

Exclusions Policy

Frequency of Review	Annually
Author	Adopted from OCC Model
Approved by	Headteacher
Reviewed	February 2022
Date of Next Review	February 2023 (unless there is a material change)

This policy describes the arrangements that the Propeller Academy Trust (PAT) follows regarding the exclusion of pupils. We recognise that exclusion of any pupil is a very serious matter and always an act of last resort.

Our Trust will ensure that no exclusion decision will be reached without fully exhausting working in partnership with parents, seeking Oxfordshire County Council advice drawing on their guidance and resources available, consideration of equalities matters including special educational needs and ethnicity and trauma informed mental health and well-being assessment. We will use the Early Help Assessment when concerns emerge prior to exclusion.

The governing bodies and headteachers of this Trust are committed to the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. We 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 headteachers have the discretion to deal with pupils who are displaying challenging behaviour but will do so consistently in the context of the school's behaviour 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 within the class imposed by the teacher
- Time out in another teacher's class
- Lunchtime exclusion
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

This policy deals with lunchtime, suspensions and permanent exclusions and has been developed in accordance with the Statutory Guidance when dealing with exclusions from schools and academies (2020).

References to the Discipline Committee refer to an ad hoc committee formed by the headteacher to deal with specific incidents. No parent of a pupil at the schools may be part of these committees. Governors on the Discipline Committee must be trained in considering exclusion matters.

Before considering exclusion

The PAT recognises that parents/carers are profoundly affected by the exclusion of their children and will work with them closely to ensure that the pupil's circumstances are fully understood and that parents have the ability to support the school and pupil.

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 will be engaged to support the pupil and our school to avoid exclusion, for example the Exclusion & Reintegration Team, LCSS Early Help Team, the Educational Psychology Service. In all cases the involvement of these agencies will be with parents' consent and, in many instances, they will have made direct contact with parents/carers.

Restorative Practice is a strategy adopted for use in our schools.

Pupils who have Special Educational Needs

The exclusion of pupils at SEN Support or with EHCPs does not fit with our inclusive ethos and will be avoided wherever possible. Assessment of a pupil's needs will often assist in identifying the underlying causes of unacceptable behaviour. In the case of a pupil with an EHCP, an emergency review will be convened with parents, school and other professionals.

Children we Care for

This school has a policy of non-exclusion of Children we Care for (children in public care). We will work with the Oxfordshire Virtual School to ensure that the needs of Children we Care for and our school community are met.

Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds

Our schools are aware that pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are more likely to be excluded across England. This does not meet our inclusive ethos and requirements for our schools. We will work with families, community leaders and other professionals to address any real or potential bias.

To prevent the need for exclusion

Where a risk of exclusion is identified, the schools will:

- advise parents/carers in writing that the pupil is at risk of exclusion;
- 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 actions and interventions with the pupil and advice to parents and carers;
- involve specialist professionals

When exclusion may be unavoidable

Exclusion will not be our default response to serious breaches of school behaviour policy and breaking the law will not automatically result in exclusion. However, exclusion may be considered, for the benefit of the pupil in terms of better managing their own behaviour, and the school community, will only be taken if:

- there have been serious breaches of the school's behaviour 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. It is highly unlikely, but a permanent exclusion may be considered for a one-off matter.

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

- consider all the relevant facts and such evidence as may be available to support the allegations made, taking into account the school's special educational needs, behaviour 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 governing body's Discipline Committee.

If the headteacher is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the pupil did what he or she is alleged to have done and that exclusion is the appropriate sanction given the nature of the issue, the headteacher may exclude the pupil. (Only the headteacher 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
- the behaviour of the pupil's parents/carers, for example, parental violence or abuse against members of the school community.

The headteacher must ensure that exclusion is dealt with consistently and that there is no discrimination against any minority group. There is no stepped approach 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 suspension

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

Lunchtime suspension is treated in the same way as any other suspension:

- the headteacher will inform the parent of the suspension and the reasons for it;
- the suspension will run for a fixed period and must be marked in the register as a half day suspension per day;
- parents/carers have the right to make representations about the suspension to the discipline committee of the governors

It is not permissible to insist that a pupil is off the premises for lunchtime without it being a formal suspension. Informal arrangements to stay at home are not permitted.

Suspension

The headteacher may suspend a pupil for up to 45 days in any one school year. However individual suspensions will be for the shortest time necessary, because any suspension makes it difficult for the pupil to reintegrate back into the school and damages positive home/school relationships.

Any suspension over 5 days requires our school to provide full time education elsewhere for the duration of the suspension.

Permanent exclusion

Permanent exclusion is an extremely serious step to take. The headteacher 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.

When a pupil has been permanently excluded

Once the headteacher excludes a pupil, the parents/carers will be notified immediately, by telephone, text or other means. Within one school day, a letter will follow.

This letter will include details about:

- the reasons for the exclusion
- the nature of the exclusion
- the name and 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 governors.

Education of permanently excluded pupils

In all cases where a pupil is suspended for more than a day, work will be set and marked for the pupil concerned. If a pupil is suspended for more than 5 consecutive school days, the headteacher will plan:

- how the pupil's education will continue during the period of exclusion;
- how the pupil will be successfully reintegrated back into the school community;
- Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for the full time education of permanently excluded pupils from Day 6 following the headteacher's decision to permanently exclude. The permanently excluding school is responsible for full time educational provision from days 1-5 of a permanent exclusion.

Reintegration back to school

The headteacher will convene a planning meeting to discuss and make plans for the reintegration of the pupil after any suspension. The meeting will make the necessary preparations for the pupil's return to school and will involve the parents/carers and the pupil. Parents/carers will be invited to come with a friend or supporter. 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 outcomes agreed. If there were no plans prior to the suspension one will be drawn up. All plans will include elements of a contract between the parties involved so that the school and pupil will know how to achieve success, the school, parents and pupil will set realistic targets and review dates will be set. The meeting will also re-consider whether the pupil has special educational needs and whether enough is being done to support those needs. A restorative approach will be adopted to secure successful reintegration.

