

FOREST FEDERATION  
SUSPENSION AND EXCLUSIONS POLICY  
MARCH 2024

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DUE FOR RENEWAL MARCH 2026

**This policy applies to every school in the federation the terms 'school' and 'federation' are interchangeable except where a school is specifically named.**

The Forest Federation is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. We aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents and staff are treated fairly and with respect, and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities. This policy, and any subsequent actions taken, are in accordance with the Cambridgeshire Guidance on Suspension and Exclusion from maintained schools and academies (June 2023).

### **Federation/School/Family Partnerships**

Families working in partnership with the schools to consistently reinforce the school's expectations is an important factor in every child's success. Across the schools, we will work in partnership to ensure that expectations are clear and parents can reinforce them with their children. This includes ensuring that parents are kept informed about decisions made in response to a child's misbehaviour so that we can work together in the best interests of pupils to ensure expectations for behaviour are made clear.

The schools are responsible for communicating to pupils, parents and staff its expectations of standards of conduct. A range of policies and procedures are in place to promote good behaviour and appropriate conduct.

We aim to include, not exclude, and we approach all challenging behaviour in a supportive and positive way. We recognise that such behaviour can sometimes be symptomatic of a real, deeper need for our support and understanding. All children can go through times of inappropriate behaviour, and we strive to never give up easily on a child as we recognise that each person has a unique contribution to make to school life and we want to support them to achieve this.

We will use behaviour data to assess patterns of challenging behaviour in pupils. Where patterns emerge we will systematically intervene, drawing up an action plan with the child, parent and teacher. It is school leaders' class teachers', parents' and the children's responsibility to ensure the action plan is followed. No suspension or exclusion will be initiated without first attempting other strategies or, in the case of a serious single incident, a proper investigation.

### **Reasons for suspension or exclusion**

- Serious breach of the school's rules or policies
- Serious risk of harm to the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

This can either be a very serious incident or the repetition of serious incidents. Any suspension or exclusion will be at the decision of the Head of School, usually in consultation with other members of the senior leadership team (particularly if they were involved in investigating the incident).

### **Types of Suspension/Exclusion**

Internal Suspension is when a pupil is excluded from the rest of the school and must work away from their class for a fixed amount of time. This will be in a different classroom or space. An internal suspension is a discretionary measure, where a pupil's behaviour is escalating and more serious measures need to be taken but there are not yet grounds for an external / fixed-term suspension. Typically, a child receiving a consequence of this level should be receiving additional support for their behaviour, intended to help them to avoid their behaviour escalating to a point where a suspension is necessary (examples: behaviour chart to address specific behaviours causing a problem; support from identified staff etc)

Suspension (formerly a Fixed-Term exclusion) is when a child is suspended from school and must remain at home for a fixed amount of time. This should be for the shortest time necessary to ensure minimal disruption to the child's education, whilst mindful of the seriousness of the breach of policy.

Permanent exclusion is when a child is permanently excluded from school and not allowed to return. This is a very serious decision and the Head of School will consult with senior leaders, the Executive Headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body as soon as possible in such a case.

### **Reasons for Suspension/Exclusion**

A decision to suspend a pupil, either internally, for a fixed period or permanently is seen as a last resort by the school. The physical and emotional health of our children and staff is our primary concern, and we therefore accept, that in some serious situations, suspension may be necessary, if all other strategies have been exhausted.

The decision to suspend will usually follow a range of strategies and be seen as a last resort, or it will be in response to a very serious breach of school rules and policies or a disciplinary offence such as (this list is not exhaustive):

- Serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff
- Possession or use of an illegal drug or weapon on school premises
- Persistent bullying
- Persistent prejudice based harassment or hatred based acts

Suspension may be the result of persistently poor behaviour or a serious single incident.

### **Persistent or cumulative problems**

Internal and temporary/fixed-term suspension may be used in response to a persistent poor behaviour which breaches school rules and policies. In the most serious cases where the problem persists and there is no improvement a permanent exclusion may be necessary.

These would be imposed only when the school had already offered and implemented a range of support and management strategies. These could be joint action plans with parents, child and school, behaviour intervention with identified staff, target setting, home/school communication book etc.

The length of an suspension will depend upon a number of factors, such as the severity of the incident, and the likely impact on the child's learning and ability to succeed on returning to school. Such decisions will be made in the best interests of the child, whilst also mindful of the need to maintain order and reinforce the rules and expectations of the school in a clear and consistent way.

### **Single incident**

Internal and temporary/fixed-term suspension may be used in response to a very serious breach of school rules and policies or a disciplinary offence. In the most serious cases where the problem persists and there is no improvement a permanent exclusion may be necessary.

In such cases the Head of School or a designated senior leader will investigate the incident and consider all evidence to support the allegation, taking account of the school's policies. The pupil will be encouraged to give his/her version of events and the Head of School will check whether the incident may have been provoked, for example by bullying or racial harassment.

The Governing Body will be informed of all exclusions on a regular basis; and additional consultation may also take place about key incidents with the Chair of Governors.

## **The decision to exclude**

If the Head of School decides to suspend a pupil he/she will:

- ensure that there is sufficient recorded evidence to support the decision;
- explain the decision to the pupil if the pupil is in the state of mind to listen to the decision.
- contact the parents, explain the decision and ask that the child be collected
- send a letter to the parents confirming the reasons for the suspension, whether it is a permanent or temporary measure
- the length of the suspension and any terms or conditions agreed for the pupil's return
- in cases of more than a day's suspension, ensure that appropriate work is set and that arrangements are in place for it to be marked
- plan how to address the pupil's needs and integration back into their class on his/her return
- plan a meeting with parents and pupil on his/her return to be conducted by a suitable senior member of staff.

## **Safeguarding**

An suspension will not be enforced if doing so may put the safety of the pupil at risk. In cases where parents will not comply by, for example, refusing to collect the child, the child's welfare is the priority. In this situation, depending on the reason for suspension, the school may consider an internal suspension until the end of the day, implementing the original suspension decision from the time the child is collected from school, or, in more severe circumstances the school may contact Social Care and/or the Police to safely take the pupil off site.

## **Re-integration**

After fixed term suspension, the pupil and parent may be requested to attend a reintegration meeting with a senior member of staff. At this meeting the behaviour leading to exclusion will be discussed and targets will be set for improvement. Support around behaviour will be also be discussed. The meeting will be recorded on CPOMS and a copy retained by the parent, child and school.

## **Work Set**

When a pupil is suspended for more than one day, work should be set by the school within a reasonable time-scale and this should be returned to the school when the exclusion is over. If a child is suspended at the end of a school day, then it may not be possible to arrange for work to be set until the following morning. A pupil can be suspended for up to 5 continuous days on a fixed term basis. On a potential 6<sup>th</sup> continuous day, the school is responsible for providing education for the pupil, which could be at another local school, the pupil referral unit or by providing home education.

## **Behaviour outside school**

Pupils' behaviour outside school e.g. on school trips, at sports events, is subject to the school's behaviour policy. Unacceptable behaviour in such circumstances will be dealt with as if it had taken place in school; and additionally this includes any serious breach of policy which could 'bring the school into disrepute'.

## **Pupils with special educational needs and disabled pupils**

The school must take account of any special educational needs when considering whether or not to suspend a pupil. The Head of School should ensure that reasonable steps, in collaboration with the SENDCo, have been taken by the school to respond to a pupil's disability so the pupil is not treated less favourably for reasons related to the disability.

### **Managed move**

In cases where the Head of School and parent's agree that the progress of the pupil has been unsatisfactory and the pupil is unwilling or unable to profit from the educational opportunities offered, or if a parents failure to engage in strategies implemented by the school are resulting in a continuing pattern of poor behaviour or lack of improvement in behaviour, the Executive Headteacher may consult with the Local Authority and propose a managed move to another school. This is not exclusion and in such cases the Head of School may assist the parents in placing the pupil in another school.

### **Removal from the school for other reasons**

The Head of School may send a pupil home, after consultation with that pupil's parents and a health professional as appropriate, if the pupil poses an immediate and serious risk to the health and safety of other pupils and staff, for example because of a diagnosed illness such as a notifiable disease. This is not an suspension and should be for the shortest possible time. A pupil cannot be 'sent home' for other reasons, including poor behaviour.

### **Equal Opportunities**

The Governing Body recognise that it is unlawful to take into account anyone's gender, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age, or sexual orientation. Full consideration has been given to this during the formulation of this policy as it is the governors' aim that no-one across the federation should suffer discrimination, either directly or indirectly, or harassment on any of these grounds.

### **Reintegration meeting**

After every period of fixed term suspension, the parent and child will be offered a reintegration meeting with a senior member of school's staff. At this meeting targets will be agreed for improving behaviour and a written agreement may be produced for all parties to sign.

### **Procedure for appeal**

If parents wish to appeal the decision to exclude, the matter will be referred to the Governing Body and handled through the school and LA appeal procedure.