

COGNITA



Oxford House School

Suspension, Expulsion and Removal in Other Circumstances Policy

September 2024

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines the use of suspension, expulsion and removal in other circumstances as steps that may be taken by the Headteacher. The aim of this policy is to ensure procedural fairness and natural justice and to promote co-operation between the school and parents when it is necessary to consider these steps.
- 1.2 The insistence on high standards is based on the following principles:
 - The foundation of mutual respect
 - A focus on commending positive behaviour
 - Consistency and fairness
 - Affirmation of the value of the individual whilst acknowledging the inappropriateness of some behaviours

These principles are backed up by a system of rewards and, where necessary, appropriate sanctions, the most serious of which are laid out below and which are covered by this policy and which the School commits to applying in a fair, consistent and non-discriminatory manner.

- 1.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Parent Contract, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Drug and Alcohol Policy.
- 1.4 For the purposes of this policy "working days" refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time, excluding bank holidays and half term.
- 1.5 For the purposes of this policy 'parent' includes one or both the parents, a legal guardian or education guardian.

2 Application of this Policy

- 2.1 The policy applies to all pupils and parents at the School including those in our EYFS setting. This policy does not cover cases when a pupil has to leave because of ill-health, non-payment of fees, withdrawal by his/her parents, or where the pupil is required to leave because the School is unable to provide adequately for a pupil's special educational needs (as per Section 5 of the Parent Contract).

3 Suspension, Expulsion and Removal in Other Circumstances

- 3.1 The following measures are available to the Headteacher:
 - **Suspension** (also known as a Temporary or Fixed Term Exclusion) – when a pupil is sent home for a limited period either as a disciplinary measure or to allow for the investigation of an allegation of serious misbehaviour or during a Review of a decision to expel or remove the pupil in other circumstances.
 - **Expulsion** (also known as a Permanent Exclusion) – when a pupil is required to leave the school permanently.
 - **Removal in other circumstances** – when the School requires the parents to remove the pupil permanently from the School.

The School may also operate a system of 'internal exclusion'. Despite the term, internal exclusion is not registered as a formal exclusion as the pupil is not sent home from School.

Internal exclusion is a sanction to accommodate those pupils who have been removed from a lesson at short notice for poor behaviour and/or conduct (which is not so serious as to warrant consideration under this policy) so that other students may continue their learning uninterrupted. The pupil will be supervised by staff during this time.

Suspension (Fixed Term Exclusion)

- 3.2 Pupils may be suspended from School as a disciplinary sanction for disciplinary breaches which are serious but not serious enough to warrant expulsion. Suspension may also be applied where the pupil has engaged in a series of less serious offences, for example, where repetition of these offences indicates the pupil's unwillingness to conform to an acceptable pattern of behaviour.
- 3.3 A pupil may also be suspended as a neutral act pending the outcome of a disciplinary investigation.
- 3.4 A pupil shall be suspended from the School pending the outcome of a review of a decision to expel or require the removal of a pupil from the School.
- 3.5 During any period of suspension the pupil shall remain away from School and will have no right to enter School premises or to attend School trips during that time without permission from the Headteacher. This also applies in relation to external exams, and it may be, in certain circumstances, that arrangements have to be made for the pupil to take their exams isolated from their peers or elsewhere.

Expulsion (Permanent Exclusion)

- 3.6 Pupils may be expelled from the School in the event a pupil has committed a very grave breach of discipline or a serious criminal offence. This could be a single incident or a series of incidents, including a series of minor misdemeanours. The Headteacher's decision to expel shall be subject to a review, if requested by the parents – see below.
- 3.7 A list of indicative behaviours which may result in expulsion are listed below. This list is not exhaustive. Expulsion is reserved for the most serious breaches.

Removal in Other Circumstances

- 3.8 The parent may be required to remove their child permanently from the School if, after consultation with the parent/s (and if appropriate the pupil), the Headteacher is of the opinion that:
 - The pupil has committed a breach of breaches of the School rules or discipline for which removal is the appropriate sanction; or
 - By reason of the pupil's conduct, behaviour or progress, the pupil is unwilling or unable to benefit sufficiently from the educational opportunities and/or the community life offered by the School; or
 - The parents have treated the School, members of its staff or any member of the School community unreasonably.
- 3.9 The School reserves the right to impose sanctions for parental behaviour falling short of required removal, including but not limited to placing restrictions on a parent's access to School / School events, communications with the School and/or the imposition of a warning (up to and including a final written warning).

- 3.10 The Headteacher's decision to require removal shall be subject to a review, if requested by the parents – see below.

4 Examples of Relevant Pupil Behaviour

- 4.1 This is a non-exhaustive list of the types of behaviour which may result expulsion or required removal:

- Breach of School rules
- Persistent disruptive behaviour
- Persistent attitudes or behaviour which are inconsistent with the ethos of the School
- Committing a criminal offence, including (but not limited to) theft or blackmail
- Physical violence, threatening behaviour and fighting
- Drug use (including drinking alcohol smoking or vaping) (see Drug and Alcohol Policy)
- Supply, possession or use of certain drugs (including alcohol and tobacco) and solvents or their paraphernalia or substances intended to resemble them (see Drug and Alcohol Policy)
- Intimidation, bullying, including cyber-bullying (see Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Misconduct of a sexual nature including sexual harassment (including online) and sexual violence, "sexting" (also known as youth-produced sexual imagery), and the supply and possession of pornography or indecent images
- Inappropriate use of social media and/or technology
- Possession or use of unauthorised firearms or other weapons
- Wilful damage to property, vandalism and computer hacking
- Malicious accusations against a member of staff
- Discriminatory conduct or language (including sexist, racist, homophobic or transphobic abuse)
- Cheating, including plagiarism
- Other serious misconduct toward a member of the school community or conduct which brings the school into disrepute (single or repeated episodes), on or off the school premises including but not limited to on social media or any other means such as the publication of, or participation in the publication of, defamatory press articles.

5 Examples of Relevant Parental Behaviour

- 5.1 This is a non-exhaustive list of types of parental behaviour which may result in required removal:

- Breaching the Parent Contract (as amended and updated from time to time)
- Causing serious or repeated nuisance on the School premises
- Acting aggressively or inappropriately towards staff (including but not limited to via social media or electronic communication)
- Bringing the School into disrepute including but not limited to via social media, electronic communication or any other means such as the publication of, or the participation in the publication of, defamatory press articles
- Failing to respect the principles of the School
- Failing to make payment or serious delay on the payment of the Fees or Matriculation Fee or Place Reservation Fee (refer to the Financial Responsibility document)
- Communicating with the School in person or in writing (directly or indirectly), in a manner which is deemed voluminous, and/or relentless, and/or confrontational, and/or unreasonable and/or aggressively;
- Behaving in a way which adversely affected (or in a manner which is likely to adversely affect) the welfare of a member or members of the School community.

6 Procedure - Suspension (Fixed-Term Exclusion)

- 6.1 This section does not apply to suspensions applied pending the outcome of an investigation or pending a review of a decision to expel or require removal.
- 6.2 Only the Headteacher (or a member of staff acting on their behalf) can suspend a pupil.
- 6.3 Before deciding to suspend a pupil, the Headteacher will ensure that an proportionate and appropriate investigation of the alleged incident is carried out (by the Headteacher or their nominee). Any findings of fact will be made on the balance of probabilities.
- 6.4 Once a decision has been reached to suspend a pupil, the Headteacher must inform parents as soon as reasonably practicable.
- 6.5 The Headteacher will also write to confirm the suspension and provide clear reasons for the suspension and the length of time the pupil is to be suspended for. The reasons may include a cooling off period for the pupil and time for a fuller investigation to take place, should that be considered necessary in the circumstances.
- 6.6 The findings of the investigation will be recorded and the notes concerning the investigation placed in the pupil's file.
- 6.7 There is no right to review a suspension unless the suspension is for more than 11 School days or would prevent the pupil taking a public examination. The procedure for review is set out below.
- 6.8 A suspension (imposed as a disciplinary sanction as opposed to a suspension as a in place pending the outcome of an investigation or pending the outcome of a review of a decision to expel or require removal) can last anything from 1 School day to 5 School days depending on the severity of the incident. No more than 15 days of suspension (as a disciplinary sanction) can be given in one academic term.
- 6.9 After a period of suspension, parents and their child will be required to attend school on the day of their return for a Re-integration Meeting. This will generally be prior to the start of the school day. The Re-integration Meeting will usually last no longer than 30 minutes and will be an opportunity for the School, parents and pupil to meet to among other things offer a process of restorative justice (where appropriate) and to agree expectations for future behaviours.

7 Procedure – Expulsion (Permanent Exclusion) or Removal in Other Circumstances

- 7.1 Only the Headteacher can expel a pupil or require their removal in other circumstances.
- 7.2 Before a decision is taken to expel or require removal the Headteacher will ensure an appropriate and proportionate investigation into the alleged incident/s is carried out (by the Headteacher or their nominee). Any findings of fact will be made on the basis of the balance of probabilities.
- 7.3 Parents will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable if a complaint or allegation under investigation is of a nature that could result in the pupil being excluded or removed.

- 7.4 The School reserves the right to suspend the pupil as a neutral act during an investigation procedure. Alternatively, the pupil may be placed under a segregated regime if they remain on School premises.
- 7.5 Prior to any decision being taken by the Headteacher to exclude or require the removal of the pupil, the Headteacher will meet with the pupil and their parents or (in circumstances involving the possibility of the pupil's required removal on the grounds of parental unreasonable behaviour) the parents.
- 7.6 If the Headteacher considers that further investigation is needed, the meeting may be adjourned, and the reason for the adjournment will be explained to the pupil / their parents.
- 7.7 Following the conclusion of the meeting the Headteacher will reach their decision on the balance of probabilities. Before expelling or requiring the removal of a pupil, the Headteacher must seek advice from the Cognita General Manager/Educational Advisor. The Headteacher will communicate their decision to the parents in writing within five working days from the meeting.
- 7.8 Some parents, may, after due consideration, prefer to voluntarily withdraw their child from the School prior to the decision of the Headteacher to expel or require removal being communicated in writing to the parents. However, it must clearly be understood by all parties that the Headteacher reserves the right to insist on expulsion or removal. If the decision of the parents is to withdraw their child they waive any right to an appeal.

8 Review of Expulsion or Removal in Other Circumstances

- 8.1 The School will always offer the right of appeal to any pupil who is expelled or required to be removed from the School.
- 8.2 If the parents want to appeal the decision they should write to the General Manager/Education Advisor at 41-42 Eastcastle Street, London W1W 8DY, setting out their grounds of appeal. This request must be received within 7 working days of the date the decision was communicated to the parents in writing by the Headteacher.
- 8.3 Following the receipt of a review request, the General Manager will convene a three-member review panel, usually within 10 working days. One member of the Review Panel will be independent of the day to day management of the school. The panel members will have no detailed knowledge of the case or of the pupil or parents and may include the European Director of Education. Parents will be notified in advance of the names of the panel members.
- 8.4 Where a review is requested, the pupil will be treated as suspended pending the review. While suspended, the pupil shall remain away from School as detailed above at paragraph 6.

9 Review Panel Meeting

- 9.1 The appointed panel will meet to review the appeal at a review panel meeting and one member of the panel will be appointed as chair.
- 9.2 The review meeting is not a legal process but a private procedure and all those who are concerned in it are required to keep its proceedings confidential, subject to law.

- 9.3 The panel will have discretion to determine how the review meeting will take place including whether it take places in person or online, whether any further investigation or information should be requested and who should attend. The parents and the Headteacher will always be invited to attend. The panel may also invite other relevant parties to attend, for example, relevant staff members.
- 9.4 The parents may be accompanied by a friend or relation. The Headteacher may be accompanied by a colleague. Legal representation is not permitted.
- 9.5 A clerk should be present in the meeting to keep a written record of the main points discussed at the meeting and these will be shared with the parents and the Headteacher after the meeting. Other parties attending may wish to take their own written notes. Audio or video recordings of the meeting are not permitted.
- 9.6 The panel chair will lead the meeting which will be conducted in an informal manner. All parties are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners. If this is not the case, then the chair of the panel may at his/her discretion adjourn or terminate the meeting.
- 9.7 The parents and the Headteacher will be given a reasonable opportunity to make submissions to the panel.
- 9.8 After the due consideration of all the facts the panel consider relevant, the panel will make findings as to whether the decision to expel or require removal was a reasonable decision and decide whether to uphold the appeal or not. The panel may make its decision by majority.
- 9.9 The decision of the panel will be notified, with reasons, to the parents by the Chair of the panel by letter within five working days of the meeting. The decision of the review panel is final and there is no further right of appeal.

10 Leaving Status

- 10.1 The School reserves the right to record the leaving status of the pupil on the pupil's file immediately following expulsion or removal or withdrawal. In the event the parents review a decision to expel or require removal, the pupil will be suspended for the period pending the outcome of that review and the leaving status will be confirmed / updated following the outcome of that review process.
- 10.2 When a pupil's expulsion or removal is confirmed, UK Schools should notify the local authority within 24 hours of notifying parents.

11 Recording and Monitoring

- 11.1 Where the sanction imposed is exclusion, required removal or suspension, the written report on the investigation will be placed on the pupil's file.
- 11.2 Details of the expulsion, required removal or suspension will be recorded on the School's Sanctions Record.

12 Availability of this Policy

- 12.1 This policy is available to parents and prospective parents on request from the School office and can also be accessed on the School website.

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