



Rivermead

Together on the road to success

Exclusion of Pupils Policy

Reviewed: Yearly

Signed

Date

David Hopkins
18/12/17

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Rivermead has the highest concern for the safety and wellbeing of the whole school community, and we work hard to ensure that our ethos and environment supports student learning and success. Exclusion is a sanction used only as a last resort, and we aim to reduce the need for the use of it as far as is possible. This policy outlines the school's use of exclusions and is supported by our **school behaviour policy**.

1. Power to exclude

The head teacher/head of school are the only members of staff within the school who automatically have the power to exclude a pupil, either permanently or for a fixed-term. However, in the absence of these people the deputy head can make this decision.

The Local Advisory body can review the head teacher's decision and consider appeals from parents of excluded pupils. They may direct the reinstatement of an excluded pupil, or uphold an exclusion after a review, but they cannot exclude a pupil themselves. For more information on the Local Advisory body's role in exclusions, see section 5.

2. Reasons for exclusion

There are two main reasons for exclusion: a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy, or a situation where it is feared that the safety and wellbeing, or education, of other students is at risk.

In line with the school's behaviour policy, the following actions constitute unacceptable behaviour and may result in permanent or fixed-term exclusions:

- verbal abuse to staff and others
- verbal abuse to pupils
- physical abuse to/attack on staff
- physical abuse to/attack on pupils
- indecent behaviour
- damage to property including arson, graffiti or vandalism
- misuse of illegal drugs
- misuse of other substances
- theft
- serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff
- sexual abuse or assault
- supplying an illegal drug
- carrying an offensive weapon
- arson
- unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported, and for which school sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the pupil's behaviour.

3. Types of exclusion

3.1 Permanent exclusion

Permanent exclusion is an extremely serious sanction, and a step taken by the school only as an absolute last resort. In most cases, permanent exclusion will be used only after various alternative strategies have been tried to improve behaviour but have been

unsuccessful. There are, however, some situations in which permanent exclusion on the first offence is the only option. These include:

- serious, actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff
- sexual abuse or assault
- supplying an illegal drug
- carrying an offensive weapon
- arson.

It may be necessary for the school to involve the police if the offence warrants it. All permanent exclusions will be reviewed by the Local Advisory body to ensure that they are justified and fair. The head teacher can withdraw an exclusion that has not yet been reviewed by the Local Advisory body.

3.2 Fixed-term exclusion

The length of a fixed-term exclusion will be set out by the school at the start of the exclusion period. If a pupil is excluded for more than 45 days in one school year, they will be permanently excluded.

A fixed-term exclusion may result from a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy. It may be a first offence or persistent disruptive behaviour that requires a tougher sanction than detention, but does not warrant permanent exclusion.

A fixed-term exclusion can be changed into a permanent exclusion by the head teacher if the circumstances warrant it. In this case, parents or carers will be notified in writing with an explanation of why the change has occurred. During fixed-term exclusions and permanent exclusions, daytime supervision of the child is the responsibility of their parent or guardian.

An excluded pupil has no automatic right to take a public examination or National Curriculum tests on the school's premises. The Local Advisory body can decide whether or not to allow the pupil to sit the tests, and this will depend on the seriousness of the reason for exclusion.

3.3 Lunchtime exclusion

This is a type of fixed-term exclusion and will not be used as a long-term solution to a behaviour problem. A lunchtime exclusion counts as half a day when calculating total number of days of exclusion.

The school may decide to exclude a pupil from the school premises during the break at lunchtime if their behaviour during this time is very disruptive or dangerous to other pupils. Arrangements will be made for parents or carers to collect the excluded pupil and supervise them if their age or vulnerability warrants it. The school will not invoke a lunchtime exclusion for any period longer than a week. If the problem persists, alternative strategies will be looked at to deal with managing the pupil's behaviour.

Pupils who are entitled to free school meals will still be given this provision over their period of lunchtime exclusion.

4. Making the decision to exclude

Exclusion of any sort, for any period of time, is taken very seriously by the school, and the decision to exclude is not taken lightly. Various alternative strategies to manage behaviour will be tried before exclusion, as this sanction is only used as a last resort unless there is an immediate threat to safety within the school.

If it is decided that exclusion is necessary, the parents or carers of the pupil will be notified, and the circumstances surrounding the exclusion will be formally recorded.

4.1 Alternative behaviour management strategies

Internal inclusion

If a pupil needs to be removed from a lesson that is in progress, or a social situation, for disruptive behaviour or to calm down, it may be necessary to place that pupil elsewhere in the school. This may occur over break times and will be used in circumstances where it is not necessary to remove the pupil from the school site, but separation is needed. They will be placed in another class or somewhere where appropriate support and supervision can be provided.

Mediation

If there is a conflict between two or more pupils, a member of staff will sit down with those involved and attempt to mediate the situation through discussion. This strategy may also be used if there is a conflict between a teacher and a pupil.

Restorative justice

This strategy is dependent on the cooperation of all parties involved in an incident or situation, and will usually be used where one person has done something to upset or harm another. It can be helpful for the offender to redress the harm that they have done and hopefully learn from their mistakes. It can also provide closure for those who have been harmed.

Managed move

It may be in the best interest of a pupil to have a chance of a fresh start by moving to another school. This will only occur in consent with parents, the LA, the head teacher, and the school's Local Advisory body. The new school will be asked by the head teacher to accept the pupil.

Parents will not be put under any pressure to agree to a managed move, especially in fear of a permanent exclusion, and the school will do everything it can to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible.

4.2 Looked-after children and young people

Rivermead understands that looked-after children and young people may be more susceptible to having behavioural problems due to additional problems they may face at home. We work in conjunction with all relevant childcare authorities to support looked-after children and try every possible means of keeping them in school. Before any decision to exclude is made, the school will:

- consult the LA about alternative options to support a looked-after pupil

- consult the LA about what alternative provision will be available if the pupil is excluded
- involve the child's social worker as early as possible to help the school avoid exclusion
- work with the foster carer to improve the pupil's behaviour.

4.3 Pupils with special educational needs or a disability (SEND)

Pupils with SEN

Our school's full SEN provision is outlined in our **special educational needs policy**. We work hard to accommodate students who have behavioural difficulties or difficulties with elements of social interaction as part of their SEN. The school will try every practical alternative to exclusion, but there may be some cases where it cannot be avoided.

If a permanent exclusion is made, the head teacher will use the time between the initial decision and the Local Advisory body's review to see whether a change of circumstances might enable the school to withdraw the exclusion. It may be the case that more support is needed for the pupil, or that it is in the child's best interest that their Educational Health Care Plan be changed to name a different school, in which case the school will work with the LA and the child's parents or carers to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Pupils with a disability

If a pupil with a disability is under consideration for exclusion, the head teacher will ensure that all other possible outcomes have been tried. To justify excluding a pupil with a disability for a reason related to their disability, there must be material and substantial reason. The erosion of order and discipline in the school may be material and substantial justification, but only if reasonable adjustments have been made for the pupil's disability. You can find more information on reasonable adjustments in our **school accessibility plan**.

4.4 Ethnicity

Rivermead does not discriminate against any person and our school ethos is one of inclusion, equality, and diversity. If any person feels that they have been discriminated against due to their ethnicity they may make a formal complaint to the school following the process outlined in our **school complaints procedure**.

4.5 Investigating the circumstances

Disruptive behaviour or actions that may warrant discipline will always be investigated before the decision to exclude is made, unless there is a threat to the safety of pupils or others at the school.

Before the decision to exclude is made, the head teacher will:

- ensure that the school has made a thorough investigation
- consider all the evidence available when looking to support the allegations
- encourage the pupil to give his or her version of events
- take into account the school's behaviour policy and equal opportunities policy, and relevant equalities legislation

- find out whether the behaviour may have been provoked, for example in the case of racial or sexual harassment, or bullying
- consult other people as necessary (but not anyone on the Local Advisory body or management committee who may later have a role in reviewing the decision)
- keep a written record of discussions, interviews and actions, and retain copies of written records made by other members of staff, ensuring that witness statements are dated and signed if possible.

4.6 Confidentiality

The school will deal with all cases of exclusion and the surrounding circumstances confidentially. Information will be shared only with those who need to know it, and a breach of this may result in disciplinary action.

4.7 Recording and notifying the decision to exclude

All exclusions will be formally recorded and the head teacher will contact the parents or carers of the pupil immediately once the decision has been made to exclude, specifying why this action has been taken and the length of time that it will last. If the pupil is over 18, they will be notified directly. The decision will be confirmed in writing. The head teacher will notify the Local Advisory body and LA within one day of the decision to exclude being made.

5. Reviewing an exclusion

The Local Advisory body will review fixed-term exclusions of any length on request by parents who feel that the sanction is unjustified. They will automatically review all cases of permanent exclusion, as well as any fixed-term exclusions that would lead to a pupil being excluded for more than 15 days of a school term or missing a public exam. The review panel will look at the evidence and the records leading up to the exclusion and decide whether the head teacher has made a fair decision and if exclusion is the appropriate sanction.

The members of the Local Advisory body who are on the review panel will have the appropriate training to fulfil the role, and notes will be taken of any review proceedings.

Parents who want to appeal an exclusion can contact the Local Advisory body. Parents will be invited to a review meeting and are entitled to bring a friend or legal representative with them. Parents will be asked to provide the Local Advisory body with any written statements or evidence that they might have relating to the exclusion prior to the review meeting so that these can be circulated amongst the review panel. There will be an opportunity during the review meeting for parents to ask questions of the other parties.

The pupil concerned is encouraged to attend if they are able to fully understand the proceedings. Rivermead believes that pupils should be encouraged to take part in the review process and feel that they are listened to. This will hopefully increase the chance of a positive behaviour pattern emerging in the future. The Chair of the Local Advisory Body is David Hopkins who can be contacted via office@rivermead.medway.sch.uk.

5.1 Notification of the review decision

Parents will be notified of the outcome of the review meeting in writing. This letter will also outline how parents can request a review by the independent panel at the LA's expense if they are unhappy with the outcome of the Local Advisory body's review. The outcome will be one of the following:

- **Unlawful exclusion**

If the review panel has found that the exclusion has been made unlawfully, it will not stand. The Local Advisory body will not investigate further. Parents who have a complaint about an unlawful exclusion should follow the procedures set out in the school's complaints policy to report it.

- **Upholding the exclusion**

If the review panel finds that the exclusion is fair and just, they will uphold the decision to exclude. In this case, a letter will be sent to the parent or carer of the child outlining:

- the decision
- the reason for the decision
- the parent's right to appeal to an independent appeal panel
- the name and contact details of the person to whom to send a notice of appeal
- the date by which a notice of appeal should be given
- that the notice of appeal must set out the grounds for appeal
- that the notice of appeal should set out any grounds for alleging disability discrimination if this is the case.

- **Reinstating the pupil**

If the review panel decides that it is appropriate to reinstate the pupil immediately or by a given date, support will be given to ensure that the pupil is easily reintegrated into the school. This will include a return to school meeting with at least one member of the Senior Leadership Team, the learner and a parent or carer on school grounds.

A copy of the letter detailing the outcome will be put in the student's academic records along with any relevant papers. The Local Advisory body may also decide to arrange for an educational provision offsite to improve the child's behaviour, such as an anger management course.

6. During an exclusion

Although the school has made the decision to exclude a pupil, we maintain responsibility for the education of that child and will do everything that we can to minimise the disruption to their education.

For the first five days of any type of exclusion, the school will set and mark work that the child should complete at home under parental supervision.

From the sixth day onwards, if the exclusion is fixed-term, the school will arrange for alternative full-time educational provision. If the exclusion is permanent, the LA will arrange for this provision having assessed the child's needs. Alternative provision might be arranged at:

- another school in the area
- a shared joint facility
- a pupil referral unit
- a private provider
- a local FE college.

If the child has a statement of special educational needs, the alternative provision will meet those needs.