

Suspension and Exclusion Policy

March 2026



The Stour Academy Trust

Introduction

This document is a statement of aims, principles and strategies for the school.

DfE guidelines have been taken into consideration in the formulation of this policy. To establish the general ethos of the school, it should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy. KCC guidelines have also been considered when producing this policy.

Rationale

This document provides a framework for an orderly environment in which children can both learn and develop. It is important to us that children in the school are able to learn in an environment where the expectation of pupil behaviour is high, providing all pupils with the opportunity to learn unhindered.

The school will manage and promote pupils personal, social, health and emotional education alongside the aims set out below:

Aims

- To promote the inclusion of all pupils in the learning process by developing teaching strategies that avoid the need for exclusion or suspension in any form.
- Ensuring every child has the right to learn unhindered.
- To follow the statutory requirements as set out by law, for all children to access education.
- To ensure all decisions relating to suspension and exclusion comply with the Equality Act 2010, including consideration of reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND or disabilities.

Principles

The establishment of a sound, positive and caring ethos is an essential prerequisite for learning. It depends upon pupils taking responsibility for their own learning and behaviour, together with the establishment of trusting relationships and a process of cooperative teamwork. The school will prioritise early intervention and pastoral support strategies to address underlying causes of behaviour before considering suspension or exclusion.

The school welcomes and encourages the involvement of parents and carers, the Local Authority, Trustees and others in the community in supporting the school's aims.

Responsibilities

The headteacher will ensure that any decision to suspend or permanently exclude is lawful, reasonable, and proportionate, and will take account of safeguarding, SEND needs, disability, age, and whether reasonable adjustments have been made. All decisions will be supported by documented evidence.

- Ensure all suspension and exclusion decisions are lawful, reasonable, and proportionate, based on clear evidence.
- Consider SEND, disability, safeguarding factors, and reasonable adjustments before deciding to exclude.
- Notify parents without delay, explaining the reason, duration, legal rights, and support available.
- Notify the Board of Trustees and local authority within required timescales depending on the length and type of exclusion.
- Arrange suitable full-time Day 6 education for suspensions over 5 days and supply necessary information to the LA for permanent exclusions.

- Supply complete and accurate documentation to support Board of Trustee review, including behaviour records, interventions, and evidence.
- Record exclusions accurately in attendance registers and use the correct DfE codes, ensuring all data is reported correctly.
- Hold a reintegration meeting with parents following each suspension and ensure support plans are in place.
- Consider and document alternatives to exclusion, such as pastoral interventions, managed moves, or lawful off-site direction, ensuring these are not misused.
- Ensure internal exclusions are lawful, supervised and do not restrict curriculum access.

Internal Exclusion

Internal exclusion 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 area within the school with a senior leader. An internal exclusion 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 suspension. Internal exclusions will not be used to circumvent formal suspension procedures. Pupils will have access to the curriculum and appropriate supervision throughout. All internal exclusions will be recorded. 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 the adults within the school, Individual Behaviour Support Plan etc). Headteachers will always consider the proportionality of the sanction, along with a consideration of any alternative interventions, SEN/disability factors, safeguarding and whether all earlier steps have been exhausted.

There are two types of formal exclusion:

- Suspension, which can range from half a day to a maximum of 45 school days in a school year. (A child can also be suspended for lunchtimes.)
- Permanent.

Suspension

Parents will be notified of the reason for the suspension without delay, and the notification letter will include all prescribed information, including clear timelines, so the parent is fully informed of when the suspension starts, the total days, and of their rights and responsibilities regarding the suspension. Before the child is re-admitted to school, a meeting between the parents and the school will be arranged. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss strategies, any adaptations to the child's provision and a way forward to ensure that the offending behaviour is not repeated.

A written record of the discussion, and commitments to the agreed plan, by both the parents and the school, will be made.

Length of suspension

Suspension for less than 5 school days

If any exclusion is for less than 5 school days the Board of Trustees should review any representation made by parents / carers, but it cannot direct reinstatement and is not required to arrange a meeting with parents.

Suspension for more than 5 school days but not more than 15 days in a term

If any exclusion is for more than 5 school days (running concurrently) parents/carers can make representations to the Board of Trustees to review the exclusion. The Board of Trustees must consider and decide within 50 school days of receiving the notice of suspension whether the suspended pupil should be reinstated. In the absence of any representations from the parents, the Board of Trustees is not required to meet and cannot direct the reinstatement of the pupil.

The Board of Trustees must consider and decide on the reinstatement of a suspended or permanently excluded pupil within 15 school days of receiving notice of a suspension or permanent exclusion from the headteacher if:

- it is a permanent exclusion.
- it is a suspension which would bring the pupil's total number of school days out of school to more than 15 in a term.
- it would result in the pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test.

For suspensions exceeding five school days, the school will arrange suitable, full-time education from the sixth school day

Permanent exclusion

When exclusion is permanent, the panel of Trustees must meet to review the exclusion. Parents / carers and an LA representative must be invited, in person or remotely, to review the meeting.

Even if the parents/carers did not attend the Board of Trustees Panel meeting, they have the right to appeal to an Independent Review Panel if the Board of Trustees uphold the decision to exclude.

The Board of Trustees will meet to review the decision to exclude a child within the statutory timescales.

Parents/carers are entitled to take a friend or legal representative to the meeting.

A representative of the LA will normally be present at the meeting.

Before issuing a permanent exclusion, the headteacher will demonstrate that the behaviour represents a serious breach or persistent breaches of the behaviour policy and that allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Recording and Monitoring

All suspensions and exclusions will be recorded using the correct DfE attendance codes. Data will be reported to the Local Authority in line with statutory requirements. No pupil will be removed from roll except through the statutory exclusion process.

Board of Trustees Panel – What happens?

The meeting will be chaired by one of the Trustees and will be as informal as possible.

The school (represented by either Headteacher or SENDCo) will explain the reason(s) for the exclusion and all participants will have the opportunity to ask questions.

Parents/carers, or their representative will be asked to make a statement and may be asked questions.

The LA representative will provide impartial advice to all parties during the meeting.

After the meeting the Trustees will make a decision, which they will confirm in writing giving their reasons without delay. The Trustees can either uphold the exclusion or direct reinstatement. When a child is permanently excluded, the LA is responsible for the child's education from the 6th school day.

Independent Review Panel

If the Board of Trustees uphold the decision to exclude a child permanently, the parents/carers have the right of appeal to an Independent Review Panel.

Should I appeal to the Independent Review Panel (IRP)?

The Education Act 2002 (as amended by the Education Act 2011), requires all Local Authorities (LAs) and Academies to make arrangements for enabling parents to apply for a review of the decision of a Governing Body of an Academy not to reinstate a pupil who has been permanently excluded from a school maintained by a LA or Academy.

The appeal must receive notification in writing/by email advising that you wish to appeal. This must be done within 15 school days of the date you received the Trustees' decision letter. The appeal letter must set out the reasons for applying for a review and, if relevant, state how you consider your child's SEN are relevant to the exclusion.

IMPORTANT: Whether or not your child has recognised special educational needs, you have a right to request that the Local Authority / Academy appoint a SEN expert to attend the review.

Should you wish for a SEN expert to attend the review hearing, you must clearly state this at the time you apply for a review of the Governors' decision.

Sign and date the letter, and forward to:

Clerk to Independent Review Panel
Governance & Law
Room 1.99
Sessions House
County Hall, Maidstone
ME14 1XQ

Email: appeals@kent.gov.uk

Tel: 01622 694297

We do act on behalf of some voluntary aided, foundation, academies and free schools, however in the first instance you should contact the clerk to the Trustees by email to clerk@stouracademytrust.org.uk or through the school office directly.

What powers does the Independent Review Panel have?

The IRP can decide to:

- uphold the exclusion i.e. refuse your application; or
- recommend that the governing body / proprietor reconsiders their decision; or
- quash the decision and direct that the governing body / proprietor considers the exclusion again.

For further details please refer to: [A Parent's Guide To Applying For A Review By Independent Review Panel from KCC](#)

[Model Letter \(1\) SUSPENSION OF 5 SCHOOL DAYS OR FEWER IN ONE TERM Sept 24.doc](#)

[Model Letter \(1\) SUSPENSION OF 5 SCHOOL DAYS OR FEWER IN ONE TERM Sept 24.docx](#)

[Model Letter \(1\) SUSPENSION OF 5 SCHOOL DAYS OR FEWER IN ONE TERM Sept 241.docx](#)

[Model Letter \(1a\) SUSPENSION OF 5 DAYS OR UNDER BUT OVER 5 IN ONE TERM Sep24.doc](#)

[Model Letter \(2\) SUSPENSION OF MORE THAN 5 SCHOOL DAYS \(UP TO AND INCLUDING 15 DAYS\) IN A TERM Sept24.doc](#)

[Model Letter \(3\) SUSPENSION OF MORE THAN 15 SCHOOL DAYS IN TOTAL IN ONE TERM Sept24.docx](#)

[Model Letter \(4\) PERMANENT EXCLUSION Sep24.docx](#)

[Model Letter \(5\) UPHOLDING A PERMANENT EXCLUSION Sept 24.docx](#)

[Model Letter \(5\) UPHOLDING A PERMANENT EXCLUSION Sept 24.docx](#)