

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy



Willingdon
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Date adopted by the Governing Body: 30th September 2026

To be reviewed: September 2027

Staff Responsible: Tom Cain, Assistant Headteacher

Link Governor: Chair of Governors

A relational, inclusive and legally compliant policy aligned to July 2026 statutory guidance.

This policy should be read alongside the Relationship and Engagement Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Attendance Policy, SEND Policy, Behaviour and Inclusion procedures, Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance, Restrictive Intervention Policy and Alternative Provision procedures.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school Vision Statement and Ethos of the School as detailed below.

We are Willingdon

We are a united, vibrant community which demonstrates personal excellence in all that we do. Learning at Willingdon transforms lives by igniting curiosity and expecting the very best from staff and students alike. We value opportunities, aiming for success today to prepare for challenges and opportunities tomorrow. We are respectful, honest and courteous to empower each other on our unique learning journeys. We look after ourselves and each other, and show empathy, respect and compassion to all people and our environment along the way. We encourage tolerance, resilience and reflection, which in turn allows everyone to make progress every lesson. We work together as a harmonious community to be the very best versions of ourselves.

This makes us Willingdon

Ethos

At Willingdon Community School, we aim to develop, in all our students, key values which we consider contribute to the achievement of what we refer to as, Personal Excellence.

Ambition

To strive to do your best on all occasions. Take on new challenges and challenge yourself to reach the highest possible standards and be personally successful.

Respect

To respect and value all members of our community, recognising and celebrating our differences. Respect ourselves, valuing what we can each bring to our community.

Compassion

Understand the needs of others and support those who sometimes need our help. Contribute to charitable work which supports those less well-off in the world.

Courtesy

Be well mannered in all situations, displaying the basic courtesies that we all value. Greet those you work with regularly; be particularly welcoming and polite to visitors and show appreciation for those who support and work closely with you.

Honesty

Always be honest, even when it may appear difficult. Be honest to yourself - know your strengths and your weaknesses.

1. Purpose, Ethos and Aims

At Willingdon Community School, our work with young people is underpinned by our ethos of Personal Excellence: Ambition, Respect, Compassion, Courtesy and Honesty. Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious disciplinary measures. They are not routine behaviour tools and they do not replace inclusive practice, early intervention, restorative work or a graduated response to need.

The school aims to ensure that all reasonable alternatives to suspension are explored wherever possible so that individual situations are de-escalated and structured learning time is protected. We are committed to an inclusive, early-intervention approach in which suspension is used only when necessary, lawful and proportionate, and after appropriate support strategies have been implemented unless the incident is a serious one-off.

Through this policy the school aims to ensure that:

- the suspension and permanent exclusion process is fair, transparent and consistently applied;
- pupils, staff and families understand the circumstances in which suspension or permanent exclusion may be considered;
- all reasonable adjustments, graduated responses and support strategies have been considered where appropriate;
- the safety, welfare and education of all pupils and staff are protected;
- re-integration following suspension is structured, relational and purposeful;
- the school fulfils all duties set out in current legislation and statutory guidance.

2. Strategic Alignment, Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on and should be read in line with the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (statutory guidance, July 2026);
- Education Act 2002;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012 and associated amendments;
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998;

- Education Act 1996, including section 19 duties;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025;
- Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 where relevant to off-site direction and related updates;
- the Relationship and Engagement Policy and related inclusion, SEND, safeguarding and attendance policies.

This policy also reflects the school’s wider strategic alignment with the renewed Ofsted framework from November 2025 and the 2026 national direction towards stronger inclusion, earlier intervention and better joined-up support.

3. Definitions and Key Principles

- Suspension means a pupil is temporarily removed from the school on disciplinary grounds. Suspensions may be for a fixed period, for part of a school day where lawful, or for lunchtimes only. The cumulative limit of 45 school days in one academic year applies to suspensions.
- Permanent exclusion means a pupil is permanently removed from the school roll on disciplinary grounds. It is the most serious sanction available and must only be used as a last resort.
- Only the Headteacher, Acting Headteacher or another senior leader formally delegated by the Headteacher may suspend a pupil. Only the Headteacher or Acting Headteacher may permanently exclude.
- Suspension and permanent exclusion may only be used on disciplinary grounds. They must not be used for non-disciplinary reasons, informal cooling-off arrangements or as a substitute for appropriate support.
- The school is aware that off-rolling is unlawful. A pupil must not be removed from roll, or parents encouraged to remove a pupil from roll, primarily in the interests of the school rather than the pupil.
- Safeguarding separation is distinct from suspension or permanent exclusion. It is a safeguarding response used only in rare and defined circumstances where pupils cannot safely remain together on site and where the concern is safeguarding-led rather than disciplinary.

4. The Decision to Suspend or Permanently Exclude

A decision to suspend or permanently exclude will be taken only in response to a serious or persistent breach of the school’s policies, or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education, welfare or safety of others. Permanent exclusion will be used only as a last resort.

Before making a decision, the Headteacher or delegated senior leader will:

- consider all relevant facts and evidence, including the chronology of events and context;
- allow the pupil to give their account of events where appropriate;
- consider whether the incident was provoked or influenced by wider contextual factors;
- consider whether unmet SEND, SEMH, communication, attachment or trauma-related factors may have contributed;
- consider whether safeguarding concerns, vulnerability or external risk factors are relevant;
- consider whether reasonable adjustments have been identified and consistently applied;
- consider whether existing support plans are in place and being implemented, including APDR, Pastoral Needs Plan, Additional Needs Plan or EHCP outcomes where relevant;
- consider whether a graduated response has been implemented, unless the incident is a serious one-off;
- decide on the balance of probabilities and record a clear written rationale showing proportionality.

4.1 Mandatory Considerations Before Suspension

Before any decision to suspend, the following should be explicitly considered and recorded where relevant:

- whether unmet need has contributed to the behaviour;
- what support, intervention or adjustment has already been tried and with what impact;
- whether internal suspension, pastoral support, an adapted timetable, off-site direction or another preventative alternative remains viable;
- whether the proposed suspension is necessary, lawful, fair and proportionate to the behaviour and context.

4.2 Use of Alternatives

Where appropriate, leaders should evidence that alternatives to suspension have been considered, including:

- pastoral intervention and key adult support;
- adapted provision or timetable adjustments;
- internal suspension or supervised separation within school;
- external agency involvement;
- off-site direction where lawful and appropriate;
- managed move, only where this is in the pupil's best interests and not coerced.

Suspension should not be used where reasonable alternatives remain viable, unless the incident is of a serious nature requiring immediate removal for safety or welfare reasons.

5. Inclusion, Prevention and Graduated Support

The school adopts a graduated approach to behaviour, inclusion and suspension prevention. Suspension is not a replacement for inclusive practice. It sits within a wider framework of universal, targeted and specialist support.

- Universal provision: high-quality teaching, routines, coaching, assemblies, adaptive practice and clear relational expectations.
- Targeted provision: pastoral intervention, mentoring, attendance support, APDR processes, behaviour monitoring, small-group work and family meetings.
- Specialist provision: external agency involvement, therapeutic support, alternative provision, outreach and personalised intervention.

The school is committed to reducing suspensions through inclusive practice, early identification of need, family partnership, robust APDR processes and strong relationships. Suspension should never replace a robust support process.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Executive Headteacher

- make decisions on suspension and permanent exclusion lawfully and fairly;
- ensure required consideration of SEND, safeguarding, equality and proportionality is evidenced;
- inform parents/carers without delay and ensure all statutory notices are issued correctly;
- notify the governing board, local authority, social worker and Virtual School Head where required;
- ensure appropriate education is arranged within statutory timescales where the school is responsible;
- ensure every suspension is supported by clear documentation, intervention history and reintegration planning.

6.2 Governing Board

- consider reinstatement in line with statutory thresholds and timescales;
- ensure procedures have been followed lawfully and fairly;
- monitor patterns and trends in suspensions and permanent exclusions, including repeat suspensions, duration and impact on vulnerable groups;
- scrutinise disproportionality affecting pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, looked after children and other vulnerable groups;
- ensure leaders act where concerning patterns or inequity emerge.

6.3 Local Authority / Academy Trust Duties

- arrange suitable full-time education from the sixth school day of a permanent exclusion;

- arrange an independent review panel where parents apply for review of a permanent exclusion in line with statutory timescales;
- fulfil section 19 duties where required, including where safeguarding separation triggers such duties.

7. Informing Parents/Carers and Notifying Relevant Agencies

The Executive Headteacher will inform parents/carers immediately, and in writing without delay, of:

- the reason(s) for the suspension or permanent exclusion;
- the length of a suspension or the fact that the exclusion is permanent;
- the parents' right to make representations to the governing board and how the pupil may be involved;
- where relevant, parents' right to attend a governing board meeting, be represented at their own expense and bring a friend;
- their legal duty for the first five school days of a suspension to ensure that their child is not in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification;
- details of any alternative provision arrangements where these are known.

The Executive Headteacher will notify the governing board and the local authority without delay of:

- a permanent exclusion, including where a suspension is made permanent;
- a suspension which would result in the pupil being suspended for more than five school days, or more than ten lunchtimes, in a term;
- a suspension which would result in the pupil missing a public examination.

Where required, the school will also notify the pupil's social worker and/or the Virtual School Head without delay.

8. Education During Suspension, Off-site Direction and Safeguarding Separation

For a suspension of more than five school days, the governing board will ensure suitable full-time education is arranged from the sixth school day where the school is responsible. Provision does not have to be arranged for pupils in the final year of compulsory education who do not have any further public examinations to sit.

The school may use off-site direction as a preventative intervention in line with statutory guidance. Off-site direction must have a clear rationale, timescale, review arrangement and educational purpose. It must be in the pupil's best interests and not used as disguised exclusion.

In exceptional safeguarding circumstances, the school may use safeguarding separation where a pupil cannot safely remain on site during an investigation and where this is not a disciplinary suspension. Where safeguarding separation is used, the school will act in line with current guidance and local authority arrangements.

9. Governing Board Consideration of Reinstatement

The governing board will consider the reinstatement of a suspended or permanently excluded pupil in line with statutory requirements. This includes:

- within 15 school days of receiving notice where the exclusion is permanent;
- within 15 school days where a suspension would bring the pupil's total suspended time to more than 15 school days in a term;
- before the date of a public examination where reasonably practical if the pupil would otherwise miss the examination;
- within 50 school days of receiving notice if parents request consideration of a suspension of more than five but not more than 15 school days in a term.

In reaching a decision, the governing board will consider whether the suspension or permanent exclusion was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair, and whether the Headteacher complied with legal duties. Decisions are made on the balance of probabilities.

The governing board may:

- decline to reinstate the pupil;
- direct reinstatement immediately;
- direct reinstatement on a future date.

Minutes of meetings and the record of evidence considered will be retained, and the outcome will be recorded on the pupil's educational record.

10. Independent Review, SEN Expert and Remote Access

Where the governing board does not reinstate a permanently excluded pupil, parents/carers may apply for an independent review panel within 15 school days of the governing board's decision. The local authority or academy trust will arrange the review in line with statutory requirements.

The review panel may:

- uphold the governing board's decision;
- recommend that the governing board reconsiders reinstatement;
- quash the governing board's decision and direct reconsideration where the decision is flawed.

Parents/carers have the right to request the presence of a SEN expert at an independent review, regardless of whether the school recognises that their child has SEN. The panel must have regard to the views of the SEN expert where one is requested and appointed.

Remote access meetings may be used for governing board meetings or independent review panels where this is permitted by guidance and where fair, lawful and practical to do so.

11. School Registers

A pupil's name will be removed from the school admissions register only in line with statutory requirements. Where parents do not apply for an independent review within the required period, or confirm in writing that they will not do so, the school may remove the pupil's name from roll following the appropriate waiting period. Where a review is requested, the pupil's name will remain on roll until the review process has concluded.

Where alternative provision has been arranged and a pupil attends it, the correct attendance code will be used in line with statutory guidance. Where a suspended pupil is not attending alternative provision, the appropriate absence code will be used.

12. Returning from Suspension: Reintegration and Support

Following a suspension, a reintegration meeting will be held involving the pupil, parent/carers, a senior member of staff and other staff where appropriate. Reintegration is an intervention, not a formality.

The reintegration process will usually include:

- a structured review of the incident and any underlying barriers;
- updated support planning, including APDR, ANP, PNP or other support plans where relevant;
- clear expectations, identified adults and agreed support strategies;
- restorative work and repair where appropriate;
- review points and timescales;
- consideration of further pastoral, SEND or alternative provision support where needed.

13. Recording and Documentation

For every suspension or permanent exclusion, the school will record:

- the reason for the decision;
- the intervention history and support already in place;
- SEND, safeguarding and equality considerations;
- the rationale for proportionality and why the chosen response was necessary;
- pupil and parent/carers voice where reasonably practicable;

- dates, times, decision-makers, notifications and reintegration arrangements.

Accurate and detailed records are essential to ensure transparency, accountability and legal compliance.

14. Monitoring, Accountability and Review

The designated Deputy Headteacher will monitor suspensions and permanent exclusions regularly and report to the Headteacher and the governing board. Monitoring will include:

- frequency of suspensions;
- repeat suspensions;
- duration;
- patterns over time;
- comparison across vulnerable and protected groups, including SEND, disadvantaged pupils, looked after children and other identified groups;
- the effectiveness of interventions and reintegration planning.

Leaders must take action where disproportionality, repeated patterns or weaknesses in support are identified. This policy will be reviewed annually, and sooner where statutory change or monitoring suggests that revision is required.

15. Links with Other Policies

- Relationship and Engagement Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SEND Policy
- Alternative Provision procedures
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco Policy
- Restrictive Intervention Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures

Appendix 1 – Decision-Making Checklist

- Has the allegation/incident been investigated and recorded?
- Has pupil voice been sought where appropriate?
- Has parent/carers voice been considered where appropriate?
- Have SEND, SEMH, safeguarding and vulnerability checks been completed?
- Have reasonable adjustments been considered and evidenced?
- Have APDR / ANP / PNP / EHCP processes and strategies been reviewed?
- Have alternatives been considered, including internal suspension, off-site direction or pastoral intervention?
- Is the decision necessary, proportionate and clearly rationalised?
- Have notification duties and reintegration requirements been planned?

Appendix 2 – Immediate Information to Record on the Day of Suspension

Information Required	Completed
Name of pupil, tutor group, PP, SEND, CLA / vulnerable group status	
Member of staff leading and authorising suspension	
Summary of incident and evidence gathered	
Witness statements collected where relevant	
Reason for suspension as it will appear in the letter	
Intervention history and support plans reviewed	
Parent/carers contacted before the pupil leaves site	
Length of suspension and dates	
Work arranged and responsible staff identified	
Date/time of reintegration meeting and staff attending	

Appendix 3 – Indicative Response Guide (Not a Fixed Tariff)

Sanctions are not automatic and must not follow a rigid tariff model. Any indicative period must be adapted according to seriousness, context, previous record, vulnerability, support history and proportionality. This appendix should be used only as a guide and never as a substitute for professional judgement.

Concern	Indicative Response
Gross defiance / refusal to follow a reasonable instruction	Internal suspension or short suspension where alternatives are insufficient and proportionality is evidenced
Failure to comply with internal suspension provision	Escalated internal consequence or short suspension, depending on context and prior support
Repeated serious breach of uniform, punctuality or attendance expectations	Graduated intervention first; suspension only where persistent, serious and all relevant support has been exhausted
Absconding from site	Short suspension and reintegration planning where risk warrants it
Threatening, aggressive or violent behaviour	Response determined by seriousness, risk, injury and context; may include suspension or permanent exclusion in the most serious cases
Bullying, discriminatory abuse or serious harmful conduct	Investigation followed by proportionate consequence, support, repair and safeguarding action
Possession of a weapon or serious harmful object	Serious sanction likely, including suspension or permanent exclusion depending on risk and circumstances
Possession of illegal substances or serious substance-related misconduct	Investigation, safeguarding response and serious sanction where warranted
Breach of reintegration expectations following a recent suspension	Further intervention, possible extension or further suspension where justified

This policy should be applied alongside the school's commitment to inclusion, early intervention and relational practice. Suspension and permanent exclusion remain lawful disciplinary tools, but they must always be used carefully, fairly and in line with statutory guidance.

Appendix 4 – APDR Following Suspensions for Reintegration

Assess • Plan • Do • Review

Purpose: To support evidence-led, inclusive and reintegration-focused responses before and after suspension, including consideration of SEND, reasonable adjustments, pastoral support and next steps.

1. PUPIL DETAILS

Pupil name:		Year group / Tutor group:	
Date of birth:		UPN (optional):	
SEN status:	☐ EHCP ☐ SEN Support ☐ No identified SEND	HOY / Pastoral lead:	
SENCO:	Ollie Barber	Date of suspension:	
Length of suspension:		Date of reintegration meeting:	

Reason for suspension:

Gross defiance to staff

2. ASSESS

Purpose: Identify what happened, what may be driving the behaviour, and what barriers to learning or regulation may be present.

2.1 Incident Summary

What happened?

-
-
-

When and where did it happen?

-
-
-

Who was involved?

-
-

What was the impact on safety, learning or others?

-
-

2.2 Context / Pattern Analysis

☐ Pattern by lesson / subject	☐ Pattern by time of day
☐ Pattern by staff / peers	☐ Pattern in transitions / unstructured times
☐ Attendance / internal truancy concerns	☐ Previous similar incidents

Summary of patterns identified:

-
-
-

2.3 Assessment of Need

☐ Communication difficulty	☐ Anxiety / SEMH
☐ Sensory overload	☐ Peer conflict
☐ Task avoidance / curriculum mismatch	☐ Trauma / home factors
☐ Attachment / trust issues	☐ Unmet SEND need
☐ Other	

Evidence reviewed (behaviour logs / attendance / safeguarding / SEND plans / external reports):

-
-

2.4 Pupil Voice

What does the pupil say happened?

-
-

What does the pupil say was difficult?

-
-

What does the pupil think would help?

-

2.5 Parent / Carer Voice

What do parents/carers report?

-

Relevant home/context factors:

-

Parent/carers suggestions or requests:

-

2.6 Reasonable Adjustments / SEND Considerations

What adjustments were already in place?

-
-

Were they implemented consistently?

-
-

What further adjustments may be needed?

-
-

3. PLAN

Purpose: Agree clear outcomes, support, responsibilities and timescales for reintegration and behaviour support.

3.1 Desired Outcomes

Outcome 1:

-

Outcome 2:

-

Outcome 3:

-

3.2 Short-Term Targets

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

3.3 Support / Adjustments Agreed

☐ Daily meet and greet	☐ Check-in / check-out
☐ Timetable adjustment / phased reintegration	☐ Key adult support
☐ Restorative meeting	☐ Safe space / exit card
☐ Movement / sensory breaks	☐ Seating plan adjustment
☐ Visual timetable / pre-teaching	☐ Reduced transition stress support
☐ Parent communication plan	☐ Counselling / therapeutic support
☐ SENCO observation / review	☐ External agency referral
☐ Attendance support	☐ Managed move / off-site direction / AP discussion (if applicable)
☐ Other	

Other support / adjustments:

3.4 Actions, Responsibility and Timescale

Action	Responsible adult	Start date	Review date

4. DO

Purpose: Ensure the agreed support is implemented consistently and that staff know what they are expected to do.

4.1 Implementation Log

What support has been put in place?

-
-

Has it started on time?

-
-

Are staff aware of their responsibilities?

-

-

Have parents/carers been updated?

-
-

Has the pupil been shown how to access support?

-
-

4.2 Delivery Notes

What is working already?

-
-

What barriers are there to implementation?

-
-

Are agreed strategies being applied consistently?

-
-

5. REVIEW

Purpose: Evaluate impact, decide next steps and determine whether support should continue, change or escalate.

5.1 Review Meeting Details

Date of review:		Attendees:	
Next review date:		Lead reviewer:	

5.2 Evidence Reviewed

☐ Attendance since suspension	☐ Behaviour incidents / removals
☐ Lesson engagement	☐ Pupil voice
☐ Parent/carers feedback	☐ Teacher feedback
☐ SEND / pastoral observations	☐ Other

5.3 Impact Evaluation

What has improved?

What remains a concern?

Has risk reduced and has the pupil re-engaged with learning?

Were actions implemented fully?

5.4 Review Outcome

☐ Continue current support	☐ Adjust / refine support
☐ Increase targeted intervention	☐ Refer to SENCO / specialist
☐ Begin further APDR cycle	☐ Consider EHCP / statutory assessment discussion
☐ Consider AP / managed move / alternative pathway	☐ Other

Other / additional review outcome:

5.5 Next Steps

Actions agreed:

Who is responsible?

When will impact be reviewed?

6. SIGN-OFF

Completed by:		Role:	
Signature:		Date:	
Parent / carer informed:	☐ Yes ☐ No	Date:	
Pupil voice captured:	☐ Yes ☐ No	Date:	

OPTIONAL PROMPT QUESTIONS FOR STAFF

Use these prompts to improve the quality of assessment and planning.

☐ What is the behaviour communicating?
☐ What barriers to learning or regulation might be present?
☐ What has already been tried and with what impact?
☐ What reasonable adjustments are needed?
☐ What will success look like in 2 weeks, 4 weeks and 6 weeks?
☐ How will parents/carers and the pupil be involved?
☐ What would help this pupil feel safer, more connected and more ready to learn?