



# **THE BEECHES INDEPENDENT** **SCHOOL**

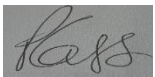
## **Suspension and Exclusion Policy**

Signed by:



Headteacher

Date: 22.09.2026



COO

Date: 22.09.2026

## Statement of intent

The Beeches Independent School recognises that promoting good behaviour is essential to a safe, respectful and high-quality education. Suspension or permanent exclusion may be necessary where there has been a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy or where allowing a pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education, welfare or safety of the pupil or others.

The school will use suspension and permanent exclusion only where lawful, reasonable, proportionate and consistent with this policy and the school's published arrangements. The school will not use informal or unofficial exclusion, pressure a parent/carer to withdraw a pupil, or use exclusion as a substitute for appropriate safeguarding, SEND, attendance or pastoral intervention.

This policy is designed specifically for an independent school. It should be read alongside the Behaviour Policy, Parent/Carer Contract, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, SEND Policy, Attendance Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Pupil Code of Conduct, Complaints Policy and relevant pastoral/SEMH procedures.

## 1. Legal framework and guidance

The school will comply with applicable legislation and have regard to relevant statutory guidance. This includes, where applicable:

- Education Act 1996.
- Education Act 2002.
- Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance.
- Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools.
- Relevant Department for Education guidance concerning behaviour, suspension and permanent exclusion, insofar as applicable and as good practice.

The school recognises that the statutory suspension and permanent exclusion framework applicable to maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units is not automatically applicable to an independent school. The school therefore operates its own contractual and policy arrangements for suspension and exclusion, while complying with applicable legal duties and safeguarding requirements.

The proprietor body will ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements have regard to KCSIE, Working Together to Safeguard Children and Working Together to Improve School Attendance, and that this policy remains consistent with those arrangements.

## 2. Principles

- Decisions will be made on the individual circumstances of each case.
- Suspension or permanent exclusion will be lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate.
- The school will apply the civil standard of proof when determining disputed facts, namely the balance of probabilities.
- The pupil will be given an appropriate opportunity to provide their account, subject to the need to take immediate protective action where necessary.
- The school will consider safeguarding, SEND, disability, mental health, vulnerability, bullying, discrimination and other relevant contextual factors.
- The school will take reasonable steps to avoid discrimination and will consider reasonable adjustments where required.
- The school will maintain appropriate records of incidents, decisions, communications and reviews.
- The school will work with parents/carers and relevant external agencies where this is necessary to safeguard or support the pupil.
- The school will not impose an informal or unofficial suspension or exclusion.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### The proprietor body

- Ensure that this policy is implemented and reviewed.
- Provide an appropriate and sufficiently independent mechanism for parents/carers to request a review of a suspension or permanent exclusion in accordance with this policy and the Parent/Carer Contract.

- Ensure that review arrangements include appropriate reasonable adjustments.
- Monitor exclusion data and consider patterns involving SEND, disability, race, sex, vulnerability and other relevant characteristics.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding oversight.

#### The headteacher

- Make decisions to suspend or permanently exclude in accordance with this policy and the Parent/Carer Contract.
- Ensure decisions are lawful, fair, proportionate and properly evidenced.
- Ensure appropriate investigation and record keeping.
- Consult the DSL where a safeguarding concern is identified or where exclusion may increase a pupil's vulnerability.
- Consider SEND, disability, reasonable adjustments and relevant pastoral or contextual factors.
- Notify parents/carers without undue delay and provide written confirmation.
- Ensure the pupil has access to appropriate education/work during a suspension where practicable and consistent with the school's arrangements.
- Ensure appropriate arrangements are made for pupils who are vulnerable, looked after or subject to an EHC plan.
- Ensure that the school works with the local authority and other agencies where required.

#### The DSL

- Advise the headteacher where exclusion may create or identify a safeguarding concern.
- Consider whether the pupil is at increased risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, radicalisation, going missing or other harm while away from school.
- Ensure safeguarding referrals and information sharing take place where required.
- Ensure safeguarding records are maintained separately and appropriately from routine disciplinary records.

## 4. Grounds for suspension or permanent exclusion

Suspension or permanent exclusion may be considered following serious or persistent breaches of the Behaviour Policy, Pupil Code of Conduct or Parent/Carer Contract, or where the pupil's continued attendance would seriously harm the education, welfare or safety of the pupil or others.

- Physical assault or serious violence.
- Threatening or abusive behaviour.
- Serious bullying or harassment.
- Discriminatory abuse, including racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or ableist abuse.
- Serious misuse or threatened use of a weapon or prohibited item.
- Serious sexual misconduct or sexual harassment.
- Serious possession, supply or misuse of drugs or other prohibited substances.
- Serious damage to property.
- Serious or persistent breaches of safeguarding or online-safety expectations.
- Other serious or persistent behaviour which makes continued attendance inappropriate.

The list is illustrative and not exhaustive. The headteacher will consider the circumstances of each case.

## 5. Immediate suspension and protective action

Where the headteacher reasonably considers that immediate removal from school is necessary to protect pupils, staff or the pupil concerned, a suspension may be imposed before all investigation has been completed. The school will then complete appropriate investigation and review.

A pupil will not be sent home simply to 'cool off' unless the absence is formally authorised as a suspension or otherwise lawful. Parents/carers will not be asked to remove a pupil from school as an informal disciplinary measure.

## **6. Investigation and decision-making**

- The school will gather relevant evidence and record the investigation.
- The pupil will normally be given an opportunity to explain their account.
- Parents/carers will be involved where appropriate and consistent with safeguarding and the circumstances of the case.
- Confidential information concerning other pupils or witnesses will be handled appropriately and will not normally be disclosed where doing so would breach another person's privacy or create a safeguarding risk.
- The headteacher will consider the balance of probabilities and all relevant circumstances before making a final decision.
- The decision and reasons will be recorded.

## **7. Safeguarding and vulnerable pupils**

Exclusion is a safeguarding matter as well as a disciplinary matter. Before, during and after a suspension or permanent exclusion, the school will consider whether the pupil is at increased risk because they are away from school.

- The DSL will be consulted where a safeguarding concern exists or where exclusion may increase risk.
- The school will consider known or suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation, radicalisation, going missing, self-harm, mental health concerns and risks associated with the home environment.
- The school will consider whether a referral to children's social care, the police or another agency is required.
- The school will consider the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children and other vulnerable pupils.
- Safeguarding concerns will not be delayed or subordinated to disciplinary processes.
- Relevant information will be shared lawfully and appropriately with agencies and, where appropriate, a receiving school or education provider.

## **8. SEND and disability**

The existence of SEND, SEMH needs or disability will not in itself prevent the school from suspending or permanently excluding a pupil where this is otherwise lawful and proportionate. However, the school will consider the pupil's individual needs, whether behaviour may be connected to those needs, reasonable adjustments, support already provided, whether further assessment or intervention is required, and duties under the Equality Act 2010 and SEND framework.

Where a pupil has an EHC plan, the school will consider the plan and liaise with the local authority as appropriate. Where exclusion raises concerns about whether the pupil's needs can be met, the school will seek appropriate advice and support.

## **9. Looked-after children and other vulnerable pupils**

The school will take particular care when considering suspension or permanent exclusion of a looked-after or previously looked-after child, or any pupil known to be vulnerable. The school will consider the pupil's care status, placement, relationships, educational history and safeguarding needs and will involve the relevant professionals where appropriate.

## **10. Parents/carers: notification and information**

When a decision to suspend or permanently exclude is made, the headteacher will notify the parents/carers without undue delay. Written notification will normally include:

- the decision and its effective date;
- the reasons for the decision;
- the duration of a suspension or the fact of permanent exclusion;
- arrangements for education/work during the suspension, where applicable;
- any arrangements for the pupil's return or transition;
- information about the parent/carer's right to request a review under this policy;
- the deadline and method for requesting a review;
- information about reasonable adjustments and accessibility;
- relevant safeguarding or education contacts where appropriate.

The school will not disclose confidential information relating to other pupils or witnesses unless there is a lawful basis for doing so.

## **11. Education, attendance and children missing education**

The school recognises its safeguarding responsibility to minimise disruption to a pupil's education. A suspension or permanent exclusion will not be used as a means of allowing a pupil simply to disappear from education.

- During suspension, the school will provide or arrange appropriate work/education in accordance with the school's arrangements and the circumstances of the case.
- Where a pupil leaves the school following permanent exclusion or withdrawal, the school will establish, so far as reasonably practicable, what education the pupil will receive next.
- The school will cooperate with the local authority in accordance with Children Missing Education guidance and relevant attendance requirements.
- Where the pupil's destination is unknown or there is concern that they may not be receiving suitable education, the school will make appropriate reasonable enquiries and follow the school's CME/attendance procedures.
- Where safeguarding concerns exist, the DSL will consider whether information should be shared with the local authority or other agencies.

## **12. No off-rolling or pressured withdrawal**

The school will not require, pressure or encourage parents/carers to withdraw a pupil as an alternative to formal disciplinary action. The school will not prevent a pupil from attending through an informal arrangement. Where the school considers that a pupil cannot continue at the school, the appropriate formal process will be followed.

A parent/carer may choose to withdraw a pupil, but the school will not represent withdrawal as compulsory where the pupil has not been formally excluded.

## **13. Review of suspension or permanent exclusion**

Because this is an independent school, the school provides a review mechanism through its proprietor body rather than relying on the statutory review arrangements applicable to maintained schools and academies.

A parent/carer may request a review in writing within five working days of receiving the written decision, unless the Parent/Carer Contract provides a different period. The request should explain the grounds for review.

- The review will normally consider whether the decision was made in accordance with this policy and the Parent/Carer Contract, whether relevant information was properly considered, whether the sanction was proportionate, and whether relevant legal or safeguarding duties were observed.
- The review will be conducted by persons who were not involved in the original decision and who have no conflict of interest.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made where required.
- The parent/carers and pupil will have a fair opportunity to make representations.
- The panel may uphold the decision, recommend reconsideration, or substitute an alternative outcome where the school's contractual arrangements permit.
- The outcome and reasons will be provided in writing, normally within five working days of the review meeting.
- The decision of the proprietor body under this procedure will be final within the school's internal processes, subject to any rights available under law or contract.

## **14. Complaints and external rights**

A parent/carers who considers that the school has failed to follow its published procedures may use the school's Complaints Policy where appropriate. Nothing in this policy removes any legal right or remedy available to a pupil or parent/carers.

## **15. Records, monitoring and equality**

- The school will maintain a central record of suspensions and permanent exclusions.
- Records will include the reason, duration, decision-maker, parental notification, relevant review information and outcome.
- Safeguarding information will be recorded and stored in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- The proprietor body will review exclusion data at least annually and consider patterns and disproportionality.
- The school will consider whether exclusion rates indicate unmet SEND, safeguarding, pastoral, attendance or equality needs.
- Records will be retained in accordance with the school's records-management arrangements and applicable law.

## **16. Police and other agencies**

The headteacher, in consultation with the DSL where appropriate, will consider whether behaviour may constitute a criminal offence or create a safeguarding risk. Where necessary, the school will contact the police, children's social care, the local authority or other relevant agency. Referral to an external agency will not replace the school's responsibility to make a proportionate disciplinary decision.

## **17. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher in conjunction with the proprietor body, and sooner where there is a material change to legislation, statutory guidance, the Independent School Standards, KCSIE or the school's contractual arrangements.

All staff will be familiarised with this policy as part of induction and through appropriate ongoing training.