

Exclusions Policy

Junior School and Senior School including Boarding

This policy will be operated in accordance with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Types of Exclusion

A pupil may be excluded from the school for either:

- i) a fixed period of time - a 'fixed period exclusion' or suspension which may be internal or external
- ii) permanently – where the pupil will not be permitted to return to the school

Fixed Period Exclusion/Suspension

A decision to exclude a pupil for a fixed period of time or suspend a pupil should only be taken where there has been a serious breach, or a series of breaches due to a build up of incidents over time, of the school's Behaviour Policy and/or related policies such as the Responsible use of ICT Pupil Agreement and Anti-bullying Policy. Any decision to suspend a pupil will be made by the Head in discussion with the Deputy Heads or Head of Junior School.

Any subsequent failure to abide by the school's rules and regulations could give rise to permanent exclusion.

Permanent Exclusion

A decision to permanently exclude will be taken as a last resort after a wide range of other strategies have been previously employed or if an exceptional individual offence has been committed. Any decision to permanently exclude is taken by the Head after discussion with the Deputy Heads/Head of Junior School and the Clerk of Committee (Chair of Governors). Parents are usually asked whether they wish to withdraw their child rather than have them permanently excluded.

Rationale for Exclusion

Exclusion will usually be considered only where such action is deemed to be in the best interests of one or more of:

- the pupil concerned
- other pupils in the school
- staff in the school
- or where the pupil's action has brought or is likely to bring the school's reputation into disrepute.

Permanent exclusion will also be the likely outcome where the pupil concerned is regarded on the balance of probabilities as having committed a criminal offence, whether connected with the school or outside of school. Drug related incidents will lead to permanent exclusion as will carrying or possessing any offensive weapons in or around the school's premises.

A pupil is also liable to be excluded if fees remain unpaid unless an arrangement has been agreed with the Bursar for paying arrears. Such exclusion of a pupil does not fall within the Exclusions Policy and are determined in accordance with any breach of the parent contract.

Process Leading to Permanent Exclusion

While the precise procedure to be followed in each situation depends on the circumstances of the case, the procedure outlined below would apply wherever possible:

- A fair and thorough investigation, if required, will be led by the Deputy Head of School or Head of Junior School.

- Pupils must be informed of the allegation and the evidence relied upon and must be given a fair opportunity to exculpate themselves.
- Parents will be informed as soon as practically possible.
- A decision will be reached by the Head.
- Parents will receive formal written notice of the decision.
- An appeal should be offered.

Appealing a Permanent Exclusion

If a pupil is excluded by the Head, the parent may appeal against the decision. Such an appeal should be made in writing to the Clerk of Committee within 14 days of the Head's written confirmation of the decision to exclude and should set out the reasons for disputing the Head's decision. If the parents do not appeal within 14 days, there shall be no later right of appeal.

In the event of an appeal, the Clerk of Committee will inform the Head and appoint an Appeal Panel of three people (usually two Trustees and one independent person) not directly involved in the matters surrounding the exclusion. A hearing will be scheduled to take place as soon as is practicable and normally within 15 school days of receipt of the parents' notice of appeal. Unless otherwise agreed by the parents, at least 7 days' notice will be given of the time and place of the hearing.

A pupil whose exclusion is subject to such an appeal will be suspended from attending the school pending the outcome of the appeal.

Prior to the hearing, the Clerk of Committee will write to the parents to ask them to provide, not less than 10 days before the hearing, any written statements and supporting documentation on which they wish to rely, for inclusion in a combined bundle of documents for use at the hearing. The Head will also be asked to provide a statement covering the reasons for permanent exclusion.

All attendees should have the same set of documents before them for the hearing. The Clerk of the Appeals Panel will, at least 5 days prior to the hearing, circulate a copy of the combined bundle of documents to the parents, Head, Clerk of Committee and panel members. No further documentation may be submitted after this time.

The hearing is not a court of law, and the conduct of the hearing shall be at the Appeal Panel's discretion which will be based on fairness and informality. Parents should not bring legal representatives to the hearing. There will be a designated note-taker present at the hearing to minute the meeting.

The Panel's role is to review the Head's decision by considering if it was fair and reasonable in all the circumstances and if permanent exclusion was a proportionate sanction. If the parents are seeking reinstatement of the pupil, the Panel would consider if reinstatement were possible, taking into account the impact of such reinstatement on other members of the school's community (both pupils and staff).

The Appeal Panel will make its decision in private and will produce a written recommendation within 48 hours of the hearing, giving their reasons for upholding or varying the decision to permanently exclude the pupil. The Head may, consequently, be asked to reconsider their decision to exclude. Any reconsidered decision of the Head will be made within 3 days of the date of the panel's written recommendation. The reconsidered decision of the Head is final and will not be the subject of any further review.