



Hope Academy

A joint Catholic & Church of England Academy

EXCLUSION AND SUSPENSIONS POLICY



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Hope Academy is committed to being a fully accessible and inclusive organisation, welcoming and respecting the diversity of its students, staff, community and visitors to the academy.

Rationale

This policy is underpinned by the commitment of all at Hope Academy to ensure the safety and well-being of the whole academy community and to maintain an appropriate educational environment in which all can learn and achieve.

We have an overall aim of reducing the need to use suspension as a sanction.

Introduction

The decision to exclude a student will be taken by the Principal in the following circumstances:-

- (a) In response to a serious breach of the academy's Behaviour for Learning Policy;
- (b) If allowing the student to remain in the academy would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the academy.

Suspensions and permanent exclusions are an extreme sanction and are only used by the Principal (or, in the absence of the Principal, the Vice-Principal who is acting in that role).

Suspension will be used when there is an immediate threat to the safety of others in the academy or the student concerned. Before deciding whether to exclude a student either permanently or for a fixed period the Principal will ensure appropriate investigations have been carried out, considering all the evidence available.

Suspension or permanent exclusion may be used for any of the following, all of which constitute examples of unacceptable conduct, and are infringements of the academy's Behaviour for Learning Policy:

- Verbal abuse to staff and others
- Verbal abuse to students
- Physical abuse to/attack on staff
- Physical abuse to/attack on students
- Indecent behaviour
- Damage to property
- Misuse of illegal drugs or other substances, including supplying
- Theft
- Serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff
- Sexual abuse or assault
- Carrying an offensive weapon
- Arson
- Bringing the name, or image, of the Academy into disrepute in any format (including online)
- Unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported and for which academy sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the student's behaviour

This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other situations where the Principal makes the judgment that suspension is an appropriate sanction.

Suspension procedure

- Most suspensions are of a fixed term nature and are of short duration (usually between one and three days).
- The DFE regulations allow the Principal to suspend a student for one or more fixed periods not exceeding 45 school days in any one school year.
- Following suspension, parents/carers are contacted immediately where possible. A letter will be sent by post giving details of the suspension and the date the suspension ends.

- Parents/carers have a right to make representations to the Governing Body
- A 'return to school' meeting will be held following the expiry of the fixed term suspension and this will involve the student, parent/carer, a member of the senior leadership team, and other staff where appropriate.
- It is academy practice to monitor the behaviour and work of the student very closely for the period following suspension. This may mean the use of a report or close support by staff.
- If the fixed term suspension is greater than five days or an accumulation of suspensions exceeds five days, a pastoral support plan may be drawn up. This needs to be agreed with the academy, student, parents/carers and any agencies involved.
- During the course of a fixed term suspension where the student is to be at home, parents/carers are advised that the student is not allowed on the academy premises, and that daytime supervision is their responsibility, as parents/carers.

Fixed term suspensions over five days

According to DFE guidance the academy is obliged to provide full time education from the sixth day of any period of fixed term suspension of six days or longer.

The academy will consult with the LA officers for any suspension of more than five days in order that appropriate full-time education and transport is arranged.

The academy will provide education by working with:
Pupil Referral Unit
The Local Authority

The academy will liaise with the outside education provider to ensure that the student continues with his/her programme of study. In most, when appropriate, cases the academy will set the work to be completed and ensure that it is completed appropriately.

Fixed term suspensions that take the total number of suspensions to more than 15 days in a term

Where a child is suspended for a total of more than 15 days in a term, the suspension that brings the total over this limit must be reviewed by a panel.

This means that a single suspension of 15.5 days would automatically require a review, or a review could be triggered by a single day if at least 14.5 days had previously been lost to suspension.

NB – if a suspension covering the end of one term and the beginning of another is issued and the total number of days in neither term is above 15, no automatic review is triggered.

Panels will acknowledge that the maximum number of days for which a child can be suspended over the course of a year is forty-five. The "15+" threshold, being a third of this maximum, alerts a panel to the prospect that this maximum might be reached and the child should be considered at risk of permanent exclusion. Fifteen days is not a per-term maximum.

Panels will use the opportunity to discuss the risk of further suspensions or permanent exclusion and will assist all parties in understanding the seriousness of this and will invite considerations on how further suspensions can be avoided.

Permanent Exclusion

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

The first is a final, formal step in a concerted process for dealing with disciplinary issues following the use of a wide range of other strategies, which have been used without success. It is an acknowledgement that

all available strategies have been exhausted and is used as a last resort. This would include persistent and defiant misbehaviour e.g. repeated bullying (which could include racist or homophobic bullying) or repeated possession and/or use of an illegal drug on school premises.

The second is where there are exceptional circumstances and it is not appropriate to implement other strategies, and where it could be appropriate to permanently exclude a student for a first or 'one off' offence. These might include:

Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff

Sexual abuse or assault

Possession of or Supplying an illegal substances

Carrying an offensive weapon*

Arson

The academy will consider police involvement for any of the above offences.

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

These instances are not exhaustive but indicate the severity of such offences and the fact that such behaviour seriously affects the discipline and well-being of the academy.

Exercise of discretion

In reaching a decision, the Principal or Vice-Principal will always look at each case on its own merits. Therefore, a tariff system, fixing a standard penalty for a particular action, is both unfair and inappropriate. In considering whether permanent exclusion is the most appropriate sanction, the Principal will consider the gravity of the incident, or series of incidents, and whether it constitutes a serious breach of the academy's Behaviour for Learning Policy and the effect that the student remaining in the academy would have on the education and welfare of other students and staff.

In line with its statutory duty, these same tests of appropriateness will form the basis of the deliberations at a governors' exclusion appeals hearing/meeting, when it meets to consider the Principal's decision to exclude.

Alternatives to Exclusion

The academy works closely with other local secondary schools to undertake managed moves where such a course of action would be of benefit both to the student and the two academies/schools concerned.

Lunchtime Suspension

Students whose behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive may be excluded from the academy premises for the duration of the lunchtime period. This will be treated as fixed term suspension and parents will have the same right to gain information and to appeal.

Behaviour Outside the Academy

Students' behaviour outside the academy on "academy business", for example educational visits and journeys, away sports fixtures or a work experience placement is subject to the academy's Behaviour for Learning Policy. Inappropriate behaviour in these circumstances will be dealt with as if it had taken place in the academy. If students' behaviour in the immediate vicinity of the academy or on a journey to and from the academy is inappropriate and meets the academy's criteria for suspension, then the Principal may decide to suspend.

Monitoring and review

The policy will be reviewed every three years unless an incident occurs which suggests a review is needed