



# High Storrs School

## Exclusion of Pupils Policy

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Minor Amendments:

## **Exclusion of Pupils Policy**

High Storrs School has the highest concern for the safety and wellbeing of the whole school community, and we work hard to ensure that our ethos and environment supports student learning and success. Exclusion is a sanction used only as a last resort, and we aim to reduce the need for the use of it as far as is possible. This policy outlines the school's use of exclusions in Year 7 to Year 13 inclusive, and is supported by our **school behaviour policy**. All policies cited in this policy are available on our school website or upon request.

### **1. Power to exclude**

The headteacher is the only member of staff within the school who can exclude a pupil, either permanently or for a fixed-term. In the absence of the headteacher, the deputy head or acting headteacher can make this decision.

The governing board can review the headteacher's decision and consider representations from parents of excluded pupils. They may direct the reinstatement of an excluded pupil, or uphold an exclusion after a review, but they cannot exclude a pupil themselves. For more information on the governing board's role in exclusions, see section 5.

In making decisions on exclusions, the headteacher and governing board must have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education on exclusions.

### **2. Grounds for exclusion**

Any exclusion, whether fixed term or permanent, will flow from a breach or breaches of the behaviour policy. In accordance with DfE guidance on exclusions, a permanent exclusion may only be imposed in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the behaviour policy and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education and/or welfare of the pupil or others in the school community.

In line with the school's behaviour policy, the following actions are examples of unacceptable behaviour which may result in permanent or fixed-term exclusions:

- verbal or written abuse to staff and others
- verbal or written abuse to pupils
- physical abuse to/attack on staff
- physical abuse to/attack on pupils
- indecent behaviour
- damage to property

- misuse of illegal drugs
- misuse of other substances (e.g. alcohol, solvents, new psychoactive substances)
- theft
- serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff
- sexual abuse or assault
- supplying an illegal drug
- possession of an illegal drug
- carrying an offensive weapon
- arson
- persistent and significant disruption to teaching and learning
- bringing the school into disrepute
- unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported, and for which school sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the pupil's behaviour.
- dangerous behaviour which causes or risks harm to students or staff
- repeated refusal to accept the authority of the school

In addition to the reasons above, deliberate behaviour that breaches measures put in place to limit the spread of viruses, in particular Covid 19, could be grounds for exclusion, both fixed term and permanent. A child who forgets to bring and use a face covering to school, in line with guidance on masks, will not result in a student being excluded from school.

### **3. Types of exclusion**

#### **3.2 Permanent exclusion**

Permanent exclusion is an extremely serious sanction, and a step taken by the school only as a last resort. In most cases, permanent exclusion will be used only after various alternative strategies have been tried to improve behaviour but have been unsuccessful. There are, however, some situations in which permanent exclusion on the first offence is the only option. These may include:

- serious, actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff
- serious verbal abuse against another pupil or a member of staff
- sexual abuse or assault
- supplying or being in possession of an illegal drug
- carrying an offensive weapon
- arson
- bringing the school into disrepute
- repeated refusal to accept the authority of the school
- deliberately and repeatedly breaching Covid 19 measures, despite reasonable and numerous attempts to remind and support the child to follow these measures

**The list is not exhaustive but provides an indication of the severity of the offence which may lead to permanent exclusion.**

It may be necessary for the school to involve the police if the offence warrants it. All permanent exclusions will be reviewed by the governing board to ensure that the headteacher's decision was lawful, reasonable and fair. The headteacher can withdraw an exclusion that has not yet been reviewed by the governing board.

### **3.3 Fixed-term exclusion**

The length of a fixed-term exclusion will be set out by the school at the start of the exclusion period. If a pupil is excluded for more than 45 days in one school year, they will be permanently excluded.

A fixed-term exclusion may result from a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy. It may be a first offence or persistent disruptive behaviour that requires a tougher sanction than other sanctions available to the school under the behaviour policy, but does not warrant permanent exclusion.

A permanent exclusion may follow on from a fixed term exclusion by the headteacher if the circumstances warrant it. This will generally be in cases where further evidence comes to light during the school's investigation. In this case, parents or carers will be notified in writing of the decision to permanently exclude the pupil, together with the reasons for doing so. During fixed-term exclusions and permanent exclusions, daytime supervision of the child is the responsibility of their parent or guardian for the first 5 days of the exclusion period.

An excluded pupil has no automatic right to take a public examination or National Curriculum tests on the school's premises. The governing board can decide whether or not to allow the pupil to sit the tests, and this will depend on the seriousness of the reason for exclusion.

### **3.4 Lunchtime exclusion**

This is a type of fixed-term exclusion and will not be used as a long-term solution to a behaviour problem. A lunchtime exclusion counts as half a day when calculating total number of days of exclusion.

The school may decide to exclude a pupil from the school premises during the break at lunchtime if their behaviour during this time is very disruptive or dangerous to other pupils and breaches the behaviour policy. Arrangements will be made for parents or carers to collect the excluded pupil and supervise them if their age or vulnerability warrants it. The school will not normally invoke a lunchtime exclusion for any period longer than a week. If the problem persists, alternative strategies will be looked at to deal with managing the pupil's behaviour.

Pupils who are entitled to free school meals will still be given this provision over their period of lunchtime exclusion.

## **4. Making the decision to exclude**

Exclusion of any sort, for any period of time, is taken very seriously by the school, and the decision to exclude is not taken lightly. Various alternative strategies to manage behaviour will usually be tried before exclusion, as this sanction is only used as a last resort unless the behaviour exhibited equates to a serious breach of the behaviour policy.

If it is decided that exclusion is necessary, the parents or carers of the pupil will be notified, and the circumstances surrounding the exclusion will be formally recorded.

#### **4.2 Alternative behaviour management strategies**

In line with other schools within the Minerva Trust, High Storrs School will use a range of strategies and measurable adjustments to try to avoid fixed-term and permanent exclusions. The following list indicates the kind of strategies that may be employed:

- Pastoral Support Plan
- Individual Education Plan
- Behaviour Plan
- My Plan
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Support
- Alternative Curriculum
- Vulnerable Learner Review
- Referral Service Districts – MAT (Multi Academy Trust)/Multi Agency Mentoring – with a Learning Mentor, Head of House, Student Support Assistant etc.
- Parental Meetings
- Mentor Group/Teaching Group
- Reports
- Governors' Behaviour Review Meeting
- Referral to Secondary Inclusion Panel (SIP)
- Report Monitoring System
- Fair Access Panel (the forum for Managed Moves and Step Out within the Local Authority)
- Restorative Justice
- Community Police Support
- Community Youth Team
- Educational Psychology Service/CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Counsellor Referral
- Reduced/RAG Timetable
- Attendance Officer Referral
- Personalised Timetable
- Punctuality Report
- Wishes and feelings
- SLT (Senior Leadership Team) Contract

#### **Internal exclusion (isolation)**

If a pupil needs to be removed from a lesson that is in progress, or a social situation,

for disruptive behaviour or to calm down, it may be necessary to place that pupil elsewhere in the school. This may occur over break times and will be used in circumstances where it is not necessary to remove the pupil from the school site, but separation is needed. We use a range of rooms for this purpose. Where a child has been removed from a lesson (On Call), they typically go to another classroom (e.g. a Sixth Form class) where they work quietly until the end of the lesson. We also have an isolation room where children are supervised by a member of the middle or senior leadership team and work. This is used where there has been a serious breach of the behaviour policy, but a fixed term exclusion is not considered appropriate. The aim of both On Call and seclusion is to keep the focus on learning, whilst making clear that the behaviour breach was serious enough to warrant being removed for a period of time.

Please note that during the period of time when Covid 19 measures are in place, students will only be removed to a different classroom or placed in isolation ***with students from the same year group in order to keep 'year bubbles' in place.***

### **Mediation**

If there is a conflict between two or more pupils, a member of staff will sit down with those involved and attempt to mediate the situation through discussion. This strategy may also be used if there is a conflict between a teacher and a pupil. Those students who are removed from lessons are given a detention, to which the teacher is invited to have a *Repair and Rebuild* conversation.

### **Restorative justice**

This strategy is dependent on the cooperation of all parties involved in an incident or situation, and will usually be used where one person has done something to upset or harm another. It can be helpful for the offender to redress the harm that they have done and hopefully learn from their mistakes. It can also provide closure for those who have been harmed.

### **Managed move**

It may be in the best interest of a pupil to have a chance of a fresh start by moving to another school. This will only occur in consent with parents, the Local Authority and the headteacher. The case will be presented at the Fair Access Panel, where a representative of the preferred school(s) will be asked to take the child. Managed moves typically last 12 weeks, although they can be longer.

Parents will not be put under any pressure to agree to a managed move, especially in fear of a permanent exclusion, and the school will do everything it can to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible.

## **4.3 Looked-after children and young people**

High Storrs School understands that looked-after children and young people may be more susceptible to having behavioural problems due to additional problems they may face at home. We work in conjunction with all relevant childcare authorities to support looked-after children and try every possible means of keeping them in school. Before any decision to exclude is made, the school will (as appropriate):

- consult the LA about alternative options to support a looked-after pupil
- consult the LA about what alternative provision will be available if the pupil is excluded
- involve the child's social worker as early as possible to help the school avoid exclusion
- work with the foster carer to improve the pupil's behaviour.

#### **4.4 Pupils with special educational needs or a disability (SEND)**

##### **Pupils with SEN**

Our school's full SEND provision is outlined in our **SEND Policy and Information Report**. We work hard to include students who have behavioural difficulties or difficulties with elements of social interaction as part of their SEND. The school will try every practical alternative to exclusion, but there may be some cases where it cannot be avoided.

If a permanent exclusion is made, the headteacher will use the time between the initial decision and the governing board's review to see whether a change of circumstances might enable the school to withdraw the exclusion. It may be the case that more support is needed for the pupil, or that it is in the child's best interest that their EHC Plan be changed to name a different school, in which case the school will work with the LA and the child's parents or carers to make the transition as smooth as possible.

##### **Pupils with a disability**

If a pupil with a disability is under consideration for exclusion, the headteacher will ensure that all other possible options have been tried. To justify excluding a pupil with a disability for a reason related to their disability, there must be material and substantial reason. The erosion of order and discipline in the school may be material and substantial justification, but only if reasonable adjustments have been made for the pupil's disability. You can find more information on reasonable adjustments in our **Equality Policy and Accessibility Plan**.

#### **4.5 Ethnicity**

High Storrs School does not discriminate against any person and our school ethos is one of inclusion, equality, and diversity. If any person feels that they have been discriminated against due to their ethnicity they may make a formal complaint to the school following the process outlined in our **school complaints procedure**. Where the issue arises in relation to an exclusion, the school will deal with any concerns raised by parents through the consideration of parental representations within the exclusion framework.

#### **4.6 Investigating the circumstances**

Disruptive behaviour or actions that may warrant discipline will always be investigated before the decision to exclude is made.

Before the decision to exclude is made, the headteacher will:

- ensure that the school has undertaken a thorough investigation
- consider all the evidence available
- encourage the pupil to give his or her version of events
- take into account the school's behaviour policy and all other relevant school policies including equal opportunities policy
- find out whether the behaviour may have been provoked, for example in the case of racial or sexual harassment, or bullying
- consult other people as necessary (but not anyone on the governing board or management committee who may later have a role in reviewing the decision)
- keep a written record of discussions, interviews and actions, and retain copies of written records made by other members of staff, ensuring that witness statements are dated and signed if possible.

#### **4.7 Confidentiality**

The school will deal with all cases of exclusion and the surrounding circumstances confidentially. Information will be shared only with those who need to know it, and a breach of this may result in disciplinary action.

#### **4.8 Recording and notifying the decision to exclude**

All exclusions will be formally recorded and the headteacher will contact the parents or carers of the pupil immediately once the decision has been made to exclude, specifying why this action has been taken and the length of time that it will last. If the pupil is over 18, they will be notified directly. The decision will be confirmed in writing. The headteacher will notify the governing board and LA within one day of the decision to exclude being made where the exclusion is permanent or is a fixed term exclusion which results in the pupil being excluded for a period of more than 5 school days in a term or where the exclusion will result in the pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test.

### **5. Reviewing an exclusion**

The governing board will review fixed-term exclusions of any length on request by parents who feel that the sanction is unjustified. A meeting will not always be required. They will automatically review all cases of permanent exclusion, as well as any fixed-term exclusions that would lead to a pupil being excluded for more than 15 days of a school term or missing a public exam. The governing board will look at the evidence and the records leading up to the exclusion and decide whether, in light of the evidence and his/her legal duties, the headteacher has made a lawful, reasonable and fair decision.

The review hearing will be minuted by the clerk.

Parents who want a review of the exclusion can contact the governing board. Subject to the type and length of the exclusion imposed by the headteacher, parents will be invited to a review meeting and are entitled to bring a friend or legal representative with them. Parents will be asked to provide the governing board with any written statements or evidence that they might have relating to the exclusion



prior to the review meeting so that these can be circulated. There will be an opportunity during the meeting for parents to ask questions of the other parties.

The pupil concerned is encouraged to attend if they are able to fully understand the proceedings. High Storrs School believes that pupils should be encouraged to take part in the review process and feel that they are listened to. This will hopefully increase the chance of a positive behaviour pattern emerging in the future.

In order to contact the Governing Board, parents should contact the Clerk to the Governors, Alison Foulkes.

## **5.2 Notification of the governing board decision**

Parents will be notified of the outcome of the governing board review meeting in writing. This letter will also outline how parents can request a review by the independent review panel if they are unhappy with the outcome of the governing board's review. The outcome of the governing board meeting will be one of the following.

- **Upholding the exclusion**

If the governing board finds that the exclusion decision was lawful, reasonable and fair, they will uphold the decision to exclude. In this case, a letter will be sent to the parent or carer of the child outlining:

- the decision
- the reason for the decision
- the parent's right to request an independent review panel
- the name and contact details of the person to whom to send the request
- the date by which the request and the reasons for it should be given
- that the notice of appeal must set out the reasons for the request
- the right to an SEN expert to attend the independent review panel
- the right to have a representative at the independent review panel at the parents' own expense
- that allegations of disability discrimination may also be pursued to the First Tier Tribunal (SEND Tribunal)
- that a claim to the county court can be made for other forms of discrimination.

- **Reinstating the pupil**

If the governing board decides that the decision to exclude was not lawful, reasonable or fair in light of the evidence and the duties of the headteacher, the governing board must reinstate the pupil immediately or by a given date. If the latter option is chosen support will be given to ensure that the pupil is easily reintegrated into the school. This will include a reintegration meeting with the parent or carer on school grounds, during which a Pastoral Support Plan will be drawn up.

A copy of the letter detailing the outcome will be put in the student's academic records along with any relevant papers. The governing board may also decide to arrange for an educational provision offsite to improve the child's behaviour, such as an anger management course.

## 6. During an exclusion

Although the headteacher has made the decision to exclude a pupil, we maintain responsibility for the education of that child and will do everything that we can to minimise the disruption to their education.

For the first five days of any type of exclusion, the school will set and mark work that the child should complete at home under parental supervision.

From the sixth day onwards, if the exclusion is fixed-term, the school will arrange for alternative full-time educational provision. If the exclusion is permanent, the LA will arrange for this provision having assessed the child's needs. Alternative provision might be arranged at:

- another school in the area
- a shared joint facility
- a pupil referral unit/inclusion centre
- a private provider
- a local FE college.

If the child has a SEN statement/EHC Plan, the alternative provision will meet those needs.

Please note that in light of Covid 19 measures, the timings for exclusion appeals and hearings have been made more flexible. Meetings may be conducted online on a platform such as Zoom. For more details, see the government guidance on the timings here (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion/changes-to-the-school-exclusion-process-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>).