



WOODFIELD ACADEMY

EXCLUSIONS POLICY

Ratified on 13th July 2021

1. Statement of Intent

The Directors of Woodfield Academy understand that there may be occasions when a child's poor and unacceptable behaviour will be deemed by the Senior Leadership Team to warrant exclusion for disciplinary reasons. For more serious breaches of the Behaviour Policy and Exclusions Policy, exclusions may be fast-tracked without applying other sanctions beforehand.

2. Application of Exclusions

- Exclusion may be used when any of the following applies:
 - The Behaviour Policy and/or the Exclusions Policy have been breached
 - An offensive weapon or illegal substance has been brought into school
 - Persistently refusing to follow the academy's Uniform Policy
 - Behaving in a disruptive manner, including at break times and lunchtimes
 - Using inappropriate sexual behaviour and/or sexual language and/or sexual exploitation
 - Using foul or abusive language towards other pupils, staff, visitors or swearing aloud
 - Being verbally aggressive and/or abusive towards another pupil or member of staff
 - Being physically aggressive and/or abusive towards another pupil or member of staff
 - Using threatening and/or intimidating behaviour and/or violence that does not cause actual bodily harm
 - Making allegations against staff that are found, through an external inter-agency investigation, to be malicious

3. Responsibilities and Actions

The Headteacher may decide to exclude a child if any of the above applies.

If a pupil has committed a serious disciplinary offence for the first time, or their behaviour is not deemed to be as serious as those listed below, it may be decided that a fixed-term exclusion is most appropriate. However, for more serious misbehaviours or repeated disciplinary offences, whereby a pupil has previously received a fixed-term exclusion, a permanent exclusion may be used.

Serious misbehaviours are defined by Directors to be:

- An assault on another child or member of staff
- Severe threatening and intimidating behaviour
- Reckless behaviour that places the wellbeing and/or safety of other pupils or staff at risk
- Use of an offensive weapon or illegal substance that has been brought onto the academy site

Permanent exclusion may be used if a child causes harm and distress to another child or adult via an assault, severe threats, intimidation or aggression and, if by allowing the pupil to remain in school, there would be further risks of harm to the education, welfare and safety of other pupils and staff. It is for the Headteacher to determine whether allowing a child to remain in school would seriously harm the education, welfare and/or safety of other pupils and staff. This judgement will be an important factor when determining whether an exclusion will be fixed-term or permanent.

The Headteacher may also permanently exclude a child for continuously and persistently breaching the Behaviour Policy.

When establishing the facts in relation to an exclusion decision, the Headteacher will apply the civil standard of proof, 'on the balance of probabilities' (in that it is more likely that not that a fact is true), rather than the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

The Headteacher may withdraw an exclusion that has not been reviewed by the Board of Directors. A fixed-term exclusion may also be converted into a permanent one, should further evidence come to light.

4. Communication

If the decision is made to exclude a pupil (fixed-term or permanent), parents or carers will be informed and a letter will be posted to them without delay. The letter will include details of the reason for the exclusion, the length or nature of the exclusion and the restrictions placed on the pupil during the exclusion. Details on how to appeal against the decision are also included.

In cases of permanent exclusion, parents and carers should only communicate with the academy via the Clerk to the Board of Directors. This is to ensure that the process during the maximum 15 statutory working days between the day of exclusion and the Directors' Disciplinary Panel meeting is not compromised by unofficial meetings or conversations and therefore remains fair and open to all parties. The Clerk to the Board of Directors will make every effort to assist parents or carers, should they choose to appeal against a decision to permanently exclude their child. The Clerk will seek advice before responding to any communication received from parents or carers to ensure the Clerk and the Board of Directors act within the law.

Following a decision to permanently exclude a child, parents or carers will not be admitted to the academy once they have been notified of the permanent exclusion, with the exception of collecting or returning work during the first five working days of a permanent exclusion, attending the Directors' Disciplinary Panel meeting, or if the child is reinstated to the academy, because the Directors' Disciplinary Panel overturned the decision to permanently exclude. Academy staff will only respond to parents or carers via the Clerk to the Board of Directors.

5. Vulnerable Pupils

Any decision made by Woodfield Academy to exclude a child will be lawful, rational, reasonable fair and proportionate and will be taken on disciplinary grounds only. Woodfield Academy understands that it has a statutory duty not to discriminate against pupils on the basis of protected characteristics, such as disability or race and particular consideration will be given to the fair treatment of pupils from groups that are vulnerable to exclusion prior to making the decision whether or not to exclude.

When the academy has concerns about a child's behaviour, this will be discussed early with parents and, if appropriate, relevant external agencies (such as those responsible for Looked After Children, Child Protection or SEN Services). Therefore, every effort will be made to intervene early in order to reduce the risk of exclusion.

When a Looked After Child, a child on the CP register or a child with SEN is deemed to be at risk of exclusion, Woodfield Academy will give consideration to a multi-agency approach in order to address underlying causes of disruptive behaviour, including an assessment of whether appropriate provision is in place to support them. If a pupil has an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP), an early annual review, or an interim review may be called for to discuss the way forward for the child.

Woodfield Academy understands that, as far as possible, the permanent exclusion of Looked after Children, children with an EHCP or children subject to a Child Protection Plan, should be avoided. However, the Headteacher still has the right to legally exclude such children for a fixed-term, or permanently, as long as it can be shown that this is proportionate, reasonable and a fair way of dealing with disciplinary issues and where the academy has made every reasonable effort to previously utilise a multi-agency approach.

Woodfield Academy will ensure that its policies and practice do not discriminate against pupils by unfairly increasing their risk of exclusion and this will be taken into account when deciding whether to exclude or not.

6. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Board of Directors in conjunction with the Headteacher.