

HEREFORDSHIRE PUPIL REFERRAL SERVICE



Suspensions and Exclusions Policy

Status	Statutory
Responsible Management Committee (MC)	Curriculum, Attendance and Wellbeing
Date last approved by MC	September 2023
Responsible Person	Headteacher
To Review Date	September 2024
Last Amended Date	September 2023

Rationale

This policy is an appendix of the Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service (HPRS) Behaviour Policy and follows guidance as set out in the Department for Education Guidance: *Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement, dated September 2023*; it deals with the policy and practice which informs the use of suspension and permanent exclusion. It is underpinned by the shared commitment of all members of our community to achieve a very important aim: ***To ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils, and to maintain an appropriate educational environment where children and young people are protected from disruption and are in a calm, safe, and supportive learning environment that brings out the best in every pupil.***

Statement

The decision to suspend any pupil for a fixed period will only be taken when all other options have been fully exhausted or will not reduce the disruption or risk to our other pupils. In exceptional cases, permanent exclusion may be considered where all other avenues for a change of placement or alternative programme have been exhausted and the following two criteria are met:

- In response to serious breaches of the HPRS Behaviour Policy
- If allowing the pupil to remain in the school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in HPRS.

DFE guidance states that both have to be proven both to be true (Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement, dated September 2023. Page 13, item 11). However, the context of HPRS and its role in providing for permanently excluded children makes it unacceptable, in all but the most exceptional of cases, for a child to be permanently excluded from our service.

Roles and responsibilities

The decision to suspend a pupil from HPRS can and will only be taken by the Head of Centre or, in their absence, the Deputy Head of Centre (Assistant Head Teacher, Associate Leader), to whom the authority to suspend has been delegated. No other

staff member can make this decision or send a child home without the permission of the Head of Centre or their delegated Deputy. ***Sending a pupil home without a suspension where the pupil is not unwell is not an acceptable response to any situation.***

Deciding to exclude

The decision to suspend a pupil is a matter of judgement for the Head of Centre (or the delegated Deputy), who will take into account the likely impact of the misconduct on the life of HPRS. This may include behaviour on the school premises or during school visits that is in breach of the standards of behaviour expected by HPRS. Behaviour outside of school will not be sanctioned by a suspension as this does not address the behaviour itself, which can be better dealt with within the school environment.

HPRS caters primarily for pupils who exhibit behavioural difficulties, but this does not mean that the expectations of behaviour are low or that pupils preventing others from learning or staff from effectively carrying out their duties in relation to teaching, is acceptable. However, staff will work with pupils to avoid exclusion wherever possible, using alternative strategies as well as considering a restorative approach to incidents.

Permanent Exclusions

Permanent exclusions will not be used apart from in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the Local Authority, as this is in contradiction to the ethos and values of HPRS. However, alternative programmes may be put in place for any pupil where their placement is no longer tenable. In the case of pupils with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP), pupils whose placements are at risk of breaking down will be referred to the SEN Team for an interim review.

Suspensions

The length of a suspension is the decision of the Head of Centre based on their professional judgement and the information provided by any staff involved in the incident/circumstances leading up to this. The Head of Centre may exclude a pupil for up to 45 days in any one academic year. Generally, suspensions will be for one to three days. More serious incidents will incur suspensions of 5 days. Suspensions will only ever be the decision of the Head of Centre or their Deputy.

No other member of staff can make the decision to send a child home without the permission of the head of centre. No child can be sent home without an exclusion unless this is an agreed response as part of a pastoral support plan and is agreed and documented.

As an indication, the following would be deemed a reasonable but not exhaustive list of behaviours and sanctions that would warrant a suspension:

- Continual and relentless disruption to the smooth running of HPRS, which prevents others from learning;
- Sustained racial, sexist or homophobic abuse with threatening behaviour;
- Persistent bullying;
- Targeted verbal abuse to pupils or staff;

- Deliberate physical assault on staff and/ or peers which is not within a restraint situation;
- Bringing in banned or illegal items in to HPRS (e.g. drugs, alcohol, weapons);
- Significant damage to or theft of property resulting in police involvement.

Procedures following a Suspension

The Head of Centre will inform the parent/carer of the period of the suspension and the reasons for it both on the phone if contact can be made and in writing. During this process HPRS will ensure that the parent or carer is informed of their duties in the first five days.

During the period of suspension HPRS will consider strategies to address the pupil's problems and identify any support that may be necessary to promote a successful reintegration. This may form the basis of a Personal Support Programme (PSP) which can then be reviewed and amended as part of the planned return of the pupil to full-time on-site learning.

The parent/carer has the right to make representations about the suspension to the Wellbeing Committee of the Management Committee and to the Local Authority. It is expected that any child suspended remains at home during the school day and is not seen in a public area during this time.

Reintegration

A reintegration meeting with parents or carers will be held during or following the expiry of a suspension. The pupil should attend all or part of the meeting. Upon return from suspension a Pastoral Support Plan may be discussed, agreed and signed by the pupil, parents/carers and the school. This will identify the issues leading to the suspension and outline a clear set of expectations for a smooth and successful reintegration. A range of additional strategies and resources to support the reintegration process may be identified.

In the event that a meeting with parents cannot be arranged, the meeting will still be held with the pupil and an appropriate adult. Reintegration meetings may also take place at the pupil's home if the parent / carer is unable to attend HPRS. If parent/carers are unable to attend a reintegration meeting, this must not be used as a reason for delaying the pupil's return to school.

Linked Policies, Procedures and Legislation

- HPRS Behaviour Policy and Procedures
- DfE, Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement, dated September 2023
- The Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011;
- The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- The Education Act 1996; and

- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended by the Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.