

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

2026–2027

The Governing Body of Headlands Primary School
endeavours to write and adopt policies that are fully inclusive
for all children / staff / parents / carers / Governors and
members of the wider community.



Policy approved by Governors:	September 2026
Signature of Chair of Governors:	
Date for renewal:	September 2027

Working together to ensure that all children will reach their full potential in a happy, caring, safe and respectful environment.

1. Purpose and scope

Headlands Community Primary School is committed to providing a calm, safe and supportive environment in which every child can learn and thrive. This policy sets out the school's approach to suspensions and permanent exclusions and should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, SEND Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Equality information and objectives.

The school follows the Department for Education statutory guidance, Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement, updated in July 2026. Where this policy and statutory guidance differ, the statutory guidance takes precedence.

2. Principles

Suspension and permanent exclusion are important behaviour management tools but will be used lawfully, reasonably, fairly and proportionately. The school will seek to understand and address the causes of behaviour and use appropriate support and intervention. Permanent exclusion will only be used where the statutory test is met.

- Only the Headteacher, or an acting Headteacher formally carrying out that role, may suspend or permanently exclude a pupil on disciplinary grounds.
- Decisions will be based on the individual circumstances of the case and on the civil standard of proof - the balance of probabilities.
- The pupil's views will be taken into account, where appropriate, considering their age and understanding, and support will be provided to help them express those views where needed.
- The school will consider whether SEND, disability, safeguarding concerns, bereavement, bullying, mental health needs or other contributing factors may have affected the pupil's behaviour.
- The school will have due regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.
- Informal or unofficial exclusions are unlawful. A pupil will not be sent home for disciplinary reasons unless this is recorded formally as a suspension.

3. Definitions

Suspension

A suspension is a temporary removal of a pupil from school on disciplinary grounds. A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year. Suspensions do not have to be continuous and may include part of a school day; a lunchtime suspension counts as half a school day.

A suspension cannot simply be extended or converted into a permanent exclusion. Where further evidence comes to light following an initial suspension, a further suspension or a permanent exclusion may be issued to begin after the original suspension ends, where justified by the circumstances.

Permanent exclusion

A permanent exclusion means that a pupil is no longer allowed to attend the school unless the decision is subsequently overturned and the pupil is reinstated. A permanent exclusion will only be considered:

- in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy; and
- where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others, including staff or other pupils.

Cancelled exclusion

The Headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion that has begun, or has not yet begun, provided the Governing Body has not already met to consider reinstatement. Where an exclusion is cancelled, the school will follow the notification, recording and reintegration requirements in the statutory guidance. Any school days missed before cancellation count towards the 45-day maximum.

4. Behaviour outside school

A pupil's behaviour outside school may be considered grounds for suspension or permanent exclusion where it is reasonable for the school to regulate the behaviour. This may include behaviour on school trips, on the journey to and from school, online behaviour, or behaviour that could adversely affect the orderly running or reputation of the school or pose a threat to another pupil, member of staff or member of the public.

5. Factors considered before exclusion

Before deciding to suspend or permanently exclude, the Headteacher will consider the available evidence and relevant circumstances. Where appropriate, this will include:

- the pupil's account and views, alongside the views and evidence of others involved;
- whether appropriate behaviour strategies, pastoral support and reasonable adjustments have been implemented;
- whether an assessment of unmet needs, including SEND or health needs, is required;
- whether the pupil has a social worker, is looked-after or previously looked-after, and whether relevant professionals should be involved;
- whether additional in-school intervention, outreach, alternative provision, an off-site direction or a managed move may be appropriate as a preventative measure;
- the impact of the behaviour on the safety, education and welfare of the pupil and the wider school community.

Off-site direction will not be used as a punishment for past misconduct. Any managed move will be voluntary and agreed with the relevant parties, with the pupil's best interests and views considered.

6. Pupils with SEND, disabilities or additional vulnerability

The school recognises that some pupils are more vulnerable to exclusion. Where a pupil has SEND or a disability, the school will consider whether reasonable adjustments have been made and whether

additional support is required. Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan, the school will work with the local authority and consider whether an early review of the plan is appropriate.

Where a pupil has a social worker and is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the Headteacher will involve the social worker, Designated Safeguarding Lead and parents and carers as early as possible. For a looked-after child, the Designated Teacher will contact the relevant Virtual School Head as soon as possible. The school will also seek relevant advice for previously looked-after children where appropriate.

7. Reasons for suspension or permanent exclusion

The Headteacher will exercise professional judgement in each case. The following are examples of behaviour that may lead to suspension or permanent exclusion, depending on severity, context and any previous incidents:

- physical assault against a pupil or adult;
- verbal abuse, threatening or intimidating behaviour;
- bullying, including online bullying;
- racist, discriminatory or prejudicial abuse, including abuse relating to disability, religion, sex, sexual orientation or gender reassignment;
- use or threatened use of an offensive weapon or prohibited item;
- sexual misconduct or other indecent behaviour;
- serious or persistent disruption or defiance;
- damage to property, theft or arson;
- possession, use or supply of drugs or other prohibited substances;
- persistent breaches of the Behaviour Policy where previous support, intervention and sanctions have not secured improvement.

This list is not exhaustive. A single serious incident may justify permanent exclusion where the statutory test is met.

8. The decision and notification process

When the Headteacher decides to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, the school will notify parents and carers without delay of the decision, the period of any suspension, and the reason or reasons. Written notification will also be provided without delay and will include the information required by statutory guidance, including rights to make representations to the Governing Body and, where applicable, to request that a meeting is held remotely.

For a pupil of compulsory school age, parents and carers will be told about their duty to ensure that the pupil is not present in a public place during school hours on the relevant first five school days of the exclusion, unless there is reasonable justification.

The local authority will be informed without delay of every suspension and permanent exclusion, regardless of length. The Governing Body will be notified without delay of any permanent exclusion; any exclusion that takes the pupil's total above five school days or ten lunchtimes in a term; and any

exclusion that would cause the pupil to miss a public examination or national curriculum test. Where relevant, the pupil's social worker and/or Virtual School Head will also be notified.

9. Education during suspension or permanent exclusion

The school will take reasonable steps to set and mark suitable work during the first five school days of a suspension or permanent exclusion where the pupil is not attending alternative provision. Work will be accessible and appropriate to the pupil's needs, including any SEND or disability.

For a suspension of more than five school days, the Governing Body is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education from the sixth school day. Following a permanent exclusion, the local authority is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education from the sixth school day. For looked-after children and children with a social worker, the school and local authority should work together to arrange alternative provision from the first day following the exclusion wherever possible.

10. Reintegration following suspension

Following a suspension, the school will support the pupil's successful return to school. A reintegration meeting will normally be arranged with the pupil and parents and carers, involving appropriate staff. The purpose is to welcome the pupil back, review the circumstances leading to the suspension, agree support and expectations, and reduce the likelihood of further suspension.

A pupil will not be prevented from returning to school because a parent or carer is unable or unwilling to attend a reintegration meeting.

11. Governing Body consideration

The Governing Body has a statutory role in considering suspensions and permanent exclusions. In a maintained school, this function may be delegated to a committee of at least three governors. The Governing Body will consider parents' representations and, where required by law, decide whether the pupil should be reinstated.

- For a permanent exclusion, the Governing Body must meet to consider reinstatement within 15 school days of receiving notice.
- Where a suspension, alone or combined with earlier suspensions in the same term, takes the total above 15 school days, the Governing Body must meet within 15 school days.
- Where an exclusion would cause a pupil to miss a public examination or national curriculum test, the Governing Body must meet within 15 school days and take reasonable steps to meet before the test where practicable.
- Where suspensions take the total above five but not more than 15 school days in a term, the Governing Body must meet within 50 school days if parents make representations.
- For suspensions totalling five school days or fewer in a term, the Governing Body must consider any representations but cannot direct reinstatement.

In reaching its decision, the Governing Body will consider whether the Headteacher's decision was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair, applying the balance of probabilities and taking account of safeguarding, welfare, equality and other relevant legal duties.

12. Independent Review Panel

If the Governing Body declines to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil, parents and carers may request an Independent Review Panel within the statutory timescale. They may also request the appointment of a Special Educational Needs expert, regardless of whether the school recognises that the pupil has SEND. The decision letter from the Governing Body will explain these rights and how to exercise them.

An Independent Review Panel cannot itself direct reinstatement. It may uphold the Governing Body's decision, recommend that the Governing Body reconsiders it, or quash the decision and direct the Governing Body to reconsider it. The school and Governing Body will comply with all statutory requirements arising from the review process.

13. Safeguarding separation, off-site direction and managed moves

Arrangements to keep pupils apart for safeguarding purposes are distinct from suspension or permanent exclusion and will not be used as an informal disciplinary exclusion. Any such arrangement will be necessary, proportionate, kept under review and designed around the safety and education of the pupils involved.

Where an off-site direction or managed move is considered, the school will follow the current statutory guidance and alternative provision requirements, ensure appropriate consultation and review, and record the pupil's views. A managed move will only proceed where it is voluntary and agreed by all relevant parties.

14. Recording, monitoring and equality

The school will maintain accurate records of suspensions, permanent exclusions, cancellations, reasons, reviews and outcomes in accordance with statutory requirements and school census arrangements. Records relating to governing body consideration will be retained with the pupil's educational record.

The Headteacher and Governing Body will monitor exclusion data and patterns, including the characteristics of pupils affected, to identify any disproportionality, repeated suspensions, safeguarding concerns or groups requiring additional support. Governors will also monitor the use and effectiveness of off-site direction and other pupil movement arrangements where relevant.

15. Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher, Mr. Andrew Buttery, is responsible for decisions to suspend or permanently exclude, ensuring that decisions and notifications comply with statutory guidance, and ensuring appropriate support, recording and reintegration arrangements are in place.

Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for carrying out its statutory consideration and review duties, monitoring the lawful and proportionate use of exclusion, and ensuring suitable education is arranged where the school has a duty to do so. The Chair of Governors is Rev Ron Smith.

Local authority

The school will notify and liaise with City of York Council in accordance with statutory requirements. The local authority has responsibilities including arranging suitable full-time education from the sixth school day following a permanent exclusion and arranging Independent Review Panels when requested.

16. Complaints and challenges

The statutory review and Independent Review Panel processes are the routes for challenging suspension and permanent exclusion decisions. Complaints about other aspects of the school's handling of a matter may be considered under the school's Complaints Policy where appropriate, but the complaints process cannot overturn a suspension or permanent exclusion decision outside the statutory framework.

17. Key guidance

This policy has been updated with regard to current national guidance and legislation, including:

- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement - statutory guidance, Department for Education, July 2026;
- Behaviour in Schools - advice for headteachers and school staff;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;
- Equality Act 2010 and associated school duties;
- School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended;
- Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) (Application to Academies and Pupil Referral Units and Minor Amendments) Regulations 2026; and
- City of York Council procedures and advice relating to suspension, permanent exclusion and alternative provision.

18. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner if statutory guidance or legislation changes. The Headteacher will ensure that relevant staff and governors are made aware of material changes to the statutory framework.