



SCHOOLS ACHIEVING SUCCESS TOGETHER

Suspension and Exclusion Policy

SAST Document Control Table			
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3.0	October 24	Alice Brown	- VWV legal clarification sought on aspects of our practice/policy - Previous version rewritten and updated in line with VWV consultation and DFE guidance - Policy Consultation took place with: Mike Motteram (SNHS Head of School), Brida Skipworth (Governance Professional), and all members of the SEG
3.1	September 25	Alice Brown	- Updated reference to KCSIE (2025) - Amended to reflect the current practice of notification to SAST (all suspensions/exclusions will be notified to Director of Education, Director of Inclusion and Head of Safeguarding)
3.2	July 26	Alice Brown	- Merged Inclusion text from 3.1 iteration into an “Introduction” section to remove duplication of ideas, clarification of principles and renaming policy - Changes to reflect all aspects of new DFE guidance which is statutory from 26 July 26, prompted by Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Act (CWSA) - Updated other DFE links e.g. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) - Removed references to Executive Headteachers as they no longer exist in the staffing structure - Changed references to Academy Committee to Local Governance Committee, Academy Committee Representative to Local Governor - Renamed the ACRP to be an Exclusion Review Panel (ERP) - Updated the accompanying procedural guidance and resources document to reflect this policy

A note:

In relation to decisions around suspension and exclusion, the legal responsibility for decision making sits with the “Headteacher.” It is important to note that within SAST, due to their role and responsibilities, the Head of School is considered to be the Headteacher in this regard. ***For clarity and the removal of all doubt: within SAST, the decision making responsibility lies with those holding a Head of School role or a Headteacher post.***

The Director of Education should always be *consulted* whenever a permanent exclusion is being considered – who may in turn chose to confer with the Director of Inclusion and/or Head of Safeguarding - as set out in this policy.

Throughout this policy, these acronyms are used:

LGC – Local Governance Committee

LG – Local Governor

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1. Introduction

The Sherborne Area Schools' Trust (SAST) values are:



When children start their education journey, they join a social community with an immeasurable potential to influence their future life. Relationships within their families, peers, adults, school and their wider community are instrumental in developing a sense of identity and place in society: a sense of belonging. Those that feel safe, valued, accepted, and nurtured within their educational setting are much more likely to experience academic success, positive social connections, and a confident perception of connection to their community. Conversely, those that feel that they do not have a place will be more likely to experience unnecessary barriers to learning and deep feelings of isolation and alienation.

There are many reasons why feelings of disconnection from a community can arise – from Adverse Early Childhood Experiences and trauma to additional learning needs, disability, cultural differences, sexual identity and poverty. An authentic inclusive ethos is founded on trusting relationships, a culture where people have their voice heard and listened to, and an ability to recognise and respond swiftly and effectively when there are early signs that things are not going well. Strong partnership working with key partners such as the Local Authority, health, social care, youth workers and the police, are essential in supporting the development of genuinely inclusive provision.

We are committed to equality: the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other unlawful conduct. We strive to ensure opportunity and accessibility for all: anticipating and making the reasonable adjustments required to support individuals, providing the support they need to overcome their barriers to learning in a timely manner.

SAST schools are committed to the need to work collaboratively and relentlessly in establishing and maintaining inclusive communities, characterised by high ambition and flexibility of approach. These enable every person to flourish, *especially* those who are vulnerable or experiencing disadvantage. Equity unpins our approach: we understand that inclusion is about children getting what they need as an individual, rather than everyone getting the same.

“All children and young people are entitled to an appropriate education, one that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential.”
Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2014)

SAST believes that good behaviour in school is essential to ensure that all children and young people can benefit from the opportunities provided by education, in a positive atmosphere based on a sense of community and shared ethical values. In exceptional circumstances, SAST recognises that suspension and exclusion may be required to secure that environment for others.

This policy describes the principles, approach and practice that our establishments will adopt to ensure that the suspension of pupils occurs as infrequently as possible; and that when they do occur, they are lawful and in line with DfE statutory guidance. This policy also aims to secure a pupil’s right to an education despite having been suspended or excluded, by ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place.

Permanent exclusion will only ever be implemented as a last resort in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches, of SAST’s behaviour principles and school policies, when a school can demonstrate, with adequate evidence, that all reasonable steps have been taken to support the pupil (including multi-agency working and the use of alternative provision if appropriate); and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm their welfare or that of other pupils or staff.

We are striving to eradicate suspension and exclusion from all SAST schools.

2. Legislation, statutory guidance and linked SAST policies

This policy is based on statutory guidance from the Department for Education: [Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement \(2026\)](#)

It is based on the following legislation, which outlines schools’ powers to exclude pupils:

- Section 51a of the [Education Act 2002](#), as amended by the [Education Act 2011](#)
- [The School Discipline \(Pupil Exclusions and Reviews\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

In addition, the policy is based on:

- Part 7, chapter 2 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), which sets out parental responsibility for excluded pupils
- Section 579 of the [Education Act 1996](#), which defines ‘school day’
- The [Education \(Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#), as amended by [The Education \(Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2014](#) and as modified and amended by the [Education \(Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour\) \(Application to Academies and Pupil Referral Units and Minor Amendments\) Regulations 2026](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)

Furthermore, this policy should be read in conjunction with the following statutory guidance and policies:

- [Working together to safeguard children \(2026\)](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education \(2026\)](#)
- [Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff \(2024\)](#)
- [Mental health and behaviour in schools \(2018\)](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance \(2026\)](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice 0 – 25 \(2015\)](#)
- SAST SEND Policy
- SAST Policy for Children with a Social Worker, Looked After and Previously Looked After Children
- SAST Attendance Principles
- SAST Behaviour Principles
- Establishment policies on
 - child protection and safeguarding
 - attendance
 - behaviour and anti-bullying
- Any guidance from a school's own Local Authority relating to suspension and exclusion.

Where there are discrepancies because of a more recent DFE publication, the most recent legislation will take precedence over this policy, until such time as it can be updated.

3. Definitions

Alternative Provision (AP): suitable full-time education that is arranged for a pupil from the sixth school day (or earlier) of a suspension or the sixth school day (or earlier) after the first day of a permanent exclusion. In other circumstances, AP may refer to education arranged for pupils who are unable to attend mainstream or special school and who are not educated at home, whether for behavioural, health, or other reasons.

Managed move: when a pupil is transferred to another mainstream school, permanently, in a planned process. This can only be initiated with parental consent and must be in the best interests of the pupil. A managed move should not be used as a sanction.

Off-site direction: When an academy requires a pupil to attend another education setting temporarily, for a time-limited period, to improve their behaviour.

Parent: in addition to the child's birth parents, references to parents in this policy include any person who has parental responsibility (which includes the local authority where it has a care order in respect of the child) and any person (for example, a foster carer) with whom the child lives. Where practical, all those with parental responsibility should be involved in the suspensions and permanent exclusions process.

Permanent Exclusion: is where a child is no longer allowed to attend school, in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the behaviour policy and where allowing the pupil

to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupils or staff in the setting.

School: within this policy, the term is used to refer to any OFTSED registered nursery, primary school, secondary school or learning centre establishment/pupil referral unit.

Suspension: is where a child is temporarily unable to attend the educational setting where they are on roll on disciplinary grounds, for one or more fixed periods, up to a maximum of 45 days in a single academic year. A suspension may be for all or part of a school day for example, over lunchtime.

4. Principles

Our schools will

- fulfil and comply with their duties under the Equality Act (2010) and Children and Families Act (2014). They will not discriminate against pupils on the basis of protected characteristics. Our establishments will give particular consideration to the fair treatment of pupils from groups who are vulnerable to exclusion and ensure that all reasonable adjustments have been considered and implemented.
- design and implement aspirational curriculums which promote high standards, helping children achieve the best possible outcomes and be prepared effectively for adulthood
- implement behaviour policies that are underpinned by a clear, relationship-based approach; and that take account of the need for reasonable and specific adjustments to be made for individual children with additional needs as well as those who have experienced (or are experiencing) adverse childhood experiences.
- recognise that disruptive behaviour can be an indication of unmet needs. Where there are concerns about a pupil's behaviour the first steps will be to identify whether there are any causal factors and intervene early to support the child. Where concerns are ongoing, the school will undertake risk assessments and implement behaviour action plans or pastoral support plans. It may be appropriate to place the child on the SEN register and to implement the graduated response (see SAST SEND policy).
- make timely, appropriate referrals to professional agencies for assessment, advice and support and work together with partners in other agencies to improve educational opportunities and outcomes
- through robust and iterative assessment of needs, deploy staff and develop diversity and flexibility in provision, to meet the needs of all learners
- support staff professional development so that everyone can deepen their understanding of the characteristics of an inclusive organisation and have a working knowledge of the impact of disadvantage and additional support needs.
- have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of the child and their parents – understanding the importance of their participation in decision making
- recognise that parents/carers are profoundly affected by the exclusion of their children and work with them closely to ensure that only in very rare circumstances will exclusion come as a surprise.

- make effort to avoid suspension and exclusion where a child is disabled; has an Education, Health and Care Plan; is Child in Care or has previously been in Local Authority care; has a social worker; or is the subject of a Child Protection plan.
- foster “mattering” in our schools, so that pupils know they are authentically valued and have agency
- ensure that the best interests of children and young people are at the heart of all decision making

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Authority is responsible for:

- Having due regard to the relevant statutory guidance when carrying out its duties in relation to the education of Looked After Children
- Arranging suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age excluded permanently, in coordination with the school
- Reviewing and reassessing pupils’ needs in consultation with their parents where they have an EHC plan and are excluded permanently, with a view to identifying a new placement

The Trust is responsible for:

- Through the Directors of Education and Inclusion, providing professional advice, support and challenge to Headteachers and Heads of School, in their decision making around suspensions and exclusions.
- Through the Head of Safeguarding, ensure that any separation of pupils for safeguarding purposes is used in rare and exceptional circumstances – namely only those where it is essential and clearly demonstrated that it cannot practicably be done in a way that lets one or more pupils remain on school premises.
- Using data to evaluate the Trust’s practices regarding intervention, suspension and exclusion
- Appointing a trained clerk to convene the necessary panels, and provide advice to the Exclusions Review Panel (ERP) and other parties on procedure, law and statutory guidance on suspensions and exclusions
- Arranging for an independent review panel hearing to review the decision of the ERP not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil where required
- Providing information, within 14 days of a request, to the Secretary of State and LA about any exclusions within the last 12 months

The Local Governance Committee is responsible for:

- Reviewing the termly off roll, educated off-site, suspension, exclusion and separation of pupils for safeguarding data - providing support and deploying maximum challenge to understand movement and identify emerging patterns, especially where they relate to groups with protected characteristics
- Ensuring that the Head of School/Headteacher has made arrangements for a suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age who is suspended, where required (6th day onwards, consecutive suspensions are to be treated as cumulative)

The Head of School/Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all SAST policies and DFE statutory guidance is implemented in their schools
- Adopting a reliable method for monitoring the maximum 45 days permitted in a school year out of school due to exclusion, including those received from other schools
- Ensuring a formal process is in place for arranging, at short notice, suitable full-time alternative education for pupils receiving suspensions over five school days.
- Using data to evaluate the school's practices regarding intervention, suspension and exclusion; advising and supporting the Head of School to implement any necessary improvements
- Implementing good levels of discipline to ensure all pupils can benefit from the opportunities provided by education and to minimise potential suspensions and exclusions
- Considering what extra support may be needed to identify and address the needs of individual pupils, particularly those with SEND, Children in Care (CiC), those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), and those from certain ethnic groups
- Engaging effectively with parents in supporting the behaviour of pupils with additional needs
- Considering the use of a multi-agency assessment for a pupil who demonstrates persistent disruptive behaviour
- Considering any contributing factors that are identified after an incident of poor behaviour has occurred
- Complying with their statutory duties in relation to pupils with SEND
- Complying with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010
- Applying the civil standard of proof when establishing the facts in relation to a suspension or exclusion
- Making the decision to suspend or exclude based on the evidence available at the time, regardless of any police investigation and/or criminal proceedings
- Determining whether a pupil will be suspended or excluded on disciplinary grounds, after consideration of all the relevant factors and evidence
- Consulting with the Director of Education, prior to any permanent exclusion being confirmed
- Ensuring any decision to suspend or exclude is lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate
- Collating the evidence and document the rationale for the suspension or exclusion
- Ensuring they have considered their legal duty of care when sending a pupil home following a suspension or exclusion
- Notifying a pupil's parents without delay where the decision is taken to suspend or exclude the pupil, including the days on which the parents must ensure the pupil is not present in a public place at any time during school hours, as well as any other necessary information statutorily required
- Ensuring that all information provided to parents is clear and easily understood
- Organising suitable work for suspended or excluded pupils
- For suspensions longer than 5 days, to arrange 6th day provision (costs met by school)

- Organising FSM provision for eligible excluded pupils (can be delegated to AP if they can provide FSM, or to the LA for permanent exclusions, after Day 6)
- Ensuring that the SAST Directors of Education and Inclusion, and the Head of Safeguarding, are copied into the relevant notification letters.
- Ensuring that social workers, virtual school and SEND officers are copied into the notification letters where relevant
- Notifying the local authority and/or pupil's home authority as required
- Notifying the Local Governance Committee Chair of their decision to suspend or exclude a pupil if certain criteria are met (names and incident details should not be provided)
- Notifying the Local Governance Committee Chair of their decision to separate pupils for safeguarding purposes (names and incident details should not be provided)
- Compiling the ERP evidence pack in accordance with the SAST guidelines, and sharing this with the Governance Professional no later than 8 working days before the hearing date
- Adhering to their responsibilities when cancelling an exclusion before the ERP has met to consider whether the pupil should be reinstated.
- Attending the ERP or IRP meetings as required
- Ensuring that the outcome of the ERP is noted on the pupil's education record, along with copies of relevant papers for future reference
- Ensuring that the correct attendance codes are used
- Ensuring a pupil's name is removed from the school admissions register, when appropriate (and informing the LG Chair that this has action has been completed)
- Reintegrating pupils who are returning from a safeguarding separation or off site direction, those whose suspensions have ended or been cancelled and those whose permanent exclusions have been cancelled – and supporting pupils' future behaviour
- Reviewing the effectiveness of suspensions and exclusions as sanctions, e.g. if a pupil has received multiple suspensions or is approaching the legal limit for suspensions in an academic year, then a review with the Director of Education/Director of Inclusion must be convened
- Notifying the Local Governance Committee once per term of all instances of suspension, exclusion and separation for safeguarding reasons, in the Head of School/Headteacher report to the Local Governance Committee

The Exclusions Review Panel (ERP) is responsible for:

- Considering parents' representations about suspensions and exclusions within 15 school days of receiving notice if the appropriate requirements are met
- Where a suspension or exclusion would result in a pupil missing a public examination or test, considering the suspension or exclusion before this date
- Considering whether it would be appropriate for a pupil to be permitted onto the school premises to sit the public examination or test
- Adhering to its responsibilities to consider the reinstatement of pupils
- Considering the interests and circumstances of the suspended or excluded pupil, including the circumstances in which they were suspended or excluded, and have due regard to the interests of others at the academy

- Using the civil standard of proof (based on the ‘balance of probabilities’ it is more than likely that the fact is true) when establishing the facts relating to a suspension or exclusion
- Notifying the pupil’s parents, the Head of School and other relevant parties, of its decision and the reasons for it, without delay
- Where appropriate, informing parents of where to apply for an Independent Review Panel
- Reconvening within 10 school days to reconsider reinstatement of a pupil if directed to do so by an Independent Review Panel

The Governance Professional/Clerk to the ERP is responsible for:

- Convening the ERP and arranging the meeting at a time and date convenient to all parties, but in compliance with the statutory time limits
- Arranging for ERP meeting to take place via remote access if requested by parents or excluded pupils aged 18 and over
- Informing the appropriate individuals that they are entitled to:
 - Make written representations to the panel
 - Attend the hearing and make oral representations to the panel
 - Be represented
- Saving the electronic panel pack in a designated, secure location
- -Sharing the electronic panel pack with the SAST Directors of Education and Inclusion for review, before then distributing to all parties at least five days before the panel are due to meet. This will usually be through a secure link to the electronic pack, however if any panel member or attendee requires a paper copy or other reasonable adjustment, this will be accommodated
- Giving all parties details of those attending and their role, once the position is clear
- Attending the ERP meeting and ensuring that minutes are produced in accordance with instructions from the panel within the timeframe of the policy
- Supporting the ERP Chair, with writing and issuing the decision letter to the relevant people, within the relevant timeframe.

6. Grounds for Suspension or Exclusion

Headteachers/Heads of School will only suspend or exclude a pupil where it is absolutely necessary and where all other possible support and disciplinary sanctions have been exhausted.

The following behaviour *may* warrant a suspension or exclusion. This list is not exhaustive, but illustrative:

- Persistent disruptive behaviour
- Physical assault against a pupil or adult
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a pupil or adult
- Discriminatory abuse, e.g. racist, homophobic, transphobic or ableist abuse
- Use, or threat of use, of an offensive weapon or prohibited item
- Dangerous and illegal activity

Pupils can be suspended on a fixed-period basis, or permanently excluded. Pupils may only be permanently excluded following a suspension where further evidence in relation to the incident has come to light. In all cases, the Head of School/Headteacher will decide whether a pupil will be subject to a suspension or exclusion, depending on what the circumstances warrant.

7. Factors to consider before making a decision to exclude

The SAST Resources, Procedural Advice and Guidance document contains a decision-making template which Heads of School/Headteachers are strongly encouraged to use to support their decision-making and ensure that all factors are considered.

Before deciding whether to suspend or exclude a pupil, the Head of School/Headteacher will:

- consider all the relevant facts and evidence on the balance of probabilities, including whether the incident(s) leading to the exclusion were provoked
- take account of any contributing factors that are identified after an incident of poor behaviour has occurred. For example: previously unrecognised special educational needs (SEN), bereavement, mental health issues or has been subject to bullying
- consider whether the pupil has (SEN), and whether the school has been making adequate provision to support these (see 7.1)
- consider whether the pupil is especially vulnerable because they have a social worker (see 7.2) or other needs
- consider the safeguarding implications of exclusion for the pupil
- allow the pupil to give their version of events
- consider the views of the pupil, in light of their age and understanding, before deciding to suspend or exclude, unless it would not be appropriate to do so
- consider whether exclusion would be consistent with other decisions made in response to similar breaches of the behaviour policy, and if not, be clear about the mitigating circumstances which justify the different decision
- consider whether all alternative solutions have been explored and exhausted, such as changes to supervision and provision and off-site direction (see 8)
- take into consideration whether the pupil has received multiple suspensions or is approaching the legal limit of 45 suspended days per school year and whether suspension is serving as an effective sanction
- consult others where appropriate, including the Director of Inclusion, Head of Safeguarding and Director of Education, being careful not to involve anyone who may have a role in any statutory review of their decision
- keep a written record of the actions taken, including any interview with the pupil, discussion with parents/carers, and record on My Concern. Witness statements must be dated and should be signed, wherever possible
- ensure that the decision to exclude is made in line with the administrative law i.e. that it is: Lawful (with respect to the legislation relating directly to exclusions and the school's wider legal duties, including the European Convention of Human Rights); Rational; Reasonable; Fair; Proportionate

7.1 Pupils with disabilities and Special Educational Needs

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, under no circumstances will a pupil with identified SEND difficulties be suspended or excluded before a review of the school's graduated response has been completed by the Head of School/Headteacher.

Where a school has identified concerns around behaviour and there is a significant risk of suspension and permanent exclusion for a pupil with SEN, a disability or an EHC plan, it should, in partnership with others consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required. This should involve assessing the extent and suitability of the provision for a pupil's SEN or disability. It is imperative that detailed records around the school's best endeavours to meet needs, are kept.

- For those with SEN but without an EHC plan, the school should seek the support of the SAST Director of Inclusion and external specialists as appropriate, to determine whether the current support arrangements are appropriate and what changes may be required.
- Where a pupil has an EHC plan, schools should also contact the local authority about any concerns at an early stage and consider requesting an early annual review prior to making the decision to suspend or permanently exclude.

7.2 Pupils who have a social worker

For children with a social worker, education is an important protective factor, providing a safe space for children to receive support, be visible to professionals and realise their potential. When children are not in school, they miss the protection and opportunities it can provide and become more vulnerable to harm. Headteachers should balance this important reality with the need to ensure calm and safe environments for all pupils and staff, so should devise strategies that take both of these aspects into account.

Where a pupil has a social worker e.g. because they are the subject of a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan, and they are at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the Head of School/Headteacher should inform their social worker, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the pupil's parents to involve them all as early as possible in relevant conversations. Support should also be sought at an early stage from the SAST Head of Safeguarding.

Where a looked-after child is likely to be subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion, the Designated Teacher (DT) should contact the local authority's VSH and the SAST Director of Inclusion as soon as possible. The DT should seek their advice and consider what additional assessment and support need to be put in place to help the school address the factors affecting the child's behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion. This should include how the school is using Pupil Premium Plus, and consideration should be given to how effectively the current Personal Education Plan (PEP) is being implemented and whether an interim PEP review needs to be called. The school should also engage with a child's social worker, foster carers, or children's home workers as relevant.

8. Preventative Measures and Alternatives to Exclusion

Where pupils are becoming at increased risk of exclusion, schools need to consider taking preventative measures as an alternative to exclusion. These could include, but are not limited to:

- bespoke behaviour management approaches and use of alternative rewards and sanctions
- specified time in a designated regulation and reflection space
- redirection/supervision to be with senior staff in learning time/unstructured time
- the use of the Early Help system (Local Authority Front Door), working with external agencies and parents/carers to provide targeted support
- outreach support, for example from TADSS (Teaching Alliance of Dorset Special Schools), Learning Centre/PRUs or specialist teachers
- short-term internal alternative provision, such as creating bespoke teaching spaces and providing enhanced in-school interventions
- short-term alternative provision (AP) led by an external provider, delivered on the school site, if the pupil needs a time limited intervention from a different organisation
- off-site provision through directing attendance at another mainstream school or alternative provision provider
- offering a fresh start in another setting through a managed move

8.1 Off-site Direction

Where interventions or targeted support have not been successful in improving behaviour, the proprietor of an academy school/alternative provision academy may make an off-site direction. In practice, it will be the Head of School/Headteacher who will decide whether a temporary off-site direction to another mainstream school or alternative provision is an appropriate solution to support and improve a pupil's behaviour and avoid suspension or exclusion. In considering this option, the Head of School/Headteacher should ensure that both parents and the pupil are supported to share their views and take account of these, however formal parental consent is not required for a directive to be issued.

An off-site direction should *only* be implemented where in school interventions and/or outreach (including multi-agency support or any statutory assessments) have been unsuccessful or are deemed inappropriate - and the school can evidence that this is the case. Depending on the individual needs and circumstances of the pupil, off-site direction can be full-time or a combination of part-time support in alternative provision and continued mainstream education. A proposed maximum period of time should be discussed and agreed upon as part of the planning phase for an off-site direction.

The direction must only be used to support a child or young person to improve their future behaviour and not as a sanction or punishment for past misconduct. Consideration must be given to:

- an understanding of the child's needs (including SEN and Health needs)
- the DfE Statutory Guidance on [Alternative Provision](#)

- the need to provide advance written notice to parents in accordance with the requirements set out by the DfE in paragraph 45 of [Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools \(2026\)](#)
- the need for the original school to share all relevant information about the pupil in advance of the placement, including, data on prior and current attainment, academic potential, a current risk assessment, and advice on effective ongoing risk management and/or other pupil support strategies - to ensure the pupil is protected
- the requirements for monitoring and review of the off-site direction as set out in by the DfE in [Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools \(2026\)](#)

8.1.1 Off-site Direction Review Panels

Parents, and where the pupil has an EHCP, the local authority, can request, in writing, that a review meeting is held. When this happens, the request must be complied with as soon as possible, unless there has already been a review meeting in the previous ten weeks.

Regardless of receiving a request, all off-site directions must be reviewed by an off-site direction panel at regular intervals (at least every 6-8 weeks). A written invitation must be issued not later than 6 days before it is to be held, for the following persons to attend, or make written submissions in advance, as to whether the off-site direction should continue. So far as possible, the meeting should be convened on a date and at a time, that is suitable for the family.

The review meeting should involve the following persons:

- a) the pupil and parents
- b) the Headteacher of the directing school
- c) the alternative provision provider
- d) a representative of the local governance committee (with no current or previous connection to the pupil, and not an employee of the Trust, so as to leave no doubt about their ability to act impartially)
- e) where the pupil has an EHCP, a representative of the relevant local authority

Other agencies may also be involved in review meetings, depending on the needs of the pupil – for example, a pupil’s social worker, a representative of the youth justice team.

The purpose of the review meeting is to consider the extent to which the off-site direction is achieving its objectives and determine whether the placement should continue and if so, for what period of time. Following the meeting, a written notification of the decision, including the reasons for it, should be sent to the parent within 6 school days.

NOTE: Any off-site directions that were arranged and intended to still be operational after 26 July 2026, must be reviewed by using the above guidance, as soon as reasonably practicable after 1 August 2026, *even* if a review was held in the preceding ten weeks.

8.2 Managed Moves

On rare occasions, it may be appropriate to consider if it is in the pupil’s best interests to transfer them to another mainstream school, permanently. This is known as a managed move.

The Head of School/Headteacher will discuss this option with the parents of the pupil. If the pupil has an EHCP the LA responsible for maintaining the plan should be involved in these discussions and the statutory procedure for amending the plan must be followed. If the pupil is in care, the social worker representing the LA holding parental responsibility, and the virtual school must also be involved in discussions.

A managed move should only be offered as part of a graduated response to intervention and support; and must be entered into voluntarily and with the agreement of all parties, including the parents and the admission authority of the new school. In considering this option, the Head of School/Headteacher should ensure the pupil is supported to share their views and take account of these. Managed moves should not be used as sanctions or as a mechanism to over-ride a school's in-year admissions process.

Detailed records should be kept of any decision to initiate a managed move. Prior to any managed move, the original school should be able to evidence that appropriate initial intervention has been carried out, including, where relevant, multi-agency support or any statutory assessments.

Information must be shared with the pupil's new school in relation to prior and current attainment, academic potential, a current risk assessment and advice on effective ongoing risk management and/or other pupil support strategies. This information must be shared in all circumstances and in advance of the managed move to ensure the pupil is protected.

The law does not allow for a "trial admission" or "trial managed move". If a temporary move is considered necessary, this must be arranged and managed through the off-site direction process. The required review of an off-site direction placement may identify alternative options, which includes a permanent managed move (for pupils placed in a mainstream school).

Any move from one school to another must comply with the statutory [School admissions code](#) (unless the pupil has an Education Health and Care Plan) as well as [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#).

Once a pupil undergoes a managed move, the pupil moves permanently from the original school to the new school, and the pupil's name should be deleted from the original school's admission register and added to the admission register of the new school. Where a managed move follows a period of off-site direction, the pupil will already have been registered at the school where they are receiving education off-site; in these circumstances, the deletion from the original school's register only takes place when the move becomes permanent. The pupil should be registered at one school only.

8.3 Separation of pupils for safeguarding purposes

In certain exceptional circumstances, a school can temporarily forbid a pupil from attending its premises, for example, due to an allegation of harm by one pupil against another which might require physically separating a pupil from one or other pupils. In this scenario, the local authority must arrange education for the pupil (under their Section 19 duty) if the

school itself or the pupil's parent does not do so. This is not an exclusion on disciplinary grounds.

If the event that a Head of School/Headteacher is considering using this strategy to separate pupils, it is essential that the school's designated safeguarding lead and the SAST Head of Safeguarding is involved at the earliest opportunity. The strategy will only ever be implemented after a robust risk assessment process has been undertaken which clearly demonstrates the separation of pupils is essential and cannot practicably be done in a way that lets one or more pupils remain on school premises.

The Head of School/Headteacher should inform parents of the reason why the pupil has been temporarily forbidden from attending its premises and in conjunction with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). The Local Governance Committee should also be notified without delay, via the Chair of the LGC.

8.4 Complaints

Parents who have concerns or who are unhappy with an off-site direction, managed move or a separation of pupils for safeguarding decision will be referred to the Trust's Complaints Policy and Procedure.

9. The decision to exclude

After giving due consideration to all of the factors as outlined, only the Head of School/Headteacher may decide to suspend or exclude a pupil on disciplinary grounds. The decision can be made in respect of behaviour inside or outside of school.

- The decision to exclude must be lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.
- Pupils whose behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive may be excluded from the school premises for the duration of the lunchtime period.
- The Head of School/Headteacher will take account of their legal duty of care when sending a pupil home following an exclusion.
- A pupil may be excluded for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year), or permanently

A decision to exclude a pupil permanently 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 in the school; and
- after consultation with the SAST Director of Education.

The Head of School/Headteacher will ensure that the details of any exclusion of a pupil, even for short periods, is formally recorded in the pupil's MIS record.

10. Informing parties about an exclusion

10.1 Duty to inform parents

Following the Head of School/Headteacher's decision to suspend or exclude a pupil, they will immediately inform the parents/carers, or the excluded pupil if they are 18 or older, in person or by telephone, of the period of the suspension, or permanency of the exclusion and the reasons behind this.

The Head of School/Headteacher will also provide the following information to parents or an excluded pupil if they are 18 years or older, in writing, without delay:

- the reason(s) for the suspension or permanent exclusion
- the period of a suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent
- parents' right to make representations about the suspension or permanent exclusion to the Local Governance Committee (LGC) and how the pupil may be involved in this
- parents' right to make a request to hold the meeting via the use of remote access and how and to whom to make this request
- how any representations should be made
- parents' right to attend a meeting where there is a legal requirement for the ERP to consider the suspension or exclusion and the fact that they are able to bring an accompanying individual
- the arrangements that have been made for the pupil to continue their education prior to the organisation of any alternative provision, or the pupil's return to school

Where the pupil is of compulsory school age, the Head of School/Headteacher will also notify parents that:

- For the first five school days of an exclusion (or until the start date of any alternative provision or the end of the suspension, where this is earlier), the parents are legally required to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without a good reason.
- Parents may be given a fixed penalty notice or prosecuted if they fail to do this

Where the Head of School/Headteacher has arranged alternative provision, they will also inform the parents of the following:

- the start date for any provision of full-time education that has been arranged during the suspension or permanent exclusion
- the start and finish times of any such provision, including the times for morning and afternoon sessions where relevant
- the address at which the provision will take place
- any information required by the pupil to identify the person they should report to on the first day

Where the Head of School/Headteacher is unable to provide information on alternative provision by the end of the afternoon session, they will provide the information in a subsequent written notice without further delay and within 48 hours of the pupil beginning

the provision. If the alternative provision is due to begin before the sixth day of the suspension or exclusion, the Head of School/Headteacher is able to give less than 48 hours of notice, with parental consent.

In addition, the school will draw attention to relevant sources of free and impartial information including:

- The local area SENDIAS service who can provide information, advice and support to children and young people with SEND, including on exclusions.
- A link to the Coram Children's Legal Centre:
 - www.childrenslegalcentre.com
 - Telephone 0300 330 5485
- A link to the ACE education service
 - <http://www.ace-ed.org.uk>
 - Telephone 0300 0115 142 (Monday to Wednesday from 10am to 1pm during term time)
- A link to the Independent Provider of Special Education Advice (IPSEA) which offers free and independent information, advice and support to help get the right education for children and young people with all kinds of special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities
 - www.ipsea.org.uk

If the Head of School/Headteacher has decided to suspend the pupil for a further fixed period following their original suspension or to permanently exclude them, they will notify the parents/carers without delay and issue a new suspension or exclusion notice.

Letter templates are provided in the SAST Resources, Procedural Advice and Guidance document, which schools are expected to use.

10.2 Duty to inform the Local Authority, Social Workers and Virtual School Head

The Head of School/Headteacher will notify the relevant LA(s) of all suspensions and permanent exclusions without delay, regardless of the length of a suspension.

The notification will include:

- The reason(s) for the suspension or permanent exclusion
- The length of a suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent

If the child has an EHCP, direct notification to the SEN Provision Lead/case officer for the school is also strongly advised to ensure that the statutory SEND team is fully aware. If this notification is via email, the message should be tagged as "high priority" to support our LA colleagues.

If the child is in local authority care, has a social worker and/or is the subject of a Child Protection Plan, the children's social worker and/or Virtual School Head (VSH) must be informed.

For a permanent exclusion, if the pupil lives outside the LA in which the school is located, the Head of School/Headteacher must also, without delay, inform the pupil's 'home authority' of the exclusion and the reason(s) for it.

Letter templates are provided in the SAST Resources, Procedural Advice and Guidance document, which schools are expected to use.

10.3 Duty to inform SAST Directors/Head of Safeguarding

The Head of School/Headteacher will, without delay, notify the Director of Education, the Director of Inclusion and the Head of Safeguarding of all suspensions and permanent exclusions, by sharing the letter sent to parents.

10.4 Duty to inform the Local Governance Committee

The Head of School/Headteacher will inform the Local Governance Committee Chair (LGCC) of:

- a permanent exclusion
- any suspension which would result in the pupil being excluded for more than five school days (or more than ten lunchtimes) in a term
- consecutive suspensions resulting in the pupil being suspended for more than 5 days and consequently requiring 6th day provision
- any suspension which would bring the pupil's total number of school days out of school to more than 15 in a term
- any suspension or exclusion which would result in the pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test

No details related to the student (name, gender, age etc); or the incident should be shared: just that a suspension/exclusion has occurred. The LGCC will cascade this notification to the rest of the LGC.

All other exclusions will be notified to the Local Governance Committee once per term, via the written Head of School/Headteacher's Report.

11. Arranging education for excluded pupils

11.1 Suspensions

During the first 5 days of a suspension, if the pupil is not attending alternative (AP) provision, the Head of School/Headteacher must take steps to ensure that work is set and marked for the pupil. Online pathways such as Oak Academy may be used for this. If the pupil has a special educational need or disability, the Head of School/Headteacher must make sure that the work set is accessible.

For a suspension of more than five school days, the Head of School/Headteacher (or Local Authority for a pupil suspended from a PRU) must arrange suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age, unless they are in their final year of compulsory education and do not have any further public exams to sit. Where a pupil receives consecutive suspensions, these are regarded as cumulative and full-time education needs to be provided from the sixth day of suspension.

In addition, for suspensions of more than five days where a pupil has an EHCP, the local authority may need to review the plan or reassess the child's needs, in consultation with parents, with a view to identifying a new placement.

If the pupil is looked after, the school will work with the LA and VSH to arrange AP from the first day following the suspension or permanent exclusion. Where this isn't possible, the school will take reasonable steps to set and mark work for the pupil, including the use of online pathways. This should be documented in the child's PEP.

11.2 Permanent exclusions

The Local Authority must arrange suitable full-time education for the pupil to begin from the sixth school day after the first day the permanent exclusion took place.

Children who are receiving education should be recorded as such in the school attendance register, for the relevant sessions (see Section 9.0 Attendance Coding)

12. Reintegration after a suspension, off-site direction or separation for safeguarding purposes

All pupils who return to school following a suspension, off-site direction or separation for safeguarding purposes will be supported by a re-integration strategy that offers a fresh start and communicates to the pupil that they are valued, and that previous behaviour is not an obstacle for future success. The process should help them understand the effect of their behaviour on themselves and others, teach them how to meet the high expectations of behaviour in line with school culture, foster a renewed sense of belonging within the school community and build engagement with learning.

During a suspension, off-site direction or separation for safeguarding purposes, schools may consider a range of measures to enable the pupil's successful reintegration which can include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining regular contact during the suspension or off-site direction
- Daily contact with a designated pastoral professional in-school
- Ensuring the pupil follows an equivalent curriculum during their suspension or off-site direction or receives academic support upon return to catch up on any lost progress
- Regular reviews with the pupil and parents to praise progress being made and raise and address any concerns at an early stage

On return to school, a re-integration meeting should be held involving the pupil, parents, the Head of School/Headteacher, and other staff where appropriate (such as the SENCO). Parents cannot be compelled to attend but should be sent a copy of the meeting notes regardless. The purpose of the reintegration meeting is to welcome the pupil back to school and consider what additional support a pupil may need in order to move forward positively and thrive.

Where necessary, schools will work with relevant staff and multi-agency organisations, such as social workers, educational psychologists or family and social workers, to identify and support any SEND, health or family needs.

A part-time timetable must not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour, however there may be exceptional circumstances that warrant an initial period of reduced attendance as part of a reintegration strategy. The Head of Safeguarding should be involved in this discussion. Any such arrangement must only be in place for the shortest time necessary (no longer than 6 weeks) by which point the pupil is expected to attend education full-time, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing this arrangement with the pupil and their parents (usually weekly). In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised (Code C2).

The progress of the reintegration strategy should be regularly reviewed and adapted where necessary in collaboration with the pupil, parents, and other relevant parties. If there is a risk of repeat suspension, further discussions with parents and other organisations should be considered.

A record of the reintegration meeting, and any subsequent strategy reviews, should be kept on the pupil's electronic record. An exemplar template is included in the SAST Resources, Procedural Advice and Guidance document, which schools are strongly encouraged to use.

13. Cancelling suspensions and permanent exclusions

The Head of School/Headteacher may cancel any suspension or permanent exclusion where it has not yet been reviewed by the ERP. Where there is a cancellation, they must, without delay:

- notify the parents, SAST Directors of Education and Inclusion, the ERP Clerk and LA, and any social worker/VSH if relevant - explaining the reason for the cancellation
- offer parents the opportunity to meet with the Head of School/ Headteacher to discuss the cancellation
- allow the pupil back in school
- notify the LGC Chair

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.

The Head of School/Headteacher will report the number of cancellations to the Local Governance Committee once per term.

14. The Local Governance Committee's duty to consider an exclusion

Responsibilities regarding exclusions are delegated to the Local Governance Committee, who will be supported by the SAST Governance Professional to ensure their duties are correctly discharged through an Exclusion Review Panel (ERP).

Where the pupil has been suspended, and the suspension does not bring the pupil's total number of days of suspension to more than 5 in a term, the ERP must consider any representations made by parents within a reasonable timescale. However, it is not required to arrange a meeting with parents, and it cannot direct the Headteacher to reinstate the pupil.

Where the pupil has been suspended for more than 5 days, but less than 15 days, in a single term, *and* the parents make representations to the ERP, the ERP will consider and decide on the reinstatement of a suspended pupil within 50 school days of receiving notice of the suspension. If the parents do not make representations, the ERP is not required to meet, and it cannot direct the Headteacher to reinstate the pupil.

Where the exclusion is a suspension which would bring the pupil's total number of days out of school to more than 15 in a term; or it would result in a pupil missing a public exam or National Curriculum test, or it is permanent, then the ERP must consider and decide on the reinstatement of a suspended or permanently excluded pupil within 15 school days of receiving the notice of the suspension or exclusion.

Where a suspension or permanent exclusion would result in a pupil missing a public exam or National Curriculum test, the ERP will, as far as reasonably practicable, consider and decide on the reinstatement of the pupil before the date of the exam or test. If it is not practical for sufficient LG's to consider the reinstatement before the examination or test, then the Chair of the Local Governance Committee may make the decision alone. Alternatively, the Education Director may work with the Head of School/Headteacher to make arrangements for the pupil to take their exam(s) in another setting - pending the ERP meeting.

14.1 Convening the Exclusion Review Panel (ERP)

The Governance Professional will initiate the convening of the ERP on behalf of the LGC. The first step in that process is for the Governance Professional to appoint a suitable clerk. This person may be the Governance Professional themselves, or another suitably trained person.

The appointed clerk should then complete the following steps, seeking advice from the Governance Professional as needed:

- Consider which Local Governors (LG's) have the best understanding of the suspension and exclusion process, the school's behaviour policy and/or have received appropriate training
- Ensure that panel members have no personal interest in the case and have minimal knowledge of the situation. They may know that a pupil has been suspended or excluded but should not know the details or have had any prior involvement, so that they are able to review the situation objectively.

- Ensure that the panel consists of three LG's, including at least one LG from a school that is different to the one the pupil attends. Trustees can be included where necessary.
- Ensure that panel members understand they must adhere to confidentiality and must not discuss the suspension or permanent exclusion with any party outside of the process.
- Consider who might chair the ERP Meeting. This person may not be the same person who chairs the school's ERP if, for any reason, they are party to details/information about the student or incident which could risk the integrity of the process through procedural error.

14.2 Invitations to the ERP Meeting

The appointed clerk will invite the following parties to the ERP meeting (and no others) so that they can make representations or share information:

- Parents or the pupil if they are 18 or over
- The Head of School/Headteacher
- The pupil's social worker, if they have one
- The Virtual School Head, if the pupil is looked after

The pupil should also be made aware of their right to attend, where appropriate, and should be enabled to make a representation on their own behalf if they wish to do so. Be aware that:

- where a pupil under 18 is invited, parental consent should be sought
- neither the parents nor the pupil *has* to attend, though if they wish to make representations it would be more appropriate if they were there in order to put forward their views
- parents and pupils can be accompanied by a friend or representative at the meeting

The ERP clerk should ascertain in advance if any reasonable adjustments are required for attendees so that they can participate fully, and the Chair of the ERP should ensure that these are secured.

Parents may request that a representative from the LA/Home Authority attends as an observer. However, it is important to note that as an Academy, this representative may only make representations if the panel consents to this.

Note - In the case of exclusion from a Pupil Referral Unit (such as Harbour Vale Learning Centre), the LA/Home Authority *does* have the right to make representation to the panel, so should be invited to the meeting by the ERP Clerk. The LA/Home Authority may choose to make their representation in person or via a written statement.

The ERP clerk will try to arrange the meeting within the statutory time limits set out above and at a time that suits all relevant parties. However, its decision will not be invalid simply on the grounds that it was not made within these time limits.

14.3 The School Evidence Pack

In advance of the ERP meeting, the Head of School/Headteacher will prepare a school evidence pack as written documentary evidence for the decision to exclude. (Templates are provided in the SAST Resources, Procedural Advice and Guidance document). Evidence will be redacted where necessary to comply with GDPR.

The pack will be sent to the Governance Professional Clerk at least 8 days before the scheduled meeting, who will then share this with the SAST Directors of Education and Inclusion. The Governance Professional or ERP clerk will then circulate copies to all parties attending the meeting, including parents, at least 5 days before the Panel Meeting.

After receiving the school evidence pack, the panel may wish to hold a preliminary meeting with the clerk, to ensure that they have all of the information they require and that they are prepared for an effective meeting. The ERP members should discuss the reasonable adjustments required to support the attendance and contribution of all parties at the meeting, including considering the steps that should be taken to support the pupil's views being heard. It is important to note that this meeting is not a time for discussing the case and reaching a decision: it is purely to ensure that the panel members are prepared.

14.4 The ERP Meeting

The ERP will always meet in person unless remote access has been requested by a parent or due to extraordinary events or unforeseen circumstances. Where the meeting is to held remotely, the Governance Professional/ ERP clerk should consult the detailed guidance set out in by the DfE in Part 11 of the [Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools \(2026\)](#) guidance, to ensure all relevant factors are considered when planning for the meeting.

However, regardless of the format chosen, social workers and VSHs must be allowed to join via the use of remote access, as long as the panel are satisfied they will be able to participate effectively (they can hear and be heard, and see and be seen if participating by video), and their remote participation will not prevent the meeting being fair and transparent.

During the ERP, members must consider whether the decision to exclude the pupil was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair, taking account of the legal duties of the Head of School/Headteacher. They must take into account both the interests and circumstances of the suspended or permanently excluded pupil, and that of other pupils, staff, and school community.

If reinstatement would make no practical difference, e.g. if the pupil has already returned to the school following a suspension or the parents/carers make clear they do not want their child reinstated, the ERP must still consider whether the pupil should be officially reinstated and whether the decision to suspend or exclude the pupil was fair, lawful and proportionate.

The Panel Meeting should proceed according to the guidance in the SAST Resources, Procedural Advice and Guidance document.

The ERP will apply the civil standard of proof when responding to the facts relating to a suspension or exclusion, i.e. that on the 'balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that the facts are true.

The clerk should take detailed minutes throughout the meeting which state the evidence and information considered by the panel, including questions and answers. All parties should withdraw before the ERP deliberate and make their decision. The clerk should remain to record the discussion and ensure that the minutes clearly state how the decisions have been reached.

14.5 The ERP's Decision

After considering the evidence, the ERP will either:

- Decline to reinstate the pupil
- Direct the reinstatement of the pupil immediately, or on a specified date

The ERP must, without delay, notify the relevant parties of their decision and the justification for it, in writing. The clerk may assist in the wording of the decision letter, using the relevant template from the SAST Resources, Procedural Advice and Guidance document; and will ensure that it is circulated to the correct parties.

15. Registers and Records

15.1 Attendance Coding

While a pupil is not permitted to attend the school site, their name must remain on the school's admission register and attendance will still be recorded appropriately.

Where the pupil is receiving education in another school establishment (such as a Learning Centre), they will become dual registered pupils from the point of admission and should be coded D in the main school's attendance register. Any absence from the other setting should be recorded in their attendance register.

Where the pupil is receiving education in an alternative, non-school setting, they may be coded B (if provision was arranged through the school) or K (if arranged through the LA). However, if the pupil does not *physically* attend these arranged sessions, then alternative codes must be used for the relevant time period, for example:

- C for students authorised to be absent for exceptional circumstances
- E for students suspended or permanently excluded

Schools should seek support from the Director of Inclusion if they are unsure which attendance code should be used in each circumstance.

15.2 Removal from the register

The Governance Professional will inform the Head of School/Headteacher in writing when

- 15 school days have passed since the parents were notified of the ERP's decision to not reinstate the pupil and no application has been made for an independent review panel, or

- The parents have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent review panel.

Only when this notification has been received, will the Head of School/Headteacher remove the pupil from the school admission register. The off-rolling will take effect from the date the notification is received, not the date the exclusion began.

The Governance Professional will inform the Head of School/Headteacher in writing if an application for an independent review has been made within 15 school days. In that event, the Head of School/Headteacher will need to wait until that confirmation that the process has been concluded or abandoned, including any further reconsideration that has been recommended or directed, before removing a pupil's name from the register.

15.3 Making a return to the Local Authority (LA)

Where a pupil's name is to be removed from the school admissions register because of a permanent exclusion, the school will make a return to the LA. The return will include:

- The pupil's full name
- The full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides
- At least one telephone number at which any parent with whom the pupil normally resides can be contacted in an emergency
- The grounds upon which their name is to be deleted from the admissions register (i.e. permanent exclusion)
- If the pupil's parent or parents or someone else with control over the pupil's attendance have told the school that the pupil is already going to another school or is going to go to another school, or the school itself has directed or is going to direct the pupil off-site to another school, the return must also give the name of that school and the first date when the pupil first attended or is due to attend there

This return must be made as soon as the ground for removal is met (as advised by the Governance Professional) and no later than the removal of the pupil's name.

15.4 Transfer of records

Once the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register and the pupil has been registered at a new school, the common transfer file should be transferred within 15 school days. When no destination is identified, a CTF could be generated and sent to the "Lost Pupil's Database" (LPD) instead. (See DFE guidance on [Common transfer file \(CTF\) and co-ordinated admissions](#)).

The designated safeguarding lead should ensure the child protection file is transferred as soon as possible and within 5 days. Any special educational needs records should also be transferred to the new school's SENCO coordinator (SENCO).

15.5 Record Retention

Claims of discrimination to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability), in relation to disability, or County Court, for all other forms of discrimination, can be made up to six months after the discrimination is alleged to have occurred.

On behalf of the school, the Governance Professional should retain all records and evidence relating to an exclusion for at least six months after the ERP; or, if the case proceeds to an Independent Review Panel, for at least five years.

16. A note on off-rolling

SAST schools are aware that off-rolling is unlawful. OFSTED define off-rolling as:

“A form of gaming where a school:

- removes a pupil from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or*
- encourages a parent to remove their child from the school roll or*
- encourages a sixth form student not to continue with their course of study or*
- retains a pupil on the school roll but does not allow them to attend school normally, without a formal permanent exclusion or suspension*

and that decision is made primarily in the interests of the school and not the pupil.”

Further examples of off-rolling include:

- moving a pupil to off-site AP where that is not in the best interests of that pupil
- sending a pupil home without a formal suspension regardless of whether it occurs with the agreement of parents
- placing a pupil on a part-time timetable for behavioural reasons
- intentionally removing a pupil from the school roll without correctly following regulations

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

- without following the statutory procedure or formally recording the event
- because they have special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) that the school feels unable to support
- due to poor academic performance
- because they or their parents haven't 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

Ofsted will consider any evidence found of a parent being pressured into a managed move that has resulted in off-rolling. Where inspectors find evidence of bad practice, the school's report card and leadership and governance evaluation may be negatively impacted.

17. Independent Review Panel

17.1 Convening the IRP

If applied for by parents within the legal time frame, SAST will arrange for an independent review panel hearing to review the decision of the ERP not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil, according to the DfE's [Suspension and permanent \(2026\)](#) guidance.

The legal time frame for an application is:

- Within 15 school days of notice being given to the parents by the governing body of their decision to uphold a permanent exclusion or
- Where an application has not been made within this time frame, within 15 school days of the final determination of a claim of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010, in relation to the exclusion.

The costs associated with an IRP, including in relation to the appointment of a SEND expert if requested, will be met in full by the excluding school.

Any application made outside of the legal time frame will be rejected by SAST.

17.2 The IRP decision

Following the review, the panel will do one of the following:

- Uphold the decision
- Recommend that the Review Panel reconsiders reinstatement
- Quash the decision and direct that the Review Panel reconsiders reinstatement

The IRP panel's decision does not have to be unanimous and can be decided by a majority vote. It is binding on the pupil, parents, the ERP, School and LA.

17.3 Reconsidering Reinstatement following an IRP

Where the IRP instructs the ERP to reconsider their decision not to reinstate a pupil, they will do so within 10 school days of being given notice of the independent review panel's decision. If, following that instruction, the ERP does not offer to reinstate the pupil, then the school will be required to make a payment of £4,000 directly to the LA area in which the school is located.

Where the IRP recommends that the ERP should reconsider their decision not to reinstate a pupil, they will do so within 10 school days of being given notice of the review panel's decision. If, following that recommendation to reconsider, the ERP offers to reinstate the pupil, the school's budget will not require adjustment to the LA.

Following reconsideration, the ERP will notify the parents/carers, the Head of School/Headteacher, the ERP, SAST Directors of Education and Inclusion and the LA, of their reconsidered decision and the reasons for this.

18. Using data

Each school will collect data on the following:

- Suspensions and permanent exclusions
- Those taken off-roll
- Separation of pupils for safeguarding purposes
- Use of reduced timetables
- Use of alternative provision and off-site directions, including to a learning centre
- Use of dual registration and managed moves

The Headteacher/Head of School will ensure that the data is analysed every term to evaluate the school's practices regarding support, intervention, suspension and exclusion. The data will be analysed from a variety of perspectives including:

- By year group
- By time of day/week/term
- By SEND, disadvantage and other vulnerability indicators
- By protected characteristic

Where there are patterns which may indicate that certain policies and support measures are not working, the Headteacher/Head of School should advise the LGC, Education Director and Director of Inclusion, and work with others to ensure that the necessary changes are implemented to meet the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The SAST Directors of Education and Inclusion, and the Head of Safeguarding will review, consider and provide advice, support and challenge in relation to:

- The school register and absence codes
- How effectively and consistently the Trust's behaviour principles and the school's behaviour policy is being implemented
- Interventions in place to support pupils at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion
- The effectiveness of the reintegration process in instances where pupils receive repeat suspensions
- The suitability of placement, for children with an EHCP where they are at risk of repeated or permanent exclusion (in conjunction with the LA),
- Understand any protected characteristics of suspended and excluded pupils and evaluate equality considerations
- Use of separation for safeguarding, reduced timetables, off-site direction placements, and managed moves
- Any permanent exclusions, to make sure they are only used when necessary

Appendix A: The Graduated Response - ideas to minimise suspension and exclusion

Each graduated response will differ in detail, according to the presenting and assessed needs, and the strengths, of each child. Beyond Tier 2, the provision and outcomes will be recorded according to the principles outlined in the SAST SEND policy.

Strategies to consider include (but are not restricted to):

Tier 1 – Universal (class teacher / tutor / subject teachers)

- Whole school approach to understanding special education needs and disabilities, adverse childhood experiences, and to promoting resilience and well-being
- A Behaviour Policy which is aligned to the SAST Behaviour Principles, detailing a clear, relationships-based approach that is trauma aware, and attachment informed
- Use of restorative approaches to build, maintain and repair relationships
- Use of PSHE, Circle Time and other whole class curriculum approaches to explicitly teach rules and routines, build self-confidence and develop social skills
- Explicitly teaching de-escalation and self-management strategies
- Modelling of expected behaviours
- Zones of Regulation
- Anti-bullying work
- Identification of a key adult (class teacher/form tutor) to build positive and trusting relationships
- Class Strategies - Reward Charts / Class Rewards etc.
- Buddy / peer mentor system
- Regular home/school communication (phone calls, book, meetings etc.)
- Health checks – hearing and vision
- My Concern - monitoring
- Attendance monitoring
- Class wellbeing screening e.g. Thrive, PASS survey, Pupil and parent surveys

Tier 2 - Initial Support

- Raising concerns with SENCO for additional assessment, observation, monitoring and advice
- Curriculum adaptation, scaffolding and differentiation
- Reasonable adjustments e.g. sensory reduction equipment or space, visual timetables and cues, memory support and movement breaks, modified language use by adults
- Use of distraction techniques and giving responsibility for something/someone
- Providing limited choices that allow the child some control with the same end result (for example, “Would you like to talk to me now or in 5 minutes?” “Would you like to sit on the red chair or the blue chair?”). Ensure “pause to process” time is given to respond whenever possible.
- Backward chaining – for example, bringing learner in at the end of assembly, activity, session or day to build up confidence
- Use agreed positive scripts for routines, re-direction and reinforcement of expectations
- Gather individual Pupil Voice informally
- Creating a 5-point scale and/or Reducing Anxiety Management Plan (RAMP), with the pupil where possible
- Individual behaviour plans, using therapeutic thinking approaches such as the early prognosis tool

- Frequent communication agreed between home and school, to understand what is going on and to share and agree strategies
- Referral to the NHS health services for support with health, behaviours and low-level anxiety
- Diagnostic Screening/Assessment tools such as Speech and Language checklists, SNAP-B, Boxall Profile, Strength and Difficulties questionnaire
- Attendance meetings and possible attendance plan
- Consideration for adding to the SEND register

Tier 3 – Additional Support (Child is most likely to now be on SEND register)

- Encourage, and seek to understand, the individual Pupil Voice
- Learning Support Plan/Passport
- Pastoral Support Plans
- Designating a Learning Mentor or additional key adult(s) (beyond class teacher / form tutor)
- Small group school-based interventions such as ELSA, MHST, Thrive, Forest School, Speech and Language, Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations, Nurture time; and for specific areas of curriculum learning
- Support for unstructured time e.g. lunch club
- Emotion Coaching techniques to support relationships after an incident
- Individual Risk Assessment (using Dorset RA Toolkit, Therapeutic Thinking Risk Calculator or similar)
- Review RAMP / Five point Scale
- Identify protective and educational consequences (Therapeutic Thinking)
- Analyse dysregulation and values/beliefs (Therapeutic Thinking)
- Complete in-depth anxiety analysis (Therapeutic Thinking)
- Refinement of Individual behaviour plans – including reporting to another teacher – ensure adjustments made in line with Equalities Legislation
- Review of Personal Education Plan with Virtual School Lead
- Detailed transition time planning e.g. Meet and Greet, for the end of the day
- Staff-Student Solution Circle approach (INSET, Briefings, Staff Meeting)
- Onward referral to agencies for assessment such as Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, Paediatrician, Early Mental Health Practitioners – and then incorporating advice and provision into pupil's plans
- Undertake/signpost for further cognitive diagnostic assessment e.g. dyslexia
- Regular liaison, collaboration and reviews with parents to understand the context and discuss progress in school
- TAF or TAC (Team Around the Child or Family) - SENCO, Teacher, SLT etc.
- Case discussion with other SENCOs
- Onward referrals for support e.g. Family support workers, parental support advisor
- Parenting Workshops/Courses Signposting to the Local Authority Offer, SENDIAS services, Children with Additional Needs Team and any relevant specialist groups in the area
- Outreach / In-reach e.g. from / Specialist teachers / TADSS / Tor School

Tier 4 – Further Support (complex needs, not responding to support and repeat exclusions)

- Critical self-review of the graduated response, using the School Review Tool for support
- Shorten the Assess, Plan, Do, Review, Cycle to ensure progress towards small step targets is planned for, delivered and evaluated.
- Bring together all therapeutic thinking analysis to create a predict, prevent and progress plan.

- Consider modifying curriculum plans (short term, agreed with parents, reviewed at least fortnightly)
- Further onward referrals, with consideration given to a wider range of other agencies or avenues of support such as CAMHS, play therapists, trauma counselling, PCSOs, safeguarding colleagues
- SAST Director of Inclusion case review
- SAST Head of Safeguarding case review
- Consideration for making a request for Statutory Assessment of SEN (EHCNA)
- Initiate further support from the Dorset Locality Inclusion Team professionals such as the Early Help team, Virtual School Lead, Targeted Youth Worker, Attendance Support Worker
- Wider TAF or TAC (Team Around the Child or Family) - SENCO, Teacher, SLT, social worker, external agencies etc.
- Educational Psychologist review
- Consideration given to time-limited interventions and avenues of support not previously considered e.g. part-time off-site direction to alternative provision for regulation and well-being support
- If the child already has an EHC Plan, work with parents and request that the responsible LA conducts an Emergency Annual Review

Tier 5 - At High Risk of Permanent Exclusion

- Complete a Therapeutic Tree and Plan (Therapeutic Thinking)
- Case discussion with local authority SEND team, inclusion worker
- Consideration given to interventions and avenues of support not previously considered e.g. off-site direction, potential managed move
- Team Around the School (including Director of Inclusion, Head of Safeguarding, and the relevant LA representative e.g. from the Dorset North Locality Team)

Appendix B: Contacts

DORSET:

North Dorset Locality Team

Email: northlocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Tel: 01258 474036

Dorchester Locality Team

Email: dorchesterlocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Tel: 01305 224220

Purbeck Locality Team

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Tel: 01929 557000

West Dorset Locality Team

Email: westlocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Tel: 01308 425241

Service Manager and VSH: Jo Smark-Richards

Email: jo.smark-richards@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Tel: [01305 221632](tel:01305221632)

SEND information, advice and support service (SENDIASS):

Email: sendiass@dorsetcc.gov.uk
Mobile: 07748 624609

SOMERSET:

Exclusion Notification Contacts

exclusions@somerset.gov.uk
Toby.Jenkins@somerset.gov.uk
jen.cox@somerset.gov.uk
samantha.dowell@somerset.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 123 2224 – Education Engagement Service

Principal Teacher/Virtual School Head

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SEND information, advice and support service (SENDIASS):

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WILTSHIRE

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Virtual School Head Teacher:

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Strategic Lead for Alternative Provision

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Alternative Provision Business Support Officer

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Wiltshire SENDIASS

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Appendix C: A Theological Reflection on Exclusions



A Theological Reflection on Exclusions

'How we treat the most damaged, the most vulnerable and the worst behaved in society reflects our humanity.' Paul Dix *When the Adults Change, Everything Changes*

'Whatever you did for the least of these... you did for me.' Matthew 25:40

A theology of pupil exclusion must begin with the Christian understanding that each individual is made in the image of God and therefore of immense worth and value; each child matters. Jesus' words 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full' (John 10:10) are an offer for everyone, not the select few. In fact, the vulnerable and excluded are at the very heart of Jesus' invitation.

Wisdom in leadership holds in tension the varied needs of vulnerable pupils with the safety of the wider school environment. It knows that learning is essential for life ('Get wisdom, get understanding' – Proverbs 4:1) and all pupils should have the chance to learn (and teachers to teach) within safe environments ('They will live in safety, and no one will make them afraid' – Ezekiel 34:28). It balances this with an understanding that each child has one chance of a childhood education and makes every effort to secure this for even the most challenging pupils, as early as possible ('Doesn't he go after the lost sheep until he finds it?' Luke 15:4). Wise leaders understand the need for clarity, in judging each situation fairly and with equal measure, and take the time to fully comprehend each child's needs – 'not wanting any of these little ones to be lost.' (Matthew 18:4).

Christian **hope** has every reason to look expectantly into the future, in the confidence of God's final redemption of all things – the new heaven and the new earth. At the same time, there has to be a recognition that things are not currently as they should be ('now we see only a reflection ... then we shall see face to face' 1 Corinthians 13:12). This is the 'now and not yet' of the Christian life. There is an impetus therefore to keep going with challenging pupils, spurred on by the love of Christ, whilst handling the reality which presents itself: 'love... always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.' (1 Corinthians 13:7) Hopeful school leaders believe in the possibility of transformation and endeavour to attain a better future for even the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, despite the cost. They commit to looking beyond stereotypes, taking care to obtain achievement for all.

Throughout the Old Testament, Israel is warned to care for its weakest members just as God, the Father of the fatherless, does (Exodus 22:22; Psalm 82:3-4; Jeremiah 22:3). Jesus reiterates this imperative throughout his teaching, describing a **community** that is to 'deal mercifully with human weakness and failure', enabling 'forgiveness and reintegration of the wrongdoer into the community's life'¹. Community without the most challenging becomes a community without vulnerability, a community without the need for dependence. However, the school's desire to be hospitable and welcoming to all needs to be held together with protecting the well-being of the whole from the impact of disruptive behaviour. Early identification and intervention of difficulties is therefore vital in preventing more serious issues for both the community and individual later on.

Finally, school leaders show their commitment to the **dignity** of each child by looking with curiosity beyond the presenting behaviour to see the underlying needs, understanding that 'targeting behaviour is like treating the symptoms and ignoring the cause of an illness'². They consider the uniqueness of each individual, valuing them as 'wonderfully and fearfully made' (Psalm 139:14) while also giving the respect of calling out inappropriate behaviour, setting boundaries and offering the chance for repair. Whilst exclusion can be a necessary step for a young person and their family on the path to starting afresh, greater dignity is found in the life that is redeemed, in becoming fully alive and entering into the fullness of who God created them to be.

¹ Hays, R. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (Harper Collins, 2013)

² Hoffman, Cooper & Powell *Raising a Secure Child* (Guildford, 2017)