

“Together in Achievement”



EXCLUSIONS POLICY

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Exclusions Policy

1. Aims

Each Aspire academy aims to ensure that:

- The exclusions process is applied fairly and consistently
- The exclusions process is understood by governors, staff, parents and pupils
- Pupils in school are safe and happy
- Pupils do not become NEET (not in education, employment or training)

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on statutory guidance from the Department for Education: Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units (PRUs) in England.

It is based on the following legislation, which outline schools' powers to exclude pupils:

- Section 52 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 looks at 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

3. The decision to exclude

Only the headteacher, or acting headteacher, can exclude a pupil from school. A permanent exclusion will be taken as a last resort.

Aspire academies are aware that off-rolling is unlawful. Ofsted defines off-rolling as:

"...the practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school roll, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the pupil."

We are committed to following all statutory exclusions procedures to ensure that every child receives an education in a safe and caring environment. Whilst this policy summarises our position, Aspire headteachers and Local Governing Bodies will always refer to the latest more detailed, statutory guidance from the DfE: *'Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England: statutory guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion September 2017'*.

The decision to exclude a pupil for a fixed period will be taken in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the Behaviour Policy.

The decision to exclude a pupil permanently will be taken 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 pupil or others.

Before deciding whether to exclude a pupil, either permanently or for a fixed period, the headteacher will:

- Consider all the relevant facts and evidence, including whether the incident(s) leading to the exclusion were provoked
- Allow the pupil to give their version of events
- Consider if the pupil has special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)

4. Definition

For the purposes of exclusions, school day is defined as any day on which there is a school session. Therefore, INSET or staff training days do not count as a school day.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The headteacher

Informing parents

The headteacher will immediately provide the following information, in writing, to the parents of an excluded pupil:

- The reason(s) for the exclusion
- The length of a fixed-term exclusion or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent
- Information about parents' right to make representations about the exclusion to the governing board and how the pupil may be involved in this
- How any representations should be made
- Where there is a legal requirement for the Exclusions sub-committee of the Local Governing Body to meet to consider the reinstatement of a pupil, and that parents have a right to attend a meeting, be represented at a meeting (at their own expense) and to bring a friend

The headteacher will also notify parents by the end of the afternoon session on the day their child is excluded that for the first 5 school days of an exclusion, or until the start date of any alternative provision where this is earlier, 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.

If alternative provision is being arranged, the following information will be included when notifying parents of an exclusion:

- The start date for any provision of full-time education that has been arranged
- 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 this information on alternative provision is not reasonably ascertainable by the end of the afternoon session, it may be provided in a subsequent notice, but it will be provided no later than 48 hours before the provision is due to start. The only exception to this is where alternative provision is to be provided before the sixth day of an exclusion, in which case the information can be provided with less than 48 hours' notice with parents' consent.

Informing the Local Governing Body, Trust CEO and Local Authority

The headteacher will immediately notify the Local Governing Body, Aspire MAT CEO and the Local Authority of:

A permanent exclusion, including when a fixed-period exclusion is followed by a decision to permanently exclude a pupil

Exclusions which would result in the pupil being excluded for more than 5 school days (or more than 10 lunchtimes) in a term

Exclusions which would result in the pupil missing a public examination

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

For all other exclusions, the headteacher will notify the LGB, CEO and LA once a term.

5.2 The Local Governing Body

Responsibilities regarding exclusions are delegated to an Exclusions sub-committee of each Local Governing Body consisting of at least 3 governors.

The Local Governing Body has a duty to consider the reinstatement of an excluded pupil.

For a fixed-period exclusion of more than 5 school days, the Local Governing Body will arrange suitable full-time education for the pupil. This provision will begin no later than the sixth day of the exclusion.

5.3 The LA

For permanent exclusions, the LA is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education to begin no later than the sixth day of the exclusion.

6. Considering the reinstatement of a pupil

The Exclusions sub-committee of the Local Governing Body will consider the reinstatement of an excluded pupil within 15 school days of receiving the notice of the exclusion if:

- The exclusion is permanent
- It is a fixed-term exclusion which would bring the pupil's total number of school days of exclusion to more than 15 in a term
- It would result in a pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test

If requested to do so by parents, the Exclusions sub-committee of the Local Governing Body will consider the reinstatement of an excluded pupil within 50 school days of receiving notice of the exclusion if the pupil would be excluded from school for more than 5 school days, but less than 15, in a single term.

Where an exclusion would result in a pupil missing a public examination, the Exclusions sub-committee of the Local Governing Body will consider the reinstatement of the pupil before the date of the examination. If this is not practicable, the Exclusions sub-committee will consider the exclusion and decide whether or not to reinstate the pupil.

The Exclusions sub-committee can either:

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

In reaching a decision, the Exclusions sub-committee will consider whether the exclusion was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair and whether the headteacher followed their legal duties. They will consider all available evidence and decide whether or not a fact is true 'on the balance of probabilities', which differs from the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

Minutes will be taken of the meeting, and a record of evidence considered kept. The outcome will also be recorded on the pupil's educational record.

The Exclusions sub-committee will notify, in writing, the headteacher, parents and the LA of its decision, along with reasons for its decision, without delay.

Where an exclusion is permanent, the Exclusions sub-committee's decision will also include the following:

- The fact that it is permanent
- Notice of parents' right to ask for the decision to be reviewed by an independent review panel, and:
 - The date by which an application for an independent review must be made
 - The name and address to whom an application for a review should be submitted
 - That any application should set out the grounds on which it is being made and that, where appropriate, reference to how the pupil's SEND is considered to be relevant to the exclusion
 - That, regardless of whether the excluded pupil has recognised SEND, parents have a right to require Aspire Multi-Academy Trust to appoint a SEND expert to attend the review
 - Details of the role of the SEND expert and that there would be no cost to parents for this appointment
 - That parents must make clear if they wish for a SEND expert to be appointed in any application for a review
 - That parents may, at their own expense, appoint someone to make written and/or oral representations to the panel, and parents may also bring a friend to the review
 - That if parents believe that the exclusion has occurred as a result of discrimination, they may make a claim under the Equality Act 2010 to the first-tier tribunal (special educational needs and disability), in the case of disability discrimination, or the county court, in the case of other forms of discrimination. A claim of discrimination made under these routes should be lodged within 6 months of the date on which the discrimination is alleged to have taken place

7. An Independent Review

If parents apply for an independent review, the Multi-Academy Trust will arrange for an independent panel to review the decision of the governing board not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil.

Applications for an independent review must be made within 15 school days of notice being given to the parents by the Exclusions sub-committee of its decision to not reinstate a pupil.

A panel of 3 or 5 members will be constituted with representatives from each of the categories below. Where a 5-member panel is constituted, 2 members will come from the school governors' category and 2 members will come from the headteacher category.

- A lay member to chair the panel who has not worked in any school in a paid capacity, disregarding any experience as a school governor or volunteer
- School governors who have served as a governor for at least 12 consecutive months in the last 5 years, provided they have not been teachers or headteachers during this time
- Headteachers or individuals who have been a headteacher within the last 5 years

A person may not serve as a member of a review panel if they:

- Are a director of the Multi-Academy Trust or a member of the Local Governing Body of the excluding school
- Are the headteacher of the excluding school, or have held this position in the last 5 years
- Are an employee of the Multi-Academy Trust, unless they are employed as a headteacher at another academy
- Have, or at any time have had, any connection with the Multi-Academy Trust, excluding academy, Local Governing Body, parents or pupil, or the incident leading to the exclusion, which might reasonably be taken to raise doubts about their impartiality
- Have not had the required training within the last 2 years (see appendix 1 for what training must cover)

A clerk will be appointed to the panel.

The independent panel will decide one of the following:

- Uphold the decision of the Exclusions sub-committee of the Local Governing Body
- Recommend that the Local Governing Body reconsiders reinstatement
- Quash the Exclusions sub-committee's decision and direct that they reconsider reinstatement (only when the decision is judged to be flawed)

The panel's decision can be decided by a majority vote. In the case of a tied decision, the chair has the casting vote.

8. School registers

A pupil's name will be removed from the school admissions register if:

- 15 school days have passed since the parents were notified of the exclusion panel'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

Where an application for an independent review has been made, the Local Governing Body will wait until that review has concluded before removing a pupil's name from the register.

Where alternative provision has been made for an excluded pupil and they attend it, code B (education off-site) or code D (dual registration) will be used on the attendance register.

Where excluded pupils are not attending alternative provision, code E (absent) will be used.

9. Returning from a fixed-term exclusion

Following a fixed-term exclusion, a re-integration meeting will be held involving the pupil, parents, a member of senior staff and other staff, where appropriate.

The following measures may be implemented when a pupil returns from a fixed-term exclusion:

- Agreeing a behaviour contract
- Putting a pupil 'on report'

10. Monitoring arrangements

The academy headteacher monitors the number of exclusions every term and reports to the Local Governing Body and MAT CEO. They also liaise with the Local Authority to ensure suitable full-time education for excluded pupils.

This policy will be reviewed by the Aspire Board of Trustees every 3 years.

11. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to the Aspire MAT Behaviour Policy and each academy's SEND policy.

APPENDIX 1: Independent Review Panel Training

Aspire Multi-Academy Trust will ensure that all members of an independent review panel and clerks have received training within the 2 years prior to the date of the review.

Training will have covered:

- The requirements of the primary legislation, regulations and statutory guidance governing exclusions, which would include an understanding of how the principles applicable in an application for judicial review relate to the panel's decision making
- The need for the panel to observe procedural fairness and the rules of natural justice
- The role of the chair and the clerk of a review panel
- The duties of headteachers, Local Governing Body and the panel under the Equality Act 2010
- The effect of section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 (acts of public authorities unlawful if not compatible with certain human rights) and the need to act in a manner compatible with human rights protected by that Act

APPENDIX 2: COVID-19 Addendum

1. Scope

This addendum applies for the duration of time that the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on temporary changes to exclusions during COVID-19 is in place.

It sets out temporary changes to our normal exclusion policy. Pupils, parents and staff should continue to follow our normal exclusion policy with respect to anything not covered in this addendum.

We may need to amend or add to this addendum as circumstances or official guidance changes. We will communicate any changes to staff, parents and pupils.

2. Remote panel meetings

For exclusions occurring between **1 June 2020 and 24 March 2021**, any meeting of a governing board exclusion panel or an independent review panel (IRP) will be held via remote access if:

- It is not reasonably practicable for the meeting to take place in person, within the usual timescales, due to coronavirus
- The Local Governing Body is satisfied that:
 - a) All participants agree to the use of remote access
 - b) All participants have access to the technology which will allow them to hear and speak throughout the meeting, and (if a live video link is used) to see the other participants and be seen by them
 - c) All participants will be able to put across their point of view or fulfil their function
 - d) The meeting can be held fairly and transparently via remote access

During remote meetings, procedural requirements will remain as normal. For example, parents can still have a friend or representative join the meeting.

2.1 Responsibilities of the Local Governing Body

The Exclusions sub-committee of the Local Governing Body will make sure the conditions above are met before a meeting takes place. When determining this, they will assess:

- The facts of the individual case
- The circumstances in which a meeting in person could be expected to take place
- The needs of the participants (as far as this is possible)
- The latest public health guidance

Ahead of the meeting, the Exclusions sub-committee of the Local Governing Body will:

- Explain to participants what technology they propose to use
- Explain that participants do not have to agree to a remote meeting if they do not want to, though this will likely result in the meeting being delayed
- Take reasonable steps to facilitate participants' access to the technology required

If, once the meeting starts, it cannot proceed fairly (for example, because a participant cannot access the meeting), the Exclusions sub-committee will adjourn the meeting.

3. Applications for an Independent Review

For exclusions occurring between **1 June 2020 and 24 March 2021**, applications for an independent review must be made within **25 school days** (as opposed to 15 school days as outlined in our normal

policy) of notice being given to the parents by the Exclusions sub-committee of its decision to not reinstate a pupil.

The school will wait for 25 school days to pass without an application having been made before deleting the name of a permanently excluded pupil from the admissions register.

4. Timescales for holding meetings

4.1 Exclusions between 25 September 2020 and 24 March 2021

We will follow our normal timescales for holding meetings. However, where this is not reasonably practicable due to coronavirus or due to the conditions for a remote access meeting, the Exclusions sub-committee of the Local Governing Body will hold them as soon as it is safe to meet in person or practical to do so via remote access.

4.2 Exclusions between 1 June 2020 and 24 September 2020

Fixed-period exclusions resulting in the pupil missing between 6 and 15 school days in a term

Where a parent/carer chooses to make representations about the exclusion, the Exclusions sub-committee will hold a meeting to discuss the pupil's reinstatement within **60 school days**, or as soon as possible after that, if:

- Due to coronavirus it has not been reasonably practicable for the Exclusions sub-committee to meet face-to-face within our normal timeframe of 50 school days
- It has not been reasonably practicable for the Exclusions sub-committee to meet remotely due to the conditions for a remote meeting

Permanent exclusions, and fixed-period exclusions resulting in the pupil missing more than 15 school days in a term

The Exclusions sub-committee will meet to discuss the pupil's reinstatement within **25 school days**, or as soon as possible after that, if:

- Due to coronavirus it has not been reasonably practicable for the governing board to meet face-to-face within our normal timeframe of 15 school days
- It has not been reasonably practicable for the governing board to meet remotely for a reason relating to the conditions for a remote access meeting

Independent Review Panels to consider permanent exclusions

The timescale for the IRP meeting will be extended to **25 school days** (from the usual 15 school days), or as long as reasonably necessary, if it has not been reasonably practicable for the review panel to meet:

- Face-to-face within 15 school days due to coronavirus
- Remotely for a reason relating to the conditions for a remote access meeting

5. Monitoring arrangements

We will review this policy as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum by July 2021.

6. Links with other policies

This addendum links to the Aspire Exclusions and Behaviour policies.