



St Peter's
Catholic School



Faith is our Foundation

Suspension and Exclusion Policy

Details

Written by: A Williams
Approved by: J Loughran
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Next review due by: Summer 2024



This policy is written to comply with regulations, advice and guidance in the following documents:

- DfE guidance 'Suspensions from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral units in England' Published, September 2017
- Updates and addendums published in 2021
- St. Peter's Catholic School Behaviour & Discipline Policy

Ethos

The Catholic Faith is the foundation of this policy and suspensions are carried in order to support all pupils and to ensure that the school community is a safe and happy place for all member of the community to learn. Suspensions occur with the aim that the seriousness of the sanction will support a pupil in corrected their behaviour. The focus of all decisions is to be fair and allow the pupils involved to improve, progress and realise their potential.

Deciding whether to exclude a pupil

The school view the education and welfare of each and every pupil to be a serious matter. The school will endeavour to act in a way that is fair, proportionate, with consideration to the best intentions of the pupil concerned, other pupils and members of staff and the school.

A pupil would only be suspended when they have breached the schools Behaviour & Discipline Policy seriously or persistently. The school will always consider any other contributing factors when deciding to suspend and all contributing factors will be considered when considering the support required as part of the reintegration process following a suspension.

Investigations leading to Suspension

The school will make every effort to be fair in making decisions regarding suspensions. The pupil will have the opportunity to make a full written statement as soon as possible after the incident; members of staff and other pupils will also be asked to give their accounts of the incident(s). If a pupil is unable to write a statement, it can be dictated and written by a member of staff.

The Headteacher will then review the evidence and decide whether a suspension is necessary and, if so, how long it will be. When there is contradictory or uncertain evidence, the Headteacher must decide 'on the balance of probability' which account of the incident(s) is most likely to be correct.

Suspensions

The school will sometimes suspend a pupil for a fixed number of days. This will be determined by the Headteacher based on the seriousness of the incident, the previous behaviour of the pupil and other relevant circumstances. At the end of the suspension, the pupil will be re-admitted to the school following a formal meeting between the pupil, parents and a senior member of staff.

The school may suspend a pupil while an investigation takes place if the pupil's presence at school would be detrimental to the investigation or if the incident being investigated is very serious; under these circumstances, the length of the suspension will not necessarily be known at first. Similarly, if additional information becomes available after the length of the suspension has been decided, the Headteacher may shorten or extend the suspension. Parents will be made aware of this at the earliest opportunity.

Where a suspension is of five or fewer days, parents assume responsibility for an excluded child during school hours.

Fixed Term Suspensions longer than five days

The school recognises that suspensions over five days require different arrangements. Where a suspension is of six or more days the school will assume responsibility for ensuring the child receives an appropriate education from the sixth day. Arrangements will be made on a case by case basis, the most common arrangement involving a temporary placement in a neighbouring school or at an Alternative Provision Provider, currently Solihull Academy. School will inform parents of the specific arrangements during the initial suspension period including dates, times and location.

Communication

Notification for parents is made in several ways. A formal letter setting out the reasons for the suspension, the period of the fixed term, who to contact for further information and work, the return date and parent's rights to appeal, together with statutory legal information is normally sent the same day by first class post to the primary address and a member of the administration team will call the telephone number(s) available to further inform parents. A copy of the letter will be given to the pupil who is being suspended. Two members of staff will inform the pupil of the suspension details, including the reason the decision has been made. The focus will always be on ensuring the pupils understands their wrongdoing and resolution.

Exclusion

A permanent exclusion would only be used as a last resort in response to a serious incident or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour and Discipline Policy; and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in school. In all cases parents are informed by telephone and a written letter.

Suspensions being extended

Sometimes the school will set an initial suspension period, and this may then be extended. This happens because:

- The full events surrounding the situation need further investigation or further information comes to light
- The school is waiting for other agencies (e.g. the police) to make further enquiries
- A multi-agency planning meeting needs to be arranged

Reintegration interviews

Pupils returning from a suspension will have a formal meeting with a senior member of staff before they return to lessons. Parents and the pupil concerned are expected to attend – it is vital that they have a chance to discuss the incident(s) and help the pupil to avoid further suspensions. The meeting will usually take place in school although on occasions may take place remotely. To support the reintegration of a pupil who has been suspended for a fixed term they would not return immediately to their normal lessons and privileges. On the day of their return pupils would work in the St Francis Room or Pupil Support Room and work with one of the Pupil Support mentors to ensure that their reintegration is a successful one. Other strategies to ensure a successful return may include mediation or a reconciliation meeting.

Right of appeal

Parents have the right to make representations about this decision to the Governing Body. Those who wish to make representations contact the Clerk to the Governors, via the Main School Office, as soon as possible. Whilst the Governing Body has no power to direct reinstatement, they must consider any representations you make and may place a copy of their findings on your child's school record.

Parents should also be aware that if they believe the suspension relates to a disability their child has, and they think disability discrimination has occurred, they have the right to appeal, and/or make a claim, to the First Tier Tribunal <http://www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/send/appeals> Making a claim would not affect your right to make representations to the Governing Body.

Parents have the right to see and have a copy of their child's school record. The School will be happy to supply a copy on request but due to confidentiality restrictions the School must be notified in writing and the file collected. There may be a charge for photocopying.

Information

The following sources of advice are available:

- Solihull Local Authority Suspensions Team, can provide advice on the suspension process. Tel: 0121 704 6663, e-mail: inclusion@solihull.gov.uk
- The Children's Legal Centre. They aim to provide free legal advice and information to parents on state education matters. They can be emailed at <http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com>.
- The Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) offer advice to parents of children in state schools through their website: www.ace-ed.org.uk and their advice line service on 03000 115 142 on Monday to Wednesday from 10 am to 1 pm during term time)
- If your child has special educational needs you may wish to contact Solihull SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Information, Advice and Support Service who are a local source of independent advice. Their Helpline number is 0121 516 5173 or you can email them at solihullsendias@family-action.org.uk. They are based at Sans Souci, Tanworth Lane, Shirley B90 4DD
- Statutory guidance on suspension can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-suspension>

Related policies

- Anti-bullying strategy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy