LYMM HIGH SCHOOL

Suspension and permanent exclusion policy

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1. Aims

Lymm High 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. Suspension or exclusion are used only as last resorts, and we aim to reduce the need for the use of them as far as is possible. This policy outlines the school's use of suspensions and exclusions and is supported by our school behaviour policy.

At all times, the school will follow statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE): Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement.

Our school aims to:

- Make sure that the exclusions process is applied fairly and consistently
- Help governors, staff, parents/carers and pupils understand the exclusions process
- Make sure that pupils in school are safe and happy
- Make sure all suspensions and permanent exclusions are carried out lawfully

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 The headteacher

Deciding whether to suspend or permanently exclude

Only the headteacher, or acting headteacher, can suspend or permanently exclude a pupil from school on disciplinary grounds. The decision can be made in respect of behaviour inside or outside of school. The headteacher will only use permanent exclusion as a last resort.

A decision to suspend a pupil will be taken in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. This policy includes examples of the kinds of behaviours that may result in suspension or permanent exclusion.

Where suspensions have become a regular occurrence, the headteacher will consider whether suspensions alone are an effective sanction and whether additional strategies need to be put in place to address behaviour issues.

A decision to permanently exclude a pupil will be taken only:

- In response to serious or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy, **and**
- If allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or of others such as staff or pupils in the school

Before deciding whether to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, the headteacher will:

- Consider all the relevant facts and evidence on the balance of probabilities, including whether the incident(s) leading to the exclusion was/were provoked
- Allow the pupil to give their version of events considering these in light of their age and understanding, unless it would not be appropriate to do so

- Consider whether the pupil has special educational needs (SEN)
- Consider whether the pupil is especially vulnerable (e.g. the pupil has a social worker, or is a looked-after child (LAC) or a previously looked-after child)
- Consider whether all alternative solutions have been explored
- Consider the views of the pupil, in light of their age and understanding, before deciding to suspend or permanently exclude, unless it would not be appropriate to do so.

Where there are concerns about the behaviour, or risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, of a pupil with SEN, a disability or an education, health and care (EHC) plan ,the school will, in partnership with others (including where relevant, the LA), consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required. This will involve assessing the suitability of provision for the pupil's SEN or disability.

Where a pupil has an EHC plan, the school will contact the LA about any behavioural concerns at an early stage and consider requesting an early annual review prior to making the decision to suspend or permanently exclude the pupil.

If there is an ongoing safeguarding investigation (whether that includes a criminal investigation or not) that may result in the permanent exclusion of a pupil, or if a pupil has been reinstated to the school, it is likely that complex and difficult decisions will need to be made. These decisions will be made alongside the school's safeguarding duties and its duty to provide an education.

Deciding whether to temporarily remove a pupil from the school site for safeguarding reasons

In exceptional circumstances, the headteacher may decide to temporarily prevent a pupil from attending the school site for safeguarding reasons. This is not an exclusion on disciplinary grounds.

This measure will only be used when:

- It is necessary to separate pupils to ensure safety, and
- There is no reasonable alternative that would allow all pupils to remain on site

Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, led by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and informed by multi-agency working where appropriate (e.g children's social care or the police).

Where this measure is used, the school will:

- Inform parents/carers without delay, including the reasons for the decision
- Notify the governing board without delay
- Provide work for the pupil to complete at home, or work with the LA to ensure suitable education is arranged
- Support the pupil's reintegration, as soon as it is safe to do so

Informing parents/carers

If a pupil is at risk of suspension or exclusion, the headteacher will inform the parents/carers as early as possible, in order to work together to consider what factors may be affecting the pupil's behaviour, and what further support can be put in place to improve the behaviour.

If the headteacher decides to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, the parents/carers will be informed, in person or by telephone, of the period of the suspension or exclusion and the reason(s) for it, without delay.

The parents/carers will also be provided with the following information in writing, without delay:

- The reason(s) for the suspension or permanent exclusion
- The length of the suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent
- Information about the parents'/carers' right to make representations about the suspension or permanent exclusion to the governing board and, where the pupil is attending alongside parents/carers, how they may be involved in this
- How any representations should be made
- Where there is a legal requirement for the governing board to hold a meeting to consider the reinstatement of a pupil, and that parents/carers have a right to attend the meeting, be represented at the meeting (at their own expense) and bring a friend (and, where appropriate, more than one, subject to reasonable limits set by the governing board)
- That parents/carers have the right to request that the meetings be held remotely, and how and to whom they should make this request

If the pupil is of compulsory school age, the headteacher will also notify parents/carers without delay and by the end of the afternoon session on the first day their child is suspended or permanently excluded, that:

- For the first 5 school days of the suspension or exclusion (or until the start date of any alternative provision or the end of the suspension, where this is earlier), the parents/carers are legally required to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without a good reason. This will include specifying on which days this duty applies
- Parents/carers may be given a fixed penalty notice or prosecuted if they fail to do this

If alternative provision is being arranged to improve behaviour, the written notification will include:

- The start date for any provision of full-time education that has been arranged
- The address at which the provision will take place
- The name of the person the pupil should report to on arrival
- The duration of the placement
- The reasons for, and objectives of, the placement
- The start and finish times of any such provision
- Where 2 sessions per day are provided:
    - What time the morning sessions starts
    - What time the afternoon session ends
    - What time the break between them starts and ends
- Where a single session per day is provided, what time the session starts and ends

If the headteacher does not have all the information about the alternative provision arrangements by the end of the afternoon session on the first day of the suspension or permanent exclusion, they can provide the information at a later date, without delay and no later than 48 hours before the provision is due to start.

The only exception to this is where alternative provision is to be provided before the sixth day of a suspension or permanent exclusion, in which case the school reserves the right to provide the information with less than 48 hours' notice, with parents'/carers' consent.

If the headteacher cancels the suspension or permanent exclusion, they will notify the parents/carers without delay, and provide a reason for the cancellation.

Informing the governing board

The headteacher will, without delay, notify the governing board of:

- Any permanent exclusion, including when a suspension is followed by a decision to permanently exclude a pupil
- Any suspension or permanent exclusion that would result in the pupil being suspended or permanently excluded for a total of more than 5 school days (or more than 10 lunchtimes) in a term
- Any suspension or permanent exclusion that would result in the pupil missing a public exam
- Any suspension or permanent exclusion that has been cancelled, including the reason for the cancellation

Informing the local authority (LA)

The headteacher will notify the LA of all suspensions and permanent exclusions without delay, regardless of the length of a suspension.

The notification will include:

- The reason(s) for the suspension or permanent exclusion
- The length of a suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent

For a permanent exclusion, if the pupil lives outside the LA in which the school is located, the headteacher will also, without delay, inform the pupil's 'home authority' of the exclusion and the reason(s) for it.

The headteacher must notify the LA without delay of any cancelled exclusions, including the reason the exclusion was cancelled.

Informing the pupil's social worker and/or virtual school head (VSH)

If a:

- **Pupil with a social worker** is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the headteacher will inform **the social worker** as early as possible
- **Pupil who is a looked-after child (LAC)** is at risk of suspension or exclusion, the headteacher will inform **the VSH** as early as possible

This is so they can work together to consider what factors may be affecting the pupil's behaviour, and what further support can be put in place to improve the behaviour.

If the headteacher decides to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil with a social worker/a pupil who is looked after, they will inform the pupil's social worker/the VSH, as appropriate, without delay, that:

- They have decided to suspend or permanently exclude the pupil
- The reason(s) for the decision
- The length of the suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent

- The suspension or permanent exclusion affects the pupil's ability to sit a public exam (where relevant)
- They have decided to cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion, and why (where relevant)

The social worker/VSH will be invited to any meeting of the governing board about the suspension or permanent exclusion. This is so they can provide advice on how the pupil's background and/or circumstances may have influenced the circumstances of their suspension or permanent exclusion. The social worker should also help ensure safeguarding needs and risks, and the pupil's welfare are taken into account.

Cancelling suspensions and permanent exclusions

The headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion that has already begun, or one that has not yet begun, but only where it has not yet been reviewed by the governing board. Where there is a cancellation:

- The parents/carers (or the pupil if they are 18 or older), governing board and LA will be notified without delay
- Where relevant, any social worker and VSH will be notified without delay
- The notification must provide the reason for the cancellation
- The governing board's duty to hold a meeting and consider reinstatement ceases
- Parents/carers (or the pupil if they are 18 or older) will be offered the opportunity to meet with the headteacher to discuss the cancellation, which will be arranged without delay
- The pupil will be allowed back in school 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.

Providing education during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion

If the pupil is not attending alternative (AP) provision, the headteacher will take steps to ensure that achievable and accessible work is set and marked for the pupil. Online pathways may be used for this. If the pupil has a special educational need or disability (SEND), the headteacher will make sure that reasonable adjustments are made to the provision where necessary.

If the pupil is looked after or if they have a social worker, the school will work with the LA to arrange AP from the first day following the suspension or permanent exclusion. Where this isn't possible, the school will take reasonable steps to set and mark work for the pupil, including the use of online pathways.

A note on off-rolling

'Off-rolling' is a form of gaming and occurs where a school decides, in the interests of the school and not the pupil to, for example:

- Remove a pupil from the school admission register without a formal, permanent exclusion, or
- Encourage a parent/carer to remove their child from the school, or
- Retain a pupil on the school admission register but not allow them to attend the school normally, without a formal permanent exclusion or suspension, or

- Send a pupil home without formally recording a suspension regardless of whether it occurs with the agreement of parents/carers

Accordingly, we will not suspend or permanently exclude a pupil unlawfully by telling or forcing them to leave, encouraging their parent(s)/carer(s) to remove them from the school, or not allowing them to attend school without following the statutory procedure contained in the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012, or formally recording the event.

Any suspension or exclusion will be made on disciplinary grounds and will not be made due to a pupil's poor academic performance or because a pupil has special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) that the school feels unable to support.

2.2 The governing board

Considering suspensions and permanent exclusions

Responsibilities regarding exclusions are delegated to the Governors Disciplinary Panel.

The Governors Disciplinary Panel has a duty to consider parents'/carers'/the pupil's (if they are 18 or older) representations about a suspension or permanent exclusion. It has a duty to consider the reinstatement of a suspended or permanently excluded pupil (see section 3) in certain circumstances.

Within 14 days of receiving a request, the governing board will provide the secretary of state with information about any suspensions or exclusions within the last 12 months.

For any suspension of more than 5 school days, the governing board will arrange suitable full-time education for the pupil. This provision will begin no later than the sixth day of the suspension.

The governing board does not have to arrange such provision for pupils in their final year of compulsory education who do not have any further public exams to sit.

Monitoring and analysing suspensions and exclusions data

The governing board will review, challenge and evaluate the data on the school's use of suspension, exclusion, off-site direction to alternative provision, and managed moves. The governing board will:

- Closely scrutinise patterns of all pupil movement, including suspensions, permanent exclusions, off-site direction and managed moves
- Ensure these measures are only used as a last resort
- Review any use of separation from site for safeguarding purposes
- Challenge the school's leadership team to identify and address emerging trends

The governing board will consider:

- How effectively and consistently the school's behaviour policy is being implemented
- 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 make sure they are only used when necessary
- The timing of moves and permanent exclusions, and whether there are any patterns, including any indications that may highlight where policies or support are not working

- The characteristics of suspended and permanently excluded pupils, and whether pupils who share any particular characteristic are suspended or permanently excluded more than others
- Whether the placements of pupils directed off-site into alternative provision are reviewed at sufficient intervals to assure the school that the education is achieving its objectives and that pupils are benefiting from it
- The cost implications of directing pupils off-site

2.3 The local authority (LA)

For permanent exclusions, the LA will arrange suitable full-time education to begin no later than the sixth school day after the first day of the exclusion.

For pupils who are looked after or have social workers, the LA and the school will work together to arrange suitable full-time education to begin from the first day of the exclusion.

3. Considering the reinstatement of a pupil

The Governors Disciplinary Panel will consider and decide on the reinstatement of a suspended or permanently excluded pupil within 15 school days of receiving the notice of the suspension or exclusion if:

- The exclusion is permanent
- It is a suspension that would bring the pupil's total number of days out of school to more than 15 in a term; or
- It would result in a pupil missing a public exam

Where the pupil has been suspended, and the suspension does not bring the pupil's total number of days of suspension to more than 5 in a term, the governing body must consider any representations made by parents/carers / the pupil (if they are 18 or older). However, it is not required to arrange a meeting and it cannot direct the headteacher to reinstate the pupil.

Where the pupil has been suspended for more than 5, but not more than 15 school days, in a single term, and the parents/carers make representations to the board, the governing body will consider and decide on the reinstatement of a suspended pupil within 50 school days of receiving notice of the suspension. If the parents/carers/pupil do not make representations, the board is not required to meet and it cannot direct the headteacher to reinstate the pupil.

Where a suspension or permanent exclusion would result in a pupil missing a public exam, the governing body will, as far as reasonably practicable, consider and decide on the reinstatement of the pupil before the date of the exam or test. If this is not practicable, the governing body may consider the suspension or permanent exclusion and decide whether or not to reinstate the pupil.

The following parties will be invited to a meeting of the Governors Disciplinary Panel and allowed to make representations or share information:

- Parents/carers, or the pupil if they are 18 or older (and, where requested, a representative or friend, and where appropriate, more than one, subject to reasonable limits set by the governing board)
- The pupil, if they are aged 17 or younger and it would be appropriate to their age and understanding (and, where requested, a representative or friend)
- The headteacher

- The pupil's social worker, if they have one
- The VSH, if the pupil is looked after

The meeting can be held remotely at the request of parents/carers, or pupils if they are 18 or older. See section 9 for more details on remote access to meetings.

The governing board will try to arrange the meeting within the statutory time limits set out above and must try to have it at a time that suits all relevant parties. However, its decision will not be invalid simply on the grounds that it was not made within these time limits.

The governing body can either:

- Decline to reinstate the pupil, or
- Direct the reinstatement of the pupil immediately, or on a particular date (except in cases where the board cannot do this – see earlier in this section)

In reaching a decision, the governing body will consider:

- Whether the decision to suspend or permanently exclude was lawful, reasonable, and procedurally fair
- Whether the headteacher followed their legal duties
- The welfare and safeguarding of the pupil and their peers
- Any evidence that was presented to the governing board

They will decide whether or not a fact is true 'on the balance of probabilities'.

The clerk/governance professional will be present when the decision is made.

Minutes will be taken of the meeting and a record kept of the evidence that was considered. The outcome will also be recorded on the pupil's educational record and copies of relevant papers will be kept with this record.

The governing body will notify, in writing, the following stakeholders of its decision, along with reasons for its decision, without delay:

- The parents/carers, or the pupil if they are 18 or older
- The headteacher
- The pupil's social worker, if they have one
- The VSH, if the pupil is looked after
- The local authority
- The pupil's home authority, if it differs from the school's

Where an exclusion is permanent and the governing body has decided not to reinstate the pupil, the notification of decision will also include the following:

- The fact that it is a permanent exclusion
- Notice of parents'/carers'/the pupil's (if they are 18 or older) right to ask for the decision to be reviewed by an independent review panel
- The date by which an application for an independent review must be made (15 school days from the date on which notice in writing of the governing board's decision is given to parents/carers)
- The name and address to which an application for a review and any written evidence should be submitted
- That any application should set out the grounds on which it is being made and that, where appropriate, it should include reference to how the pupil's special educational needs (SEN) are considered to be relevant to the permanent exclusion

- That, regardless of whether the excluded pupil has recognised SEN, parents/carers/the pupil have a right to require the [LA/academy trust] to appoint an SEN expert to advise the review panel
- Details of the role of the SEN expert and that there would be no cost to parents/carers/the pupil for this appointment
- That parents/carers/the pupil must make clear if they wish for an SEN expert to be appointed in any application for a review
- That parents/carers/the pupil may, at their own expense, appoint someone to make written and/or oral representations to the panel
- That, if parents/carers/the pupil believe that the permanent exclusion has occurred as a result of unlawful discrimination, they may make a claim under the Equality Act 2010 to the first-tier tribunal (special educational needs and disability), in the case of disability discrimination, or the county court, in the case of other forms of discrimination. Also, that any claim of discrimination made under these routes should be lodged within 6 months of the date on which the discrimination is alleged to have taken place

4. Independent review

If parents/carers/the pupil (if they are 18 or older) apply for an independent review within the legal timeframe, the school will, at their own expense, arrange for an independent panel to review the decision of the governing board not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil.
For Lymm High School, the independent panel will be administered by Warrington Borough Council.

Further details of this process can be found in the statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE): Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement.

5. Remote access to meetings

Parents/carers, or pupils if they are 18 or older, can request that a governing board meeting, or independent review panel be held remotely. If the parents/carers/pupil don't express a preference, the meeting will be held in person.

Requests for remote meetings may be refused where, following a risk assessment, it is considered that a remote format would not allow the meeting to be conducted fairly, transparently, or with full participation due to safeguarding reasons.

In case of extraordinary or unforeseen circumstances, which mean it is not reasonably practicable for the meeting to be held in person, the meeting will be held remotely.

Remotely accessed meetings are subject to the same procedural requirements as in-person meetings.

The governing body should make sure that the following conditions are met before agreeing to let a meeting proceed remotely:

- All the participants have access to the technology that will allow them to hear, speak, see and be seen
- All the participants will be able participate fully
- The remote meeting can be held fairly and transparently

Social workers and the VSH always have the option of joining remotely, whether the meeting is being held in person or not, as long as they can meet the conditions for remote access listed above.

The meeting will be rearranged to an in-person meeting without delay if technical issues arise that can't be reasonably resolved and:

- Compromise the ability of participants to contribute effectively, or
- Prevent the meeting from running fairly and transparently

6. Monitoring arrangements

The school will collect data on the following:

- Attendance, permanent exclusions and suspensions
- Use of pupil referral units (PRUs), off-site directions and managed moves
- Anonymous surveys of staff, pupils and other stakeholders on their perceptions and experiences

The data will be analysed regularly by senior leaders and the governing body.

The data will be analysed from a variety of perspectives including:

The school will use the results of this analysis to make sure it is meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010. If any patterns or disparities between groups of pupils are identified by this analysis, the school will review its policies in order to tackle it.

7. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Behaviour policy
- SEND policy
- SEN information report