Suspensions and Exclusions Policy

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Suspensions and Exclusions Policy

At Stanhope Primary School, we are committed to creating calm, safe, and supportive learning environments where every child feels valued and can thrive.

Stanhope Primary's Relational Approach & Behaviour Policy is fundamentally about **support, understanding and repair** – it is not about creating a pathway to suspensions or permanent exclusions.

The Relational Approach and Behaviour Policy focuses on four key parts; which is about supporting children through difficulty, not simply escalating consequences to suspension or permanent exclusion.

At Stanhope, all feelings are accepted. Behaviour that harms, threatens or intimidates another person is not accepted. We continue to value and care for the child without accepting behaviour that causes harm.

Incidents of aggression and serious breaches of the policy are taken seriously and suspension or permanent exclusion decision-making may well sit within this response. However, **suspension never completes Stanhope Response.**

This Policy has been written to sit alongside the Relational Approach and Behaviour Policy and the statutory guidance from the DfE for Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement, which supports headteachers in using suspension and permanent exclusion when warranted as part of creating calm, safe, and supportive environments where both pupils and staff can work in safety and are respected.

1. When Suspension or Permanent Exclusion May Be Used

Distinct responses in line with our Relational Approach and Behaviour Policy.

Response	Purpose and status
Support and reasonable adjustments	Provision enabling access, communication, regulation, safety and success. It is not a consequence and is not earned.
Natural, logical and protective consequences	Relational responses to natural impact, repair, re-teaching or identified risk. Protective consequences are temporary and proportionate, with support, review and a route back.
Fixed Term Suspension	A separate statutory exclusion decision for a fixed period. It may serve a protective purpose; it is not an everyday protective consequence.
Permanent exclusion	A separate, last-resort statutory decision. It does not automatically follow suspension or repeated suspension.

Suspension or permanent exclusion may be considered for serious behaviour or serious and/or persistent breaches of the Relational Approach and Behaviour Policy, including relevant off-site or online behaviour.

Serious Breach We define a "serious breach" as behaviour which could cause significant physical or psychological harm, destruction of property and illegal activities.

A suspension, is a protective consequence and is considered where a proportionate formal response is required or safe education cannot otherwise be maintained. Suspension may be the appropriate response when it provides:

- Necessary separation of pupils or staff
- Protection of safety, welfare or education
- Time for urgent safeguarding or provision planning
- Interruption of an unsafe pattern while a credible safer plan is established

Where suspension is not used, this does not mean the behaviour was accepted. Both statutory decisions (suspension and permanent exclusion) remain available where warranted.

A permanent exclusion is when a pupil is no longer allowed to attend a school. The decision to exclude a pupil permanently will only be taken:

1. **in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's Relationships and Behaviour Policy; and**
2. **where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others, including pupils or staff.**

Both tests must be met. A serious one-off incident may qualify without prior suspension or every alternative being attempted.

The decision must be:

- **Lawful** (complying with relevant legislation)
- **Reasonable** (a decision that a reasonable headteacher could make in the circumstances)
- **Fair** (procedurally fair)
- **Proportionate** (appropriate to the severity and circumstances)

Permanent Exclusion is a last resort and the school will:

1. Consider all the context (SEND, safeguarding and contributing factors) and support provided
2. Consider whether other strategies have been exhausted
3. Demonstrate that remaining in school would cause serious harm
4. Ensure that the decision is proportionate and fair

2. Decision-Making Process

Each decision will be based on careful consideration of:

- Individual evidence and circumstances
- Severity and impact of the behaviour
- Intent and the pupil's capacity to understand their actions
- Pattern of behaviour and context
- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Safeguarding considerations
- Available protective measures

Consistency means applying shared principles and dependable follow-through, not producing identical outcomes in every case.

When establishing the facts in relation to a suspension or permanent exclusion decision the headteacher will apply the civil standard of proof, i.e. 'on the balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that a fact is true, rather than the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt.'

Before deciding on suspension, the school will consider:

1. **What meaningful function would suspension add in this case?**
2. **Could a realistic in-school response safely and adequately provide that function?**

Where possible, prior to decision marking, the school will also take the pupil's views into account, considering these in light of their age and understanding, before deciding, unless it would not be appropriate to do so.

If the pupil's views are unable to be collected, for example the pupil is not fully dysregulated, the pupil's views will be collected as close to the event as possible. This may also be through advocates such as parents, or if the pupil has one, a social worker. Part of the debrief will also inform the pupil about how their views have been factored into any decision made.

See the flowchart at the end of this policy for guidance on implementation following either decision.

3. Types of Exclusion

3.1 Internal Suspension

An 'internal suspension' is when a child is withdrawn from class for a finite period and supervised – whilst continuing school work - in another part of the school, due to either a step on the child's behaviour plan, or in response to serious inappropriate behaviours. The length of the internal seclusion will be appropriate in proportion to the behaviour. Parents/carers will be informed if their child is to be placed in an internal isolation.

Internal Suspension is a significant protective consequence and will only be used where necessary to protect safety, dignity or learning: it is supervised, time-limited, provides meaningful education, considers safeguarding and welfare and influences reflective conversations to support returning to belonging and learning.

3.2 Suspension (Fixed-Period)

A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year). A suspension does not have to be for a continuous period.

A suspension (often referred to as a Fixed-term Suspension) is when a child is excluded from school and must remain home for a fixed amount of time.

Suspension is considered where the child's behaviour was seriously detrimental to the safety, welfare and/or education of others (including staff) and themselves.

A suspension can also be for parts of the school day. For example, if a pupil's behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive, they may be suspended from the school premises for the duration of the lunchtime period. Lunchtime suspensions are counted as half a school day in determining whether a governing board meeting is triggered.

3.3 Permanent Exclusion

A permanent exclusion is when a child is permanently excluded from school and not allowed to return. This is a very serious decision and the Executive Headteacher will consult with senior leaders, external agencies including the local authority inclusion team and Chair of the Local Advisory Committee soon as possible in such a case.

4. Education During Suspension/Exclusion

For any suspension, the head teacher will take steps to ensure that appropriate work is set and marked for pupils during the first five school days of a suspension. This can include utilising online pathways or paper work.

For any permanent exclusion, the headteacher will take reasonable steps to ensure that work is set and marked for pupils during the first five school days where the pupil will not be attending alternative provision.

For a suspension of more than five school days, the local authority must arrange suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age. This provision must begin no later than the sixth school day of the suspension.

5. Notification Requirements

5.1 Notifying Parents

Whenever a decision has been made to suspend (fixed term suspension) or permanently exclude a pupil parents will be notified, without delay.

The headteacher will also provide parents with the following information in writing, using the local authority templates:

- the reason(s) for the suspension or permanent exclusion
- the period of a suspension or, for a permanent exclusion
- (if relevant) the fact that it is permanent
- parents' right to make representations about the suspension or permanent exclusion to the governing board

5.2 Notifying Other Parties

Whenever a decision has been made to suspend (fixed term suspension) or permanently exclude a pupil, the head teacher, without delay, after their decision, will notify:

- the local authority
- the academy trust
- the chair of governors
- the social worker, if a pupil has one
- the VSH, if the pupil is a LAC

6. Reintegration

Re-integration meetings with the child, parent(s), Executive Headteacher, Head of School or Assistant Headteacher, will always take place if a child has a suspension for two or more days. However, we may also host a re-integration meeting for shorter suspensions, if necessary and appropriate.

In this meeting:

- the narrative will be retold (if appropriate);
- targets will be set for the child;
- targets will be set for the family (if necessary);
- targets will be set for the school (if necessary);
- a discussion of any change to support, including proactive and reactive strategies in place and any support from external agencies, if appropriate
- a discussion as to how to repair the rupture with the associated individuals.

It may be appropriate for this reintegration meeting to be held at the pupil's home during the suspension.

The school aims to support pupils to reintegrate successfully into school life and full-time education following a suspension, returning to belonging and learning.

It is recognised that a fixed term suspension alone is not going to prevent repeated behaviour incidents but the support plan and reflective conversation will support the pupil in achieving success.

7. Governing Board Review

The governing board will consider and decide on the reinstatement of a suspended or permanently excluded pupil within 15 school days of receiving notice of a suspension or permanent exclusion from the headteacher if:

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

8. Independent Review Panel (IRP)

If applied for by parents within the legal time frame, the school will, at the school's expense, arrange for an Independent Review Panel hearing to review the decision of a governing board not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil.

The legal time frame for an application is: within 15 school days of notice being given to the parents by the governing board of its decision not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil.

9. Safeguarding

Stanhope Primary School has a statutory duty to make arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children. In the case of any internal suspension, suspension or permanent exclusion, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed and will assess any additional steps that need to be taken to safeguard the child.

10. Equality and SEND Considerations

Under the Equality Act 2010 schools must not discriminate against, harass, or victimise pupils because of their: sex; race; disability; religion or belief; sexual orientation; pregnancy/maternity; or gender reassignment. For disabled children, this includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments to any provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a substantial disadvantage.

Where a school has concerns about the behaviour, or risk of suspension and permanent exclusion, of a pupil with SEN, a disability or an EHC plan Stanhope will, in partnership with others (including where relevant, the local authority), consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required.

11. Managed Moves

In cases where the Executive Headteacher and parents agree that the progress of the pupil has been unsatisfactory and the pupil is unwilling or unable to profit from the educational opportunities offered, or if a parent's failure to engage in strategies implemented by the school are resulting in a continuing pattern of poor behaviour or lack of improvement in behaviour, the Executive Headteacher may consult with the Local Authority and propose a managed move to another school.

12. Penalty Notices

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion/suspension. Failure to do so may render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice.

13. Appeals

If parents wish to appeal the decision to exclude or suspend, the matter will be referred to the Local Advisory Committee and handled through the school appeal process.

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Should we suspend?

This decision process sits within The Cambridge Response

Develop Relationships → Respond and Calm → Repair and Restore → Return to Belonging and Learning

Develop Relationships is the foundation. PACE shapes the whole response.

1 Respond and Calm: protect, regulate and care

Regulate yourself and reduce risk, demands, audience or stimulation. Arrange first aid, medical or safeguarding action where needed. Support the child and affected people separately. Preserve safety and dignity. Inform the senior leader/Headteacher. Record direct observations. Safety and regulation before reflection. Do not demand a detailed account yet.

2 Establish what happened and what contributed

FACTS AND IMPACT

Hear the child, adults and witnesses.
Support communication. Separate fact from interpretation. What is agreed, disputed or uncertain? Apply the balance of probabilities.
Identify harm, fear, risk and disruption to learning.

THE WHOLE SEQUENCE

Before, during and after: original risk, context and adult safety responses/escalation.
Check SEND, disability, communication, regulation, sensory need and safeguarding.
What provision and reasonable adjustments were actually delivered?
Consider previous support and patterns.

Acceptance: We accept the child whilst not necessarily accepting the behaviour.
Curiosity: Behaviour is communication. Understand without blame or excusing harm.
Empathy: Recognise the child's experience and impact on everyone affected.
Context informs understanding and prevention; it does not erase impact or accountability.

3 Consider realistic in-school responses

Could a credible, resourced response safely and adequately meet the need?
Consider support and reasonable adjustments, safe on-site separation, changed staffing, supervision, environment or provision, re-teaching, logical or protective consequences and repair.
Relevant Team Around the Child members contribute where appropriate.
Could this address seriousness, impact and risk? Weigh the risks of remaining against the risks created by absence.
Support and reasonable adjustments are not consequences. Alternatives do not all have to fail.

4 Headteacher decision: purpose and proportionality

What meaningful function would suspension add in this case?
Could a realistic in-school response safely and adequately provide that function?
Purpose may include necessary separation, protection of safety, welfare or education, urgent planning, safeguarding, assessment or provision change, or interrupting an unsafe pattern while a credible plan is established.
Formal signalling should not normally be the sole justification.
Check established facts, seriousness and impact, child voice, circumstances, previous support and its effectiveness, risks of remaining and absence, and SEND, equality, safeguarding and reasonable-adjustment duties.
Is suspension lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate?
What fixed period is proportionate? Record the decision and reasons.

A No suspension

No suspension does not mean no response or that the behaviour was accepted.
Safety, accountability, support and repair continue.

B Formal suspension

A statutory decision: record the purpose and fixed period. Follow formal processes.
Suspension does not complete The Cambridge Response.

Both routes → What happens next?

PACE informs the process, not the legal threshold.

Permanent exclusion under consideration? Move to its separate statutory decision process.

STANHOPE PRIMARY SCHOOL

What happens next?

After A: No suspension or B: Formal suspension

What now needs to be repaired, restored, re-taught or protected?

1 Start with support

Maintain safety, connection and support for the child and affected people. Support and reasonable adjustments are provision, not consequences. Support is not earned.

2 Respond to anyone harmed or significantly affected

Care, voice and acknowledgement. Medical or safeguarding support as needed. Protection from recurrence, retaliation or avoidable contact. Appropriate information, a named contact and follow-up after the incident and return. Agency over restorative contact. No forced apology, forgiveness or reconciliation; no assumed equal responsibility. Staff support, recording and workplace/risk controls are independent of suspension.

3 Would an imposed consequence serve a clear purpose?

Repair harm, restore learning or relationships, re-teach, or reduce an identified risk?

NO

No imposed consequence

Do not manufacture a consequence merely to demonstrate that the incident was serious. Notice safe natural outcomes; do not create or prolong them. Continue support, teaching, communication, safeguarding and review.

YES

Choose a linked response

Logical consequence — Repair or re-teach

A supported action to repair, restore learning or relationships, re-teach or practise a safer response.
A reflective conversation may be appropriate; repair itself may be the logical consequence.
Do not force apology or remorse.

Protective consequence — Protect or reduce risk

Temporary, proportionate and no more restrictive than necessary. Identify the risk, support, review point and clear route back.

Connected? Purposeful? Achievable? Proportionate?

Support and reasonable adjustments remain separate.

A

B

4 Formal suspension only: additional action

Complete statutory processes, education and appropriate contact. Support affected people and plan return. Do not add another consequence simply because suspension occurred. Suspension does not replace repair, support or changed provision.

5 Repair and Restore

When regulated and ready. PACE: dignity, whole-sequence understanding and empathy for everyone. Recognise impact, repair, re-teach or practise a safer response and identify what adults will change. Emotion, remorse or an apology cannot be demanded.

6 Return to Belonging and Learning

How will the child reconnect? What will the child be supported to do differently? What will adults or provision change? How will affected people be supported? Whether, when and how can repair happen safely? Who will follow up? The child does not have to earn their return. Belonging and high expectations continue.

7 Enhanced Team Around the Child review

Every repeat suspension triggers enhanced review. SLT may act earlier where the plan is not sufficiently reducing a serious or persistent pattern's risk, disruption, recurrence or educational impact. Review patterns and antecedents, relationships, SEND/communication/regulation, safeguarding, curriculum, environment, staffing/supervision, adult response, provision/adjustments and agreed actions. Were actions delivered? Did suspensions work? What must change? No fixed incident threshold.

8 Review

Less risk or recurrence? People safer? Learning and belonging restored? Provision, adjustments and actions delivered? Further Team Around the Child action?