



# Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy

**September 2025**

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## Introduction

Plymouth CAST schools endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected, valued, listened to, and in which their self-confidence grows, and they achieve well academically and socially. Staff are alert to the signs of pupils experiencing difficulties and take prompt action to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Behaviour and SEND policies.

Plymouth CAST's Exclusions Policy reflects the government's ambition to create high standards of behaviour in schools so that children and young people are protected from disruption and are in a calm, safe, and supportive environment that brings out the best in every pupil.

Suspension and Permanent Exclusions will always be a last resort.

## Overview

Plymouth Trust schools must ensure that exclusion procedures conform to statutory guidance set out by the Department for Education (DfE) Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England including pupil movement. August 2024

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66be0d92c32366481ca4918a/Suspensions\\_and\\_permanent\\_exclusions\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66be0d92c32366481ca4918a/Suspensions_and_permanent_exclusions_guidance.pdf)

This policy must be read in conjunction with the above document.

Headteachers will ensure that all parties involved in exclusions, including parents, governing bodies and Independent Review Panels (IRPs), have regard to this statutory guidance.

This policy aims to outline roles, rights and responsibilities around suspension and permanent exclusion to ensure that all such proceedings at Plymouth CAST schools are conducted in a fair, legal and just manner, with appropriate notice to all; full participation of relevant parties, and within the statutorily designated timelines.

Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions can only be applied for a breach of a school's behaviour policy, which must be widely published to all pupils and parents, and available on the school website.

Schools must ensure that academic, pastoral and specialist provision are effectively planned and focused to ensure that wherever possible pupils' individual needs are met, and suspension/permanent exclusion is avoided.

Before a suspension or permanent exclusion is issued, the Headteacher must ensure that to do so would be: lawful, reasonable, proportionate, and fair.

## Alternatives to Suspension and Exclusion

Headteachers must be able to demonstrate that they have explored alternatives to suspension or permanent exclusion:

## Trauma-Informed Practitioner Support

Triage and direct work with child and/or staff to support the effectiveness of teaching/curriculum/behaviour management/SEMH support etc to modify the child's behaviour and reduce the likelihood of suspension.

This could be from a school-based TIS Practitioner, or through outreach/school-to-school support from a TIS Practitioner in another Plymouth CAST school.

### **Enhanced Support**

Support plans are reviewed and additional support is provided and/or revised plans/strategies are implemented.

For children with an EHCP, the LA should be contacted to request an early/emergency review.

### **Internal Alternative Provision**

The child attends appropriate alternative provision within the school and does not attend their normal classes or socialisation periods. This would be carefully planned, resourced, monitored and reviewed. It would be for a time-limited period. Parents would be informed.

### **Reduced Timetable**

This is not a long-term solution. It is for a time-limited period; must be agreed with parents; must be approved by the school's School Improvement Officer using the trust proforma; clearly documented and regularly reviewed; used in the best interests of the child (i.e to support the child rather than removing a problem from school to home); must be supported by the LA for children with an EHCP, the social worker for children on CIN or CP Plans, the Head of the Virtual School for Looked After or Previously Looked After Children.

### **Alternative Provision Outreach**

The school works with a local alternative provision/specialist to provide within-school support for the child and/or staff to support the effectiveness of teaching/curriculum/behaviour management/SEMH support etc to modify the child's behaviour and reduce the likelihood of suspension.

### **Off-Site Direction**

The LCB (Local CAST Board) can require a child to attend another education setting to improve their behaviour.

Where interventions or targeted support have not been successful in improving a pupil's behaviour, off-site direction should be used to arrange time limited placements at an alternative provision or another mainstream school.

Off-site direction may only be used as a way to improve future behaviour and not as a sanction or punishment for past misconduct.

Off-site direction should only be used where in-school interventions and/or outreach have been unsuccessful or are deemed inappropriate.

Approval of the school's School Improvement Officer is required before an off-site directive can begin.

Careful consultation and planning should take place with the receiving school. Where necessary and appropriate, allocated support staff should accompany the child to the receiving school.

The home school must be confident with the safeguarding policy and arrangements of the receiving school/AP.

The home school must ensure that arrangements for recording attendance and reporting absence to parents etc are fully understood.

The home school must ensure that arrangements for recording, reporting and sharing safeguarding concerns are understood.

During the off-site direction to another school, a pupil must be recorded in the attendance register using code D. This code is used to indicate that the pupil is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered.

The home school remains responsible for safeguarding, attendance monitoring, and educational outcomes during an off-site direction.

The home school must: notify the parents in writing with reasons, aims, and duration of the direction; keep the direction under review; ensure that the placement is appropriate and safe for the child.

To support a child with reintegration into their home school at the end of the off-site direction, the focus of intervention whilst off-site should remain on ensuring that a child continues to receive a broad and balanced curriculum whilst any inappropriate behaviours which require intervention are being addressed. If a pupil with a disability or SEN has been moved offsite, the duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014 continue to apply (for example, to make reasonable adjustments or to put support in place to meet SEN).

A reintegration meeting and process must be completed at the end of the off-site direction.

### **Alternative Provision**

The school works with the local authority to identify suitable alternative provision and funding to support a child, and prevent the need for a suspension or exclusion.

The use of appropriate and approved alternative provision outside the local authority system.

The use of any alternative provision is subject to the completion of the trust's AP Risk Assessment and approval by the school's School Improvement Officer.

Any use of alternative provision should be based on an understanding of the support a child or young person needs in order to improve their behaviour, as well as any SEND or health needs. It could be part-time or fulltime.

[Arranging Alternative Provision - A Guide for Local Authorities and Schools - GOV.UK](#)

### **Managed Move**

A managed move is used to initiate a process which leads to the transfer of a pupil to another mainstream school permanently.

A managed move should only be offered as part of a planned intervention. The home school should be able to evidence that appropriate initial intervention has been carried out, including, where relevant, multi-agency support, or any statutory assessments were done or explored prior to a managed move.

Managed moves **must** be voluntary and agreed with all parties involved, including the parents and the admission authority of the new school; the LA for children with an EHCP; the named social worker for children on a Child in Need Plan or Child Protection Plan, and the Head of the Virtual School for Looked After or Previously Looked After children.

If a temporary move needs to occur to improve a pupil's behaviour, then offsite direction (as described above) should be used. Managed moves should only occur when it is in the pupil's best interests.

With all of the above being satisfied, a successful off-site direction might lead to a managed move.

A careful and thorough information sharing and planning process must take place between the two schools before the child leaves their home school.

### **Types of Exclusion**

There are two types of exclusion: suspension and permanent exclusion

Suspension
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School leaders must discuss any suspension with the school's School Improvement Officer as soon as possible - ideally before it is issued.

#### Permanent Exclusion

Headteachers must consult with the school's School Improvement Officer prior to issuing any permanent exclusion, except where immediate action is necessary to ensure the safety of pupils or staff.

**Suspension:** When a pupil is temporarily removed from the school for disciplinary reasons for a fixed number of days. The pupil remains in the school roll and is expected to return to school at the end of the suspension.

There is a limit of 45 school days of suspensions in an academic year for an individual pupil.

The law does not allow for extending a suspension or 'converting' a suspension into a permanent exclusion.

In exceptional cases, usually where further evidence has come to light the school may, issue a further suspension to **begin** immediately after the first exclusion ends; or a permanent exclusion to begin immediately after the end of the suspension.

On the sixth day of a suspension, the school (or local authority, in the event of a permanent exclusion) must arrange suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age.

Where a pupil receives consecutive suspensions, these are regarded as a cumulative period of suspension for the purposes of this duty.

**Permanent Exclusion:** When a pupil is removed from the school roll because of a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy, and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others.

Permanent exclusions can only be in response to persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy or for a 'one-off' serious breach of the behaviour policy, where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil and/or others at the school.

The school must take reasonable steps to ensure that following a permanent exclusion the pupil has work set and marked where they are not attending an alternative provision.

A panel of Governors, the Pupil Discipline Committee (PDC), must review permanent exclusions and any suspensions which result in the pupil being suspended for more than 15 school days (singly or cumulatively) within one term. School must record all suspensions and permanent exclusions on its Management Information System (MIS) in a timely manner and keep careful track of suspensions that total more than 15 days in a term.

All suspensions and permanent exclusions must be reported to Plymouth CAST using the appropriate form, and include the completed Headteacher Suspension/Permanent Exclusion Checklist

Suspensions and permanent exclusions must also be reported to the local authority in line with local arrangements. This will enable the local authority to fulfil its duty to provide alternative educational provision from the sixth day of the exclusion.

If a suspension or permanent exclusion requires review (i.e. suspension totalling more than 15 days in a term or permanent exclusion), the school must notify its School Improvement Officer (SIO) immediately, and ensure that the review meeting is held as soon as possible within the statutory time scales, and that arrangements are made for it to be appropriately chaired and clerked. (see section below)

Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions, including an analysis of trends and context, must be reported to Governors in the Headteacher's Report and discussed in Local CAST Board (LCB) meetings..

#### Cancelling a Suspension or Permanent Exclusion

The Headteacher can cancel any exclusion that has already begun (or one that has not yet begun), but this can only happen when the Local CAST Board's Pupil Discipline Committee has not yet met to consider whether the pupil should be reinstated.

Where a suspension or permanent exclusion is cancelled:

- The Headteacher must notify the parents, the Trust, the Local CAST Board, the LA and the pupil's social worker and VSH as applicable, without delay. The notification must also provide the reason for the cancellation;
- The Local CAST Board's duty to consider reinstatement ceases, and there is no requirement to hold a meeting to consider reinstatement;
- Parents (or the excluded pupil if they are 18 years or older) should be offered the opportunity to meet the Headteacher to discuss the circumstances that led to the exclusion being cancelled which should be arranged without delay;
- The pupil must be allowed back into the school from which they were excluded without delay.
- Any days spent out of school as a result of any exclusion, prior to the cancellation will count towards the maximum of 45 school days permitted in any school year.

A permanent exclusion cannot be cancelled if the pupil has already been excluded for more than 45 school days in a school year or if they will have been so by the time the cancellation takes effect.

### **The Headteacher's role in Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions**

Only the Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or acting Headteacher/Executive Headteacher can suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. This power may not be delegated.

Where a school is led by an Executive Headteacher, they are the headteacher for the purposes of suspensions and permanent exclusions. The Head of School, deputy headteacher or similar **does not have** the legal power to suspend or permanently exclude a child.

The headteacher must complete the Plymouth CAST Headteacher Suspension/Permanent Exclusion Checklist prior to contacting the SIO, and before issuing a Permanent Exclusion. (Appendix A)

The headteacher must complete the Plymouth CAST Headteacher Suspension/Permanent Exclusion Checklist prior to contacting the SIO, and before issuing a Suspension (Appendix A)

School leaders must discuss any **suspension** with the school's School Improvement Officer as soon as possible, and ideally before it is issued.

**While the decision to permanently exclude a pupil rests solely with the headteacher, it is the expectation of the trust that headteachers will consult with the school's School Improvement Officer prior to issuing any permanent exclusion, except where immediate action is necessary to ensure the safety of pupils or staff.**

**If the headteacher is unable to contact the school's School Improvement Officer, they must contact another School Improvement Officer, the Director of Education or the Chief Executive Officer to undertake the consultation.**

**The consultation is to support the Headteacher in ensuring that the decision to permanently exclude a child is legal, proportionate, and fair.**

**To support the decision-making process, the Headteacher will complete the trust's Permanent Exclusion Checklist**

Schools must not use 'informal' or 'unofficial' exclusions (e.g. sending a child off-site for a 'cooling down' period); these are illegal.

Where a pupil's behaviour at lunchtime requires a *lunchtime suspension* this must be dealt with in the same way as any other suspension.

Where a pupil has received multiple suspensions or is approaching the legal limit of 45 school days of suspensions in an academic year, the Headteacher must consider whether suspension is providing an effective sanction, and must discuss the matter with the school's School Improvement Officer.

The Headteacher will ensure that staff have the knowledge, skills and understanding to be aware of pupils who are becoming vulnerable to suspension or permanent exclusion.

All staff must discuss their concerns about a child becoming at risk of suspension or permanent exclusions with the headteacher and other appropriate school leaders such as the SENCo and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). School leaders must ensure that these concerns are discussed with the child's parent(s), social worker, the Virtual School Headteacher, LA SEND worker, and, where appropriate, any other agency working with the child. School leaders must complete and co-create/share with parents an At Risk of Suspension/Permanent Exclusion Action Plan.

Where a child is identified as being at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, it must be discussed with the school's School Improvement Officer.

Suspensions and permanent exclusions are illegal if they occur for non-disciplinary reasons, such as:

- additional needs or a disability that the school feels it is unable to meet;
- lack of academic attainment/ability;
- the actions of a pupil's parent(s); or
- failure of a pupil to meet specific conditions before reinstatement.

Suspension and permanent exclusion should only be used as a last resort where all alternatives have been considered and all strategies to change behaviour have failed. The school must be able to demonstrate that every effort has been made to meet the child's needs, including any special educational needs or disabilities, and to modify behaviour. Any specific circumstances that could have impacted on the child at the time of the incident(s) must be carefully considered. The school must be able to evidence that it provided appropriate support for the child, and that it carefully considered this context before issuing the suspension or permanent exclusion.

The school must be able to demonstrate that allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school. 'Others' includes staff as well as pupils.

When a Headteacher suspends or permanently excludes a pupil they must notify the LA without delay regardless of the length of a suspension.

Where a suspended or permanently excluded pupil has Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability (SEND) or is on the SEN register, it must be demonstrated that the school has regard for the SEN Code of Practice and has provided extensive means of support to help meet the pupil's needs.

Where a pupil with an EHC Plan is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion or has been issued with one or more suspensions, the school should contact the Local Authority to request an interim review of the EHCP to ensure that everything possible is being done by the school, local authority and other agencies to meet the needs of the child.

Early intervention to address underlying causes of disruptive behaviour should include an assessment of whether appropriate provision is in place to support any SEN or disability that a pupil may have.

Any intervention strategies should be discussed with and involve the pupil's parents.

Where any pupil is becoming vulnerable to suspension or permanent exclusion, provision must be reviewed, and where necessary revised, and parents/carers, the school's School Improvement Officer, the Trust's SEND lead officer, outside agencies and the Local Authority involved as soon as possible.

If a Looked After Child is issued with a suspension or is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the pupil's social worker should be contacted as soon as possible. If the social worker is not available, then this should be escalated to the social work manager as soon as possible. The Head of the Virtual School should also be notified immediately for a Looked After Child.

Where a child is subject to a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, the allocated social worker must be contacted by the school as soon as the child is identified as being at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion. In the event of a suspension or permanent exclusion being issued, the school must contact the allocated social worker before the child is sent home.

### **Duty to Inform Parents**

Parents must be informed immediately when any child **becomes vulnerable to** suspension or permanent exclusion. The school must work with the parents and any relevant outside agencies to identify any issues that may be leading to the behaviour challenges; identify strategies to support and mitigate, and to work together to avoid suspension or permanent exclusion.

These discussions and plans must be documented by the school. An At Risk of Suspension/Permanent Exclusion Action must be co-created/shared.

When a child is suspended or permanently excluded, the parent(s) must be informed immediately and in writing. They must be informed as to whether it is a suspension or a permanent exclusion, and, if a suspension, how long it is. Parents must also be informed of their right to make representations to the Governors/Local CAST Board

Pupils over 18 have to be informed and have the right to appeal on their own behalf.

Children must be collected by a parent/guardian or other authorised person to leave the school site at the commencement of a suspension or exclusion.

Schools should use Plymouth CAST's standard letters for notifying parents of suspensions and permanent exclusions.

### **Review of the Decision to Suspend or Permanently Exclude**

In all cases of permanent exclusion and suspensions amounting to over 15 days in a term (cumulatively or singly), the decision of the Headteacher must be reviewed by a panel of Governors. This panel is referred to as the Pupil Discipline Committee (PDC).

The PDC should be constituted from members of the Local CAST Board (LCB) of the school; governors from other Plymouth CAST schools, or if necessary, a Plymouth CAST Director.

All members of the PDC must be appropriately trained; have had no prior involvement with the case; no direct involvement with/impact from the behaviour(s) that has led to suspensions/external exclusion; be impartial, and have no personal or familial connection to the child or their family.

All PDC members must have successfully completed the Governor Hub Suspension and Exclusion on-line training programme:

#### [Suspensions and exclusions | GovernorHub](#)

The PDC quorum is three Governors, including the chair.

An appropriately trained governor will chair the PDC.

The PDC must be professionally clerked.

Members of the PDC must be prepared and available to attend an Independent Review Panel if required.

In the event of a request for external independent review by parents (see section below entitled Independent Review Panel), the Chair of the PDC will represent the panel at that independent review meeting. The Headteacher cannot be a member of the panel.

Review meetings must be held within a period of 15 working days from the date of the suspension/permanent exclusion.

The Headteacher should liaise with the Local Authority Exclusion/Inclusion Officer or similar and support her/his attendance as an observer/advisor where appropriate.

The Headteacher must ensure that the paperwork required for the PDC members, parents, LA and other permitted attendees is prepared immediately. The Headteacher must work with the clerk to the PDC to ensure that all paperwork is distributed at least 5 days before the meeting of the PDC.

The PDC review panel may confirm the exclusion or direct reinstatement of the pupil. There is no legal option to impose a lesser sanction, i.e. to commute a permanent exclusion to a suspension

The review panel may direct reinstatement for any pupils suspended for a fixed-term period of more than five days **or** pupils who would miss a public exam, **or** pupils who have been permanently excluded.

If the pupil is to be reinstated, a reintegration programme should be planned with the school.

If reinstatement is not practicable – because the pupil is already back in school or because the parent does not want it – the review panel must consider the representations made by the school and parent(s) and decide whether or not the exclusion was justified.

The decision should then be included in the pupil's record.

After the Governor review hearing (PDC), the clerk will inform the parties in writing about the result, with reasons for the decision.

Decisions must be communicated as soon as possible, and every attempt should be made to do this within 5 working days. For suspensions totalling **five or fewer school days** (or 10 or fewer lunchtimes or half days) in any one term, the governing body's PDC must consider any representations made by parents, but it cannot direct reinstatement and is not required to arrange a meeting with parents. All suspensions must be reported to the Governors at each meeting and recorded on the school's MIS. If suspension means that a pupil will miss a **public exam**, the panel should try to meet before the date of the exam. If this is not practicable, the Chair of Governors may use the emergency powers for Chair's action to review the exclusion alone.

- For suspensions of **6 to 15 school days**, if the parents make representations, the LCB must consider within 50 school days of receiving the notice of suspension/permanent exclusion, whether the excluded pupil should be reinstated. In the absence of any representations from the parents, the LCB is not required to meet and cannot direct the reinstatement of the pupil.
- For suspensions that singly or cumulatively total more than **15 days in one term**, and for **permanent exclusions**, the panel must hold a formal hearing within 15 school days, whether or not the parent(s) make representations.

## **Reintegration Process**

Following a suspension, off-site direction, or the reinstatement of a suspended or permanently excluded child, a school must work with parents, child, appropriate other agencies and school-based staff to plan an effective reintegration.

The reintegration plan should include: arrangements for reintegration meeting; reassurance of child/parents/other children/staff; any temporary reduced-timetable elements; restorative work with children and adults where appropriate; any curriculum or pedagogical adaptation; revised relational/behavioural plans/risk assessments; revised individual learning plans; consideration of management of socialisation times; use of in-school specialists; safeguarding needs; staff training and awareness raising; dates for formal reviews.

This should be planned by the school during the period of suspension/off-site direction.

A reintegration meeting must be held prior to the child's return to school. This should include school representatives, parents and child. During the meeting the reintegration plan will be discussed and agreed.

At the end of the reintegration meeting, the Reintegration Meeting Template (Appendix 2) must be completed and signed by all parties.

## **Remote Reinstatement and IRP Meetings**

Local CAST Board reinstatement meetings (PDC) and IRPs can be held via the use of remote access (for example, live video link) for suspension and permanent exclusions if requested by the parents, provided certain criteria are satisfied.

## **Key criteria / conditions for remote meetings**

For a reinstatement meeting or IRP hearing to occur remotely, the following must all be satisfied:

### **1. Request properly made**

- The parent or excluded pupil (if over 18) must request the meeting to be held via remote access.
- The written notification sent by the school/governing board (or IRP body) must have explained that right, and how to make the request.

### **2. Fairness and transparency**

The governing board (for reinstatement hearings) or the arranging authority (for IRP hearings) must be satisfied that the meeting can be held fairly and transparently in that format. This implies:

- All participants can hear and speak, and if using video, see and be seen throughout the meeting.
- All participants have access to the necessary technology, reliable internet/connection, appropriate devices.
- The parent (or pupil) has an appropriate space, free from distractions, to take part effectively.
- The meeting will allow the parties to put forward their point of view / representation.

### **3. Not because of undue pressure**

- The school/governing board should not pressure the parent (or pupil) into requesting a remote meeting simply to facilitate logistics. The option must be genuine.

### **4. Extraordinary circumstances exception**

- If there has been no request for remote access, a meeting must be held in-person, unless there is an “extraordinary event or unforeseen circumstances” making in-person meeting impracticable (for example: outbreak of illness, school closure due to fire/flood). In such cases, remote access may be used even without a formal request.

### **5. What happens if remote fails or is not suitable**

- If during a remote meeting there are technological or connectivity issues that compromise the ability of participants to be heard/seen or otherwise to participate fairly, then the meeting must be converted to a face-to-face format without delay.

Meetings held via the use of remote access **should not be a default option** and face to face meetings should always be encouraged. Further information is set out in Part Eleven of the DfE Statutory Guidance document.

## **Principles of Natural Justice**

- All factual determinations are based on a balance of probabilities, both by Headteachers and at any subsequent review. This means that the Headteacher/reviewing panel should accept that something happened if it is more likely that it happened than that it did not happen.

In making their decisions to exclude, Headteachers must ensure that their decisions are fair, based on the facts of the incident and do not include any elements of discrimination.

- Members of the panel should be impartial, unprejudiced, have taken no previous part in the specific case, and have no personal or school interest in its result. Headteachers must not discuss individual exclusions with members of their local governing board as cases may be referred to the local governing board for review.
- Parent(s) should be informed of the case put forward by the school and have an opportunity to challenge it.
- Both parties should be allowed to present their case without unreasonable interruption. Aggressive, repetitive or unnecessarily over-long presentations hinder the effectiveness of the review process, and the Chair will retain discretion to curtail any such presentation.
- Parent(s) should be able to bring a friend or adviser with them. An effective meeting, however, will not be able to accommodate large groups of people and the Chair retains ultimate discretion as to the attendance of invited parties beyond a reasonable number.
- All documents to be used in evidence should be distributed to all parties at least five working days before the hearing. If new material is introduced at the hearing, all parties must have time to consider it. Should such material be extensive, the Chair has the discretion to adjourn the meeting to allow proper review.
- No party to the hearing should be in the presence of the panel unless the other party is also present. Every party should feel that they have had a full opportunity to present their case and have it duly considered.
- Panel members should be effectively trained/briefed to ensure that they are aware of their legal and procedural roles and responsibilities.

### **Independent Review Panel**

**(See Part 9 [Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement](#) )**

IRPs contribute to a robust process of scrutiny to ensure that exclusions are lawful, reasonable, and procedurally fair.

If a permanent exclusion is upheld, parent(s) must be told of their right to seek an independent review of the decision reached by Governors and the deadline for seeking such a review.

Parents also have the right to request the attendance of a SEN expert at the Independent Review Panel meeting.

Decision letters sent by schools to the parent(s) must include these details of the right of independent review.

The parent(s) have 15 school days (from the date of receipt of the review panel's decision) to seek an independent review.

Within 15 school days of such a request, Plymouth CAST will engage the services of an external clerking agency to arrange and clerk the Independent Review Panel.

The independent review is normally attended by the Headteacher, lead school staff member on the case, and Chair of the original review panel.

The clerk of the original panel may attend but plays no formal part in proceedings.

Where the parent(s) has legal representation or it is considered appropriate on behalf of the school, it may be agreed that the school should also have legal representation. This will be arranged by Plymouth CAST.

The Independent Review Panel cannot direct a governing body to reinstate a pupil. It may:

- uphold the exclusion;
- recommend that the original panel reconsider its decision; or

c) quash the original panel's decision and direct the panel to reconsider its decision. In such a case, the Independent Review Panel will then be expected to order that the school must make an additional payment of £4,000 if it does not offer to reinstate the pupil.

#### Parallel police proceedings

The governing body has no power to delay a hearing beyond the statutory time limit because of police proceedings.

If a permanent exclusion is upheld in these circumstances, the parent has 15 days to request independent review in the normal way.

### **Guidance for Local CAST Boards and the Trust Board on using data on suspensions and permanent exclusions.**

#### **Trust Board**

The Director of Education will report data and analysis of suspensions and permanent exclusions to the Trust Board via the Education and Standards Committee. Analysis will include trends, patterns, schools causing concern etc.

Directors will challenge and evaluate this information, exploring what it suggests about the trust as a whole and, where appropriate, individual schools.

Directors will carefully consider the level of suspensions and exclusions, and the characteristics of pupils who are being suspended or permanently excluded to ensure that the sanctions are only being used when necessary, as a last resort.

Directors will review suspensions and permanent exclusions, those taken off roll and those on roll but attending education off-site. It is important to consider both the cost implications of directing children to be educated off-site in AP and whether there are any patterns to the reasons or timing of moves. For example, if high numbers of children with SEND are moving, the trust may wish to consider reviewing its SEN support.

#### **Local CAST Board**

The Headteacher will report data and analysis of suspensions and permanent exclusions to the Local CAST Board (LCB). Analysis will include trends, patterns, concerns and successes etc.

The LCB will challenge and evaluate this information, exploring what it suggests about the school.

The LCB will carefully consider the level of suspensions and exclusions, and the characteristics of pupils who are being suspended or permanently excluded to ensure that the sanctions are only being used when necessary, as a last resort.

The LCB will review suspensions and permanent exclusions, those taken off roll and those on roll but attending education off-site. It is important to consider both the cost implications of directing children to be educated off-site in AP and whether there are any patterns to the reasons or timing of moves. For example, if high numbers of children with SEND are moving, the trust may wish to consider reviewing its SEN support.

#### **Trust Board and LCBs**

##### **Directors and Local CAST Boards should consider:**

- effectiveness and consistency in implementing the school's behaviour policy
- the school register and absence codes
- instances where pupils receive repeat suspensions
- interventions in place to support pupils at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion
- any variations in the rolling average of permanent exclusions to understand why this is happening, and to ensure they are only used when necessary
- timing of moves and permanent exclusions, and whether there are any patterns, including any indications which may highlight where policies or support are not working

- understanding the characteristics of excluded pupils, and why this is taking place
- whether the placements of pupils directed off-site into AP are reviewed at sufficient intervals to assure that the education is achieving its objectives and that pupils are benefiting from it
- Further information can be found here:

[Understanding your data: a guide for school Governors and academy trustees - GOV.UK](#)

Plymouth CAST officers will work with schools to consider this information, and whether there are patterns across academies within the trust, recognising that numbers in any one academy are often too low to allow for meaningful statistical analysis.

Trust officers will support and challenge school leaders to ensure that suspensions and permanent exclusions are used appropriately and only as a last resort.

Trust officers will support school leaders to ensure that all suspensions and permanent exclusions are legal, proportionate and fair.

### **Principle Documentation**

[Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance](#)

[A guide for parents on school behaviour and exclusion - GOV.UK](#)

[School Discipline \(Pupil Exclusions and Reviews\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

[The Education \(Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2014](#)

## **Appendix A Headteacher's Suspension/Permanent Exclusion Decision-Making Checklist**

This checklist supports lawful, proportionate and procedurally fair decision-making when considering a permanent exclusion, in line with DfE statutory guidance (August 2024).

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Pupil Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Threshold for Suspension/Exclusion

- Have I considered whether the pupil's behaviour constitutes a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy?
- Have I considered whether allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others in the school?

## 2. Incident Review

- Have I gathered and reviewed all relevant evidence (e.g. CCTV, witness statements, written reports)?
- Have I ensured the investigation is thorough and impartial?
- Have I considered the pupil's account of the incident(s)?
- Have I recorded the incident clearly, including date, time, location, persons involved, behaviour exhibited, and consequences?

## 3. Consideration of Contextual Factors

- Does the pupil have a history of similar incidents?
- Has the pupil received previous sanctions, and were they effective?
- Have there been previous suspensions, and how many?
- Were reintegration meetings undertaken before return to school after all previous suspensions? Were these documented and signed by parents? Were any actions/ next steps agreed to by the school, undertaken?
- Are there other school-based or home issues that may have contributed to this behaviour?
- Have alternative interventions been attempted (e.g. support plans, mentoring, adapted timetable)?
- Does the child have a relational/behaviour plan/risk assessment/management plan or similar? if yes, was this appropriately followed by staff prior to the incident(s)

## 4. Consideration of Vulnerability

- Does the pupil have a SEND diagnosis or history?
- Is the pupil undergoing SEND assessment or EHCP application?
- Is the pupil identified as having social, emotional, or mental health needs?

- Is the pupil known to be: a Looked After Child, previously LAC, FSM-eligible, or from an ethnic group disproportionately excluded nationally?
- Have I considered whether the behaviour may be a manifestation of unmet needs or disability?
- Have reasonable adjustments been considered or applied?

## 5. Proportionality & Alternatives

- If a suspension, have I considered the length of the suspension and its proportionality?
- If a suspension, will it allow time for review, intervention, or planning?
- Have I considered alternatives to suspension or permanent exclusion (e.g. managed move, AP, support plan, governors' behaviour panel, off-site direction, Early Help)?
- Have I weighed whether suspension/exclusion is a last resort?

## 6. Consultation

- Have I consulted with relevant senior staff (DSL, SENCo, safeguarding lead)?
- Have I consulted a Trust officer, while retaining legal responsibility for the final decision?
- Have I informed the pupil's parents/carers of my intention to consider suspension/permanent exclusion?

## 7. Safeguarding

- Is the suspension/permanent exclusion decision free from bias and compliant with the school's Equalities duties?
- Have I considered whether there is a safeguarding concern (e.g. exploitation risk, trauma, home risk)?
- Has the Local Authority been informed, if required, for early help or safeguarding follow-up?

## 8. Formal Decision and Recording

- If a permanent exclusion, did the Trust Officer support my decision?
- Have I written a formal letter to the parent/carer with required statutory information?
- Have I informed the Chair of Governors / Local CAST Board, Trust leadership, Local Authority, and VSH/social worker (if applicable)?
- Have I updated internal systems, including SIMs and ensured pupil records are complete?

## Declaration

I confirm that I have considered all relevant evidence and factors in reaching the decision to suspend/permantly exclude (delete as applicable) the above-named pupil, and that the decision is lawful, reasonable, proportionate, and fair.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Headteacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### Reintegration Meeting

<u>Date of reintegration meeting:</u> <u>Present at meeting:</u>		
<b>Pupil details</b>		
<u>Name:</u>	<u>Year group:</u>	<u>Needs:</u> <u>e.g. Pupil Premium, CiC, CiN, SEND, EHCP</u>
<u>Support around the pupil: ( Inc any additional services)</u>	<u>Previous suspensions:</u>	<u>Current attendance:</u>
<b>Suspension details</b>		
<u>Date of suspension:</u>	<u>Date of return to school:</u>	<u>Number of days suspended:</u>
<u>Reason for suspension</u> A brief summary of behaviour which led to the suspension. Include detail about the impact on others.		
<u>What have we learnt from this and what can we change?</u> This needs to take account of what happened, what should have happened and the impact on others. It is an opportunity to identify triggers/hotspots so changes can be made to prevent similar behaviours reoccurring.		
<b>Previous suspensions</b>		
<u>Details of any previous suspensions:</u>		
<u>Total number of days suspended this term:</u>		
<u>Provision during suspension:</u> (Include details of any work provided and marked over suspension period, alternative provision and/or interventions from counselling or behaviour services, SEND support or local safeguarding partners)		
<u>Understanding needs and strengths</u>		
<u>What is going well at school?</u>		
<u>What strengths and interests does the pupil have? What works – examples of success? What motivates – at home and at school?</u>		
<u>What is not working well at school?</u>		
<u>What does the pupil find difficult? This may be specific lessons, times of the day, spaces in school or particular ways of being spoken to.</u>		
<b>Needs</b>		
<u>What needs / factors are impacting behaviours at school?</u>		

## Hopes for the future at school

### **Planning for success**

Typically, pupils who have been suspended would already have an agreed relational plan in place and may also have a risk assessment. These should be reviewed at the reintegration and linked to this document for future reference.

If pupils do not already have a relational support plan one must be agreed at the reintegration meeting. Schools will also decide if a risk assessment is required.

<u>Relational Support Plan written or reviewed</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>If no please provide reasons:</u>
<u>Risk Assessment written or reviewed</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>If no please provide reasons:</u>

## Monitoring

How will behaviour and progress be monitored and celebrated?

Date(s) of next review meeting:

Is the pupil on a reduced timetable? Y / N (add details)

(If yes, reintegration plan should be completed)

## Further actions

Has the family been signposted to support if necessary?

Y / N (add details)

Have any safeguarding concerns been raised that require follow up actions?

Y / N (add details)

## Additional comments

Pupil:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Family:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

School:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_