



HISP Exclusions Guidance

Version: 1.0

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Next review: Autumn 2026 (unless DFE guidance changes)

1.Aim of this Guidance: This guidance outlines the guidelines and circumstances under which a student may be suspended or permanently excluded from a HISP school. It applies to all students across the Trust, regardless of age, including those below or above compulsory school age. This guidance should be read alongside each school's behaviour policy. Both documents are available on individual school websites and can be provided in large print or other accessible formats upon request. For the purposes of this guidance, the term *Headteacher* includes any formally appointed Acting Headteacher, as well as any individual temporarily assuming headteacher responsibilities in the absence of the substantive Headteacher.

2.Relationship to other policies: This guidance should be read in conjunction with the School's Behaviour Policy which includes a list of graduated sanctions to a non-exhaustive list of occasions where suspensions and exclusion may be considered, as well as other relevant school policies, particularly.

- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

It also has a close interrelationship with the Attendance Policy.

3.Guidance and legislation This guidance is drafted to be compliant with the Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and student referral units in England (August 2024: [Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance](#)) statutory guidance.

This guidance contains a summary of the statutory guidance and is not intended to provide a full account of all the guidance content which should be read alongside this document. The non-statutory government guidance Behaviour in Schools (February 2024: [Behaviour in Schools - Advice for headteachers and school staff Feb 2024](#)) is also very relevant. This guidance takes account of our public sector equality duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

4.Statement of principles: Permanent exclusion will only be used as a last resort, in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the School Behaviour Policy; and where allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the school.

As a Trust we seek to reduce the number of incidents leading to a suspension and permanent exclusion by promoting a positive atmosphere of belonging, mutual respect, and discipline



within our Trust schools. We regularly monitor the number of suspensions and permanent exclusions to ensure that no group of students is unfairly disadvantaged through their use and that any underlying needs of individuals are being fully met.

5. Authority to exclude: Permanent exclusions can only be authorised by the Headteacher, after discussions with the Executive Director of Education. Suspensions can only be authorised by the Headteacher. These decisions must not be delegated to anyone else (other than an Acting Headteacher or a Deputy Headteacher in the absence of the Headteacher). The final decision will always rest with the Headteacher. The Headteacher will always consider carefully, including seeking advice from their School Improvement Partner as deemed required, where any potential suspension or permanent exclusion involves a child with special educational needs or a disability (SEND), or a looked-after or previously looked-after child or for any exclusion where the circumstances are particularly complex.

6. Decision to suspend or exclude: A student may be suspended for one or more fixed periods, up to a maximum of forty-five school days in a single academic year following which an exclusion is considered. They can also be excluded permanently.

A decision to permanently exclude a student will only be taken: *“in response to a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of the School Behaviour Policy; and where a student’s behaviour means that allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the school”*

The decision will always be:

- Lawful
- Rational
- Reasonable
- Fair
- Proportionate

When establishing the facts in relation to an exclusion, the Headteacher will always 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 issuing a suspension or permanent exclusion, the Headteacher will:

- ensure that a thorough investigation has been conducted and consider all the relevant facts and evidence on the balance of probabilities, including whether the incident(s) leading to the suspension or exclusion were provoked. As per the School Behaviour Policy, the Headteacher may consider the behaviour of a student outside school as grounds for a suspension or exclusion.
- allow and encourage the student to give their version of events. The Headteacher will give the student an opportunity to present his or her case considering their age and understanding, before taking the decision to suspend or exclude unless it would not be appropriate to do so.

Students who need support to express their views will be allowed support of an advocate, such as a parent/carer or social worker.

- find out whether the student comes into a category that is known to be a particularly vulnerable group (e.g., students with SEND, free school meal (FSM) students; looked after children; students with a social worker; certain ethnic groups; (for example traveller children) and consider whether all supportive and preventative strategies have been fully utilised.
- where a student has SEND, will consider if any reasonable adjustments need to be made to ensure the student has been provided with adequate support and to consider whether any further support can be provided. The Headteacher will seek to understand the underlying cause of the behaviour and consider whether the student's SEND influenced their behaviour and if it did, whether it is still appropriate to issue the sanction or any sanction at all.
- where a student has a social worker or a Virtual School Head (VSH), will ensure they and, as appropriate, any parent/carers; the Designated Safeguarding Lead; and the designated lead for Looked-After Children are involved as early as possible in relevant conversations.
- consider whether all relevant initial intervention strategies set out in the Behaviour in Schools guidance and alternative solutions have been explored, including an offsite direction or managed move.
- consider possible short-term mitigating circumstances such as bereavement, mental health issues etc.
- consider whether there are any safeguarding concerns and whether the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be consulted. Headteachers have access to an Exclusion Checklist to ensure all legal considerations have been made. The Headteacher will keep a written record of the actions taken including the signed statements of witnesses. Any suspension or exclusion of a student, even for short periods of time, will be formally recorded on Arbor.

The Headteacher will not:

- suspend or exclude any student for non-disciplinary reasons
- use exclusion informally or unofficially, students will not be sent home to 'cool off' even with parent/carers' permission
- extend or 'convert' a suspension into a permanent exclusion unless further investigation has been undertaken which leads to that decision, in which case a new sanction will be issued.

7. Behaviour related to protected characteristics: We will take care to ensure that a decision to suspend or exclude does not involve any kind of discrimination as defined by the Equality Act 2010. We will not discriminate against students based on protected characteristics, such as disability or race.

Our schools will make reasonable adjustments for managing behaviour which is related to a student's disability. Where suspension or exclusion needs to be considered, the school will ensure that a student with a disability is able to present his or her case fully where the disability might hinder this. We recognise that disruptive behaviour can be an indication of unmet needs. Where we have concerns about a student's behaviour, we will try to identify whether there are any contributing factors and try to intervene early to reduce the need for a subsequent sanction.



We will consider whether a multi-agency assessment that goes beyond a student's educational needs is required.

Where a student has SEND or an EHC Plan and we have concerns about their behaviour, we will work in partnership with others to consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required. Our schools will work proactively with parent/carers in supporting behaviour of students with additional needs.

8. Lunchtime suspensions: A suspension can be for parts of the school day. For example, students whose behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive may be suspended from the school premises for the duration of the lunchtime period only, then back into school in the afternoon. In such cases the legal requirements in relation to suspensions, such as the Headteacher's duty to notify parent/carers, still apply. Lunchtime suspensions are counted as half a school day for statistical purposes and in determining whether a Governors Disciplinary Committee (GDC) meeting is triggered.

9. Action following any suspension or exclusion: Informing parent/carers (or the student if they are 18 or older) The Headteacher will provide the following information to parent/carers of a suspended or excluded student (or the student if they are 18 or older), without delay (usually by phone initially and then followed up in a letter):

- The reason(s) for the suspension or permanent exclusion.
- The length of a suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent.
- Information about parent/carers' right to make representations to the Local Governing Body and how the student may be involved in this.
- Where there is a legal requirement for the Local Governing Body to meet via a GDC 6 to consider the reinstatement of a student, and that parent/carers have a right to attend a meeting, that they may be represented at a meeting (at their own expense) or bring a friend. The Headteacher will also notify parent/carers by the end of the afternoon session on the day their child is suspended or permanently excluded:
- That for the first five school days of a suspension or permanent exclusion, or until the start date of any alternative provision where this is earlier, parent/carers are legally required to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without a good reason. Parents/carers may be given a fixed penalty notice or prosecuted if they fail to do this.
- That the school will provide work for the student to complete during this time and the expectation that the student will try their best to complete all work set. If alternative provision is being arranged, the following information will be included when notifying parent/carers of an exclusion:
 - The start date for any provision of full-time education that has been arranged.
 - The start and finish times of any such provision, including the times for morning and afternoon sessions, where relevant.
 - The address at which the provision will take place.

● Any information required by the student to identify the person they should report to on the first day. Where this information on alternative provision is not ascertainable by the end of the afternoon session, it may be provided in a subsequent notice, but it will be provided no later than 48 hours before the provision is due to start. The only exception to this is where alternative provision is to be provided before the sixth day of an exclusion, in which case the information can be provided with less than 48 hours' notice with parent/carers' consent. Local authorities provide templates of letters for suspensions and exclusions which each school should access and use. Such letters should be sent without delay. If a student is issued with a further suspension or is subsequently permanently excluded, the Headteacher must inform parent/carers without delay and issue a new suspension or permanent exclusion letter to parent/carers to continue from the end of the initial suspension. Informing the Chair of the Local Governing Body and Director of Education

The Headteacher will immediately notify the Chair of the Local Governing Body and Executive Director of Education of:

- a permanent exclusion
- suspensions which would result in the student being excluded for more than five seven school days (or more than 10 half days / lunchtimes) in a term
- suspensions which would result in the student missing a public examination.

10. Informing the Local Authority (LA): The Headteacher will notify the LA of all suspensions and permanent exclusions without delay, regardless of the length of a suspension. The notification will include:

- The reason(s) for the suspension or permanent exclusion.
- The length of a suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent. For a permanent exclusion, if the student lives outside the LA in which the school is located, the Headteacher will also, without delay, inform the student's 'home authority' of the exclusion and the reason(s) for it.

11. Informing the student's social worker and/or virtual school head (VSH): As noted above if a:

- Student with a social worker is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the Headteacher will inform the social worker as early as possible.
- Student who is a child looked after (CLA) is at risk of suspension or exclusion, the Headteacher will inform the Virtual School Head (VSH) as early as possible. This is to work together to consider what factors may be affecting the student's behaviour, and what further support can be put in place to improve the behaviour. If the Headteacher decides to suspend or permanently exclude a student with a social worker / a student who is looked after, they will inform the student's social worker / the VSH, as appropriate, without delay:
- That they have decided to suspend or permanently exclude the student.
- The reason(s) for the decision.

- The length of the suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent.

If the suspension or permanent exclusion affects the student's ability to sit a National Curriculum test or public exam (where relevant), the social worker/VSH will be invited to any meeting of the Local Governing Body about the suspension or permanent exclusion. This is so they can provide advice on how the student's background and/or circumstances may have influenced the circumstances of their suspension or permanent exclusion. The social worker should also help ensure safeguarding needs and risks and the student's welfare are considered.

12. Alternative education / provision (AP): During the first five days of a suspension, if the student is not attending alternative provision (AP), the Headteacher will take steps to ensure that achievable and accessible work is set and marked for the student. Online pathways such as TEAMS may be used for this. If the student has a special educational need or disability, the Headteacher will make sure that reasonable adjustments are made to the provision where necessary. If the student is looked after or if they have a social worker, the school will work with the LA to arrange AP from the first day following the suspension or permanent exclusion. Where this is not possible, the school will take reasonable steps to set and mark work for the student, including the use of online pathways.

For a suspension of more than five school days for a student at compulsory school age, the school will arrange suitable full-time education for the student to begin no later than the sixth day of the suspension. However, the school will attempt to start this provision as soon as possible. Where a student receives consecutive suspensions, these are regarded as a cumulative period of exclusion for the purposes of this duty. This means that if a student has more than five consecutive school days of exclusion, then education must be arranged for the sixth school day of exclusion, regardless of whether this is because of suspension or more than one suspension. Provision does not have to be arranged for students in the final year of compulsory education who do not have any further public examinations to sit. For permanent exclusions, the student's home LA has responsibility for arranging suitable full-time education for the student from the sixth day of exclusion onwards.

13. Off rolling. Our schools are aware that off-rolling is unlawful. Ofsted defines off-rolling as: *"The practice of removing a student from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent/carer to remove their child from the school roll, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the student"* Our schools will not suspend or exclude students unlawfully or not allow students to attend their school:

- Without following the statutory procedure or formally recording the event.
- Because they have special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) that the school feels unable to support.
- Due to poor academic performance.
- Because they have not met a specific condition, such as attending a reintegration meeting.

- By exerting undue influence on a parent/carer to encourage them to remove their child from the school.

14. Reintegration from a suspension: Following suspension or any cancelled suspension or cancelled permanent exclusion, the school will put in place a strategy to help the student reintegrate successfully into school life and full-time education. Where necessary, the school will work with other agencies to identify whether the student has any unmet special educational and/or health needs. The following measures may be implemented, as part of the strategy, to ensure a successful reintegration into school life:

- Maintaining regular contact during the suspension and welcoming the student back to school.
- Daily contact in school with a designated pastoral professional.
- Mentoring by a trusted adult or a local mentoring charity.
- Adapting the curriculum being studied, either for a given period or more permanently but always in the best interests of the student
- Regular reviews with the student and parent/carers to praise progress being made and raise and address any concerns at an early stage.
- Informing the student, parent/carers, and staff of potential external support. The strategy will be reviewed and adapted where necessary throughout the reintegration process in collaboration with the student, parent/carers, and other relevant parties. The school will explain the reintegration strategy to the student in a reintegration meeting before or on the student's return to school. During the meeting, the school will communicate to the student that they are getting a fresh start and that they are a valued member of the school community. The student, parent/carer, a member of senior staff, and any other relevant staff will be invited to attend the meeting. The meeting can proceed without the parent/carer if they cannot or do not attend.

This meeting will seek to establish practical ways in which further exclusion or suspension can be avoided and behaviour modified to acceptable standards in partnership between student, parent/carer, and school. The meeting must be formally recorded and attached to the pupil's file. This can either be as a behaviour plan if already in place, or a record of meeting, or both.

15. Cancelling a suspension or exclusion: The Headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion that has already begun, but this will only be done where it has not yet been reviewed by the Academy Committee. Where there is a cancellation:

- The parent/carers, Chair of the AC and Director of Education will be notified without delay.
- Where relevant, any social worker and Virtual School Head will be notified without delay.
- Parent/carers will be offered the opportunity to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the cancellation.
- The student will be allowed back in school.

16. School registers: A student's name will be removed from the school admissions register if:

- Fifteen school days have passed since the parent/carers were notified of the GDC's decision to not reinstate the student following a permanent exclusion and no application has been made for an independent review panel, or
- the parent/carers have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent review panel. Where an application for an independent review has been made, the Local Governing Body will wait until that review has concluded before removing a student's name from the register if upheld, or after the GDC has reconsidered the exclusion if directed by the independent panel.

Where alternative provision has been made for a suspended or excluded student and they attend it, code B (education off-site) or code D (dual registration) will be used on the attendance register.

17. Reporting, monitoring and analysing suspensions and exclusions data: Suspension and exclusion data is recorded and regularly monitored and analysed at both school level including by the Academy Committee and Trust level through the Education Committee, to ensure that suspensions and exclusions are used in line with this guidance.