

ROSSENDALE SCHOOL

EXCLUSION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

A decision to exclude a pupil, either for a fixed period or permanently, is seen as a last resort by the School.

The School is responsible for communicating to pupils, parents and staff its expectations of standards of conduct. A range of policies and procedures are in place to promote good behaviour and appropriate conduct.

No exclusion will be initiated without first exhausting other strategies or, in the case of a serious single incident, a thorough investigation. The School conforms to the DfE's Guiding Principles on Exclusions.

THE REASONS FOR EXCLUSION

Rosendale School aims to educate its pupils to make informed personal choices and decisions about their behaviour and attitude to their work and to each other. The School's policies, ethos and practice promote self-discipline and proper regard for authority, and encourage good behaviour and respect for others, with measures to ensure acceptable standards of behaviour and the regulation of pupils' conduct.

Where pupils breach the School's expectations, sanctions will be applied because pupils will be deemed to have made inappropriate choices about their behaviour, in full knowledge of the standards expected by the School. Sanctions also act as a deterrent and the range of sanctions is outlined in the Behaviour Management Policy. In cases where there has been a **serious** breach of the School's expectations, the Headteacher can exclude a pupil from the School. Serious breaches of the Behaviour Management Policy include physical assault, racial and sexual harassment, bullying, theft, vandalism, open defiance of reasonable instructions from staff, and bringing the School into disrepute. (Please note this is not an exhaustive list). The School does not publish a list of offences with a tariff of punishments attached. Each case is examined fairly and thoroughly on its merits before a judgement is made about the appropriate sanction for an individual pupil.

Exclusions will **not** be used for relatively minor incidents such as failure to do homework, poor attainment or academic performance, lateness or breaching School uniform requirements (unless the pupil refuses to comply with a reasonable request for the breach to be addressed), nor will it be used for truancy, pregnancy, or punishing a pupil because of problems with parents, such as their failure to attend a meeting convened to discuss their child's behaviour.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Investigating an incident and keeping records

When the School investigates an incident, any pupil witnesses will be asked to write a brief statement of what they know, on the clear understanding that such statements are in confidence – witnesses will not be prompted, nor will there be leading questions; any questions will be to clarify points within the statement that might be unclear. Statements will be dated and signed wherever possible. A pupil alleged to be the perpetrator will be advised of the allegations against them, and invited to respond or to write a statement; if the incident is of a serious nature, then as soon as possible, parents will be invited into School to discuss the situation; and the Headteacher will then decide on any sanction required. A written record will be kept of the actions taken by the Headteacher, including any interview with the pupil concerned.

All statements and any other evidence will be retained by the Headteacher, in strict confidence, for a period of 6 years from the date of the incident, in case the School (or the LEA) have to justify or explain the decision to which the statements contributed. However, if the School goes through a formal process including, potentially, an exclusion, then the statements, suitably anonymised, may be part of the evidence used.

Pre-exclusion

It is rarely the case that a pupil is excluded from the School for a 'one-off' incident. It is more likely that a pupils' behaviour, work and/or attitude will have deteriorated over a period of time. Parents/carers will normally have been invited into the School to discuss their child's behaviour at an earlier stage – the informal 'pre-exclusion stage' when parents will be encouraged to provide any background information and to put forward their views to help formulate a joint strategy or behaviour modification programme to encourage the child to improve. The child may be invited to attend for part of this meeting, in order to give his/her perspective. At this stage the parents will receive a warning that the pupil is at risk of exclusion and the agreed joint strategy, behaviour modification programme, or pastoral support programme which identifies improvement targets for attitude, behaviour and attainment will be confirmed in writing. If parents do not respond at this stage then the LEA will be contacted. The School will keep accurate written notes of advice, warnings and agreements.

Internal Exclusion

This sanction is used for misdemeanours that are less serious than those deserving Temporary Exclusion but deserve more than a detention. The pupil concerned will

work in School, away from other pupils, on assignments set by members of staff, and will also be asked to write down how they are progressing in each subject, any difficulties they might have, and whether they need extra support to improve their work and/or behaviour. In addition, the normal schoolwork missed during the period of internal exclusion must be written up as soon as possible. Pupils will be asked by their Form Tutor to complete written accounts of work set during and internal exclusion and have the work confirmed by staff signatures. Subject teachers will sign when the work has been done to their satisfaction and the completed form will be returned by the pupil to their Form Tutor or Special Support Assistant. Parents will be informed by the School of an internal exclusion of their child in writing. In the first instance the School will attempt to discuss the incident with parents by telephone and arrange a meeting.

Temporary Exclusion

Temporary exclusion should be for the shortest time necessary; Ofsted evidence suggests that 1-3 days is usually enough to secure benefits without adverse educational consequences.

Temporary exclusion for a period of time from half a day to 5 days for persistent or cumulative problems would be imposed only when the School had already offered and implemented a range of support and management strategies. These could include:

- Discussion with the pupil
- Mentoring (Form Tutor support)
- Report Card
- Discussions with parents
- Target sessions
- Checking on any possible provocation
- Detention
- Mediation
- Counselling
- Internal exclusion

Single Incident

Single incident temporary exclusions are rare but may be used in response to a serious breach of School rules and policies or a disciplinary offence. In such cases the Headteacher will investigate the incident thoroughly and consider all evidence to support the allegation, taking account of the School's policies. The pupil will be encouraged to give his/her version of events and the Headteacher will check whether the incident may have been provoked, for example by bullying or racial harassment.

Permanent Exclusion

It would *normally* be the case that a pupil would not be excluded permanently for a 'one-off' or first offence. It would normally be the case that a pupil would be excluded permanently only if there has been a serious breach of the School's Behaviour Management Policy *and* after a range of alternative strategies have been tried and failed. However, a pupil may **be excluded permanently even for one-off incidents such as those detailed below** because the breach of the School's standards is deemed to be so serious that allowing the pupil to remain in School might seriously harm the education, safety and welfare of others in the School – in such circumstances (which will be rare) the School's previous strategies to foster appropriate and responsible behaviour through PSHE curriculum, the use of outside agencies, the Individual Education Plan and behaviour management will be deemed to have been tried and failed, and a behaviour modification programme will not be appropriate.

A pupil considered likely to put at risk the health, safety or welfare of others may be excluded permanently. Incidents where a pupil has been excluded permanently from Rossendale School are very rare, but the few examples include supplying or selling drugs to other School pupils; acting as a go-between in the sale and purchase of drugs; serious physical violence; threatened use of and actual possession of an offensive weapon.

The Decision to Exclude

If the Headteacher decides to exclude a pupil he/she will:

- Ensure that there is sufficient recorded evidence to support the decision
- Explain the decision to the pupil
- Contact the parents, explain the decision and ask that the child be collected
- Send a letter to the parents confirming the reasons for the exclusion, whether it is a permanent or temporary exclusion, the length of the exclusion and any terms or conditions agreed for the pupil's return
- In cases of more than a day's exclusion, ensure that appropriate work is set and that arrangements are in place for it to be marked
- Plan how to address the pupil's needs on his/her return
- Plan and meeting with parents and pupil on his/her return
- Plan a meeting with the LEA to coincide with the above

An exclusion should not be enforced if doing so may put the safety of the pupil at risk. In cases where parents will not comply by, for example, refusing to collect the child, the child's welfare is the priority.

Behaviour Outside School

Pupils' behaviour outside School on School business, eg on School trips, at sports fixtures, is subject to the School's Behaviour Policy. Bad behaviour in such circumstances will be dealt with as if it had taken place in School. For behaviour outside the School, not on School business, the Headteacher may exclude a pupil if there is a clear link between that behaviour and maintaining good behaviour and discipline among the pupil body as a whole, or if it is deemed to be damaging to the reputation of the School.

SEN

As a School exclusively for pupils with an Education Health Care Plan the School must take account of any special educational needs when considering whether or not to exclude a pupil. We have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 and the Children and Families Act 2014 not to discriminate against disabled pupils by excluding them from School for behaviour related to their disability. The Headteacher will ensure that reasonable steps have been taken by the School to respond to a pupil's disability so the pupil is not treated less favourably for reasons related to the disability.

'Reasonable steps' could include:

- Differentiation in the School's Behaviour Management Policy
- Developing strategies to prevent the pupil's behaviour
- Requesting external help with the pupil
- Staff training

Where reasonable adjustments to policies and practices have been made to accommodate a pupil's needs and to avoid the necessity for exclusion as far as possible, exclusion may be justified if there is a material and substantial reason for it. A specific incident affecting order and discipline in the School may be such a reason.

Outcome

In the event of either a temporary or a permanent exclusion parents will be notified of their right of appeal, which will be overseen by an independent appeal panel. In addition the pupil's home Local Education Authority will also be notified.

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