory process for off-site direction, including written notice, objectives, time limits, reviews, information sharing and attendance coding.
- Clarification that managed moves are voluntary and permanent and that ‘trial managed moves’ are not lawful.
- Requirement to consider local-authority home-to-school travel support for sixth-day alternative provision where the pupil may be eligible.
- Expanded governing-board scrutiny of pupil movement, safeguarding separation and wider performance data.
- Updated references to the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and attendance coding.

Reference

Department for Education, Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement: statutory guidance, July 2026 (effective 26 July 2026).