



All Saints'  
Academy  
Cheltenham

# Fixed Period Suspensions and Exclusions Policy

## **Introduction**

### **1. Sponsors' Statement**

*The policies of All Saints' Academy, with its distinctive Anglican and Catholic foundation, exist to support the Sponsor's Christian vision, ethos and values that are embedded in the day-to-day and long term running of the Academy. Each policy evidences the commitment of the Sponsor to developing Body, Mind and Spirit.*

### **Safeguarding Statement**

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff and trustees and are consistent with those of Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

### **2. Promoting positive behaviour and early intervention**

All Saints' Academy has policies, procedures and staff training in place which promote good behaviour and prevent poor behaviour. The Ready to Learn Policy is widely publicised so that students, staff and parents/carers are aware of the standards of behaviour expected of students and the range of sanctions that can be imposed.

The Academy will apply the Ready to Learn Policy in a consistent, rigorous and non-discriminatory way. All areas of its application will be monitored routinely to satisfy legal requirements under race, disability and gender discrimination law.

### **3. Fixed Period Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions**

A fixed term suspension or permanent exclusion will be used after a range of measures have been attempted to improve the student's behaviour, unless used as a result of a very serious one-off incident as outlined in section 5 of this policy. The Academy believes that effective policies, procedures and training minimise the number of students at risk of either suspension or permanent exclusion.

### **4. Fixed Period Suspension**

A decision to suspend a student for a fixed period will be taken in response to breaches of the Academy's Ready to Learn Policy. This could include persistent disruptive behaviour, where the behaviour is not serious enough to warrant permanent exclusion but lesser sanctions, such as detention, are considered inappropriate. Individual suspensions will be for the shortest time necessary, but will be issued in relation to the seriousness of the offence and the child's behaviour record.

Procedures following a fixed period of suspension

1. The Principal, or delegated staff, will notify parents of any suspension.
2. Work will be set for the student during the period of the suspension.

3. All students will receive a reintegration meeting where it is expected that the student and parent/carer will attend. The purpose of the reintegration meeting is to assist the reintegration of the student and promote the improvement of his or her behaviour. It provides an opportunity to:
  - emphasise the importance of parents/carers working with the Academy to take joint responsibility for their child's behaviour;
  - discuss how behaviour problems can be addressed;
  - explore wider issues and any circumstances that may be affecting the child's behaviour;
  - reach agreement on how the child's education should continue, how best they can be reintegrated and what measures could be put in place to prevent further misbehaviour.

## **5. Permanent Exclusion**

**There are two categories of permanent exclusion:**

- A.** As a result of persistent breaches of the Academy Ready to Learn Policy and/or
- B.** as a result of a serious one-off event.

The decision to exclude a student permanently will be taken only if allowing the student to remain in the Academy would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the Academy.

Only the Principal (or the Vice Principal in his absence) can permanently exclude a student. Other suspensions do not have to be undertaken by the Principal personally, but will be delegated to the appropriate senior member of staff, usually a Vice Principal.

### **Permanent Exclusion as a result of persistent breaches of the Ready To Learn Policy**

A decision to exclude a child permanently is a serious one and will only be taken where the basic facts have been clearly established on the balance of probabilities. It will be the final step in a process for dealing with disciplinary offences following a wide range of other strategies which have been tried without success. It is an acknowledgement by the Academy that it has exhausted all available strategies for dealing with the child and will be used as a last resort.

### **Permanent Exclusion as a result of a serious one-off event**

There will, however, be exceptional circumstances where, in the Principal's judgement, it is appropriate to permanently exclude a child for a first or one-off offence. These may include:

- a) Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff
- b) Sexual abuse or assault;
- c) Supplying an illegal substance; or the possession of a Class A illegal substance
- d) Carrying an offensive weapon

These instances are not exhaustive, but indicate the severity of such offences and the fact that such behaviour can affect the discipline and well-being of the Academy community.

## **6. Factors which will be considered before making a decision to suspend or permanently exclude**

Suspension or permanent exclusion will not be imposed in the heat of the moment, unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of others in the Academy or the student concerned.

Before deciding whether to suspend or to permanently exclude a student, the Principal will:

- Ensure that a thorough investigation has been carried out;
- Consider all the evidence available to support the allegations, taking account of the Academy's Ready to Learn and Equal Opportunities policies, and, where applicable, the Race Relations Act 1976 as amended and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended
- Allow and encourage the student to give their version of events whenever possible;
- Check whether the incident may have been provoked, for example by bullying, or by racial or sexual harassment;
- If necessary, consult others, but not anyone who may later have a role in reviewing the Principal's decision, for example a member of the Board of Trustees.

## **7. Standard of proof**

The standard of proof to be applied is the balance of probabilities, i.e. if it is more probable than not that the student did what he or she is alleged to have done, the Principal may exclude the student.

Where a police investigation leading to possible criminal proceedings has been initiated, the evidence available may be very limited. However, it may still be possible for the Principal to make a judgment on the balance of probabilities on whether to suspend or permanently exclude the student.

## **8. When suspension or permanent exclusion is not appropriate**

Suspension or permanent exclusion should not be used for:

- minor incidents (for example, failure to complete homework);
- Poor academic performance;
- Lateness or truancy;
- Breaches of school uniform rules or rules on appearance (for example, relating to jewellery, body-piercing, hairstyles), except where these are persistent and in open defiance of such rules.

In every instance where a student is sent home for disciplinary reasons, the Principal will formally record and specify the length of the suspension or permanent exclusion.

## **9. Support for Students at Risk of Permanent Exclusion**

Students at serious risk of permanent exclusion will have a Pastoral Support Programme in place or will have been supported through provision within the Life Centre or appropriate off-site provision to help the students to manage their behaviour.

Where students are at serious risk of permanent exclusion, all relevant external agencies will be involved. The Academy believes that the behaviour of students at risk of permanent exclusion is sometimes driven by complex combinations of social, emotional and health problems, so the

involvement of other services should be co-ordinated. Multi-agency teams, such as Families First, can be an effective way in such a situation.

For those at risk, additional measures employed could include:

1. Intensive contact with parents/carers.
2. Curriculum alternatives, including joining the Life Centre or another form of alternative provision, such as off-site provision co-ordinated by the Academy.
3. Temporary or part-time placement in a Student Referral Unit, where a preventative programme can be provided and where it is felt to be more appropriate for the student to be away from the Academy site for a short period.
4. A managed move to another school, with the consent of all parties involved, including the parents/carers, trustees and the LA, and in circumstances where it is in the best interests of the student concerned. This can be successful for students at risk of multiple suspensions and as an alternative to permanent exclusion.
5. Consideration by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, with colleagues, of possible interventions within the Academy, including assessment of Special Educational Needs.
6. Referral to a specific support service, such as the Advisory Teaching Service, Education Welfare Service, Children's Services or the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

#### **10. Removing students from the Academy site**

There are four sets of circumstances in which individual students may be required to leave the Academy site, namely where:

1. There is sufficient evidence that a student has committed a disciplinary offence and if allowing the student to remain in the Academy would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the Academy. In these circumstances, the student may be suspended from school for a fixed period or permanently excluded.
2. A student is accused of a serious criminal offence but the offence took place outside the Academy's jurisdiction. In these circumstances, the Principal may decide that it is in the interests of the individual concerned, and of the Academy community as a whole, for that student to be educated off site for a certain period, subject to review at regular intervals.
3. For medical reasons, the Principal may send a student home, after consultation with that student's parents/carers and a health professional (for example, a school nurse) as appropriate, where because of a diagnosed illness (eg: a notifiable disease) the student poses an immediate and serious risk to the health and safety of him/herself or other students and staff.
4. The student is given permission by the Principal, or person authorised by the Principal, to leave the Academy premises briefly to remedy breaches of rules on appearance or uniform, where this can be done quickly and easily; this will not be for longer than is necessary to remedy the breach. This is not an exclusion, but an authorised absence. However, if the student continues to breach uniform rules in such a way as to be sent home to avoid school, the student's absence may be counted as unauthorised absence. In all such cases, the parent will be notified and the absence will be recorded.

### **11. Removal of students from the school in exceptional circumstances**

There may be exceptional circumstances in which the Principal needs to remove students from the Academy site when suspension or exclusion would be inappropriate. An example is where a student is accused of committing a serious criminal offence which took place outside the Principal's jurisdiction or where there may be insufficient evidence to warrant exclusion.

The Principal can authorise leave of absence for a fixed period, with the parents/carers' agreement, or, exercising powers delegated by the Board of Trustees under section 29(3) of the Education Act 2002, can arrange for the student to be educated elsewhere.

### **12. Lunchtime suspension**

Students whose behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive may be suspended from the Academy premises for the duration of the lunchtime period.

### **13. The Academy only uses suspensions and exclusion as the last resort.**

For all procedural requirements relating to suspension and exclusion, the Academy follows the guidance in the DFE and Gloucestershire LA publications 'Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England:

- The working of the Policy will be monitored by the Principal and a report will be made to the Academy Welfare and Ethos Committee each term.
- This policy sets out how we support our students in adopting responsible behaviour and accepting the consequences of their negative choices. It links closely to the following policies: Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and Drugs Policy.