SUSPENSIONS AND PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS POLICY

Promoting inclusion. Applying decisions fairly. Protecting every pupil.



RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL

INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

This policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures and guidance.

RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

OUR COMMITMENT

At Riverside Bridge School, every policy reflects our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and ambitious school community in which every pupil is valued, every voice matters and every family is respected and supported.

Our policies translate our values into consistent practice. They support high expectations, clear responsibilities, effective partnership and informed decision-making, ensuring that the needs, rights, wellbeing and future outcomes of our pupils remain at the heart of our work.

We work collaboratively, act with integrity and continually reflect upon and improve our practice to achieve the best possible outcomes for every pupil.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Our Policy Principles underpin how we work together and guide the decisions and actions we take to support every pupil and their families.



POLICY PURPOSE & FRAMEWORK

Riverside Bridge School policies set out the expectations, responsibilities and approaches that support safe, consistent and high-quality practice across the school. They translate our values, statutory responsibilities and professional expectations into clear guidance for everyday decision-making and practice.

Each policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures, statutory guidance and school frameworks referenced within the document.

Policies apply to the members of the school community identified within each document, including staff, governors, parents and carers, volunteers, contractors and other professionals where relevant. Everyone is expected to understand and apply the requirements appropriate to their role and to seek further guidance where clarification is required.

CURRICULUM DRIVERS



Our Drivers provide a shared golden thread across curriculum, school life, policy and leadership, helping ensure that our decisions and practice remain focused on the experiences and futures we want for every pupil.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This policy sets out Riverside Bridge School's approach to the lawful use of suspension and permanent exclusion. It explains the principles, responsibilities and statutory arrangements that ensure decisions are fair, proportionate, evidence-informed and made with careful consideration of each pupil's individual needs and circumstances.

At Riverside Bridge School, our starting point is always inclusion, understanding and support. Our pupils have a wide range of complex learning, communication, sensory, physical, medical and social, emotional and mental health needs. A pupil's presentation may be influenced by communication differences, sensory processing, emotional regulation, disability, medical need, trauma or other underlying factors. These circumstances must be understood and considered before disciplinary action is taken.

Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious disciplinary sanctions. They will only be used where the statutory requirements are met and where the Headteacher is satisfied that the decision is lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate. Permanent exclusion will always be a last resort unless exceptional circumstances justify an immediate decision.

Before considering suspension or permanent exclusion, the school will consider the individual circumstances of the pupil, including their communication needs, special educational needs and disabilities, reasonable adjustments, Education, Health and Care Plan provision, safeguarding circumstances and the support already provided. Where appropriate, additional assessment, intervention, changes to provision or multi-agency support will be considered.

The school will not use informal or unofficial exclusions. Pupils will not be sent home for disciplinary reasons without a formal suspension, prevented from returning because a reintegration meeting has not taken place, placed on a reduced timetable as a disciplinary sanction or encouraged to leave the school roll in order to avoid statutory processes.

Pupils will be supported to express their views throughout the process in a way that is accessible to them. For pupils who communicate through symbols, AAC, observation, trusted adults or other forms of communication, appropriate reasonable adjustments will be made to enable their voice to be understood.

Where a suspension is issued, the school will seek to minimise disruption to learning and use reintegration constructively to understand what support may be needed for a successful return. Reintegration will not be used as an additional sanction or as a barrier to the pupil returning once the period of suspension has ended.

This policy is implemented in accordance with current Department for Education statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion, relevant legislation and the governance arrangements of Partnership Learning Trust.

Our responsibilities to pupils and families

Riverside Bridge School will:

- promote inclusion and seek to reduce the need for suspension and permanent exclusion;
- consider each case individually and avoid automatic or zero-tolerance decision-making;
- ensure only the Headteacher, or Acting Headteacher in their absence, makes suspension or permanent exclusion decisions;
- consider SEND, disability, communication, regulation, medical and safeguarding needs;
- ensure reasonable adjustments and agreed provision have been properly considered;
- enable pupils to communicate their views in an accessible way;
- involve parents, carers and relevant professionals appropriately;
- maintain pupils' education and safeguarding during periods away from school;
- use reintegration to strengthen support and reduce the likelihood of recurrence;
- never use informal exclusion or off-rolling;
- maintain accurate records and statutory notifications; and
- monitor patterns and disproportionality to improve inclusive practice.

Through these commitments, we aim to ensure that suspension and permanent exclusion are used only where necessary and lawful, while maintaining Riverside Bridge School's commitment to understanding individual need, promoting inclusion and safeguarding the rights and welfare of every pupil.

RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	AIMS AND PRINCIPLES	02	LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE
03	DEFINITIONS	04	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
05	DECIDING WHETHER TO SUSPEND OR PERMANENTLY EXCLUDE	06	NOTIFICATION AND RECORDING REQUIREMENTS
07	EDUCATION DURING SUSPENSION AND FOLLOWING PERMANENT EXCLUSION	08	REINTEGRATION FOLLOWING SUSPENSION
09	GOVERNING BOARD REVIEW OF SUSPENSIONS AND PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS	10	INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANELS (IRPS)
11	MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION	12	EQUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY
13	RECORD KEEPING AND CONFIDENTIALITY	14	RELATED POLICIES AND FRAMEWORKS

APPROVED BY: Governing Board

APPROVED ON: September 2026

REVIEWED DUE ON: September 2027

Section 01

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

Promoting inclusion. Applying fairness. Using exclusion only when necessary.

At Riverside Bridge School, we are committed to creating a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment where every pupil is enabled to achieve their potential. We recognise that our pupils have complex learning, communication, sensory, physical, medical and social, emotional and mental health needs. A pupil's presentation may communicate need or reflect communication differences, sensory processing, emotional regulation, medical needs, trauma or other underlying factors. Our approach is therefore rooted in understanding, prevention, reasonable adjustment and positive support.

Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious disciplinary sanctions and will only be used where they are lawful, reasonable, fair, proportionate and necessary. Permanent exclusion will always be a last resort after appropriate support, intervention and reasonable adjustments have been considered, unless there is an exceptional circumstance where immediate permanent exclusion is justified.

The school is committed to ensuring that all decisions relating to suspension or permanent exclusion are made consistently, transparently and in accordance with statutory guidance, whilst balancing the rights, welfare and safety of the individual pupil with those of other pupils, staff and the wider school community.

This policy aims to:

- ensure that suspension and permanent exclusion are used only where legally justified and in accordance with statutory guidance;
- promote early intervention, positive support and individualised planning to reduce the need for suspension and permanent exclusion;
- ensure decisions are lawful, reasonable, fair, proportionate and evidence based;
- safeguard the welfare, education and well-being of all pupils and staff;
- ensure that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), looked after children, previously looked after children, pupils with social workers and other vulnerable groups receive appropriate consideration before any decision is made;
- ensure that parents, carers and pupils understand the school's procedures and their statutory rights;
- minimise disruption to education through effective reintegration planning and appropriate alternative provision where required;
- ensure governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities when considering suspensions and permanent exclusions;
- ensure compliance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance on Suspension and Permanent Exclusion and all associated legislation.

Inclusive practice

Riverside Bridge School is a specialist setting and recognises that a pupil's presentation and response to situations may be influenced by a pupil's communication needs, learning profile, sensory processing differences, emotional regulation, physical or medical needs, trauma or other underlying factors.

Before making any decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, the Headteacher will carefully consider whether:

- the incident, presentation or response may be linked to the pupil's special educational needs or disability;
- appropriate reasonable adjustments have been implemented;
- the provision specified within an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan has been appropriately delivered, where applicable;
- further assessment, therapeutic intervention or multi-agency support may be required;
- alternative strategies have been explored where appropriate.

Nothing within this policy prevents the lawful suspension or permanent exclusion of a pupil with SEND where the statutory threshold has been met. However, the school will ensure that all relevant duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice have been fully considered before any decision is reached.

Unlawful Exclusion and Off-Rolling

Riverside Bridge School will never use informal or unofficial exclusions. Pupils will not be sent home, required to remain at home, placed on reduced timetables for disciplinary reasons or otherwise prevented from attending school without the appropriate statutory processes being followed.

The school will not:

- encourage parents or carers to remove a pupil from the school roll to avoid a suspension or permanent exclusion;
- use part-time timetables as a disciplinary sanction;
- require attendance at a reintegration meeting as a condition of returning from suspension;
- remove pupils from the school roll other than in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations;
- use off-site direction or alternative provision to avoid its statutory responsibilities.

The school is committed to ensuring that all decisions are made in the best interests of the pupil and are never influenced by school performance measures, inspection outcomes or any other improper purpose.

Section 02

LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE

Meeting statutory duties. Applying lawful processes.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, including Pupil Movement (effective from 26 July 2026). It should be read alongside all relevant legislation and statutory guidance relating to behaviour, safeguarding, special educational needs and disability, equality, attendance and alternative provision.

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Education Act 2002 (Section 51A), as amended by the Education Act 2011;
- School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Education Act 1996;
- Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0–25 years;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff;
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance;
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and associated guidance;
- Alternative Provision statutory guidance;
- The School Inspection Handbook.

The school will ensure that all decisions relating to suspension and permanent exclusion are consistent with these statutory duties and are made in accordance with the principles of administrative law. Every decision will be lawful; reasonable; fair; proportionate; evidence based; and made on the balance of probabilities.

In reaching any decision, the Headteacher will have due regard to the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty, and will ensure that pupils are not treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic, including disability.

Where a pupil has special educational needs, an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, is looked after, previously looked after, has a social worker, or is otherwise considered vulnerable, the school will ensure that the additional statutory considerations set out within Department for Education guidance have been fully taken into account before any decision is reached.

As an academy within Partnership Learning, Riverside Bridge School will exercise its statutory responsibilities in accordance with this policy, the Trust's governance arrangements and current Department for Education guidance.

Section 03

DEFINTIONS

Clarifying terms. Supporting consistent application.

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply.

A suspension is the temporary removal of a pupil from the school on disciplinary grounds for a fixed period. This replaces the previous term fixed-term exclusion.

A suspension may be for all or part of a school day. A pupil may not be suspended for more than 45 school days in total during a single academic year, including any suspensions served at another school if the pupil transfers during that academic year.

Suspensions must not be open-ended and may only be imposed by the Headteacher or, in their absence, the Acting Headteacher.

A permanent exclusion is the permanent removal of a pupil from the school on disciplinary grounds. It may only be used as a last resort where the statutory threshold has been met and allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Only the Headteacher, or Acting Headteacher in their absence, has the legal authority to permanently exclude a pupil.

An off-site direction is a temporary placement at another education setting for disciplinary reasons, where this is intended to improve a pupil's behaviour and support their successful return to Riverside Bridge School.

An off-site direction is not a suspension or permanent exclusion. The pupil remains on the school's roll and Riverside Bridge School retains responsibility for the pupil's education, safeguarding and welfare throughout the placement.

A managed move is a voluntary agreement between schools, parents or carers (or the pupil where appropriate) and the receiving school for a pupil to transfer permanently to another school as an alternative to permanent exclusion. Managed moves must always be entered into voluntarily by all parties and must not be used as a form of informal exclusion or off-rolling.

Alternative provision is education arranged for a pupil who cannot attend their usual school for a period of time, including following certain suspensions, permanent exclusions or off-site directions. The provision must be suitable, full-time where required by law and appropriate to the pupil's age, ability, aptitude, special educational needs and any disability.

For the purposes of this policy, **parent** has the meaning given in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and includes:

- any person with parental responsibility for a child;
- any person who has care of the child.

Where a pupil has reached the age of 18, statutory rights under the suspension and permanent exclusion process transfer to the pupil unless legislation provides otherwise.

The relevant person is:

- the parent where the pupil is under 18 years of age;
- the pupil themselves where they are aged 18 or over.

An informal or unlawful exclusion occurs where a pupil is sent home, prevented from attending school or otherwise removed from education without the statutory suspension or permanent exclusion procedures being followed.

Examples include requiring a pupil to remain at home without formally recording a suspension, delaying a pupil's return because a reintegration meeting has not taken place, or encouraging parents or carers to remove a pupil from the school roll to avoid a suspension or permanent exclusion.

These practices are unlawful and will not be used by Riverside Bridge School.

Off-rolling occurs where a pupil is removed from the school roll, or encouraged to leave the school, primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the pupil.

Riverside Bridge School will never use suspension, permanent exclusion, managed moves, off-site direction or any other practice for the purpose of off-rolling.

Section 04

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Sharing responsibility. Maintaining accountability. Protecting pupils.

The lawful use of suspension and permanent exclusion is a shared responsibility. Whilst only the Headteacher (or Acting Headteacher) has the legal power to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, all staff, governors, parents, carers and relevant agencies have important roles in ensuring that pupils are supported consistently and that any disciplinary response is fair, proportionate and in their best interests.

Only **the Headteacher**, or in their absence the Acting Headteacher, may suspend or permanently exclude a pupil on disciplinary grounds.

The Headteacher will ensure that every decision is lawful; reasonable; fair; proportionate; evidence based; and made on the balance of probabilities.

Before deciding whether to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, the Headteacher will carefully consider all available evidence, including:

- the nature and seriousness of the incident;
- whether the incident occurred on or off the school site;
- whether the facts have been established on the balance of probabilities;
- the views of the pupil, where appropriate to their age, communication needs and understanding;
- whether the incident may have been influenced by the pupil's special educational needs, disability, communication differences, sensory processing, medical condition, mental health or other vulnerability;
- whether appropriate reasonable adjustments have been implemented;
- whether appropriate support and interventions have already been provided;
- the impact on the safety, welfare and education of other pupils and staff;
- whether suspension or permanent exclusion represents the most appropriate and proportionate response.

Permanent exclusion will only be considered where the Headteacher is satisfied that:

- there has been a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of the school's expectations as set out within the Positive Support Policy;
- allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others.

Permanent exclusion will always be a last resort unless there are exceptional circumstances that justify immediate permanent exclusion.

Where appropriate, the Headteacher will consider alternatives before making a decision, including:

- additional pastoral or therapeutic support;
- review of communication, Positive Support and Regulation Plans;
- review of reasonable adjustments;
- review of the pupil's Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan where appropriate;
- multi-agency involvement;
- temporary off-site direction where lawful and appropriate;
- managed moves, where appropriate and agreed by all parties;
- other suitable interventions identified through the school's graduated approach.

The Headteacher will ensure that statutory notifications are made to parents, the academy trust, the local authority and any other relevant professionals within the required timescales.

Where a pupil has a social worker, is looked after, previously looked after or has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, the Headteacher will ensure that relevant professionals are informed and involved in accordance with statutory guidance.

The Headteacher will also ensure that:

- suitable education is arranged where required by law;
- appropriate reintegration planning is completed following suspension;
- accurate records are maintained;
- exclusion data is monitored to identify trends and disproportionality;
- the use of suspension and permanent exclusion is reviewed to promote inclusive practice.

The Academy Trust retains the statutory responsibility for fulfilling its legal duties relating to suspension and permanent exclusion. In accordance with the Trust's governance arrangements, appropriate functions may be delegated to the Governing Board or a committee of governors.

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- considering representations made by parents, carers or eligible pupils;
- reviewing suspensions and permanent exclusions where required by law;
- ensuring decisions have been made lawfully, fairly and proportionately;
- considering reinstatement where required by legislation;
- monitoring patterns, trends and equality information relating to suspensions, permanent exclusions, off-site direction and managed moves;
- ensuring that the school's Positive Support Policy is being implemented consistently; and
- providing appropriate challenge and assurance regarding the school's use of suspension and permanent exclusion.

Governors will regularly review information relating to:

- repeat suspensions;
- pupils with SEND;
- looked after and previously looked after children;
- pupils with social workers;
- pupils with protected characteristics;
- off-site directions;
- managed moves;
- alternative provision;
- reintegration outcomes;
- any emerging patterns or disproportionality.

All staff have a responsibility to promote safe, positive participation, maintain high expectations and implement the school's Positive Support Policy consistently.

Staff are expected to:

- use preventative, proactive and individualised support strategies;
- implement agreed Communication Profiles, Positive Support and Regulation Plans and individual risk assessments;
- recognise communication, sensory, environmental and regulation needs that may contribute to incidents;
- report incidents accurately and promptly;
- contribute factual information during investigations;
- support pupils before, during and after suspension;
- contribute to reintegration planning;
- work collaboratively with families and professionals to reduce the likelihood of further suspension or permanent exclusion.

Staff do not have the authority to suspend or permanently exclude pupils.

Parents, carers and pupils are expected to work in partnership with the school to support safe, positive participation and successful reintegration following any suspension.

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- engage with meetings and support plans;
- work collaboratively with the school and external professionals;
- support agreed strategies and adjustments that enable successful participation;
- ensure that legal responsibilities relating to suspended pupils are fulfilled.

Pupils will be given an opportunity to express their views before decisions are made wherever it is appropriate and practicable to do so. Where pupils communicate using alternative methods, the school will make reasonable adjustments to enable their views to be obtained through appropriate communication systems, trusted adults, observation or advocacy.

The Local Authority, social workers, the Virtual School Head, health professionals and other relevant agencies will be involved where required by legislation or where their involvement will support the pupil's education, safeguarding or successful reintegration.

The school will work collaboratively with external agencies to ensure that suspension and permanent exclusion are used appropriately, that suitable education is arranged where required and that pupils receive coordinated support before, during and after any period of exclusion.

Section 05

DECIDING WHETHER TO SUSPEND OR PERMANENTLY EXCLUDE

Considering evidence. Understanding individual need. Reaching proportionate decisions.

Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious disciplinary sanctions. Any decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil will be made only after careful consideration of all relevant circumstances and in accordance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance.
The Headteacher, or in their absence the Acting Headteacher, is the only person authorised to make the decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil.

Every decision will be:

- lawful;
- reasonable;
- fair;
- proportionate;
- evidence based;
- made on the balance of probabilities.

Each case will be considered individually. The Headteacher will exercise professional judgement and will not operate a ‘zero tolerance’ approach that removes professional judgement or requires an automatic sanction solely because a particular incident has occurred.

A suspension may be used where the Headteacher considers that a temporary removal from school is a necessary and proportionate disciplinary response.
Suspension may be appropriate to:

- respond to a serious breach of the Positive Support Policy;
- respond to repeated breaches of the Positive Support Policy where previous interventions have not been successful;
- protect the safety, welfare or education of pupils or staff whilst further assessment or support is considered;
- create a short period in which immediate risk can be addressed and appropriate support and reintegration arrangements can be reviewed.

Where suspensions become repeated or frequent, the Headteacher will consider whether they remain an effective intervention or whether alternative approaches or additional support should be implemented.

Permanent exclusion will only be used as a last resort.

A pupil will only be permanently excluded where the Headteacher is satisfied that:

- there has been a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of the school's expectations as set out within the Positive Support Policy;
- allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others.

Both elements of this statutory test must be met before a permanent exclusion can be considered.

Before making any decision, the Headteacher will consider all relevant information, including:

- the circumstances surrounding the incident;
- witness accounts and other available evidence;
- whether the facts have been established on the balance of probabilities;
- whether the incident may have been provoked or influenced by the actions or circumstances of others;
- the views of the pupil, where appropriate;
- the age, developmental stage and individual needs of the pupil;
- any safeguarding concerns;
- the impact of the incident on other pupils, staff and the wider school community;
- whether appropriate positive support, communication strategies and reasonable adjustments have been implemented;
- whether the incident or presenting need may be linked to the pupil's special educational needs, disability, communication needs, sensory processing, medical condition or emotional regulation;
- whether an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan review or further specialist assessment should be considered;
- whether any lawful alternatives to suspension or permanent exclusion remain appropriate.

The Headteacher will give careful consideration to the needs of pupils who:

- have special educational needs or disabilities;
- have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan;
- are looked after or previously looked after;
- have a social worker;
- have identified safeguarding vulnerabilities;
- have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

The Headteacher will consider whether disability, communication needs, sensory processing, trauma, medical needs or other vulnerabilities may have contributed to the incident or the pupil's presentation, and whether appropriate reasonable adjustments and support have been provided.

The existence of SEND or disability does not prevent the lawful use of suspension or permanent exclusion where the statutory threshold has been met. However, all relevant statutory duties must be fully considered before any decision is made.

Police investigations

Where an incident or alleged conduct may also constitute a criminal offence, the school will work appropriately with the police and other agencies. The existence of a police investigation, criminal investigation or criminal proceedings does not prevent the Headteacher from making disciplinary decision where sufficient evidence is available. Decisions will be based on the balance of probabilities and will not normally be delayed solely because criminal proceedings are ongoing.

Informal exclusion

The school will never use informal or unofficial exclusions.

A pupil will not be:

- sent home without a formal suspension;
- prevented from returning because a reintegration meeting has not taken place;
- required to remain at home whilst investigations continue without a formal suspension;
- placed on a reduced timetable for disciplinary reasons.

Any temporary removal from school for disciplinary reasons will be recorded and managed in accordance with statutory requirements.

Section 06

NOTIFICATION AND RECORDING REQUIREMENTS

Communicating promptly. Recording accurately. Meeting statutory duties.

Where the Headteacher decides to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, the decision will be communicated promptly and in accordance with statutory requirements. All notifications will be clear, timely and provided in writing where required.

Notification to parents, carers or the relevant person

The Headteacher will notify the parent, carer or relevant person without delay of:

- the decision to suspend or permanently exclude;
- the reason(s) for the decision;
- the length of any suspension or confirmation that the exclusion is permanent;
- the date on which the suspension or permanent exclusion takes effect;
- the parent's, carer's or relevant person's statutory rights to make representations;
- any right to attend meetings of the Governing Board;
- the right to be accompanied by a friend or representative;
- the right to request that statutory meetings are held remotely, where permitted by legislation;
- any further procedural rights applicable to the decision.

Written confirmation will be issued without delay following the decision.

Where the pupil is aged 18 or over, statutory notifications will be provided directly to the pupil unless legislation requires otherwise.

Parents' responsibilities during a suspension

Where a pupil is of compulsory school age, parents or carers will be reminded that, during the first five school days of a suspension or permanent exclusion (or until alternative provision begins if earlier), they have a legal duty to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during normal school hours without reasonable justification.

Parents and carers will also be informed that failure to comply with this duty may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution by the Local Authority.

Alternative Provision

Where alternative provision is required, the school will provide parents or carers with the relevant details as soon as reasonably practicable, including:

- the start date;
- attendance arrangements;
- location;
- reporting arrangements;
- any other information necessary for the pupil to access the provision safely.

Where all information is not immediately available, it will be provided as soon as possible and within the statutory timescales.

Notification to the Academy Trust and Governing Board

The Headteacher will notify the Academy Trust and the Governing Board without delay where required by legislation, including where:

- a permanent exclusion has been issued;
- a suspension results in a pupil being suspended for more than five school days (or more than ten lunchtimes) in a term;
- a suspension or permanent exclusion would cause a pupil to miss a public examination or National Curriculum test;
- a suspension or permanent exclusion has been cancelled;
- any other statutory reporting requirement applies.

Notification to the Local Authority

The Headteacher will notify the Local Authority without delay of all suspensions and permanent exclusions in accordance with statutory guidance.

Where a pupil permanently excluded from Riverside Bridge School lives in another Local Authority, the pupil's home authority will also be informed where required.

Notification to other professionals

Where appropriate, the Headteacher will notify relevant professionals without delay, including:

- the pupil's Social Worker;
- the Virtual School Head for looked after children;
- professionals involved in the pupil's Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan;
- other agencies involved in supporting the pupil where appropriate.

Early communication enables all agencies to work together to consider appropriate support, safeguarding arrangements and educational provision.

Recording decisions

The school will maintain accurate records of every suspension and permanent exclusion, including:

- the reasons for the decision;
- evidence considered;

- the length of any suspension;
- statutory notifications issued;
- representations received;
- decisions of the Governing Board or Independent Review Panel where applicable;
- reintegration arrangements;
- any subsequent reviews or outcomes.

Records will be maintained securely in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the school's records retention schedule.

Cancelling a suspension or permanent exclusion

The Headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion where this is permitted by legislation and before the Governing Board has considered the decision.

Where a suspension or permanent exclusion is cancelled, the school will notify without delay:

- the parent, carer or relevant person;
- the Academy Trust and Governing Board;
- the Local Authority;
- the pupil's Social Worker and/or Virtual School Head where applicable;
- any other relevant professionals.

The notification will explain the reason for the cancellation and confirm the arrangements for the pupil's immediate return to school. The school will also offer the parent, carer or relevant person the opportunity to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the decision.

Section 07

EDUCATION DURING SUSPENSION AND FOLLOWING PERMANENT EXCLUSION

Maintaining learning. Protecting welfare. Supporting continuity.

The school is committed to ensuring that every pupil continues to receive appropriate education and support during any period of suspension or following permanent exclusion. Wherever possible, disruption to learning will be minimised and arrangements will reflect the individual needs of the pupil.

Work during the first five school days

For the first five school days of any suspension or permanent exclusion, the school will take reasonable steps to provide work for the pupil to complete at home.

The work provided will:

- be appropriate to the pupil's age, ability and aptitude;
- take account of any special educational needs or disability;
- reflect, where possible, the curriculum being taught in school;
- be accessible to the pupil's communication and learning needs;
- support continuity of learning until the pupil returns to school or alternative provision begins.

Where appropriate, staff will maintain contact with the family to provide clarification, encouragement and support with accessing the work.

Alternative Provision

Where legislation requires full-time education to be arranged from the sixth consecutive school day of a suspension or following a permanent exclusion, suitable provision will be secured in accordance with statutory requirements.

The provision will:

- be suitable to the pupil's age, ability and aptitude;
- meet any identified special educational needs and disabilities;
- take account of any Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan;
- provide a safe learning environment;
- support the pupil's continued educational progress.

Where appropriate, the school will work with the Local Authority, alternative providers and other agencies to ensure a smooth transition into the provision.

Pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans

Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, the school will work closely with the Local Authority and relevant professionals to ensure that educational provision remains appropriate during any suspension or following permanent exclusion. Consideration will also be given to whether an emergency or early review of the EHC Plan is appropriate in light of the circumstances.

Safeguarding and welfare

A period of suspension or permanent exclusion can increase a pupil's vulnerability. During any period when a pupil is not attending Riverside Bridge School, the school will continue to consider its safeguarding responsibilities and will work with parents, carers and relevant agencies where concerns arise.

Where a pupil:

- is looked after or previously looked after;
- has a social worker;
- is subject to a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need Plan;
- has significant medical needs;
- presents other safeguarding vulnerabilities,

the school will liaise with the appropriate professionals to help ensure that risks are identified and managed appropriately.

Monitoring engagement

Where work is provided during a suspension, the school will encourage pupils and families to engage with the learning and will offer reasonable support where barriers to participation are identified.

Whilst parents and carers are responsible for supervising pupils during a suspension, the school recognises that some families may require additional advice or support to enable pupils to continue learning successfully.

Maintaining contact

Where appropriate, the school will maintain appropriate communication with parents, carers and relevant professionals throughout the period of suspension or while alternative provision is being arranged.

Communication may include:

- confirming arrangements for the pupil's return;
- sharing educational resources;
- discussing support strategies;
- planning reintegration;
- ensuring that safeguarding and welfare needs continue to be monitored.

Section 08

REINTEGRATION FOLLOWING SUSPENSION

Restoring participation. Reviewing support. Reducing recurrence.

The purpose of reintegration is to support the pupil's successful return to school, reduce the likelihood of further incidents and ensure that appropriate support is in place to enable the pupil to participate safely and successfully in school life.

Reintegration should be supportive, individualised and proportionate. It should help pupils re-establish positive relationships, restore routines and identify any additional support required following a period of suspension.

Planning for reintegration

Following any suspension, the school will consider whether a reintegration meeting would support the pupil's successful return.

Where appropriate, the meeting may involve:

- the pupil;
- parents or carers;
- the Headteacher or delegated senior leader;
- class staff;
- relevant therapists or healthcare professionals;
- members of the safeguarding or pastoral team;
- other professionals involved with the pupil.

The purpose of the meeting is to review the circumstances leading to the suspension, identify any barriers to success and agree appropriate strategies to support the pupil's return.

Return to school

A pupil will normally return to school on the first school day following the end of their suspension.

The school will not delay or refuse a pupil's return because:

- a reintegration meeting has not yet taken place;
- parents or carers are unable to attend a meeting;
- further discussions are still being arranged.

Where parents or carers are unable to attend before the pupil returns, the meeting will be arranged as soon as reasonably practicable after the pupil has resumed attendance.

Individual support

Following suspension, the school will consider whether any additional support is required, including:

- review of Positive Support strategies;
- review of Positive Support and Regulation Plans;
- review of communication approaches;
- review of sensory and environmental adjustments;
- review of regulation and emotional support;
- review of individual risk assessments where appropriate;
- review of Communication Profiles;
- review of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan outcomes where appropriate;
- additional therapeutic advice or intervention;
- increased home-school communication;
- multi-agency support;
- referral to appropriate internal support processes where required.

Support will be proportionate to the needs of the pupil and based on the circumstances surrounding the suspension.

Reasonable adjustments

Where a pupil has a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, the school will consider whether additional reasonable adjustments are required to support their successful reintegration.

Adjustments may include changes to communication, the physical environment, teaching approaches, routines, sensory support, communication approaches or positive support strategies.

Phased reintegration

In exceptional circumstances, a phased reintegration may be considered where it is clearly in the pupil's best interests and has been agreed collaboratively with parents or carers and, where appropriate, the Local Authority.

Any phased reintegration will:

- have clear educational objectives;
- be time limited;
- include planned review dates;
- maintain the pupil on roll;
- continue to provide appropriate education;
- not be used as an informal exclusion or an alternative to a lawful suspension.

Monitoring progress

Following reintegration, staff will monitor the pupil's progress and wellbeing to assess whether agreed support is effective.

Where concerns remain, the school will review the support provided and consider whether additional intervention or multi-agency involvement is required.

The aim of reintegration is to enable the pupil to participate successfully in school life whilst supporting safe, positive participation, safeguarding the welfare of all members of the school community and reducing the likelihood of future suspensions.

Learning from suspension

Following each suspension, the school will reflect on the circumstances leading to the incident to identify whether any wider changes to practice, provision or support could reduce the likelihood of similar incidents occurring in the future.

This may include reviewing:

- curriculum access;
- communication supports;
- environmental factors;
- staff training needs;
- therapeutic input;
- positive support strategies;
- safeguarding arrangements;
- whole-school practice where patterns or trends are identified.

Section 09

GOVERNING BOARD REVIEW OF SUSPENSIONS AND PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS

Providing scrutiny. Applying independent judgement. Ensuring fairness.

The Governing Board will fulfil its statutory responsibilities in relation to suspensions and permanent exclusions in accordance with current legislation and Department for Education guidance.

The Governing Board will consider each case independently, fairly and without bias, ensuring that decisions have been made lawfully and that statutory procedures have been followed.

Role of the Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for reviewing suspensions and permanent exclusions where required by legislation.

In carrying out this role, governors will consider:

- whether the Headteacher followed the correct statutory procedures;
- whether the decision was lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate;
- whether the decision was based on sufficient evidence;
- whether relevant Equality Act 2010 duties were properly considered;
- whether appropriate regard was given to the pupil's special educational needs, disability, safeguarding needs and individual circumstances;
- whether suspension or permanent exclusion was an appropriate disciplinary response.

Governors will exercise independent judgement and will consider each case on its individual merits.

Meetings of the Governing Board

Where legislation requires the Governing Board to meet, meetings will be arranged within the statutory timescales. Parents, carers or the relevant person will be informed of:

- the date and time of the meeting;
- their right to attend and make representations;
- their right to be accompanied by a friend or representative;
- their right to submit written evidence;
- the documents that will be considered by governors;
- any arrangements for remote participation where permitted.

The Headteacher will also have the opportunity to present the reasons for the suspension or permanent exclusion.

Considering the evidence

When reviewing a decision, governors will consider all relevant evidence presented by the school, the parent or carer, the relevant person and any other invited participants. Governors may ask questions and seek clarification where necessary before reaching their decision. In reaching a decision, governors will consider:

- the seriousness of the incident;
- the circumstances leading to the decision;
- the evidence available;
- whether statutory guidance has been followed;
- whether reasonable adjustments were considered where appropriate;
- the impact on the safety, welfare and education of pupils and staff;
- any representations made by the parent, carer, relevant person or pupil.

Decisions available to the Governing Board

Following consideration of the case, the Governing Board will make the decision required by legislation. Where legislation provides the power to direct or recommend reinstatement, governors will exercise that power in accordance with statutory guidance. Where legislation does not permit reinstatement, governors will still consider the circumstances of the case and any representations received in accordance with their statutory responsibilities.

Notification of the decision

The Governing Board will notify the parent, carer or relevant person, the Headteacher and the Local Authority of its decision in writing without delay. The written notification will explain:

- the decision reached;
- the reasons for that decision;
- any statutory rights of review or appeal;
- the relevant timescales;
- any further information required by legislation.

Records

A written record of the Governing Board's consideration and decision will be retained in accordance with the school's records management procedures and data protection legislation.

Governors will ensure that confidential information is handled appropriately and that only those who need access to documentation receive it.

Section 10

INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANELS (IRPS)

Providing independent review. Protecting statutory rights.

Where the Governing Board upholds a decision to permanently exclude a pupil, the parent, carer or relevant person may have the right to request an Independent Review Panel (IRP) in accordance with statutory guidance. The Academy Trust is responsible for ensuring that Independent Review Panels are arranged in accordance with the requirements of the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012 and current Department for Education guidance.

Requesting an Independent Review

Where the right applies, the parent, carer or relevant person will be informed in writing of:

- their right to request an Independent Review Panel;
- the timescale within which a request must be made;
- how to submit the request;
- the role and powers of the Independent Review Panel;
- their right to request the attendance of a Special Educational Needs (SEND) expert where applicable.

The role of the Independent Review Panel

The Independent Review Panel does not reconsider the incident as a fresh disciplinary hearing.

Its role is to determine whether the Governing Board's decision to uphold the permanent exclusion was:

- lawful;
- reasonable;
- procedurally fair;
- proportionate.

The Panel will consider whether the statutory guidance and legal duties were properly applied throughout the exclusion process.

Special Educational Needs expert

Where requested by the parent, carer or relevant person, the Academy Trust will arrange for an independent Special Educational Needs (SEN) expert to attend the Independent Review Panel where required by legislation.

The SEN expert's role is to provide impartial advice on whether:

- the school's policies relating to SEND were lawfully applied;

- the school complied with its duties under the Equality Act 2010;
- reasonable adjustments were appropriately considered;
- the pupil's special educational needs may have affected the circumstances leading to the permanent exclusion;
- SEND-related matters were properly taken into account during the decision-making process.

The SEN expert does not decide whether the permanent exclusion should be overturned and is independent of both the school and the parent.

Decisions of the Independent Review Panel

Following consideration of the case, the Independent Review Panel may:

- uphold the Governing Board's decision;
- recommend that the Governing Board reconsiders its decision;
- quash the Governing Board's decision and direct it to reconsider the permanent exclusion.

Where the Governing Board is directed or recommended to reconsider its decision, it will do so in accordance with the statutory requirements and notify all relevant parties of the outcome.

Judicial review

The decision of an Independent Review Panel may be challenged only through Judicial Review where there are grounds to suggest that the decision-making process was unlawful.

Section 11

MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION

Identifying patterns. Challenging disproportionality. Strengthening inclusion.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to ensuring that suspension and permanent exclusion are used lawfully, fairly, consistently and only where necessary.

The Headteacher will monitor the use of suspensions, permanent exclusions and other disciplinary measures to ensure that decisions remain proportionate, evidence based and consistent with statutory guidance.

The school will regularly analyse information including:

- the number and length of suspensions;
- permanent exclusions;
- repeat suspensions;
- pupils with special educational needs and disabilities;
- pupils with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans;
- looked after and previously looked after children;
- pupils with social workers;
- pupils with protected characteristics;
- alternative provision;
- off-site directions;
- managed moves;
- reintegration outcomes;
- any emerging trends or disproportionality.

Where patterns or disproportionality are identified, the school will consider whether changes to policy, practice, training or provision are required to promote inclusion and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion.

The Governing Board will receive regular reports to enable it to fulfil its statutory oversight responsibilities and to provide appropriate challenge regarding the school's use of suspension and permanent exclusion. This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes to legislation, statutory guidance or operational practice require.

Section 12

EQUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Removing disadvantage. Supporting access. Promoting equality.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring that pupils are treated fairly and without discrimination.

When exercising its responsibilities under this policy, the school will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The school will have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity;
- foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered for disabled pupils throughout the suspension and permanent exclusion process.

The school will also ensure that information relating to suspension and permanent exclusion is accessible to parents, carers and pupils where required, including through translation, interpretation, alternative communication methods or accessible formats.

Section 13

RECORD KEEPING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Recording securely. Protecting information.

The school will maintain accurate, secure and confidential records relating to suspensions and permanent exclusions.

Records will include, where appropriate:

- evidence considered during decision-making;
- statutory notifications;
- correspondence;
- meeting records;
- representations received;
- Governing Board decisions;
- Independent Review Panel documentation;
- reintegration planning;
- safeguarding information relevant to the decision;
- any subsequent actions or reviews.

Information will be processed in accordance with:

- the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR);
- the Data Protection Act 2018;
- the school's Data Protection Policy;
- the school's records retention schedule.

Information will be shared only where there is a lawful basis to do so.

Section 14

RELATED POLICIES & FRAMEWORKS

Connecting practice. Strengthening consistency.

This policy should be read alongside Riverside Bridge School policies and frameworks.

- Positive Support Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Accessibility Policy and Accessibility Plan
- Attendance Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy

Statutory guidance and national frameworks to be considered:

- Department for Education: Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England
- Behaviour in Schools
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- SEND Code of Practice
- other relevant statutory guidance