Connected Futures Partnership

Authoring our story.

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Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy

SEPTEMBER 2026

Contribution | Challenge | Inclusivity | Aspiration

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Approved by	Governing Board — September 2026
Next review due	September 2027

1. Aims and principles

Connected Futures Partnership Federation (CFP) is committed to calm, safe, supportive and inclusive environments in which every child can learn, flourish and belong. Suspension and permanent exclusion are disciplinary measures within a wider culture of high expectations, strong relationships, early intervention and appropriate support.

This policy aims to ensure that:

- all suspensions and permanent exclusions are lawful, reasonable, fair and procedurally sound;
- children and parents/carers understand the process and are treated with dignity;
- the child's voice, circumstances and needs are considered before a decision is made;
- SEND, disability, safeguarding, equality and vulnerability are properly considered;
- permanent exclusion is used only when the statutory threshold is met and as a last resort;
- informal or unofficial exclusion, including sending a child home to 'cool off', is never used;
- reintegration after suspension is planned positively and is not made conditional on attendance at a meeting; and
- leaders and governors scrutinise patterns, disproportionality and the effectiveness of support.

2. Scope and statutory framework

This policy applies across CFP school settings where the statutory suspension and permanent exclusion framework applies. Practice will be age- and developmentally appropriate, including in early years provision.

The policy has been updated with regard to the Department for Education 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 the Education Act 2002; Education and Inspections Act 2006; School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended; School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024; Equality Act 2010; Children and Families Act 2014; current DfE Behaviour in Schools guidance; current safeguarding guidance; and legislation and regulations governing alternative provision and off-site direction.

Where legislation or statutory guidance changes during the life of this policy, CFP will follow the current legal requirements even where this document has not yet been formally reissued.

3. Key definitions

Suspension: A temporary removal from the school for disciplinary reasons. Suspensions may be for one or more fixed periods, but must not exceed 45 school days in total in any school year.

Permanent exclusion: The most serious disciplinary sanction, resulting in the child ceasing to be a pupil at the school once the statutory process is complete.

School day: Any day on which there is a school session. INSET or staff-training days do not count as school days for exclusion time limits.

Parent/carer: A person with parental responsibility for the child and any person who has care of the child, as defined in law.

Off-site direction: A temporary direction for a pupil to attend another education setting for the purpose of improving behaviour, used within the statutory framework.

Managed move: A voluntary, permanent transfer to another school, agreed by all parties and used only where it is in the child's best interests.

Headteacher: For the purposes of statutory decision-making within CFP, the person lawfully exercising the headteacher function for the relevant school. CFP's internal leadership arrangements include the Executive Headteacher and Heads of School; decisions will only be taken by a person authorised in law to do so.

4. Decision to suspend or permanently exclude

A suspension or permanent exclusion may only be imposed on disciplinary grounds. The decision must be made on the civil standard of proof — the balance of probabilities — and must be lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

A permanent exclusion may be considered only where:

- there has been a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and
- allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others.

Before deciding, the authorised headteacher will, so far as appropriate:

- establish the relevant facts and evidence and consider any competing accounts;
- consider whether the incident may have been provoked or influenced by bullying, harassment, discrimination, exploitation, unmet need or safeguarding concerns;
- give the child an opportunity to express their view, with communication support or an advocate where needed;
- consider the child's age, understanding, SEND, disability, communication profile and any reasonable adjustments;
- consider whether the child has a social worker, is looked after, has previously been looked after, is a young carer, or is otherwise particularly vulnerable;
- consider whether the school has made appropriate provision and reasonable adjustments and whether additional support or assessment is required;
- consider relevant alternatives and whether earlier interventions have been appropriate and effective; and
- record the reasons for the decision clearly enough to demonstrate how relevant factors were weighed.

A suspension may be for part of a school day. A child must not be sent home informally or without the suspension being formally recorded and the statutory notification process followed.

A suspension or permanent exclusion must not be imposed simply because a child has SEND or a disability that the school feels unable to meet, because of poor academic performance, or because a parent or child has not attended a reintegration meeting.

5. Equality, SEND, safeguarding and vulnerable pupils

CFP will comply with the Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. Decision-makers must consider whether a behaviour policy, sanction or process places a disabled pupil at a substantial disadvantage and whether reasonable adjustments are required.

Where a child has SEND, leaders will consider whether the behaviour is related to unmet need, whether provision is being delivered as intended and whether further assessment, review or support is required. Where a child has an EHC plan, the school will work with the local authority and may seek an early review where needs or placement require reconsideration.

Safeguarding considerations do not prevent disciplinary action where it is justified, but safeguarding and behaviour processes must work together. Where behaviour may indicate abuse, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, criminal exploitation, radicalisation, mental-health need or another safeguarding concern, the DSL will be involved and CFP safeguarding procedures followed.

For children with a social worker and looked-after children, relevant professionals should be involved early when suspension or permanent exclusion is being considered. The social worker and/or Virtual School Head will be informed as required by statutory guidance.

6. Alternatives, pupil movement and unlawful exclusions

Suspension and permanent exclusion are not substitutes for appropriate support. Depending on the circumstances, schools may consider strengthened pastoral support, SEND review, reasonable adjustments,

targeted intervention, internal arrangements, alternative provision, off-site direction or a voluntary managed move.

A managed move must be voluntary and agreed by all parties. Parents/carers and children must not be pressured into a move, elective home education or withdrawal from the school roll as an alternative to the statutory exclusion process.

Off-site direction is a temporary intervention governed by statutory requirements. It must have a clear purpose, be kept under review, and be used to improve behaviour rather than to remove a child from the school roll. Where relevant, the local authority must be notified in relation to a pupil with an EHC plan.

CFP will not use informal or unofficial exclusions. This includes sending a child home to 'cool off', routinely shortening a school day as a disciplinary measure, or preventing attendance without following a lawful process. Separate arrangements to keep pupils apart for safeguarding purposes must be lawful, educationally suitable, time-limited and reviewed at sufficient intervals.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 Executive Headteacher / authorised Headteacher function

- ensure any suspension or permanent exclusion decision is made only by a person legally authorised to do so;
- ensure decisions comply with this policy and current statutory guidance;
- notify parents/carers and relevant bodies without delay;
- ensure appropriate education and safeguarding arrangements are made;
- keep accurate records, including reasons, duration and any cancellation; and
- report patterns and key information to the Governing Board.

7.2 Heads of School and senior leaders

Heads of School and senior leaders support prevention, evidence gathering, communication, reintegration and provision. Where they do not hold the statutory authority to exclude, they must not purport to make the exclusion decision themselves.

7.3 Governing Board

The Governing Board will discharge its statutory review functions, consider parental representations, oversee the use of suspension and permanent exclusion, and scrutinise patterns and disproportionality. A committee of at least three governors will be constituted where a formal reinstatement consideration is required.

Governors will also oversee the quality and review of off-site direction and separate educational arrangements used to keep pupils apart for safeguarding purposes, where applicable.

7.4 Local authority

The local authority receives notification of all suspensions and permanent exclusions without delay. For permanent exclusions, it is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education from no later than the sixth school day. For looked-after children and children with a social worker, school and local authority partners should work together to secure appropriate education as early as possible.

8. Notifications following a suspension or permanent exclusion

Parents/carers will be informed without delay of the decision, the reason(s), the period of any suspension or the fact that a permanent exclusion is permanent, and their rights to make representations.

Written notification will include the information required by current statutory guidance, including:

- the reason(s) for the decision;
- the duration of a suspension or the fact of permanent exclusion;
- the right to make representations to the Governing Board and how to do so;
- where applicable, the right to attend and be represented at a governing-board meeting and to bring a friend;

- the parents' duty during the first five school days to ensure the child is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification; and
- details of alternative provision when known, including start date, times, location and reporting arrangements.

The local authority will be notified of every suspension and permanent exclusion without delay. The Governing Board will be notified in accordance with the statutory thresholds, including permanent exclusions, exclusions that take the child above the relevant cumulative threshold, and exclusions causing the child to miss a public examination or National Curriculum test.

Where relevant, the child's social worker and Virtual School Head will be informed and invited to statutory meetings as required. For a permanently excluded child who lives in another local authority, the home authority will also be notified.

9. Education during suspension or permanent exclusion

During the first five school days of a suspension or permanent exclusion, the school will take reasonable steps to set and mark achievable, accessible work where the child is not attending alternative provision. Reasonable adjustments will be made for SEND and disability.

For a suspension lasting more than five school days, the Governing Board must arrange suitable full-time education from the sixth school day. For permanent exclusion, the local authority must arrange suitable full-time education from the sixth school day.

For looked-after children and children with a social worker, CFP will work with the local authority and relevant professionals to seek suitable education from the first day where possible.

10. Cancelling a suspension or permanent exclusion

The authorised headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion before the Governing Board has met to consider reinstatement. A cancellation may apply to an exclusion that has started or one that has not yet begun.

Where an exclusion is cancelled:

- parents/carers, the Governing Board and local authority will be notified without delay and given the reason;
- the social worker and Virtual School Head will also be notified where relevant;
- the child will be allowed to return without delay;
- parents/carers will be offered a meeting to discuss the circumstances; and
- days already spent out of school will count towards the statutory 45-school-day maximum.

A permanent exclusion cannot be cancelled where doing so would result in the child having been excluded for more than the statutory maximum number of school days in the school year.

11. Governing Board consideration and reinstatement

The Governing Board will consider reinstatement within the statutory timescales. In summary, a formal consideration is required where a permanent exclusion has occurred, where suspensions exceed the statutory cumulative threshold in a term, or where an exclusion would cause the pupil to miss a public examination or National Curriculum test. Other parental representations will be considered in accordance with the statutory framework.

At a reinstatement meeting, the committee will consider whether the decision was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair, taking account of the evidence and the child's welfare and safeguarding. It will apply the balance of probabilities.

Relevant parties will be invited as required, including parents/carers, the child where appropriate, the authorised headteacher, the local authority representative, and where applicable the social worker and Virtual School Head.

The committee may decline to reinstate or direct reinstatement where it has the legal power to do so. Its decision and reasons will be communicated in writing without delay, together with information about further rights where the exclusion is permanent.

Meetings may be conducted remotely only where the statutory conditions for remote access are met. CFP will follow the current guidance on consent, fairness, accessibility and participation.

12. Independent review panels

Where the Governing Board decides not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil, parents/carers may apply for an Independent Review Panel (IRP) within the statutory time limit, normally 15 school days from written notice of the governing board's decision.

Parents/carers may request the appointment of a special educational needs expert regardless of whether the child has identified SEN. The panel may uphold the Governing Board's decision, recommend reconsideration, or quash the decision and direct reconsideration where the decision is judged to be flawed on judicial-review principles.

CFP and its governors will cooperate fully with the IRP process and with any subsequent reconsideration. The local authority is responsible for arranging the IRP for a maintained school.

13. Admission register and local-authority returns

A permanently excluded pupil's name will be removed from the admission register only when the statutory conditions for removal are met, including expiry of the period for seeking an independent review or completion of the review process as applicable.

The school will make the required return to the local authority when a pupil is removed from the admission register and will comply with current School Attendance (Pupil Registration) Regulations and school-census requirements.

CFP will accurately record suspension and permanent exclusion information, including cancellation and review outcomes where required by the school census.

14. Reintegration following suspension

Reintegration is a supportive process designed to help the child return successfully and reduce the likelihood of further suspension. A reintegration meeting with the child and parent/carer is good practice and will normally be offered, but attendance at a meeting must never be made a condition of the child returning to school.

A reintegration plan will be proportionate to the child's circumstances and may include:

- a warm, planned return with a named trusted adult;
- the child's views about what happened, what they need and what would help;
- restorative work where appropriate and safe;
- review of triggers, routines, relationships and environmental factors;
- SEND, communication, sensory or reasonable-adjustment actions;
- pastoral, therapeutic or multi-agency support;
- clear, achievable behaviour expectations and positive reinforcement;
- support for affected peers or staff where needed; and
- a review date to assess whether the plan is working.

Reduced timetables will not be used as a disciplinary sanction. Any temporary part-time timetable for another legitimate reason must follow CFP attendance and safeguarding procedures and current DfE guidance.

15. Recording, monitoring and governance oversight

The Executive Headteacher will ensure that suspension and permanent exclusion data are reviewed regularly and reported to governors. Monitoring will look beyond headline totals and consider:

- repeat suspensions and cumulative days lost;
- reasons, timing and context;

- patterns by school, year group and cohort;
- SEND, disability and protected characteristics;
- children with a social worker, looked-after children and other vulnerable groups;
- whether reasonable adjustments and support were in place;
- the use and outcomes of alternative provision, off-site direction and managed moves;
- cancelled exclusions and reasons for cancellation;
- governing-board and IRP review outcomes; and
- any evidence of disproportionality, inconsistency or practice that may amount to off-rolling.

Governors will use this information to test whether policies are being implemented fairly and effectively and whether additional action, training or resource is needed.

16. Complaints and further challenge

The statutory suspension and permanent exclusion review process is separate from the school complaints procedure. A complaint cannot be used to overturn an exclusion decision where the statutory route applies.

Concerns about discrimination may be pursued through the appropriate legal route. Disability discrimination claims may be made to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND); other Equality Act claims may fall within the jurisdiction of the county court. Parents/carers will be signposted to the rights and time limits set out in statutory guidance.

17. Related CFP policies

- Behaviour Policy / school-level behaviour arrangements
- Governors' Statement of Behaviour Principles
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy
- Managing Harmful Sexual Behaviour, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Between Children Policy
- Restrictive Interventions, Physical Intervention and Reasonable Force Policy
- SEND Policy and SEN Information Reports
- Equality policies and objectives
- Attendance Policy and reduced-timetable procedures
- Complaints Policy

Appendix 1: Decision-making checklist

☐ Is the proposed action on disciplinary grounds and is the decision-maker legally authorised?
☐ What facts and evidence have been established on the balance of probabilities?
☐ Has the child had a meaningful opportunity to give their account, with communication support if needed?
☐ Could bullying, discrimination, exploitation, trauma, SEND, disability, mental health or safeguarding be relevant?
☐ Have reasonable adjustments and the adequacy of existing provision been considered?
☐ Does the child have a social worker, EHC plan, looked-after status or another vulnerability requiring professional involvement?
☐ What alternatives and previous interventions have been considered, and why are they insufficient in this case?
☐ If permanent exclusion is proposed, are both limbs of the statutory threshold satisfied?
☐ Is the proposed response proportionate, consistent and free from unlawful discrimination?
☐ Are the reasons recorded clearly and are all statutory notifications ready to be issued without delay?

Appendix 2: Reintegration planning prompts

Child's voice: What does the child say happened? What would help them feel safe, successful and ready to learn?

Relationships: Who will welcome the child back? Are any restorative conversations appropriate and safe?

Learning: What work has been missed and how will the child be supported to re-engage without overload?

SEND and communication: Are reasonable adjustments, sensory supports, communication approaches or provision changes needed?

Triggers and prevention: What patterns or antecedents have been identified and what can adults change?

Support: Is pastoral, therapeutic, family, social-care, SEND or other multi-agency support required?

Expectations: What few, clear and achievable expectations will be reinforced positively?

Review: When will the plan be reviewed, by whom, and what evidence will show that it is helping?

Appendix 3: Independent review panel training

The LA must ensure that all members of an independent review panel and clerks have received training within the 2 years prior to the date of the review.
Training must have covered:

- The requirements of the primary legislation, regulations and statutory guidance governing
- exclusions, which would include an understanding of how the principles applicable in an
- application for judicial review relate to the panel's decision making.
- The need for the panel to observe procedural fairness and the rules of natural justice.
- The role of the chair and the clerk of a review panel.
- The duties of headteachers, governing boards and the panel under the Equality Act 2010.
- The effect of section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 (acts of public authorities unlawful if not
- compatible with certain human rights) and the need to act in a manner compatible with
- human rights protected by that Act.