



Exclusion Policy

Last Reviewed:	September 2017
Reviewed by (SLT Lead):	Richard Belmont
Next Review:	September 2018

This policy describes the practice that Gosford Hill School follows with regard to the exclusion of students. It recognises, however, that the seriousness of some situations requires an immediate response that cannot always follow the practice set out in the policy but, in all situations, the rights of students and parents to a full hearing will be respected.

The governing body and the Headteacher of this school are committed to the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum for all students. They 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 students and staff, in order to ensure that the curriculum is delivered and students are able to realise their full potential.

The Headteacher has the discretion to deal with students who are displaying challenging behaviour, but will do so consistently in the context of the school's behaviour policy. That policy clearly outlines the 'Never/Never' rules that may result in exclusion. Exclusion is the last step that any school can take because it runs against the school's commitment to inclusion and is of necessity reserved for 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, fixed term and permanent exclusions and has been developed in accordance with local and national guidelines.

Before considering exclusion

The school recognises that parents/carers are profoundly affected by the exclusion of their children and will work with them closely to ensure that only in rare circumstances will exclusion come as a surprise. In most instances parents/carers will have been working with the school to prevent their child from being excluded.

Students at risk of being excluded are likely to have had a history of disaffection and to have had a variety of support before the question of exclusion arises. In formulating these plans, a number of different agencies are likely to have helped the school. In all cases the involvement of these agencies will be shared with parents and in many instances they will have made direct contact with parents/carers. Sometimes, however, a student may behave unexpectedly and this may then trigger external support.

Students who have Special Educational Needs

In some cases the involvement of agencies external to the school will mean that a student has been placed on the Register of students with Special Educational Needs. In those cases where a student who has a Statement of Special Educational Needs is likely to be excluded, the school will try every practicable means to avoid the need for an exclusion and, if appropriate, in liaison with the outside agencies (including the LA), will initiate an 'interim' annual review. This of course is not always possible depending on each individual case.

Disabled students, travellers, students in Public Care and students from an ethnic minority

Particular care will also be given to students who are travellers, who are disabled or who are in Public Care or members of minority ethnic groups. Appropriate steps will be taken to seek to avoid their exclusion where ever possible but poor behaviour will not be accepted. Social Services will be involved at the earliest opportunity whenever a student in Public Care seems likely to be excluded. The school pays full regard to the Code of Practice issued by the Disability Rights Commission.

Students who are disabled or who are in Public Care have particular rights of appeal if they are excluded and the head teacher will take all necessary steps to make sure that these rights are respected and that appropriate information is shared with agencies, carers and parents.

In the run up to a possible exclusion

In those cases where exclusion seems likely to occur, the school will:

- try to inform parents/carers via a telephone call that the student is at risk of exclusion;
- if time allows, arrange a meeting with the parents to plan how to support the student and avoid the need for exclusion;
- take account of the views of the students;
- keep written notes of all verbal warnings to the students and carers;
- involve the Education Psychology Service and/or the Education Social Work Service and/or Youth Offending Team and/or other agencies such as 'Connexions' where ever possible.

When to consider exclusion

Exclusion will be used in response to serious breaches of school policy or law. The decision to exclude a student will be taken if: the student has clearly broken the 'Never/Never' Rules or has been involved in an incident that the Headteacher believes is serious enough to warrant exclusion. The school rules form part of the 'Behaviour for Success' policy of the school which encourages good behaviour in the list of 'Always/Always' rules.

A permanent exclusion may be given for a first/single offence, for example in the event of serious, actual or threatened violence or selling illegal substances.

Before reaching the decision to exclude a student, 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 behaviour and equal opportunities policies
- allow the students to give his or her own version of events via a written statement (students are asked to cooperate with this)
- check other relevant details wherever possible e.g. whether the incident may have been provoked, for example, by racial or sexual harassment;

If the Headteacher is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the student 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 student.

(Only the Headteacher or, in his/her absence, a senior leader acting with the Head's authority, can exclude a student from school).

Exclusion is not an appropriate sanction for dealing with:

- minor incidents such as failure to do homework or to attend a detention (unless this is persistent and defiant)
- poor academic performance;
- lateness or truancy;
- breaches of school uniform policy, except where persistent and in open defiance of such policy;
- punishing students for the behaviour of their parents/carers because of, for example, parental violence or abuse against members of the school community

The Headteacher will aim to ensure that exclusion is dealt with consistently and that there is no discrimination against any minority group. There is no "tariff" that leads to exclusion and all cases will be dealt with individually, subject to the consistent application of all relevant policies and procedures.

Lunchtime exclusion

Students whose behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive may be excluded from the school premises for the duration of the lunchtime periods.

Lunchtime exclusion is treated in the same way as any other fixed period exclusion:

- the Headteacher (or other delegated member of staff) will inform the parents of the period of exclusion and the reasons for it;
- the exclusion will run for a fixed period;
- parents/carers have the right to make representations about the exclusion to the discipline committee of the governors

If a parents/carers refuse to co-operate with a properly given lunchtime exclusion, the school will have due regard for the student's safety before deciding on what action to take.

Fixed term exclusion

The Headteacher is allowed to exclude a student for up to 45 days in any one school year. However, individual exclusions will be for a maximum of 5 days – after this the school must provide alternative education for the student. Responsibilities of parents are clearly outlined in the exclusion letter.

The reasons for fixed term exclusion are mainly:

- to make it clear to the student that a particular behaviour is unacceptable, because it affects not only the right of others to a safe and secure environment but also interferes with the opportunities for learning;
- to support school discipline and to act as a clear statement to all students that certain behaviour is unacceptable;
- to ensure that parents/carers know of the behaviour and are involved in controlling it.

The school will invite the family of an excluded individual into school to a reintegration interview to discuss the incident after the (or sometimes during) the exclusion has been served.

Permanent exclusion

Permanent exclusion is an extremely serious step to take. The Headteacher will normally only consider such action if:

- the student 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;

- the student has continued to behave in an unacceptable manner despite several warnings and re integration interviews (in most cases the school will have attempted a number of alternative arrangements to support the individual)
- there is evidence that previous plans and strategies have been consistently applied but brought about no significant improvement in the behaviour of the student;

In most cases of permanent exclusion the student will have had a number of reintegration interviews. In the first instance these will be with a House Leader and may include a Senior Leader of the school. The Headteacher will interview the parents and students when there has been a serious incident or a number of incidents that show there is a real risk of permanent exclusion. In most cases there may also be a meeting with a Governor where permanent exclusion or a final written warning may be considered. There may be times where an offence is serious enough to go straight to permanent exclusion.

Permanent exclusion is usually the final step in the process for dealing with disciplinary offences. It is acknowledgement by the school that it has exhausted all available strategies for dealing with the student.

Only in the most exceptional circumstances will the Headteacher exclude a student for a first or one-off offence. Such exceptional circumstances might include carrying an offensive weapon, supplying an illegal drug, sexual misconduct or serious actual/threatened violence against another student or a member of staff.

When a student has been excluded

Once the Headteacher excludes a student, the parents/carers will be notified immediately, by telephone if possible. A letter will follow that telephone call as quickly as possible. This letter will include details about:

- the reasons for the exclusion
- the nature and length of the exclusion
- the name and telephone number of a contact at the LA, who can provide advice on the exclusions process
- details about how parents/carers can make representations about the exclusion to the Discipline Committee of the governors.

(Details about the responsibilities of the Governors are available form the LA)

Education of excluded students

In all cases where a student is excluded the school will follow the national and local guidelines in its role to educate the student and will set up a meeting for Governors to hear the case in the timeframe outlined.

An individual reintegration action plan will be finalised as soon as possible after the governor's meeting. This plan will, wherever possible include:

- the steps to be taken to assess the student
- the steps to be taken towards integrating the student with the new setting
- regular review dates for the plan
- the identification of a possible next school or setting
- the target date starting at this new school

The Education Officer for the excluded student is responsible for drawing up the reintegration action plan post permanent exclusion.

Monitoring and evaluating this policy

The Senior Leadership Team in school will review this policy on a regular basis, particularly at times when there has been a change of Government or national policy