

DBMAC Exclusion Policy

Specific to:

St Thomas More RC Primary School

This policy describes the practice that St Thomas More RC Primary School follows with regard to the exclusion of pupils. It recognises however that the seriousness of some situations requires an immediate response that cannot always follow the best practice set out in the policy but, in all situations, the rights of pupils and parents to a full hearing will be respected.

The Academy Committee and the Principal of St Thomas More RC Primary School are committed to the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. They are also responsible for promoting good behaviour and discipline on the part of the whole school community and for securing an orderly and safe environment for pupils and staff in order to ensure that the curriculum is delivered and pupils are able to realise their full potential.

The Principal has the discretion to deal with pupils who are displaying challenging behaviour but will do so consistently in the context of the school's behaviour for learning policy. That policy and other relevant documents include a number of different strategies designed to promote the continued inclusion of pupils into the school. Exclusion is the most drastic step that any school can take because it runs against the school's commitment to inclusion and is of necessity reserved for the most serious cases.

Exclusion itself can take many different forms and these may include:

- Time out in another teacher's class
- Lunchtime exclusion
- Internal exclusion
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

This policy deals with lunchtime, fixed term and permanent exclusions and has been developed in accordance with Oxfordshire's "Principles and Procedures for Managing Exclusions from School" as well as DfEE circular 10/99 and DfES circular 0018/2002.

Before considering exclusion

St Thomas More RC Primary School recognises that parents/carers are profoundly affected by the exclusion of their children and will work with them closely to ensure that only in very rare circumstances will exclusion come as a surprise. In most instances parents/carers will have been working with the school to prevent their child from being excluded. Our Behaviour for Learning Policy very clearly sets out the process which is followed if a child displays the same type of behaviour 3 times in a 6 week period.

The following then occurs:

1. Teacher speaks to the parents/carers and informs KS leader.
2. Principal has a meeting with the child and their parents/carers.
3. Child is excluded and a letter is sent to parents and county form is completed.

Pupils at risk of being excluded are likely to have had a history of disaffection and to have had a variety of contracts (Behaviour Action Plans, Behaviour Support Plans, Pastoral Support Plans) before the question of exclusion arises. In formulating these plans a number of different agencies are likely to have helped the school, for example

- EBD Outreach Service (Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties)
- Educational Psychology Service
- Attendance and Engagement Service (ESW)

In all cases the involvement of these agencies will be shared with parents and in many instances they will have made direct contact with parents/carers.

Pupils who have Special Educational Needs

In some cases the involvement of agencies external to the school will mean that a pupil has been placed on the Register of pupils with Special Educational Needs. In those cases where a pupil who has a Statement of Special Educational Needs is likely to be excluded, the school will try every practicable means to avoid the need for exclusion and, if appropriate, in liaison with the LEA, will initiate an 'interim' annual review.

Disabled pupils, travellers, pupils in Public Care and pupils from an ethnic minority

Particular care will also be given to pupils who are travellers, who are disabled or who are in Public Care or members of minority ethnic groups. Appropriate steps will be taken to seek to avoid their exclusion, including the use of the Rapid Response team. Social Services will be involved at the earliest opportunity whenever a pupil in Public Care seems likely to be excluded. The school pays full regard to the Code of Practice issued by the Disability Rights Commission.

Pupils who are disabled or who are in Public Care have particular rights of appeal if they are excluded and the Principal will take all necessary steps to make sure that these rights are respected and that appropriate information is shared with agencies, carers and parents.

In the run up to a possible exclusion

In those cases where exclusion seems likely to occur, the school will:

- try to warn parents/carers in writing that the pupil is at risk of exclusion;
- if time allows, arrange a meeting with the parents to plan how to support the pupil and avoid the need for exclusion;
- take account of the views of the pupil;
- keep written notes of all verbal warnings to the pupil and advice to parents and carers;
- Involve the Educational Psychology Service and/or the Attendance and Engagement Service and/or Youth offending Team and/or other agencies such as Connexions.

When to consider exclusion

Exclusion will be used sparingly in response to serious breaches of school policy or law but breaking the law will not automatically result in exclusion. Normally the decision to exclude a pupil will only be taken if:

- there have been serious breaches of the school's Behaviour for Learning policy

and

- there is a danger that allowing the pupil to remain in school will seriously harm the education or welfare / health and safety of the pupil or others

and

- a range of alternative strategies has been tried before excluding the pupil.

However a permanent exclusion may be given for a first / single offence, for example in the event of serious, actual or threatened violence or selling illegal substances.

Before reaching the decision to exclude a pupil, the Principal will:

- consider all the relevant facts and such evidence as may be available to support the allegations made, taking into account the school's Behaviour for Learning and equal opportunities policies and the need to apply those policies consistently;
- allow the pupil to give his or her own version of events;
- check whether the incident may have been provoked, for example, by racial or sexual harassment;
- consult others, if necessary, being careful not to involve anyone who may have a role in any statutory review of the decision to exclude, for example members of the Academy Committee's Discipline Committee.

If the Principal is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the pupil did what he or she is alleged to have done and that an exclusion is the appropriate sanction given the nature of the issue, the Principal may exclude the pupil.

Only the Principal or, in his/her absence, a senior teacher acting with the head's authority, can exclude a pupil from school.

Exclusion is not an appropriate sanction for dealing with:

- minor incidents such as failure to do homework or to attend a detention
- poor academic performance
- lateness or truancy
- breaches of school uniform policy, except where persistent and in open defiance of such policy
- punishing pupils for the behaviour of their parents/carers because of, for example, parental violence or abuse against members of the school community.

The Principal will aim to ensure that exclusion is dealt with consistently and that there is no discrimination against any minority group. There is no "tariff" that leads to an exclusion and all cases will be dealt with individually, subject to the consistent application of all relevant policies and procedures.

Lunchtime exclusion

Pupils whose behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive may be excluded from the school premises for the duration of the lunchtime period.

Lunchtime exclusion is treated in the same way as any other fixed period exclusion:

- the Principal will inform the parent of the period of exclusion and the reasons for it;
- the exclusion will run for a fixed period;
- parents/carers have the right to make representations about the exclusion to the discipline committee of the Academy Committee

If a parents/carers refuse to co-operate with a properly given lunchtime exclusion, the school will have due regard for the pupil's safety before deciding on what action to take.

Fixed term exclusion

The Principal is allowed to exclude a pupil for up to 45 days in any one school year. However individual exclusions will be for the shortest time necessary, because any exclusion makes it difficult for the pupil to reintegrate into the school.

The reasons for fixed term exclusion are mainly:

- to make it clear to the pupil that a particular behaviour is unacceptable, because it affects not only the right of others to a safe and secure environment but also interferes with the opportunities for learning;
- to support school discipline and to act as a clear statement to all pupils that certain behaviour is unacceptable;
- to ensure that parents/carers know of the behaviour and are involved in controlling it.

Permanent exclusion

Permanent exclusion is an extremely serious step to take. The Principal will normally only consider such action if:

- the pupil presents a significant health and safety risk to him/herself and/or others **or**
- has been responsible for a single event that presents a serious threat to the health and safety of students and the school community; **and**
- the pupil has been offered a full range of services and strategies designed to maintain that pupil's inclusion in school; **and**
- there is evidence that previous plans and strategies have been consistently applied but brought about no significant improvement in the behaviour of the pupil.

Permanent exclusion is usually the final step in the process for dealing with disciplinary offences. It is an acknowledgement by the school that it has exhausted all available strategies for dealing with the pupil.

Only in the most exceptional circumstances will the Principal exclude a pupil for a first or one-off offence. Such exceptional circumstances might include carrying an offensive

weapon, supplying an illegal drug, sexual misconduct or serious actual/ threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff.

When a pupil has been excluded

Once the Principal excludes a pupil, the parents/carers will be notified immediately, by telephone if possible. Within one school day, a letter will follow that telephone call.

This letter will include details about:

- the reasons for the exclusion
- the nature and length of the exclusion
- the name and telephone number of a contact at the LEA who can provide advice on the exclusions process and the telephone number for the Advisory Centre for Education helpline
- details about how parents/carers can make representations about the exclusion to the Discipline Committee of the Academy Committee.

Details about the responsibilities of the Academy Committee and about the constitution of the Disciplinary Committee can be found in DfES circular 0018/2002 and in Oxfordshire's Principles and Procedures for Managing Exclusions from School

Education of excluded pupils

In all cases where a pupil is excluded for more than a day, work will be set and marked for the pupil concerned. If a pupil is excluded for more than 15 consecutive school days, the Principal will plan:

- how the pupil's education will continue during the period of exclusion;
- how the time might be used to address the pupil's problems; and
- consider, with the LEA, what local arrangements will best help with the pupil's reintegration into school at the end of the exclusion.

Post exclusion planning –

Reintegration into the excluding school

The Principal will convene a planning meeting to discuss and make plans for the reintegration of the pupil after an extended exclusion. The meeting will make the necessary preparations for the pupil's return to school and will involve the parents/carers and the pupil as well a representative of the LEA. Parents/carers will be invited to come with a friend.

The meeting will consider all aspects of reintegrating the pupil, including any modifications to the timetable or the provision of additional support. Any previous plans will be revised and new targets agreed. If there were no plans prior to the exclusion one will be drawn up. All plans will include elements of a contract between the parties involved so that the pupil will know how to achieve success, the school will set realistic targets and review dates will be set. The meeting will also consider whether the pupil has special educational needs and whether enough is being done to support those needs.

Post exclusion planning –

Reintegration into another school or educational setting

If the decision to exclude a pupil permanently is upheld by the Discipline Committee, parents can apply to an independent appeals panel (details of which can also be found in DfES circular 0018/2002 and in *Oxfordshire's Principles and Procedures for Managing Exclusions from School.*)

An individual reintegration action plan will be finalised as soon as possible after the Academy Committee's meeting at a Post Exclusion Case Conference. This plan will, wherever possible include:

- the steps to be taken to assess the pupil
- the steps to be taken towards integrating the pupil with the new setting
- regular review dates for the plan
- the identification of a possible next school or setting
- the target date for starting at this new school

The Education Officer for the excluded pupil, who is based in Macclesfield House, Oxford is responsible for drawing up and reviewing the reintegration action plan.

Monitoring and evaluating this policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team in school. The relevant sub-committee of the Academy Committee will monitor the outcomes from this review alongside an annual report on the patterns of exclusion. The full Academy Committee will subsequently evaluate the policy.

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Policy adopted by the Academy Committee

Signed _____ Chair of Academy Committee

Signed _____ Principal