

Exclusion Policy

Exclusion policy: document provenance

Approver	School and college trust leaders
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Policy authors	Behaviour cross-cutting team
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Summary of changes in this review	• All references to 'fixed term exclusion' changed to 'suspension' • Greater clarity around safeguarding arrangements • Greater clarity around students with special educational needs and / or disabilities (with or without an EHCP) students • A sentence has been added to state suspensions and permanent exclusions will be monitored and analysed • Further detail added around the purposeful reintegration of a student following a suspension •
Related policies and documents	• Anti-bullying policy • Care and control of students policy • Child protection and safeguarding policy • Positive behaviour policy • SEND policy • Education Act 1996, 2002, 2011 • Education and Inspections Act 2006 • School discipline regulations 2012 • Education (provision of full time education for excluded pupils) regulations (2007, amended 2014) • Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 • DfE Suspensions and Exclusion guidance, updated 2026 • DfE improving behaviour in schools • Working together to improve school attendance, updated 2026

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, the policy will be reviewed as per the review cycle. Should no substantive change be required at this point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.



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1.0 Policy statement

- 1.1 Dixons Academies Trust is committed to providing a quality education and experience for all students and supporting continued access to this, to the greatest extent possible, through any difficulties they may face. Any decision to use a suspension or permanent exclusion is a serious one, and all our academies work proactively and preventatively to avoid the use of those measures if possible. There are times when it may be necessary to use suspension or permanent exclusion in response to the most serious breaches of our behaviour policies. All decisions made will be lawful, reasonable and fair, with clear communication prioritised and support for the student, particularly their safeguarding and wellbeing needs, always running parallel to suspension and exclusion procedures.
- 1.2 This policy covers all students across Dixons Academies Trust, with the exception of the Dixons Sixth Form.
- 1.3 Throughout this policy we have used the term 'family' to refer to students' parents or carers, i.e. those with lawful parental responsibility (PR) including, where relevant, the corporate parent.
- 1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:
- Anti-bullying
 - Care and control of students
 - Child protection safeguarding
 - Positive behaviour
 - SEND
- 1.5 This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles and legislation established by:
- Education Act (1996, 2002, 2011)
 - Education and Inspections Act (2006)
 - School Discipline Regulations (2012)
 - Education [Provision of Full time Education for Excluded Pupils] Regulations (2007, amended 2014)
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
 - Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained School, Academies and PRUs (July 2026)
 - Working Together to Improve School Attendance (July 2026)

2.0 Scope and purpose

- 2.1 This policy outlines our implementation of the DfE guidance in relation to suspensions and permanent exclusions.
- 2.2 The purpose of this policy is to make clear the specific procedures and responsibilities relating to the use of suspensions and permanent exclusions and, to avoid repetition, wherever possible the appropriate more detailed documentation will be signposted.
- 2.3 This policy must be implemented in light of our responsibilities under Keeping Children Safe in Education and the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and related trust policies, namely our child protection and safeguarding policy and SEND policy.
- 2.4 This policy sets out the individual responsibilities within our academies to provide clarity to all stakeholders.

3.0 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The trust board

- 3.2 The trust board is responsible for ensuring all schools are compliant with the duties set-out in the [DfE guidance](#). Some of these duties are delegated in line with the trust's scheme of delegation but overall accountability remains with the trust board. These duties include:
- Ensuring a suitable full-time education is arranged no later than the sixth day for any student being excluded. This responsibility is delegated to the academy principal.
 - Considering a parents' representations about a suspension or permanent exclusion. This is delegated to the Resolutions Committee, which is a committee to the trust board with formal terms of reference, and further details are provided below. An easy to follow flow diagram of the committee's role to consider a student's reinstatement is provided in the DfE Guidance (p.43) and attached as an appendix to this policy (Appendix 1).
 - Removing a student's name from roll when they have been permanently excluded and a) the resolutions committee has met and declined to reinstate the student and b) either no Independent Review Panel (IRP) or has been requested by the



family within 15 school days of the committee's decision or an IRP has met and upheld the committee's decision. This duty is delegated to the academy principal.

3.3 The resolutions committee duty to consider reinstatement

- 3.4 In the case of a suspension of fewer than five days in a term (two Dixons terms), the resolutions committee may hear a family's representation but does not have the power to reinstate.
- 3.5 In the case of a suspension, individually or cumulative, of more than five days but less than fifteen and a half days in one term (two Dixons terms), the resolutions committee will consider any representations made by the family within 50 school days but is not required to meet if the family do not make representations.
- 3.6 In the case of a suspension of more than fifteen days, individually or cumulative, in a term (two Dixons terms) the resolutions committee must meet to consider reinstatement regardless of whether the family has made representations or not. The committee must meet within 15 school days of being notified of the suspension, or as soon as reasonably possible. ,.
- 3.7 In the case of any suspension that means a student will miss a public exam or national curriculum test, the resolutions committee will take all reasonable steps to consider reinstatement before the date of the examination. If this is not possible, the panel chair may consider the pupil's reinstatement alone.
- 3.8 In the case of a permanent exclusion, the resolutions committee must meet to consider reinstatement within 15 school days of receiving the notification. The committee must make reasonable endeavours to arrange the meeting within the statutory time limits and must have it at a time that suits all relevant parties. Its decision will not be invalid simply on the grounds that it was not made within these time limits.

3.9 The principal

- 3.10 Only the principal can suspend or permanently exclude a student on disciplinary grounds. A student may be suspended for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year) or permanently excluded.
- 3.11 When establishing the facts, the principal must apply the civil standard of proof: 'on the balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that a fact is true, rather than the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'.
- 3.12 The principal has the right to direct a student to off-site education. A permanent managed move as a preventative measure or as an alternative to permanent exclusion must involve the agreement of the family. Families will be invited to a face-to-face meeting to be informed of either decision. The meeting will be followed up with a letter.
- 3.13 The principal must notify the family without delay with following information in writing:
- the reason(s) for the suspension or permanent exclusion
 - the period of a suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent
 - parents' right to make representations about the suspension or permanent exclusion to the resolutions committee (in line with the requirements set out in the DfE guidance and how the student may be involved in this;
 - parents' (or an excluded student if they are 18 years or older) right to make a request to hold the meeting via the use of remote access and how and to whom to make this request
 - how any representations should be made; and
 - where there is a legal requirement for the governing board to consider the suspension or permanent exclusion, that parents or an excluded pupil (if they are 18 years or older) have a right to attend a meeting, to be represented at that meeting (at their own expense) and to bring a friend.
- 3.14 When notifying the family about the suspension or permanent exclusion the principal should draw attention to relevant sources of free and impartial information. This information should include Coram Children's Legal Centre or Ace Advice and Information Services, as well as a link to the most recent legal guidance on school exclusions. Full details of what should be included can be found in the DfE guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement, July 2026.
- 3.15 The principal must notify the head of governance immediately in the case of a permanent exclusion. They must also inform the Local Authority, or, if it is different, the local authority of the home address, of any permanent exclusion.
- 3.16 There should be a clear process for ensuring that families, social workers / virtual school heads (where appropriate), the governance department and local authority (where appropriate) are notified within the appropriate timeframes and with the reason(s) and parameters of the exclusion clearly stated.
- 3.17 All staff are responsible for knowing and understanding the systems in place to support the behaviour, upholding them within their academy and seeking support if necessary.
- 3.18 All students have a responsibility to behave in a way that does not disrupt the learning, wellbeing or safety of themselves, their peers or any adult in the academy or wider academy community. A student's behaviour outside the academy can be



considered grounds for a suspension or permanent exclusion.

- 3.19 Before any suspension or permanent exclusion is issued, the principal will liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and academy SENCO to review whether any underlying safeguarding need or special educational need may have contributed to the behaviour, and whether support, intervention or referral should be considered first.
- 3.20 All staff will receive regular safeguarding training in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, including awareness of the risks of exclusion and disproportionate impact on vulnerable students.

3.21 Families

- 3.22 The family may request a review from a resolutions committee to review a suspension that is more than five days in length.
- 3.23 The family has a duty to ensure their student is not in a public place at any time during the school day whilst they are suspended. Failure to comply with this could lead to a fixed penalty notice or prosecution.
- 3.24 In the case of a permanent exclusion, a meeting will be arranged and the family may arrange representation and / or bring a friend. The local authority may be able to attend the hearing as an observer and the panel will need to consent if the family want the local authority to make representations on their behalf.
- 3.25 Families have the right to apply for a review by an independent review panel within 15 school days of being notified of the outcome of the resolutions committee hearing.

4.0 Prevention

- 4.1 Each academy is committed to making full use of preventative measures, as outlined in detail in the positive behaviour policy, as their main way of avoiding a suspension or permanent exclusion for all students. Students will not be suspended or permanently excluded unless it is absolutely necessary to do so and if it is felt that no other viable alternative is available, such as in response to serious or continuous breaches of the positive behaviour policy or if the student remaining would harm the education or welfare of other students or staff.
- 4.2 In addition to the measures outlined in the positive behaviour policy, and other than in the case of a one-off but very serious behaviour incident, the permanent exclusion of a student will be the final sanction at the end of a lengthy series of procedures that have been put in place to support the student to improve their behaviour. These procedures may include but are not limited to:
- an identified key worker within their academy
 - review of their curriculum provision, class / group, seating arrangements, non-lesson time etc.
 - therapeutic support available within the academy e.g. counselling, youth worker, safer schools police officer
 - Pastoral Support Plan
 - referral to external agencies e.g. CAMHS, Educational Psychology, Youth Services
 - referral to the services provided by the Local Authority's Early Help offer
 - referral for a needs assessment for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
 - for students who are looked after by the Local Authority, liaison with the virtual school
 - for students who are on Child in Need or Child Protection Plans, liaison with their social worker
 - for students who have an existing EHCP or identified special educational needs and / or disabilities (with or without an EHCP), liaison with the Local Authority SEND team
- 4.3 All students are entitled to the full extent of our preventative measures and support but we also recognise that there are some students who, due to other factors present in their life, may be additionally vulnerable in relation to all types of exclusion. These additional vulnerabilities can both increase risk of exclusion as well as exacerbate the negative impacts of being excluded. These additional vulnerabilities may include but are not limited to:
- special educational needs and / or disabilities (with or without an EHCP)
 - medical needs
 - mental health needs
 - young carers
 - children who are looked after by the Local Authority, including those who were formerly looked after by the Local Authority
 - children who are on a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan
- 4.4 Our trust is committed to recognising these additional vulnerabilities and prioritising affected students when working



preventatively and supportively with them and their families. This may, for example, be by providing support at an earlier stage, a broader package of support, or by involving specialists from other agencies.

- 4.5 Where a student is identified as special educational needs and / or disabilities (with or without an EHCP), the SENCO and any relevant professionals from outside the academy, will be consulted before a decision is made. Where a student is currently or has previously been looked after by the Local Authority, the Virtual School will be consulted before a decision is made. For any student who has an allocated social worker for any reason, the social worker will be consulted before any decision is made.
- 4.6 Reasonable adjustments and appropriate support strategies will be considered and evidenced as part of the decision-making process.
- 4.7 Our success as a trust is built on the three-way relationship between home, academy and student. All families sign our three-way partnership when their student enters one of our academies and, with that as the starting point, we expect families to work alongside us in supporting good behaviour and the measures we put in place to support their student to learn, grow, succeed and thrive.
- 4.8 Off-site direction to another school or alternative provision, either full time or as part of a combination of this and continued mainstream provision, can be a supportive preventative measure for some students at risk of exclusion. Full statutory and non-statutory guidance can be found in the publication, DfE guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement, July 2026, and must be adhered to whenever off-site direction is being considered.
- 4.9 A managed move to another school can also be a supportive preventative measure for some students at risk of exclusion. Managed moves should only be offered as a permanent transfer, only when the student has been attending the receiving school under an off-site direction and review has deemed that they have settled in successfully, and only when voluntary and agreed with all parties involved, including families and the receiving school itself.
- 4.10 Our trust will monitor suspension and permanent exclusion data across all academies to ensure decisions are lawful, proportionate and equitable. Analysis will include consideration of pupils with protected characteristics, special educational needs and / or disabilities (with or without an EHCP), children who are looked after by the Local Authority, children who were previously looked after by the Local Authority and students with social workers.

5.0 Issuing suspensions and permanent exclusions

- 5.1 The issuing of a suspension or permanent exclusion is at the discretion of the principal and reasons may include, but are not limited to:
- physical assault against another student
 - physical assault against an adult
 - verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against another student
 - verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult
 - use or threat of use of an offensive weapon or prohibited item
 - child on child abuse
 - racist abuse
 - abuse against sexual orientation or gender reassignment
 - abuse relating to disability
 - repeat disruption and refusal to adhere to behaviour policy
- 5.2 All schools must provide information via the school census on any student subject to suspension or permanent exclusion in the previous two terms (four Dixons terms) and up to three reasons can be recorded per exclusion.
- 5.3 Any time a student is told or forced to leave the academy, or not allowed to attend, is either a suspension (if temporary) or permanent exclusion if it is for disciplinary reasons and it must be done in accordance with this policy and the statutory regulations that inform it. Suspending a student for a short period of time, such as a half day, is allowed but the formal process for a suspension, including recording of the suspension, must be followed.
- 5.4 A student being told or forced to leave the academy, or not allowed to attend, without the formal process being followed is unlawful. Reasons a school might do this include but are not limited to:
- the student having special educational needs and / or disabilities that the school feels they cannot meet
 - failure of student and / or families to attend a meeting at the end of the suspension



- putting pressure on a family to remove their child, possibly under the threat of permanent exclusion, and encouraging Elective Home Education or to find another school place

- 5.5 If any of these unlawful exclusions are carried out and lead to the deletion of a student's name from the register, this is known as 'off-rolling'.
- 5.6 If a family feels that the procedures relating to an exclusion have not been followed, or they feel pressured into home educating or finding another school for their child, they can follow the processes in our trust's complaints policy.
- 5.7 All schools have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of their students, including a duty to cooperate with the local statutory safeguarding partnership agencies, and any decision to exclude a student must be made with due regard to the most recently published version of Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- 5.8 All decisions to exclude should be made with the support and advice of the designated safeguarding lead in order to ensure any known additional risk of harm to the student that might arise or be exacerbated by an exclusion are taken into account.

6.0 Suspension

- 6.1 A suspension is when a student is temporarily removed from the school for a fixed period of time. Suspensions do not have to form a continuous period of time and can range in duration from a half day through to a maximum of 45 days in a single academic year. Only the principal can issue a suspension. Once issued, a suspension cannot be brought to an end early, extended or converted to a permanent exclusion, although in some circumstances (for example, if new information has emerged) a second suspension or permanent exclusion may be issued immediately after the first one ended.

6.2 Procedures

- 6.3 Any time a student is sent home for disciplinary reasons, including if they are provided with work or asked to utilise online options such as Oak Academy, it should always be recorded as a suspension.
- 6.4 The academy's legal duties to make reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs and / or disabilities remains in force.
- 6.5 There should be a formal process for arranging, at short notice, suitable full time alternative education for students receiving a suspension of over 5 school days. However, where a student receives consecutive suspensions, the days are considered cumulatively and education must be arranged for the sixth day onwards regardless of whether this is the result of one decision to suspend or multiple.
- 6.6 A suspension can be for parts of the academy day, for example if a student's behaviour is disruptive at lunchtime they may be suspended from the premises for the duration of the lunchtime period, and the legal requirements for notification of other parties remains the same. Part day suspensions are counted as a half day when determining whether a resolutions committee meeting should be triggered.
- 6.7 Each academy should have a clear system for monitoring the 45 days suspensions rule, including suspensions receiving with that academic year from previous schools the student has attended.
- 6.8 A suspension can provide a clear signal to a student that their behaviour has been unacceptable, but if this type of suspension becomes a regular occurrence, the principal should consider whether suspension alone is an affective sanction and whether other strategies need to be put in place.
- 6.9 Following a suspension, the academy will take reasonable steps to meet with families and students to ensure there is clarity around the reason for the action and to discuss the student's reintegration, including ongoing intervention and support. The meeting will be chaired by the principal or, in their absence, another senior member of staff.
- 6.10 Students returning from a suspension, or after a period of being off-site, e.g. following an off-site direction or reinstatement, there should be a plan in place for managing their future behaviour, possibly utilising some of the strategies described in item 34 of the DfE guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement, July 2026.
- 6.11 Following a suspension, the school will offer a reintegration meeting with the student and family. The purpose of the meeting is to:
- support a successful return to school
 - identify any underlying needs or barriers
 - agree support strategies
 - reduce the likelihood of repeat suspensions

7.0 Permanent exclusion

- 7.1 A permanent exclusion is when a student is no longer allowed to attend the academy (unless they are later reinstated) and should only be utilised in response to a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of the positive behaviour policy, and when



allowing the student to remain would seriously harm the education or welfare of the other students or staff.

- 7.2 There may be exceptional circumstances where, in the principal's judgement, it is appropriate to permanently exclude a student for a first or 'one off' offence. This could include but is not limited to:
- serious actual or threatened violence against another student or member of staff
 - sexual, racial or homophobic assault
 - supplying or using an illegal drug
 - carrying an offensive weapon

7.3 Procedures

- 7.4 The principal can cancel any exclusion that has already begun (or one that has not yet begun) but this can only happen when the resolutions committee has not yet met to consider whether the student should be reinstated.
- 7.5 Work should be set and marked for students during the first five days of an exclusion unless they are already attending an alternative provision.
- 7.6 The academy's legal duties to make reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs and / disabilities remains in force during the first five days of the exclusion.
- 7.7 The student's home Local Authority must arrange suitable full-time education no later than the sixth day of a permanent exclusion.

7.8 Resolutions committee

- 7.9 A meeting of the resolutions committee must be convened within 15 school days of notification of the permanent exclusion to consider and decide whether to uphold the principal's decision or to reinstate the student. The committee must make reasonable endeavours to arrange the meeting within the statutory time limits and must have it at a time that suits all relevant parties. Its decision will not be invalid simply on the grounds that it was not made within these time limits.
- 7.10 The family will be informed of the outcome of the committee meeting within 5 school days of the meeting.

7.11 Independent review panel

- 7.12 An independent review panel does not have the power to direct the trust to reinstate a student but, if they consider the committee's decision to be flawed, it can direct them to reconsider.
- 7.13 A student's name must be removed from the school admission register once 15 days have passed since the families were notified of the committee's decision to not reinstate and no application has been made for an independent review panel, or if the families have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent review panel.
- 7.14 Where an application for an independent review panel has been made within 15 days, the academy must wait until the outcome has been determined before removing the student's name from their roll.

7.15 Removing from the admissions register

- 7.16 When a student's name is deleted from the admissions register due to a permanent exclusion, the academy must make a return to the Local Authority; full details of what must be included can be found in the publication, Suspension and Permanent Exclusion (2026).
- 7.17 The deletion of the student's name cannot be backdated to the date the exclusion began.
- 7.18 The Local Authority is responsible for overseeing any financial readjustment / payment necessary to ensure that the right resources and support goes with the student following a permanent exclusion.

8.0 Monitoring and review

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed annually and will be approved by school and college trust leaders.



A summary of the governing board's duties to consider reinstatement⁶²⁶³⁶⁴

Conditions of exclusion

Governing board duties

Does the exclusion meet any of the following conditions?

- It is a permanent exclusion
- It is a suspension that alone, or in conjunction with previous exclusions, will take the pupil's total number of days out of school above 15 for a term. This includes suspensions that total 15.5 days
- It is a suspension or permanent exclusion that will result in the pupil missing a public exam or national curriculum test*

↓ Yes

The governing board must convene a meeting to consider reinstatement **within 15 school days** of receiving notice of the suspension or permanent exclusion.⁶³⁶²

*If the pupil will miss a public exam or national curriculum test, the governing board must take reasonable steps to meet **before** the date of the examination. If this is not practical, the chair of governors may consider pupil's reinstatement alone.⁶⁴⁶⁴

↓ No

Will the suspension(s) take the pupil's total number of school days out of school above five but less than 16 for the term?

↓ No

The governing board must consider any representations made by parents but does not have the power to decide whether to reinstate the pupil.

Yes

Has the parent made representations?

↓ Yes

The governing board must convene a meeting to consider reinstatement within 50 school days of receiving notice of the suspension.

↓ No

The governing board is not required to consider the suspension and does not have the power to decide to reinstate the pupil.

⁶² Parents on diagram refer to parent if the pupil is under 18 or the excluded pupil, aged 18 or over.

⁶³ The governing board may delegate its functions to consider a suspension or permanent exclusion to a designated committee.

⁶⁴ The ability for a chair to review in the case of public exams refers only to maintained schools.