

For this we stand:
to search for truth;
to live in love;
to grow together.



"Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is Jesus Christ"

Ephesians 4

BISHOP WORDSWORTH'S SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS & EXCLUSIONS POLICY

AIMS

1. BWS is committed to following all statutory exclusions procedures to make sure that every child receives an education in a safe and caring environment. The purpose of this policy is therefore to:
 - a. Make sure that the exclusions process is applied fairly and consistently.
 - b. Help governors, staff, parents and students understand the exclusions process.
 - c. Prevent students from becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).
 - d. Ensure that all suspensions and permanent exclusions are carried out lawfully.
2. BWS will not engage with activities understood to align with, or have the perception to align with, off-rolling. Off-rolling happens when a student is encouraged, or pressured to leave a school when a fair and proper process would find they should remain. It is not in the interests of the School or the student to:
 - a. Remove a student from the school admission register without a formal, permanent exclusion.
 - b. Encourage a parent to remove their child from the school.
 - c. Encourage a sixth-form student not to continue with their course of study.
 - d. Retain a student on the school admission register but not allow them to attend the school normally, without a formal permanent exclusion or suspension.
3. Any suspension or exclusion will be made on disciplinary grounds, and will not be made:
 - a. Because a student has special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) that the school feels unable to support.
 - b. Due to a student's poor academic performance.
 - c. As a result of an inability to meet a specific, and non-behavioural condition, such as attending a reintegration meeting.

4. This policy aligns with the Behaviour Policy which stipulates that suspensions and exclusions are intended to be very rare events used only where repeated or serious misbehaviour occurs. The School recognises that such sanctions must be used judiciously and only where:
 - a. their lack of employment would undermine the safety and/or wellbeing of the student or others in the BWS community,
 - b. where less severe action would erode the integrity of the behaviour system, or
 - c. where less severe sanctions have failed to produce behaviour in line with the Behaviour Policy.

LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE

5. This policy is based on statutory guidance from the *Department for Education (DfE): Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and student referral units in England, including student movement (August 2024)*. It is based on the following legislation, which outlines schools' powers to exclude students:
 - a. Section 51a of the Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011
 - b. The School Discipline (student Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012

In addition, the policy relates to:

- c. Part 7, chapter 2 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which sets out parental responsibility for excluded students
- d. Section 579 of the Education Act 1996, which defines 'school day'
- e. The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded students) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended by The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded students) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014
- f. The Equality Act 2010
- g. Children and Families Act 2014
- h. The School Inspection Handbook, which defines 'off-rolling'

DEFINITIONS

6. This policy uses the following terms:
 - a. Suspension – when a student is removed from the school for a fixed period.
 - b. (Permanent) exclusion – When a student is removed from the school permanently.
 - c. Off-site direction – when the School requires a student to attend another education setting temporarily in order to improve their behaviour.

- d. Managed move – when a student is transferred to another school permanently. All parties, including parents and the admission authority for the new school, should consent before a managed move occurs.
- 7. For the purposes of this policy, ‘parent(s)’ includes guardian(s), any person who has parental responsibility for the student, or any person who has care of the student.

DECISIONS ON SUSPENSION OR EXCLUSION

- 8. Only the Head, or acting Head, can suspend or permanently exclude a student from school on disciplinary grounds. In both cases the decision must be undertaken in accordance with the Behaviour Policy. The decision can be made in respect of behaviour inside or outside of school, where this is within the remit of the Behaviour Policy.
- 9. A decision to suspend a student will be taken:
 - a. To provide a clear signal of what is unacceptable behaviour
 - b. To show a student that their current behaviour is putting them at risk of permanent exclusion
- 10. Where suspensions have become a regular occurrence, the Head will consider whether suspensions alone are an effective sanction and whether additional strategies need to be put in place to address behaviour issues (see para 56)
- 11. Before deciding whether to suspend or exclude a student, the Head will:
 - a. Consider all the relevant facts and evidence on the balance of probabilities, including whether the incident(s) leading to the exclusion was provoked. In situations where provocation is established, behaviours may still warrant serious sanction including suspension and/or exclusion.
 - b. Allow the student to give their version of events
 - c. Give due consideration to whether the student has special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), including whether any identified or suspected needs may have affected the student’s understanding of events, ability to regulate their behaviour, or response to the situation. The Head will also consider whether reasonable adjustments, support strategies, or alternative responses have been put in place and whether these have been appropriately implemented and reviewed.
 - d. Consider whether the student is especially vulnerable, for example if the student has a social worker or is a looked-after child (LAC), and whether additional safeguarding or welfare considerations are relevant.
 - e. Consider whether all alternative solutions have been explored, such as detentions, reports or other sanctions provided for in the behaviour policy. In the case of exclusions off-site direction or managed moves should also be considered.
- 12. In considering the wider circumstances of a student facing suspension or exclusion, as outlined in para 10, the Head will give due and careful

consideration to each of these factors. Any recognised contextual factors do not in themselves prevent the use of suspension or exclusion where, in the Head's professional judgment, the seriousness of the behaviour and the need to maintain good order and welfare make such a sanction necessary.

13. A decision to exclude a student will be taken only:
 - a. In response to serious or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy, **and**
 - b. If allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.
14. The Head will consider the views of the student, in light of their age and understanding, before deciding to suspend or exclude, unless it would not be appropriate to do so. Students who need support to express their views will be allowed to have their views expressed through an advocate, such as a parent or social worker. The Head will not reach their decision until they have heard from the student and will explain how their views were taken into account when making the decision.

INFORMING OTHERS

15. If the Head decides to suspend or exclude a student, the parents/student will be informed, in person or by telephone, of the period of the suspension or exclusion and the reason(s) for it, without delay. This communication can come from the Head or any delegated individual, often the Head of Year. The parents/student will also be provided with the following information in writing, without delay, but always after an in person, or telephone communication:
 - a. The reason(s) for the suspension or permanent exclusion.
 - b. The length of the suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent.
 - c. Information about the parents'/student's right to make representations about the suspension or permanent exclusion to the governing body and, where the student is attending alongside parents, how they may be involved in this.
 - d. How any representations should be made.
 - e. Where there is a legal requirement for the governing body to hold a meeting to consider the reinstatement of a student, and that parents and student have a right to attend the meeting, be represented at the meeting (at their own expense) and bring a friend.
 - f. That parents/student (where over 18) have the right to request that the meetings be held remotely, and how and to whom they should make this request.
16. Where a student is of compulsory school age (ending on the last Friday in June of the school year in which a student turns 16) the Head will also notify parents without delay and, in any event, by the end of the afternoon session on the first day of suspension or permanent exclusion, that:

- a. For the first five school days of a suspension or permanent exclusion (or until the start date of any alternative provision, or the end of the suspension, if earlier), parents are legally required to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.
 - b. Parents may be issued with a fixed penalty notice or may be prosecuted if they fail to comply with this duty.
- 17. If alternative provision is being arranged, the following information will be included where reasonably practicable:
 - a. The start date for any provision of full-time education that has been arranged.
 - b. The start and finish times of any such provision, including the times for morning and afternoon sessions, where relevant.
 - c. The address at which the provision will take place.
 - d. Any information the student needs to identify the person they should report to on the first day.
- Where information required is not known at the time of the suspension or permanent exclusion the school must provide the information at the earliest opportunity and without delay once it becomes available.
- 18. Where alternative provision is to be provided before the sixth day of a suspension or permanent exclusion, the school reserves the right to provide the information with less than 48 hours' notice.
- 19. For permanent exclusions information regarding full-time education from the sixth day will be provided by the students' home address local authority, this may be different to Wiltshire.
- 20. The Head will ensure that the governing body are notified, without delay, of:
 - a. Any permanent exclusion.
 - b. Any suspension that would result in the student being suspended for a total of more than 5 school days in a single term.
 - c. Any suspension or permanent exclusion that would result in the student missing a public examination.
 - d. Any suspension or permanent exclusion that has been cancelled, including the reason for the cancellation.
- 21. The Head will ensure that Wiltshire local authority are notified of all suspensions and permanent exclusions. This notification will include the reason for the sanction and the length of sanction. Typically, this will be a copy of the suspension or permanent exclusion letter.
- 22. In the case of a permanent exclusion the student's 'home authority' must also be notified.
- 23. If a student with a social worker is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the Head will inform the social worker as early as possible such that collaborative work to address the factors which may be affecting the student's behaviour can be addressed with support.

24. If a looked-after child (LAC) is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the Head will inform the Virtual School Head (VSH) as early as possible such that collaborative work to address the factors which may be affecting the student's behaviour can be addressed with support.
25. If the Head decides to suspend or permanently exclude a student with a social worker/a student who is looked after, they will inform the student's social worker/the VSH, as appropriate, that:
 - a. They have decided to suspend or permanently exclude the student
 - b. The reason(s) for the decision
 - c. The length of the suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent
 - d. The suspension or permanent exclusion affects the student's ability to sit a public examination (where relevant)
 - e. They have decided to cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion, and why (where relevant)
26. The social worker/VSH will be invited to any meeting of the governing body about the suspension or permanent exclusion. This is so they can provide advice on how the student'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 student's welfare are taken into account.

REINSTATEMENT OF A STUDENT, THE GOVERNOR DECISION COMMITTEE (GDC), AND THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS

27. Parents, or students aged 18 or over, may make written representations in relation to a decision made by the Head. Written representations should normally be submitted within five school days of the date of the Head's notification, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Representations should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governors; however any member of staff who receives such representations is expected to forward them without delay. Oral representations may be made in person during a Governor Decision Committee (GDC) and as such are time limited to 15 school days post Head notification letter.
28. Responsibilities regarding reinstatement of a student following notifications of suspensions and/or permanent exclusions are delegated to a GDC consisting of at least 3 governors.
29. Annex A sets out the requirements for when GDC meetings are required and under what circumstances the governing body may reinstate a student. The governing body does not have to arrange such provision for students in their final year of compulsory education who do not have any further public exams to sit.
30. The governing body has a duty to convene a GDC meeting to consider reinstating the excluded student within 15 school days of receiving the notice if any of the following conditions are met:

- a. The exclusion is permanent.
- b. The suspension would bring the student's total number of days out of school to more than 15 in a term.
- c. The suspension would result in a student missing a public examination.

31. In the event of a suspension of fewer than 5 days in any single period, and fewer than 15 cumulative days in any given term, the governing body may consider any written representations received from parents/student (if over 18), but they may not direct the Head to reinstate the student.

32. Where the student has been suspended for more than 5, but not more than 15 school days, in a single term, and the parents/student (if over 18) make representations, the governing body will consider and decide on the reinstatement of a suspended student within 50 school days of receiving notice of the suspension. If no qualifying representations are made the body is not required to meet, and it cannot direct the Head to reinstate the student.

33. Where a suspension or permanent exclusion would result in a student missing a public exam or National Curriculum test, the governing body will, as far as reasonably practicable, consider and decide on the reinstatement of the student before the date of the exam or test. If this is not practicable, the chair of the governing body (or the vice-chair, if necessary) may consider the suspension or permanent exclusion and decide whether to reinstate the student.

34. The following parties will be invited to a GDC and allowed to make representations or share information:

- a. Parents, or the student if they are 18 or older (and, where requested, a representative or friend).
- b. The student, if they are aged 17 or younger and it would be appropriate to their age and understanding (and, where requested, a representative or friend).
- c. The Head.
- d. The student's social worker, if they have one.
- e. The VSH, if the student is 'Looked After'.

35. The GDC will meet to consider reinstatement of a student using a civil burden of proof. In reaching a decision the GDC will consider:

- a. Whether the decision to suspend or permanently exclude was lawful, reasonable, and procedurally fair.
- b. Whether the Head followed their legal duties.
- c. The welfare and safeguarding of the student and their peers.
- d. Any other evidence that was presented to the governing body.

36. At the GDC, or shortly after in writing, the Chair of the meeting will inform the parties that the committee have either:

- a. Declined to reinstate the student, or

- b. Directed the reinstatement of the student immediately, or on a particular date
- 37. The clerk to the governors/another governance professional will be present when the decision is made, they will take contemporaneous minutes of the meeting and ensure a record is kept of the evidence that was considered. The outcome will also be recorded on the student's educational record, and copies of relevant papers will be kept with this record. If the meeting is exclusively online or hybrid no audio, video, or screen recording is permitted unless explicitly authorised in advance by the Chair. The official record is the clerk's notes and the written decision.
- 38. The Chair of the GDC will ensure that the written notification of its decision is sent to the following stakeholders, along with reasons for its decision, without delay:
 - a. The parents, or the student if they are 18 or older.
 - b. The Head.
 - c. The student's social worker, if they have one.
 - d. The VSH, if the student is 'Looked After'.
 - e. The local authority.
 - f. The student's home authority, if it differs from the School's.
- 39. Where an exclusion is permanent and the GDC has decided not to reinstate the student, the notification of decision will also include the following:
 - a. A clear rationale for its decision including what the panel has accepted as fact, what (if anything) it has rejected, and why the decision was reached.
 - b. The fact that it is a permanent exclusion.
 - c. Notice of parental /student's (if they are 18) right to ask for the decision to be reviewed by an independent review panel.
 - d. 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 body's decision is given to parents).
 - e. The name and address to which an application for a review and any written evidence should be submitted.
 - f. 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 student's SEND have been considered to be relevant to the permanent exclusion.
 - g. That, regardless of whether the excluded student has recognised SEND, parents/student (if over 18) have a right to require the School to appoint an SEND expert to advise the review panel.
 - h. Details of the role of the SEND expert and that there would be no cost for this appointment.

- i. That parents/the student (if over 18) must make clear if they wish for an SEND expert to be appointed in any application for a review.
- j. That parents/student (if over 18) may, at their own expense, appoint someone to make written and/or oral representations to the panel, and parents may also bring a friend to the review.
- k. That, if parents/student (if over 18) student 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.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW

- 40. Parents/student (if over 18) may apply for an independent review. Applications for an independent review must be made within 15 school days of notice being given to the parents/student of the GDC's decision to not reinstate the student or, if after this time, within 15 school days of the final determination of a claim of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 regarding the permanent exclusion. Any applications made outside of this timeframe will be rejected.
- 41. The independent review will be convened within 15 days of application being received and will be arranged at the school's expense.
- 42. The independent review panel (IPR) will consist of 3 members:
 - a. A lay member to chair the panel who has not worked in any school in a paid capacity, disregarding any experience as a school governor or volunteer.
 - b. A current or former school governor, who has served as a governor for at least 12 consecutive months in the last 5 years, provided they have not been a teacher during this time.
 - c. A Head teacher, or individual who has been a Head within the last 5 years.
- 43. A person may not serve as a member of an IPR if they:
 - a. Are a member of the excluding school.
 - b. Are the Head of the excluding school, or have held this position in the last 5 years.
 - c. Are an employee of the excluding school, or on the governing body of the excluding school (unless they are employed as a headteacher at another school).
 - d. Have, or at any time have had, any connection with the School, governing body, parents or student, or the incident leading to the exclusion, which might reasonably be taken to raise doubts about their impartiality.

44. The panel must consider the interests and circumstances of the student, including the circumstances in which the student was permanently excluded, and have regard to the interests of other students and people working at the school. The panel must consider evidence from third parties where present:

- Where a SEND expert is present, the panel must seek and have regard to the SEND expert's view of how SEND may be relevant to the student's permanent exclusion.
- Where a social worker is present, the panel must have regard to any representation made by the social worker of how the student's experiences, needs, safeguarding risks and/or welfare may be relevant to the student's permanent exclusion.
- Where a VSH is present, the panel must have regard to any representation made by the VSH of how any of the child's background, education and safeguarding needs were considered by the Head in the lead up to the permanent exclusion, or are relevant to the student's permanent exclusion.

45. Considering the student's age and understanding, the student or their parents will be made aware of their right to attend and participate in the review meeting. The student should be permitted to make representations on their own behalf, should they desire to.

46. New evidence may be presented, though the school cannot introduce new reasons for the permanent exclusion or the decision not to reinstate. The panel must disregard any new reasons that are introduced. If evidence is presented that the panel considers it is unreasonable to expect the governing body to have been aware of at the time of its decision, the panel can take account of the evidence when deciding whether to recommend that the governing body reconsider reinstatement.

47. The panel's decision will be decided by a majority vote. Following its review, the independent panel will decide to do one of the following:

- Uphold the governing body's decision.
- Recommend that the governing body reconsider reinstatement.
- Quash the governing body's decision and direct that they reconsider reinstatement (only if it judges that the decision was flawed).

48. Once the panel has reached its decision, the panel will notify all parties in writing without delay. This notification will include:

- The panel's decision and the reasons for it.
- Where relevant, details of any recommended financial readjustment to the local authority should the governing body not subsequently decide to offer to reinstate the student within 10 school days.
- Any information that the panel has directed the governing body to place on the student's educational record.

CANCELLING SUSPENSIONS AND PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS

49. The Head 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 body. Where there is a cancellation:

- a. The parents/student (if over 18), governing body and local authority will be notified without delay.
- b. Where relevant, any social worker and VSH will be notified without delay.
- c. The notification must provide the reason for the cancellation.
- d. The duty of governors to consider reinstatement ceases.
- e. Parents (or the student if they are 18 or older) will be offered the opportunity to meet with the Head to discuss the cancellation, which will be arranged without delay.
- f. The student will be allowed back in school without delay.
- g. Any days spent out of school because of any exclusion, prior to the cancellation, will count towards the maximum of 45 school days permitted in any school year.
- h. A permanent exclusion cannot be cancelled if the student 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.

HYBRID AND REMOTE/ONLINE ACCESS TO MEETINGS

50. GDC meetings concerning suspensions / exclusion and independent review panel meetings, will be held entirely in person unless:

- a. There are extraordinary or unforeseen circumstances which make holding the meeting in person not reasonably practicable.
- b. Parents, or students if they are 18 or older, request that a meeting be held remotely / online.
- c. A social worker or VSH is in attendance, in which case a hybrid meeting will be conducted.
- d. It has not been possible to convene an in person panel of three governors within the statutory timeframe, in which case one or more governors may attend online.

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

51. In the case of any participant accessing remotely the Chair should make sure that the following conditions are met before agreeing to let a meeting proceed:

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

52. If any technical issues compromise the conditions set out in paragraph 51 and which cannot be reasonably resolved within an adequate time frame determined by the Chair, then the meeting will be rearranged without delay.

COMPLETION OF SCHOOL WORK

53. Work will be made available for students to complete either on paper or online while on suspension / in the first 5 days following notification of permanent exclusion. Submission of online work should be completed, using the advised method at the point of suspension, at the end of each school day for the duration of any suspension. Work will be dealt with in accordance with the Assessment and Feedback policy.

54. If the student is 'Looked After' or if they have a social worker, the school will work with the local authority to arrange suitable alternative provision from the first day following the suspension or permanent exclusion. Where this is not achievable the school will ensure that work is set and marked in accordance with para 53.

55. For permanent exclusions, the local authority (LA) of the students' home address will arrange suitable full-time education to begin no later than the sixth school day after the first day of the exclusion. For students 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.

RETURNING FOLLOWING SUSPENSION

56. Following suspension, or cancelled suspension or exclusion, the school will conduct a meeting with the aims of; helping the student reintegrate successfully into school life, ensuring lessons have been learned, discussing ongoing support and set firm expectations moving forward.

- a. Reintegration meetings are generally held in the morning of the first day that the student will be back in school.
- b. The school is committed to making reintegration meetings as successful as possible and for this reason parents are expected to attend. Where this cannot be achieved the meeting can be conducted with the student alone.
- c. Reintegration meetings are chaired by the Head of Year and will generally involve the Head. Additional staff may be invited where relevant including;
 - i. the Designated Safeguarding Lead where the suspension may relate to a matter of safeguarding or child protection.
 - ii. the SENDCo where the student has, or is suspected to have, SEND.
- d. Where necessary, the school will work with third-party organisations e.g. addiction services, Educational Psychologist or SEND specialists, Integrated Front Door, police etc.to achieve successful reintegration.

- e. Examples of ongoing support arising following reintegration include but are not limited to; peer or adult mentoring, ELSA support, SEND support, tutor/Head of Year check-ins, behaviour and/or attendance report.
- f. Part-time timetables will only be used as a tool to manage behaviour for the absolute minimum time.

SCHOOL REGISTERS

- 57. A student's name will be removed from the school admission register if either condition is met:
 - a. 15 school days have passed since notification of the GDC's decision to not reinstate the student, and where no application has been made for an independent review panel.
 - b. The parents/student have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent review panel.
- 58. Where an application for an independent review has been made within 15 school days, the governing body will wait until that review has concluded before removing a student's name from the register.
- 59. While the student's name remains on the school's admission register, the student's attendance will be recorded appropriately. The following codes will be used:
 - a. Code B: Where alternative provision (of an approved educational activity that does not involve the student being registered at any other school) has been made for an excluded student and they attend it.
 - b. Code D: During off-site direction to another school or educational establishment.
 - c. Code E: Where excluded students are not attending alternative provision.
- 60. Where a student's name is to be removed from the admissions register because of permanent exclusion, the school will ensure all necessary details are given to the local authority. This must be supplied before removal.

MONITORING

- 61. The school will conduct periodic monitoring of data relating to suspensions and exclusions. This will include analysis by event type, year group, student characteristics (including protected characteristics) and by date/term. The school will use the results of this analysis to make sure it is meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Where patterns or disparities arise between groups, the School will review its actions and/or policies.
- 62. As part of the governing bodies scrutiny of the Behaviour Policy and its implementation, governors will:

- a. Review, constructively challenge and evaluate the data on the school's use of suspension, exclusion, off-site direction to alternative provision, and managed moves.
- b. Specifically consider variations in school-wide suspension or exclusion data, and the characteristics of students.

63. If requested, and within 14 days of receiving such a request, the governing body will provide the secretary of state with information about any suspensions or exclusions occurring within the last 12 months.

64. The Policy is formally reviewed annually by Governors. It was first adopted on 11th February 2026.

11 th Feb 2026	Policy first adopted
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ANNEX A TO SUSPENSIONS & EXCLUSIONS POLICY

Governing body responsibilities (reproduced from DfE Suspensions and Exclusions guidance August 2024 – page 39).

