

EXCLUSIONS POLICY

Our Lady of the Visitation Catholic Primary School



Approved by: Maureen Gordon

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Exclusions Policy

At Our Lady of the Visitation Primary School, we are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community, and to maintain an appropriate educational environment in which all may learn and succeed.

When is Exclusion Appropriate?

The decision to exclude a pupil will only be taken in the following circumstances:

- In response to a serious breach of the School's Behaviour Policy; and
- If allowing the student to remain in School would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the School.

Exclusion may be used for any of the following, all of which constitute examples of unacceptable conduct and are infringements of our Behaviour Policy

- Persistent unacceptable behaviour for which school sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the pupil's behaviour
- Verbal or physical abuse of other pupils or school staff
- Aggression towards other pupils leading to the possibility of physical or emotional harm
- Damage to property
- Indecent behaviour

This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other situations exclusion is judged to be an appropriate sanction.

If it has been necessary to exclude a child on more than two occasions then a permanent managed move will be considered as the most suitable action.

When is exclusion not appropriate?

It is not appropriate to exclude a pupil for minor incidents, poor academic performance, lateness/truancy or pregnancy or to protect victims of bullying by sending them home. Exclusion will also not be used for breaches of school rules on uniform/ appearance, unless these are persistent and in open defiance of such rules. Neither would it be appropriate to punish a pupil for the behaviour of their parents, for example, where parents refuse or are unable to attend a meeting.

Exclusion should not be used if there are possible alternative solutions available such as restorative justice (where the offender redresses the harm done to a victim); mediation; internal exclusion or a managed move to another school (only if agreed between all parties).

Pupils with statements of special educational needs should not be permanently excluded except in the most exceptional circumstances. Every effort should be made to avoid excluding pupils being supported at School Action or School Action Plus and to avoid excluding Looked After Children (LAC).

Who makes the decision to exclude a pupil?

Exclusion is an extreme sanction and is only administered by the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is absent, the powers rest with the most senior teacher who should make it clear that they are acting in the Headteacher's absence.

Unless an immediate threat to safety exists, a thorough investigation would be carried out prior to taking such a decision, including checks to establish whether

the incident may have been provoked. As part of that investigation the pupil would be encouraged and allowed to give their version of events.

A written record would be maintained of the actions taken (and copies of written records made by other members of staff), including any interview with the pupil concerned. Witness statements must be dated and should be signed, wherever possible.

The standard of proof to be applied is the balance of probabilities, but the more serious the allegation, the more convincing the substantiating evidence needs to be.

Types of exclusion

There are three types of exclusion that schools can impose:

- **Lunchtime** – This is a form of fixed-term exclusion where the pupil is excluded from the school premises for one or more lunchtimes, see further detail in *exclusion procedures* below.
- **Fixed term** – This is a temporary exclusion of between 1 and 45 school days in length.
- **Permanent** – The pupil will not return to the school.

Our Lady of the Visitation Catholic Primary School recognises that exclusions for indefinite periods and informal or unofficial exclusions are illegal (regardless of whether they are done with the agreement of parents or carers).

Exclusion Procedures

When considering and implementing an exclusion, the Headteacher will at all times apply the procedures for dealing with exclusion as set out by the London Borough of Ealing. The current (November 2011) procedures are accompanied by an updated set of standardised forms and letters (September 2012). The procedures include:

- appropriate notification to the borough within set timescales
- immediate telephone notification to the parents followed up by a letter, translated if necessary, including the provision of information to parents regarding their right of appeal and their duty to ensure that the pupil is not to be in a public place without reasonable justification. Where an exclusion is for more than 5 days the parent must be informed in writing at least 48 hours before the provision is to commence
- the involvement at certain point, of the school's Governing Body.

A summary of Ealing's November 2011 Exclusion Procedures is set out below with an accompanying table detailing different steps, attached as Appendix 1.

Lunchtime Exclusion

Pupils whose behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive may be excluded from the school premises for the duration of the lunchtime period. This is a fixed-term exclusion counted as one half of a school day (1 session). Schools should not impose lunchtime exclusion for longer than a week, and during this period where necessary, should put in place another strategy for dealing with the problem.

The head teacher will ensure that a parent/carer has been contacted and is available, if appropriate, to arrange collection and supervision of the pupil during

the lunchtime exclusion. Arrangements will be made for pupils who are entitled to free school meals, which may mean providing a packed lunch.

The Local Authority must be informed of the exclusion within one school day where the exclusion totals > 10 lunchtimes in a term. The LA should be informed as soon as possible of exclusions of 10 lunchtimes or fewer in a term.

Fixed Term Exclusion

Although in law a pupil can be excluded for up to 45 days in a school year, exclusions should be for the shortest time necessary. Ofsted inspection evidence suggests that 1-3 days is often long enough to secure the benefits of exclusion without adverse educational consequences.

Schools are required to ensure that the parent is fully informed of their duties in the first five days of an exclusion. During the initial period of up to five school days, the parents of the excluded pupil must ensure that he or she is not present in a public place during normal school hours without reasonable justification. Parents can be prosecuted, or given a fixed penalty notice of £50 if they fail to do this.

The school must ensure that work is set for the pupil to complete during the first five school days of exclusion and that it is marked, unless during that time the pupil will be attending alternative provision (arranged on a voluntary basis by the school).

Where a pupil is given a fixed-term exclusion of six school days or longer, the school has a duty to arrange suitable full-time educational provision from and including the sixth school day of the exclusion.

Permanent Exclusion

Permanent exclusion should usually only be used as a final step when a wide range of other strategies has been tried and failed. It is an acknowledgement by the school that it has exhausted all available strategies for dealing with the child. There may be exceptional circumstances where, in the head teacher's judgement, it is appropriate to permanently exclude a child for a first or 'one off' offence. These might include for example serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff.

The Local Authority must be informed of the exclusion within one school day. The school are required to ensure that the parents are fully informed of their duties in the first five days of an exclusion and of the school day from which the pupil will be provided with suitable alternative education by the Local Authority.

During the first five school days, the school should send work home for the pupil to complete. Parents must ensure that the pupil is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification. Parents can be prosecuted, or given a fixed penalty notice of £50 if they fail to do this.

The local authority is statutorily responsible for ensuring that full-time provision is made for all permanently excluded Ealing resident pupils from the 6th school day of the exclusion.

Reintegration Meeting

The school has a duty to arrange a reintegration meeting with the parent(s) during or following the expiry of any fixed-term exclusion to assist the reintegration of the pupil and promote the improvement of his or her behaviour.

The pupil should normally attend all or part of the meeting and at least one of the pupil's parents is expected to attend. The meeting should be conducted by the headteacher or a senior member of staff and if possible, will be held on the day the pupil returns to school.

A fixed-term exclusion should not be extended if such a meeting cannot be arranged in time or the parents do not attend. Written notice of the meeting should be given no later than six school days before the meeting date.