

Ouston Primary School

Suspension and Exclusion Policy:

Determining When a Pupil Will Be Suspended or Excluded

(Primary Mainstream School)



Reviewed by: Full Governing Body
Next Review date: Spring 2027

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the circumstances in which the school may issue a suspension (fixed-term exclusion) or a permanent exclusion. It is based on the statutory DfE guidance Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units (September 2024) and the Local Authority's Revised Exclusion Guidance and Protocol (Feb 2025).

The school is committed to ensuring that exclusion is used only as a last resort, is lawful, reasonable and fair, and that pupils are supported to remain in education wherever possible.

2. Principles Underpinning Suspension and Exclusion

Exclusion as a Last Resort

The school will only suspend or permanently exclude a pupil where:

- There has been a serious breach or persistent breaches of the behaviour policy; and/or
- Allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others.

Exclusions “should not be imposed in the heat of the moment unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of others”.

Lawful, Reasonable and Fair Decision-Making

Before any exclusion, the Headteacher will:

- Conduct a full investigation.
- Consider all evidence, including witness statements.
- Allow the pupil to give their version of events.
- Consider whether the behaviour was provoked, including by bullying or harassment.
- Ensure compliance with equality duties and SEND responsibilities.
- Keep detailed written records, including signed and dated witness statements.

Unofficial Exclusions

The school will never use informal removal from school as a behaviour management strategy.

3. When a Pupil May Be Suspended (Fixed-Term Exclusion)

A suspension may be issued for:

- A serious one-off incident.
- Persistent disruptive behaviour that has not improved despite intervention.
- Behaviour that threatens the safety or welfare of others.
- Significant breaches of the behaviour policy.

Suspensions must be for the shortest time necessary.

Guidance notes that “one to three days is often long enough to secure the benefits of suspension”.

Examples of Behaviour That May Lead to Suspension

These examples are illustrative, not exhaustive:

- Physical aggression towards pupils or staff.
- Serious verbal abuse or threatening behaviour.
- Bullying, including discriminatory bullying.
- Dangerous behaviour that puts others at risk.
- Deliberate damage to property.
- Serious disruption to learning.

Behaviour That Must Not Lead to Suspension

The guidance states that exclusions should not be used for:

- Minor incidents such as not doing homework.
- Poor academic performance.
- Lateness or truancy.
- Breaches of uniform rules (unless persistent and defiant).
- Punishing pupils for the behaviour of their parents.

4. When a Pupil May Be Permanently Excluded

Permanent exclusion is the most serious sanction and will only be used:

- For a serious breach of the behaviour policy;
- For persistent breaches where all other strategies have been exhausted; and
- Where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others.

Examples of Behaviour That May Lead to Permanent Exclusion

- Serious physical assault.
- Use or possession of a weapon.
- Serious or repeated bullying.
- Sexual misconduct.
- Serious drug-related incidents.
- Persistent, high-level disruption despite extensive intervention.

5. Behaviour Outside School

A pupil may be suspended or excluded for behaviour:

- On school trips or events.
- On the journey to or from school.
- In the immediate vicinity of the school.
- Outside school where there is a clear link to maintaining good behaviour among the pupil body.

Guidance states that “Pupils’ behaviour in the immediate vicinity of the school, or on a journey to or from school, can be grounds for exclusion.”

6. Pupils with SEND and Vulnerable Pupils

The school will:

- Use its best endeavours to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Consider whether the behaviour is linked to an unmet need.

- Ensure reasonable adjustments have been made.
- Involve relevant professionals (e.g., SEND caseworker, EP).

Guidance emphasises that governing bodies must comply with statutory SEND duties during the exclusion process.

7. Lunchtime Suspensions

A lunchtime exclusion counts as half a school day and must follow the same legal process as any suspension. It must not be indefinite. Pupils entitled to free school meals must still receive their entitlement.

8. Reintegration Following Suspension

For primary pupils, the Headteacher must arrange a reintegration meeting with parents following any suspension. Suspensions cannot be extended if parents do not attend.

9. Recording and Reporting

The school will:

- Notify the Local Authority of all suspensions at the time they are issued.
- Mark attendance in line with statutory codes (e.g., Code B for off-site education, Code K for LA provision for permanently excluded pupils).
- Ensure pupils remain on roll until the exclusion process is fully concluded.

10. Decision-Making Summary

A pupil may be suspended or excluded when:

- There is a serious breach or persistent breaches of the behaviour policy.
- Safety, welfare, or learning of others is at risk.
- All reasonable interventions have been attempted (for persistent behaviour).
- The Headteacher is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the behaviour occurred.

A pupil will not be suspended or excluded for:

- Minor or low-level behaviours.
- SEND-related behaviours where reasonable adjustments have not been made.
- Uniform issues (unless persistent and defiant).
- Issues relating to parents (e.g., non-attendance at meetings).