



## **POLICY ON EXCLUSIONS (SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS)**

Whilst the exclusion of a pupil from school should be avoided where possible the school may require that a pupil be suspended<sup>1</sup> or expelled under certain circumstances.

### **Suspension**

A pupil may be suspended from school on the 3<sup>rd</sup> occurrence of a Saturday Detention or for a single serious offence or combination of serious offences. Whilst a definitive list of such offences is difficult to compile there is no doubt that the following (listed in alphabetical order) are regarded by the school as serious and so may lead to this course of action.

Abusive language, assault, bullying, fighting, interference with the possessions of others, internet abuse, physical violence, possession, use and distribution of alcohol or illegal drugs (or other substances harmful to the human body), smoking, sexual misconduct, vandalism.

In the event of the school suspending a pupil for a period of indiscipline the school will have maintained a written record of the events and of the interventions of teachers, contacts with parents and any requests for external support from the Education Authority's Education and Welfare department and educational psychology services.

In the event of the school suspending a pupil for a serious incident or incidents of indiscipline the school will have investigated and documented the incident. The pupil will be interviewed to give his/her versions of events before the decision to suspend is taken.

### **Procedures**

- 1 A pupil may only be suspended from the school by the Principal.
- 2 The number of days for the initial suspension is at the discretion of the Principal and will depend on a number of factors including the seriousness of the offence and the previous behaviour record of the pupil.
- 3 The initial period of suspension will not exceed more than 5 days.
- 4 A pupil may not be suspended for more than 45 days in any one school year.
- 5 The Principal cannot extend a period of suspension in any school year without the approval of the Chairman of the Board of Governors and shall in every case give written notification of the reasons for the extension and period of extension to the parent of the pupil and to the Education Authority.

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<sup>1</sup> Under certain circumstances a period of suspension may be followed by expulsion.

- 6 When a pupil is to be suspended from school, the Principal will
  - a. Invite the parent/guardian of the pupil to visit the school to discuss the suspension (full notes will be kept of this meeting).
  - b. Give written notice of the reason(s) for the suspension to the parent/guardian of the pupil (sent on the day of suspension), to the Chairman of the Board of Governors and to the Education Authority South Eastern Region.
  - c. At the meeting (see a. above) inform the parent/guardian of the period of suspension and inform them that either,
    - (i) the pupil is required to attend a 'return to school' interview with the Principal, or,
    - (ii) the parent/guardian will receive written notice before the end of the current suspension period of further action to be taken by the school.
- 7 The Head of Year will ensure that work will be made available to the pupil at the start of the suspension period for the duration of the suspension and make arrangements for it to be returned to the relevant teacher for marking. He/she will ensure that the pupil has taken proper steps to catch up on any work missed during the period of suspension
- 8 On the day to return to school the pupil should report immediately to the Principal.

### **Expulsion**

A pupil may be expelled from school only after serving a period of suspension. A pupil may be expelled from school only after consultation has taken place between the Principal, the parent/guardian of the pupil (the pupil has the right to attend if the parent/guardian so wishes, or if he/she has attained the age of 18), the Chairman of the Board of Governors, the Chief Executive of the Education Authority South Eastern Region or another officer in the Education Authority South Eastern Region duly authorised by him, provided that any neglect or refusal by a parent/guardian to take part in such consultations cannot prevent a pupil being expelled. After such consultation<sup>2</sup> has taken place the Principal and the Chairman of The Board of Governors may bring a proposal for expulsion to the Board of Governors. If an Expulsion Hearing is convened, the parents of the pupil will be invited to the Expulsion Hearing of The Board of Governors (again the pupil has the right to attend if the parent/guardian so wishes, or if he/she has attained the age of 18). The Board of Governors will review the case, hear or read the submission by parents and pupil. A vote will take place to come to a final decision.

When a pupil has been expelled from the school the Principal shall immediately give written notification to the parent or guardian of that pupil of his/her right to appeal the decision to expel the pupil, of the time limit set by the Education Authority South Eastern Region for lodging the appeal and of where the appeal may be lodged.

Notes:

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<sup>2</sup> This must include consultation about the future provision of suitable education for the pupil concerned.

- 1 'Chairman of the Board of Governors' includes, where the Chairman is absent or otherwise unavailable, the member of the Board of Governors for the time being performing the duties of Chairman.
- 2 'Principal' includes, where the Principal is absent or otherwise unavailable, the Vice-Principal or other persons for the time being performing the duties of Principal.
- 3 Any reference to the parent of a pupil shall include, in the case of a pupil who has attained the age of eighteen, the pupil himself/herself.
- 4 After a pupil has been expelled responsibility for making provision regarding re-instatement rests with the Education Authority South Eastern Region.

### **The Appeals Procedure**

There is a statutory right of appeal against expulsion which is made to the Expulsion of Pupil Appeal Tribunal. The parents/carers of the pupil must lodge the appeal unless the pupil is 18 years old, in which case, he or she may lodge their own appeal.

The parents must send a written account of the reasons for appeal to the Tribunal. Written notice of the hearing will then be forwarded by the Tribunal. A representative can appear on behalf of the parents of the pupil at the tribunal to put forward their views.