



Sacred Heart School

Exclusion Policy

At Sacred Heart School we all aspire to provide a happy, safe and secure environment in which every child is encouraged to achieve their full potential.

This policy is applicable to all pupils, including those in EYFS.

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Approved by:	Senior Leadership Team
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1. Policy Statement

At Sacred Heart School we aspire to provide a happy, safe and secure environment in which every child is encouraged to achieve their full potential. This policy applies to all pupils, including those in EYFS.

This policy should be read alongside the Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, SEND Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and Complaints Procedure, together with the contractual arrangements between the school and parents.

2. Purpose and Legal Framework

Sacred Heart School is an independent school. The statutory Department for Education guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units does not apply directly to independent schools. The school nevertheless has regard to relevant national guidance as good practice where appropriate.

The school will operate its suspension and permanent exclusion arrangements fairly, consistently and transparently, in accordance with its published policies, contractual arrangements, the Independent School Standards and the Equality Act 2010. The welfare, education and rights of the pupil concerned, and the safety and education of the wider school community, will be taken into account.

3. Principles

Suspension or permanent exclusion is a serious sanction. The school will normally seek to use appropriate behaviour management, pastoral support and reasonable adjustments before resorting to exclusion, although a serious single incident may justify suspension or permanent exclusion. Decisions will be proportionate, based on the individual circumstances and made on the balance of probabilities.

The school will not use informal or unofficial exclusion. A pupil will not be sent home for disciplinary reasons, or asked to remain at home, without the action being treated and recorded as a formal suspension under this policy. Parents will not be pressured to withdraw a pupil as an alternative to a formal permanent exclusion decision.

4. Authority to Suspend or Permanently Exclude

The Headteacher has authority to suspend a pupil and to make a decision to permanently exclude. In the Headteacher's absence, a member of staff formally acting as Headteacher may impose a suspension where necessary. A permanent exclusion will be determined by the Headteacher or the person formally carrying the responsibilities of Headteacher.

5. Considerations Before a Decision

Before deciding to suspend or permanently exclude, the Headteacher will undertake a fair investigation appropriate to the circumstances. The pupil will normally be given an opportunity to give their account, taking account of their age, understanding and any communication needs. The Headteacher will consider the available evidence, relevant mitigating or aggravating factors, the school's policies and the proportionality of the proposed sanction.

Particular consideration will be given to SEND or disability, reasonable adjustments, safeguarding or welfare concerns, discrimination, trauma or vulnerability, and whether additional pastoral or specialist support is appropriate. Where behaviour may indicate a safeguarding concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be involved and safeguarding procedures will operate alongside the disciplinary process.

6. Grounds for Suspension or Permanent Exclusion

A pupil may be suspended or permanently excluded for a serious or persistent breach of the school's Behaviour or Anti-Bullying Policies, or where the pupil's continued presence would seriously harm the education, safety or welfare of the pupil or others. Behaviour outside school may also be considered where there is a sufficiently close connection with the school, its pupils, staff or reputation.

Examples may include serious verbal or physical abuse; bullying, harassment or discriminatory behaviour; theft or deliberate damage; serious or persistent defiance; possession or use of prohibited substances or items; serious online misconduct; or repeated disruptive behaviour. This list is illustrative rather than exhaustive.

Permanent exclusion may exceptionally be appropriate for a first offence where the circumstances are sufficiently serious. Any decision will be made on the balance of probabilities and after consideration of the individual circumstances.

7. Procedure and Notification

Parents or carers will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable of a suspension or permanent exclusion, normally by telephone followed by written confirmation. The written notification will state the reason for the decision, the date on which it takes effect, the duration of any suspension, arrangements for education during the period away from school, arrangements for return where applicable, and the route available for representations or review.

The Chair of Governors will be informed of every permanent exclusion and of significant or repeated suspensions. Governors will receive appropriate anonymised information about patterns of suspension and permanent exclusion as part of their oversight of behaviour, safeguarding and equality.

8. Duration and Education During Suspension

Any suspension will be for the shortest period reasonably necessary in the circumstances. Its start and end dates will be clearly stated in writing. The school does not apply the statutory 45-school-day limit that governs maintained schools and academies; instead, each suspension will be considered individually under this policy and the school's contractual arrangements.

During a suspension, the school will take reasonable steps to provide appropriate work and maintain educational continuity, proportionate to the length of the suspension and the pupil's circumstances. Appropriate safeguarding or welfare contact will also be maintained where necessary.

9. Reintegration and Support

Following a suspension, the school will normally arrange a reintegration meeting with the pupil, parents or carers and an appropriate member of staff on or shortly before the pupil's return. The meeting will review the incident, reinforce expectations and agree any pastoral, behavioural, SEND or other support intended to reduce the risk of recurrence.

A Pastoral Support Plan, behaviour plan, risk assessment or other individual support may be introduced where appropriate. A parent's inability to attend a reintegration meeting will not, by itself, extend a suspension beyond the stated end date.

10. Permanent Exclusion and Governors' Review

Where the Headteacher decides to permanently exclude a pupil, the parents or carers will receive written reasons for the decision and may request a review by the Governing Body. A request should be made in writing to the Chair of Governors within the period specified in the decision letter.

The review will be heard by governors who have not been involved in the original decision and who are able to approach the matter impartially. Parents may make written representations and will normally be invited to attend and be accompanied by a friend or representative. The panel will consider whether the Headteacher's decision was fair, reasonable and proportionate in light of the evidence and the school's policies and contractual arrangements. The outcome and reasons will be confirmed in writing.

Short suspensions do not carry an automatic right to a governors' review. Parents may make representations to the Headteacher and may use the school's Complaints Procedure where appropriate.

11. SEND, Equality and Safeguarding

The school will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate unlawfully in the application of this policy. Before suspension or permanent exclusion, the Headteacher will consider whether behaviour may be linked to disability, SEND or another identified need; whether appropriate reasonable adjustments were in place; and whether further support or an adjusted response is appropriate.

A pupil will not be suspended or permanently excluded simply because the school is unable to meet their additional needs. Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan, the school will consider whether discussion with parents and the local authority, and where appropriate an early review of the plan, should take place before permanent exclusion.

Where an incident raises safeguarding concerns, including possible abuse, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, peer-on-peer abuse or other vulnerability, the school's safeguarding procedures take precedence where necessary and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be involved.

12. Record Keeping, Confidentiality and Monitoring

A clear written record will be retained of each suspension and permanent exclusion, including the incident, evidence considered, decision and reasons, parental notification, support or reasonable adjustments considered, reintegration arrangements and any review. Records will be stored securely and retained in accordance with the school's records-retention arrangements and data-protection obligations.

Cases will be treated sensitively and information shared only with those who need it for legitimate school, safeguarding, legal or regulatory purposes. The SLT and Governors will monitor the number, reasons and patterns of suspensions and permanent exclusions, including any disproportionate impact on particular groups, and will take action where trends or concerns emerge.

13. Review

The number of suspensions and permanent exclusions during the academic year 2025–26 was nil.