



# ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

## Suspension and Exclusion Policy

THIS POLICY SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH OUR BEHAVIOUR,  
RELATIONSHIPS & SEX EDUCATION, ATTENDANCE AND ANTI BULLYING POLICIES

<b>Review Frequency:</b>	Annually	<b>Review Authority:</b>	Local Governing Committee
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## Introduction

This policy adheres to the DfE statutory guidance on [Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement](#) - August 2024

School exclusions, managed moves and off-site direction are essential behaviour management tools for Head Teachers and can be used to establish high standards of behaviour in schools and maintain the safety of school communities.

For the vast majority of students at St Thomas More, suspensions and permanent exclusions may not be necessary, as other strategies can manage behaviour.

However, if approaches towards behaviour management have been exhausted, then suspensions and permanent exclusions will sometimes be necessary as a last resort. This is to ensure that other students and teaching staff are protected from disruption and can learn in safe, calm, and supportive environments.

At St Thomas More the Head Teacher will make all decisions regarding suspensions and permanent exclusions. In the absence of the Head Teacher, this is delegated to the Deputy Head Teacher.

When establishing the facts surrounding an incident which may lead to suspension or permanent exclusion, the Head Teacher must apply the civil standard of proof “on the balance of probabilities”, and not the criminal standard of “beyond reasonable doubt”.



## The Decision to Suspend or Permanently Exclude

Suspensions are fixed term for a set number of days whilst permanent exclusion results in a student being removed from the school roll. The decision to exclude a student will be taken by the Head Teacher in the following circumstances:

- In response to serious or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy;
- If allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the school;
- If the impact of not excluding the student would harm the integrity of the School's Behaviour Policy.

Before deciding whether to suspend or permanently exclude a student, the Head Teacher will ensure appropriate, balanced investigations have been carried out, considering all the evidence available. Investigations should determine whether or not there were any contributing factors affecting the child's behaviour.

The Head Teacher will take the student's views into account, considering these in light of their age and understanding, before deciding to suspend / exclude, unless it would not be appropriate to do so. They should inform the student about how their views have been factored into any decision made. Where relevant, the student will be given support to express their view, including through advocates such as parents and/or a social worker. The headteacher will also take account of any contributing factors identified after an incident of misbehaviour has occurred and consider appropriate sanctions as defined in the behaviour policy

Suspension or permanent exclusion, may be used if a student does any of the following, all of which constitute examples of unacceptable conduct, and are infringements of the school's Behaviour Policy:

- Persistently misbehaves and/or persistently disrupts the learning of others and therefore taking up an inordinate amount of staff time;
- Absconds from lessons and/or the school site and thereby puts themselves at risk
- Misbehaves in any way while on the Head Teacher's report;
- Absolutely refuses to conform to reasonable requests by a member of staff;
- Makes a malicious allegation against a member of staff;
- Swears at, or is personally insolent to a member of staff;
- Makes a physical assault on another member of the school community;
- Makes a serious, unprovoked verbal assault on another pupil;
- Is involved in the bullying of another pupil;
- Is involved with illegal, non-prescribed drugs, or those substances referred to as "legal highs", during the school day. This includes being in possession, supplying or using drugs;
- Involved with supplying or using alcohol, cigarettes [or similar] and e-cigarettes [vapes];



- Brings an offensive weapon, or an article that could be used as such to school;
- Is involved in the sharing of pornographic material or is involved in inappropriate sexualised behaviour;
- Threatens, harasses or is involved in sexual misconduct towards any member of the school community;
- Vandalises school property;
- Deliberately activates the school fire alarm without cause, thereby disrupting the school population;
- Uses social networking media or alternative digital communication inappropriately with respect to the school or its members.
- Uses derogatory language that has the potential to cause offence to other members of the school community.

It should be noted that a student's behaviour outside school can be considered grounds for a suspension or permanent exclusion.

The list above provides examples for which permanent exclusion may be deemed appropriate, however it is not possible to foresee all possibilities and permanent exclusion may result from any similar serious misdemeanour. The Head Teacher is empowered to make this decision as they see fit.



## Suspensions

Suspensions are of a fixed term nature. In line with the DfE regulations a student may be suspended for one or more fixed periods up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year. If 45 days are exceeded, then this becomes a permanent exclusion.

Prior to a suspension being issued, the needs of the student need to be carefully considered to determine if suspension is appropriate. Examples of information to be considered include:

- Behaviour record, including previous suspensions
- SEND status and needs
- Homelife / parental support
- Mental wellbeing of students and family
- PP / FSM / CIOC / Pre-CIOC status

When the decision to issue a suspension is made, parents/carers are notified immediately wherever possible. If a student has a social worker, or if a student is looked-after, the social worker and/or Virtual School Head must also be notified. In addition, the local authority is also immediately notified.

A letter will be sent by post detailing the reason(s) for the suspension, the duration, the date the exclusion ends, and information about the parents' rights to make representation about the exclusion to the Governor's Disciplinary Committee. Where there is a legal requirement for the Governors Disciplinary Committee to meet and consider the reinstatement of the student, this information will also be included within the letter.

Work will be set for the student to complete whilst the exclusion is in force. This will be coordinated by a Head or House or Head of Sixth form. For the first 5 days of any exclusion, the school will provide work for the student to complete.

If the exclusion exceeds 5 days, the school will arrange suitable alternative full-time education for the student from the 6th day of the exclusion. Details of this alternative provision, including start date, start and finish times of the provision, and the address at which the provision will take place, will also be included in the letter. Where this information on alternative provision is not reasonably ascertainable on the day of the exclusion, it may be provided in subsequent notice, but it will be provided no later than 48 hours before the provision is due to start.

During the course of a fixed term exclusion, parents/guardians are advised that they have a duty to ensure that their child is not present on the school premises or in a public place in school hours during the period of the exclusion, unless there is reasonable justification for this.

A reintegration meeting will be held following the expiry of the suspension and this will involve the student, parents/guardians, a member of the senior team and/or other staff where appropriate. During this reintegration meeting targets and interventions will be agreed by all present. These will be recorded on the reintegration form and stored on a student's record. In order to support the students returning to school targets will be shared with staff as appropriate. In addition, students will have to undertake intervention sessions targeted at changing behaviour. For example if a student is suspended for vaping, they will be required to undertake sessions on the health risks of vaping.

A copy of the reintegration template can be found in Appendix A.



A student will not be prevented from returning to the classroom environment if parents are unable or unwilling to attend a reintegration meeting.

Whilst reintegration is a fresh start, it is school practice to monitor the behaviour and work of the child very closely for the period following exclusion. This may mean the use of a report or close support by staff. In addition, depending upon the nature of the incident(s) that lead to the suspension, additional pastoral sessions may be instigated [for example to raise awareness of the health risks of vaping].



## Permanent Exclusion

The decision to exclude a child permanently is a very serious one. There are two main types of situation in which permanent exclusion may be considered:

- in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and
- where allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others such as staff or students in the school.

When the decision to issue a permanent exclusion is made, parents/carers are notified immediately wherever possible. If a student has a social worker, or if a student is looked-after, the social worker and/or Virtual School Head must also be notified. In addition, the local authority is also immediately notified.

A letter will be sent by post detailing the reason(s) for the permanent exclusion, the start date of the exclusion, and information about the parents' rights to make representation about the exclusion to the Governor's Disciplinary Committee.

The Governors' Disciplinary Committee must meet no later than 15 school days after the date on which they were notified of the permanent exclusion. The Clerk to the Governors' Disciplinary Committee will notify the parents/guardians of the date, time and location of the meeting, in which the Committee will consider the Head Teacher's decision to exclude.

For the first 5 days of the exclusion, the school will provide work for the student to complete. From the 6th day of the exclusion, the Local Authority will be responsible for providing suitable full-time education.

During the course of an exclusion, parents/guardians are advised that they have a duty to ensure that their child is not present on the school premises or in a public place in school hours during the period of the exclusion, unless there is reasonable justification for this.

The Head Teacher may cancel an exclusion that has already begun, but this will only be done where it has not yet been reviewed by the governing board. If an exclusion is cancelled, then:

- Parents, the governing board, and the LA will be notified without delay and, if relevant, the social worker and Virtual School Head;
- Parents will be offered the opportunity to meet with the Head Teacher to discuss the circumstances that led to the exclusion being cancelled;
- The student will be allowed back into school.

## The Local Governing Committee and the Governors' Disciplinary Committee

The LGC will be notified without delay of:

- any permanent exclusion (including where a suspension is followed by a decision to permanently exclude the student);
- any suspension or permanent exclusion which would result in the student being suspended or permanently excluded for a total of more than five school days (or more than ten lunchtimes) in a term; and



- any suspension or permanent exclusion which would result in the student missing a public examination or national curriculum test.

Responsibilities regarding exclusions are delegated to the Governors' Disciplinary Committee consisting of at least 3 governors.

The Governors' Disciplinary Committee has a duty to consider the reinstatement of a suspended / permanently excluded student within 15 school days of receiving the notice of the exclusion if:

- a) The exclusion is permanent;
- b) A suspension brings the student's total number of school days of suspension to more than 15 in a term;
- c) The exclusion or suspension would result in a student missing a public examination.

The following parties must be invited to a meeting of the Governors' Disciplinary Committee and allowed to make representations or share information:

- parents (and, where requested, a representative or friend);
- the student if they are 18 years or over;
- the headteacher;
- a representative of the local authority
- the child's social worker if the student has one; and
- the Virtual School Head if the child is LAC.

The meeting should take place within the statutory time limits set out and must try to have it at a time that suits all relevant parties. However, its decision will not be invalid simply on the grounds that it was not made within these time limits.

If requested to do so by parents, the Governors' Disciplinary Committee will consider the reinstatement of a suspended student within 50 school days of receiving notice of the exclusion if the student would be excluded from school for more than 5 school days, but less than 16, in a single term.

Where a suspension would result in a student missing a public examination, the Governors' Disciplinary Committee will consider the reinstatement of the student before the date of the examination.

In reaching a decision, the Governors' Disciplinary Committee will consider whether the suspended / permanently excluded was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair and whether the Head Teacher followed their legal duties. They will decide whether or not a fact is true 'on the balance of probabilities', which differs from the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt', as well as any evidence that was presented in relation to the decision to suspend / permanently exclude..

Minutes will be taken of the meeting, and a record of evidence considered kept. The outcome will be recorded on the student's educational record.

The Governors' Disciplinary Committee will notify the parents/guardians of its decision in writing, along with reasons for its decision, without delay.

With regard to a permanent exclusion, the notice of the Governors' Disciplinary Committee decision will also detail the parents/guardians rights to request for the decision to be reviewed by an independent review panel.



## An Independent Review

If parents apply for an independent review, we will engage with our Local Authority to ensure impartiality. The Local Authority will arrange for an independent panel to review the decision of the Governors' Disciplinary Committee not to reinstate a permanently excluded student.

Applications for an independent review must be made within 15 school days of notice being given to the parents by the Governors' Disciplinary Committee of its decision to not reinstate a student.

The independent panel will decide one of the following:

- Uphold the governing board's decision;
- Recommend that the governing board reconsiders reinstatement;
- Quash the governing board's decision and direct that they reconsider reinstatement (only when the decision is judged to be flawed.)

The panel's decision can be decided by a majority vote. In the case of a tied decision, the chair has the casting vote.

Instructions as to how parents/guardians request an independent review are included in correspondence to the parents/guardians.

## School Registers

A student's name will be removed from the school admissions register if:

- 15 school days have passed since the parents were notified of the exclusion panel's decision to not reinstate the student and no application has been made for an independent review panel, or
- The parents have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent review panel.

Where an application for an independent review has been made, the governing board will wait until that review has concluded before removing a student's name from the register.

Where alternative provision has been made for an excluded student and they attend it, code B (education off-site) or code D (dual registration) will be used on the attendance register.

Where excluded students are not attending alternative provision, code E (absent) will be used.

## Exclusion of students with Additional Needs

Students with additional needs are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of exclusion. The Head Teacher, as far as possible, will avoid permanently excluding any student with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or a Looked After Child (LAC).



We will engage proactively with parents in supporting the behaviour of students with additional needs. In relation to looked after children, we will cooperate proactively with foster carers or children's home workers, the Local Authority that looks after the child and the Local Authority's Virtual School Head.

Where we have concerns about the behaviour, or risk of exclusion, of a child with additional needs, a student with an EHCP or a Looked After Child, we will work in partnership with others (including the Local Authority as necessary), to consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required. This will involve assessing the suitability of provision for a student's SEN. Where a student has an EHCP, we will request an early annual review or interim/emergency review.



## Appendix A - Reintegration Meeting form



St Thomas More Catholic School



**Suspension Reintegration Meeting**

Student Name	Pastoral	Staff Member[s]	Date

**Reintegration Checklist:**

- Student in attendance?
- Parent / Carer in attendance?
- Any external agencies in attendance? [detail any agencies in attendance] |  
.....
- Suspension Workbook completed?
- Subject-specific work completed?
- Pastoral Report Provided for student? [Detail which report they have been placed on]  
.....

**Summary of Communication with home during suspension:**

- Phone call notifying parent / carer of suspension?
- Suspension Letter and email received?
- Work provided by the school?
- Phone call[s] with the Head of House?
- Home visit provided?
- If a laptop was provided, has this been returned?

**Reason for Fixed Term Exclusion & Overview of Behaviour to Date:**

**Review of Work Completed during the Suspension:**

**Additional support needed for success:**



**Reintegration Targets:**

1.
2.
3.

<b>STM Staff Signature</b>	
<b>Student Signature</b>	
<b>Parent Signature</b>	

*Please now pass this form to Behaviour Base Lead*

**Behaviour Intervention Session [Date / Time / Lead]:** .....

<i>[Detail intervention session completed]</i>
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