

Christ Church C of E Primary School

Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy

Date Policy Approved:	June 2026
Review Date:	July 2026, or earlier if statutory guidance changes
Responsible Lead:	Headteacher
Approved By:	Full Governing Body
Applies To:	All pupils on roll at Christ Church C of E Primary School

This policy has been drafted in line with the DfE statutory guidance, "Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement" (August 2024). It should be reviewed when the anticipated revised guidance is published after July 2026.

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1. Vision and policy statement

At Christ Church C of E Primary School, our vision is that "Together, we flourish." We believe that children flourish when they feel safe, valued, known and understood. Our approach to behaviour is relational, restorative and rooted in our school values of Respect, Kindness, Hope, Perseverance, Curiosity and Community.

We recognise that all behaviour is communication. When children find it difficult to regulate, make safe choices or maintain positive relationships, adults seek to understand what may be sitting beneath the behaviour while maintaining clear boundaries and high expectations. Our first response is to teach, support and repair, not simply to punish.

Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious sanctions. They will only be used when warranted, lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate. In most cases they will be used only when other strategies, practices and interventions have not been successful, or when there has been a serious one-off incident. The safety, welfare and education of pupils and staff will always be central to any decision.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- ensure that any suspension or permanent exclusion is used lawfully, fairly, consistently and proportionately;

- make clear the responsibilities of the Headteacher, governors, staff, parents and the local authority;
- ensure that pupils, including those with SEND or vulnerabilities, are supported and heard throughout the process;
- support a calm, safe and purposeful learning environment in which everyone can flourish;
- set out how the school will continue education during a suspension or following a permanent exclusion;
- support successful reintegration after a suspension or a cancelled exclusion;
- prevent unlawful exclusions, informal exclusions and off-rolling.

3. Scope, definitions and statutory framework

This policy applies to all pupils on roll at Christ Church C of E Primary School. It applies to behaviour in school, during school sessions, on school premises, during school-related activities, and to behaviour outside school where there is a clear link to maintaining good behaviour, safety, discipline and welfare within the school community.

3.1 Statutory terms used in this policy

Term	Meaning
Suspension	A temporary removal from school for a fixed period. This is what legislation has historically called a fixed-period exclusion. A suspension can be for one or more fixed periods, up to a maximum of 45 school days in one academic year.
Permanent exclusion	A decision that a pupil is no longer allowed to attend the school, unless the pupil is reinstated.
Exclusion	A general term in statutory guidance which includes both suspensions and permanent exclusions.
School day	Any day on which there is a school session. INSET days and staff training days do not count as school days.
Parent	In line with the Education Act 1996, this includes birth parents, anyone with parental responsibility, and anyone who has care of the child, such as a foster carer.

3.2 Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- DfE, Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (August 2024);
- Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011;
- School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Education Act 1996;
- Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice;
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

4. Preventing the need for suspension or permanent exclusion

Christ Church seeks to create a school culture where suspension and permanent exclusion are rarely needed. We will not operate a blanket "no exclusion" approach, because there may be exceptional situations where exclusion is necessary to protect the education or welfare of pupils or staff. However, we will always seek to understand need, reduce risk and use support as early as possible.

Our Behaviour and Relationships Policy sets out our relational approach, built on Zones of Regulation, Emotion Coaching, PACE and Restorative Practice. These approaches help adults to recognise, empathise, soothe, set limits and problem-solve with children so that behaviour can be understood, repaired and improved.

Where behaviour gives cause for concern, the school may use some or all of the following preventative measures:

- early conversations with parents and carers;
- pupil voice work to understand what may be driving the behaviour;
- restorative conversations and repair of harm where appropriate;
- pastoral support, trusted adult check-ins, mentoring or targeted intervention;
- reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities and adaptations for pupils with SEND;
- behaviour support plans, risk assessments, risk provision plans or individual regulation plans;
- support from the SENCO, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Designated Teacher, Educational Psychologist, SBAP, Family of Schools or other agencies;
- review of provision, curriculum access, sensory needs, communication needs and attendance;
- consideration of an early annual review where a pupil has an EHC plan;
- time-limited alternative provision or off-site direction where this is appropriate and lawful;
- a managed move, where this is in the pupil's best interests and agreed voluntarily by all parties.

Off-site direction will only be used to improve future behaviour, not as a punishment for past misconduct. Any managed move will be voluntary, planned, time-limited at trial stage, and never used to pressure parents into removing a child from the school roll.

5. Grounds for suspension or permanent exclusion

Only the Headteacher, or an acting Headteacher formally carrying out the Headteacher role, can suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. A decision to suspend or permanently exclude will be taken on disciplinary grounds and must be lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

A suspension may be used in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the Behaviour and Relationships Policy. It may also be used to make clear that a pupil's behaviour is unacceptable and that repeated behaviour of this nature may put the pupil at risk of permanent exclusion.

A permanent exclusion will only be taken:

- in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the Behaviour and Relationships Policy; and
- where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others, such as staff or other pupils.

A permanent exclusion will usually be a last resort after a range of support has been tried. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where a one-off incident is so serious that permanent exclusion may be considered even if the pupil has no previous history of similar behaviour.

6. Decision-making before suspension or permanent exclusion

Before deciding whether to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, the Headteacher will take reasonable steps to establish the facts and consider the individual circumstances. The Headteacher

will apply the civil standard of proof: on the balance of probabilities, it is more likely than not that the behaviour happened.

The Headteacher will, where appropriate:

- ensure that an appropriate investigation has been carried out;
- consider all relevant evidence, including accounts from staff, pupils and witnesses;
- allow the pupil to give their account, taking account of age, understanding, communication needs and emotional state;
- consider whether the pupil needs support to express their views, including support from a parent, trusted adult, advocate or social worker;
- consider any contributing factors, including SEND, disability, communication needs, trauma, anxiety, safeguarding, bereavement, bullying, peer relationships or difficulties at home;
- consult the SENCO, DSL, Designated Teacher, social worker, VSH and/or other professionals where relevant;
- consider whether reasonable adjustments, additional support or alternative action would be appropriate;
- consider the effect of the pupil remaining in school on the education and welfare of the pupil and others;
- consider the school duties under safeguarding, equality and SEND legislation;
- make and record a decision that is lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

Where there is police involvement, a criminal investigation or a safeguarding investigation, the school will make decisions on a case-by-case basis. The DSL or deputy DSL will take a leading role in safeguarding considerations. The school does not need to wait for the outcome of police or criminal proceedings before making a decision, but it will consider how to ensure fairness and avoid prejudicing any investigation.

7. Types of exclusion and key rules

7.1 Suspension

A suspension removes a pupil from school for a fixed period. The end date must be clear at the time the suspension is issued. Suspensions can be for one or more periods, up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year. Suspensions do not have to be consecutive.

A pupil can be suspended for part of the school day, including lunchtime. Lunchtime suspensions count as half a school day when calculating whether a governing board meeting is triggered.

The law does not allow an open-ended suspension. It also does not allow a suspension to be extended or converted into a permanent exclusion. In exceptional cases, usually where further evidence has come to light, a further suspension or a permanent exclusion may be issued to begin immediately after the first suspension ends.

7.2 Permanent exclusion

A permanent exclusion means that a pupil is no longer allowed to attend Christ Church C of E Primary School unless they are reinstated. The decision to permanently exclude is one of the most serious decisions a school can make and will only be made where the statutory test is met.

Where a permanent exclusion is issued, the school will work with Nottinghamshire Local Authority, and with the pupil's home local authority if this is different, to support the statutory process and the arrangement of suitable full-time education.

7.3 Cancelling an exclusion

The Headteacher can cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion that has already begun, or one that has not yet begun, provided the governing board has not yet met to consider whether the pupil

should be reinstated. If an exclusion is cancelled, parents, the governing board, the local authority and, where applicable, the pupil's social worker and/or VSH will be notified without delay and given the reason for the cancellation. The pupil will be allowed to return to school without delay.

Parents will be offered the opportunity to meet the Headteacher to discuss the circumstances that led to the cancellation. Any days already spent out of school as a result of the cancelled exclusion will still count towards the 45-day annual limit.

7.4 Unlawful exclusions and off-rolling

Informal or unofficial exclusions are unlawful. A pupil must not be sent home to "cool off", placed on an unofficial part-time timetable for behaviour reasons, or asked to stay away from school without the formal suspension or permanent exclusion process being followed.

The school will not exclude a pupil because of academic attainment or ability, because they have SEND or a disability that the school feels unable to meet, or because parents are unable or unwilling to attend a reintegration meeting. The school will not place pressure on parents to remove their child from the school roll, to electively home educate, or to seek another school place in order to avoid an exclusion.

8. Pupils with SEND, disabilities, social workers or looked-after status

Christ Church will pay particular regard to pupils who may be vulnerable to suspension or permanent exclusion, including pupils with SEND, pupils with disabilities, pupils who have a social worker, looked-after children, previously looked-after children, children who have experienced trauma, and pupils from groups with higher national rates of exclusion.

8.1 SEND and disability

The school will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014. This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and using best endeavours to secure appropriate special educational provision for pupils with SEN.

Where a pupil with SEND, a disability or an EHC plan is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the school will consider whether current provision is appropriate and whether additional support, external advice, reasonable adjustments, an EHC needs assessment or an early annual review may be required. The SENCO will be involved as early as possible.

8.2 Pupils with a social worker, looked-after children and previously looked-after children

Where a pupil has a social worker and is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the Headteacher will involve the social worker, the DSL and the pupil's parents as early as possible. Where a looked-after child is at risk, the Designated Teacher will contact the Virtual School Head as soon as possible so that additional support and assessment can be considered.

The school will balance the protective value of education with the need to maintain a calm, safe environment for all. Where a suspension or permanent exclusion is issued, the social worker and/or VSH will be notified without delay as required.

9. Notification duties following a suspension or permanent exclusion

9.1 Informing parents

The Headteacher will notify parents without delay. Where possible, this will be done first by telephone or in person so that parents can ask questions and raise immediate concerns. This initial contact will not delay written notification.

The written notification will include, as applicable:

- the reason or reasons for the suspension or permanent exclusion;
- the length of the suspension, or the fact that the exclusion is permanent;
- the pupil's right to be involved and how their views may be shared;
- parents' right to make representations to the governing board;
- where a governing board meeting is required, parents' right to attend, be represented at their own expense and bring a friend;
- the arrangements made for the pupil to continue education during the first five school days;
- whether the pupil will miss a national curriculum test or public examination, if relevant;
- parents' legal duty to ensure that the pupil is not present in a public place during school hours for the first five school days of exclusion unless there is a reasonable justification;
- information about alternative provision, if this has been arranged;
- sources of free and impartial advice, including DfE guidance for parents, SENDIAS, Coram Child Law Advice, ACE Education and IPSEA where relevant.

Where alternative provision is being arranged, parents will be told the start date, start and finish times, address and reporting arrangements. Where this information is not reasonably available by the end of the afternoon session, it will be provided as soon as possible and normally no later than 48 hours before the provision starts, unless provision starts earlier with parental consent.

9.2 Informing the governing board, local authority, social worker and VSH

The Headteacher will notify the local authority without delay of every suspension and permanent exclusion, regardless of length. For a permanent exclusion, if the pupil lives outside Nottinghamshire, the Headteacher will also notify the pupil's home local authority without delay.

The Headteacher will notify the governing board without delay of:

- any permanent exclusion, including where a suspension is followed by a decision to permanently exclude;
- any suspension or permanent exclusion that means the pupil will be out of school for more than five school days, or more than ten lunchtimes, in a term;
- any suspension or permanent exclusion that means the pupil will miss a national curriculum test or public examination.

Where the pupil has a social worker, the Headteacher will notify the social worker without delay. Where the pupil is looked after, the Headteacher will notify the Virtual School Head without delay. The social worker and/or VSH will also be informed of any governing board meeting or independent review panel meeting.

10. Education during suspension or after permanent exclusion

The school will take reasonable steps to ensure that work is set and marked for the first five school days of any suspension or permanent exclusion where the pupil is not attending alternative provision. This may include suitable online or paper-based work. The school will continue to consider its duties towards pupils with SEND and disabilities when setting work and providing support.

For a suspension of more than five school days, the governing board must arrange suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age. This must begin no later than the sixth school day of the suspension. Where a pupil receives consecutive suspensions, these are treated cumulatively for the purpose of this duty.

For a permanent exclusion, the local authority is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education from the sixth school day after the first day the permanent exclusion took place. The school will cooperate with the local authority and provide information that supports effective transition and safeguarding.

11. Governing board consideration and reinstatement

The governing board delegates consideration of suspensions and permanent exclusions to a pupil discipline committee of at least three governors with no prior involvement in the incident. Governors will act impartially and will consider the Headteacher's decision in line with statutory duties.

The governing board must consider whether a pupil should be reinstated in the circumstances set out in Appendix 3. In summary, a meeting must be held within 15 school days where the exclusion is permanent, where suspensions exceed 15 school days in a term, or where the pupil would miss a national curriculum test or public examination. For suspensions of more than five but not more than 15 school days in a term, a meeting is required only if parents make representations, and must be held within 50 school days of receiving notice of the suspension.

Where a meeting is held, the following will be invited and allowed to make representations or share information:

- parents and, where requested, a representative or friend;
- the pupil, where appropriate taking account of age and understanding;
- the Headteacher;
- a representative of the local authority;
- the pupil's social worker, if they have one;
- the Virtual School Head, if the pupil is looked after.

The committee will consider whether the decision was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair, taking account of the Headteacher's legal duties, the evidence available, the individual circumstances, and the balance of probabilities. It will also consider equality, SEND and safeguarding duties.

The committee can either decline to reinstate the pupil or direct reinstatement immediately or on a particular date. The decision and reasons will be recorded in minutes and communicated in writing without delay to parents, the Headteacher and the local authority. Where relevant, the social worker and VSH will also be informed.

If the exclusion is permanent and the committee decides not to reinstate, the written decision will include information about parents' right to request an independent review panel, the deadline for doing so, the right to request a SEN expert, and the routes for discrimination claims where parents believe discrimination has occurred.

Meetings will normally be face to face, but parents may request remote access. Remote access will be arranged only where statutory criteria are met and the meeting can remain fair and transparent. Social workers and VSHs must be allowed to join remotely where they can participate effectively.

12. Independent review panels

Where the governing board has upheld a permanent exclusion, parents may apply to the local authority for an independent review panel. The application must be made within 15 school days of notice being given of the governing board's decision not to reinstate the pupil.

Parents have the right to request that a SEN expert attends the independent review panel, regardless of whether the school recognises that the pupil has SEND. The SEN expert will provide impartial advice to the panel about how SEN may be relevant to the permanent exclusion.

The independent review panel can:

- uphold the governing board's decision;
- recommend that the governing board reconsiders reinstatement;
- quash the governing board's decision and direct that the governing board reconsiders reinstatement, where the decision is judged to be flawed.

The panel cannot itself direct reinstatement. Where a panel recommends or directs reconsideration, the governing board will comply with the statutory process and reconsideration duties.

13. Reintegration after suspension or a cancelled exclusion

Christ Church will support pupils to reintegrate successfully following a suspension or a cancelled exclusion. Reintegration should offer a fresh start, help the pupil understand the effect of their behaviour, teach the skills needed to meet expectations, repair harm where appropriate and rebuild a sense of belonging.

A reintegration meeting will normally take place before or at the start of the pupil's return to school. Parents will be invited wherever possible, and the pupil will be involved in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and emotional state. A pupil will not be prevented from returning to school because a parent is unable or unwilling to attend the reintegration meeting.

The reintegration plan may include:

- a restorative conversation or repair work where this is appropriate and safe;
- a behaviour support plan, regulation plan, risk assessment or risk provision plan;
- daily contact with a named adult or pastoral lead;
- personalised targets and review dates;
- reasonable adjustments or SEND support;
- planned pastoral or therapeutic interventions;
- academic support to address missed learning;
- regular communication with parents and relevant professionals;
- review of lunchtime, transition or unstructured time support;
- review of safeguarding or welfare concerns where relevant.

Part-time timetables will not be used to manage behaviour. If a temporary part-time timetable is considered for other exceptional reasons, it will be used only for the shortest time necessary, with parental involvement, a clear review timetable and a plan to return to full-time education.

14. Behaviour outside school and online

The school may consider behaviour outside the school premises as grounds for suspension or permanent exclusion where the behaviour is linked to school, affects the welfare or safety of members of the school community, or undermines good order and discipline. This may include behaviour on the way to or from school, on educational visits, at sporting events, during residential activities, or online where there is an impact on pupils or staff.

When considering behaviour outside school, the Headteacher will apply the same principles of lawfulness, reasonableness, fairness and proportionality. Safeguarding and child-on-child abuse procedures will be followed where relevant.

15. Records, registers, monitoring and review

All suspensions and permanent exclusions will be recorded formally, including the reason or reasons for the decision, the length of any suspension, evidence considered, notifications made, support offered and reintegration arrangements. Relevant behaviour, safeguarding and prejudice-related information will be recorded on CPOMS in line with school procedures.

Attendance registers will be marked in line with statutory attendance guidance and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Where a pupil is attending approved alternative provision or another school, the appropriate attendance code will be used. Where a pupil is excluded and not attending alternative provision, the appropriate exclusion code will be used.

Following a permanent exclusion, the pupil's name will not be removed from the admission register until the statutory conditions are met. This will usually be after 15 school days have passed since parents were notified of the governing board's decision not to reinstate and no independent review has been requested, or once parents have confirmed in writing that they will not request an

independent review. If an independent review is requested, the school will wait until that review has concluded before removing the pupil from the register.

The Headteacher will report suspensions, permanent exclusions, reintegration outcomes and patterns of behaviour to governors through anonymised monitoring. Governors will use this information to challenge and support leaders, including considering patterns by year group, SEND, disability, sex, ethnicity, disadvantaged status, looked-after status, pupils with a social worker and other relevant characteristics. This monitoring will support the school's duties under safeguarding, behaviour, equality and SEND legislation.

This policy will be reviewed in July 2026 or earlier if statutory guidance changes. A revised policy will be produced when the expected post-July 2026 guidance is available.

16. Links with other policies and guidance

This policy should be read alongside:

- Promoting Positive Relationships and Supporting Behaviour Regulation Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- SEND Policy and Information Report;
- Equality Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Attendance Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Positive Handling / De-escalation / Reasonable Force Policy;
- Child-on-child abuse procedures;
- Complaints Policy.

Sources of information and advice for parents include the DfE parent guide on behaviour, suspension and permanent exclusion, Nottinghamshire SENDIAS, Coram Child Law Advice, ACE Education and IPSEA.

Appendix 1: Examples of behaviour that may lead to suspension or permanent exclusion

The following examples are not exhaustive. The Headteacher will consider each incident individually and will apply the statutory tests and principles in this policy.

- physical assault against a pupil;
- physical assault against an adult;
- verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a pupil;
- verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult;
- use, or threat of use, of an offensive weapon or prohibited item;
- bullying, including online bullying;
- racist abuse or other prejudice-related abuse;
- abuse against sexual orientation or gender reassignment;
- abuse relating to disability;
- sexual harassment or sexual violence;
- serious or persistent high-level disruption to learning;
- serious or persistent refusal to follow reasonable adult instructions where this creates risk or significant disruption;
- serious damage to property or vandalism;
- a one-off incident that causes serious harm, significant risk or whole-school disruption;
- serious misuse of technology or online behaviour that affects safety, welfare or discipline in school.

Appendix 2: Headteacher notification checklist

Who must be informed?	When?	Key information/actions
Parents	Without delay. Written notice must follow. Public-place duty information must be given by the end of the afternoon session.	Reasons; length/type; representation rights; pupil involvement; education arrangements; public-place duty; AP details; sources of advice; test/exam impact.
Local authority	Without delay for every suspension and permanent exclusion, regardless of length.	Reason(s), period/type and pupil details through the Nottinghamshire LA process. For permanent exclusion, also notify the home authority if different.
Governing board	Without delay for permanent exclusion, more than five days/ten lunchtimes in a term, or missed national curriculum test/public exam.	Provide sufficient information to enable statutory consideration and timescales.
Social worker	Without delay where the pupil has a social worker.	Period/type and reason(s); meeting details; any safeguarding or welfare information relevant to the process.
Virtual School Head	Without delay where the pupil is looked after.	Period/type and reason(s); meeting details; information needed to support the child and fulfil statutory duties.

Appendix 3: Summary of governing board duties

Circumstance	Duty	Timescale
Permanent exclusion	Must convene a meeting and consider reinstatement.	Within 15 school days of receiving notice.
Suspension(s) taking total above 15 school days in a term, including 15.5 days	Must convene a meeting and consider reinstatement.	Within 15 school days of receiving notice.
Suspension or permanent exclusion causing pupil to miss a national curriculum test or public examination	Must take reasonable steps to meet before the test/exam. If not practical in a maintained school, the Chair may consider reinstatement alone.	As soon as reasonably practicable and, where possible, before the test/exam.
Suspension(s) above five but not more than 15 school days in a term	Must meet and consider reinstatement if parents make representations. Without parental representations, the board is not required to meet and cannot direct reinstatement.	Within 50 school days of receiving notice, if parents make representations.
Suspension(s) of five school days or fewer in a term	Must consider any parental representations but cannot direct reinstatement and is not required to arrange a meeting.	No statutory meeting timescale.

Appendix 4: Reintegration meeting prompts

The reintegration meeting should be adapted to the child's age, communication needs, SEND and emotional state. It should be relational, restorative and focused on a successful return.

Area	Prompts
Welcome back	Communicate that the child is valued, belongs at Christ Church and has a fresh start.
What happened?	Use restorative questions when the child is calm enough: What happened? What were you thinking? Who has been affected? What needs to happen next?
Regulation and safety	Identify triggers, early warning signs, safe adults, safe spaces and strategies from the Zones of Regulation or regulation plan.
Repair	Agree what repair is needed. This might include an apology, practical repair, restorative conversation, or work to rebuild trust.
Learning	Check what learning has been missed and what support is needed to catch up.
Support plan	Agree targets, reasonable adjustments, adult support, review dates and how parents will be kept informed.
Review	Set a date to review progress, celebrate success and adapt support if needed.