



WILLOW TREE Academy



THE LEAF CENTRE



Suspension and Exclusion Policy

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Mission Statement:

Willow Tree Academy: Together anything is possible.

Willow Tree Academy is committed to being a fully accessible and inclusive organisation, welcoming and respecting the diversity of its student, staff, community and visitors to the school.

Rationale

This policy is underpinned by the commitment of all at Willow Tree Academy to ensure the safety and well-being of the whole school community and to maintain an appropriate educational environment in which all can learn and achieve. We have an overall aim of reducing the need to use suspensions or permanent exclusion as a sanction.

Introduction

The decision to suspend or permanent exclude a student will be taken by the Headteacher in the following circumstances:

- (a) In response to a serious breach of the Academy's Behaviour Policy
- (b) If allowing the student to remain in School would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the School.

Suspension or permanent exclusion is an extreme sanction and is only used by the Headteacher or, in the absence of the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher who is acting in that role.

Suspension or permanent exclusion will be used when there is an immediate threat to the safety of others in the School or the student concerned. Before deciding whether to suspend a student or permanently exclude, the Headteacher will ensure appropriate investigations have been carried out, considering all the evidence available.

A suspension or a permanent exclusion may be used for any of the following, all of which constitute examples of unacceptable conduct, and are infringements of the School's Positive Behaviour Policy:

- Verbal abuse to Staff and others
- Verbal abuse to student
- Physical abuse to/attack on Staff
- Physical abuse to/attack on student
- Indecent behaviour
- Damage to property
- Theft
- Serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff.
- Online abuse/inappropriate use of social media and technology
- Carrying an offensive weapon/alcohol/cigarettes/e cigarettes.
- Arson
- Unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported and for which School sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the student's behaviour.
- Persistent disruptive behaviour and/or behaviour that puts the child or others at risk
- Hate crime

The behaviour of a pupil outside school can be considered grounds for suspension or permanent exclusion.

This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other situations where the Headteacher makes the judgement that this is an appropriate sanction.

Suspension procedure

- Most suspensions are of short duration (a maximum of 5 days but usually for 1 or 2 days)
- The DFE regulations allow the Headteacher to suspend a student for one or more periods not exceeding 15 days in a term (45 school days in any one school year.)
- Following suspension parents/carers are contacted immediately where possible. A letter will be handed to the parent when they collect their child or sent by email if it is not ready at that time, giving details of the suspension and the date the suspension ends.
- Parents/carers have a right to make representations to the Governing Body and Children's Services Directorate, Social Inclusion Officer at the LA as directed in the letter.
- A reintegration meeting will be held following the expiry of the suspension and this will involve the student, parent/carers, a member of the Senior Leadership Team and other staff where appropriate.
- During the course of a suspension where the student is to be at home, parents/carers are advised that the student is not allowed on the school premises, and that daytime supervision is their responsibility, as parents/carers.

Suspensions of over five days

According to DFE guidance, schools are obliged to provide full time education from the sixth day of any period of a suspension of six days or longer. The school will consult with the LA officers for any exclusion of more than five days in order that appropriate full time education and transport is arranged. The school will provide education by working with:

- Pupil Referral Unit
- The Local Authority

The school will liaise with the outside education provider to ensure that the student continues with their programme of study. In most cases the school will set the work to be completed and ensure that it is completed appropriately.

Permanent Exclusion

The decision to exclude a student permanently is a very serious one. There are two main types of situations in which permanent exclusion may be considered.

The first is a final, formal step in a concerted process for dealing with disciplinary issues following the use of a wide range of other strategies, which have been used without success. It is an acknowledgement that all available strategies have been exhausted and is used as a last resort. This would include persistent and defiant misbehaviour e.g. repeated bullying (which could include racist or homophobic bullying).

The second is where there are exceptional circumstances and it is not appropriate to implement other strategies and where it could be appropriate to permanently exclude a student for a first or 'one off' offence. These might include:

- Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff.
- Sexual abuse or assault.
- Supplying an illegal drug.
- Carrying an offensive weapon*.
- Arson.

The School will consider police involvement for any of the above offences.

** Offensive weapons are defined in the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 as “any article made or adapted for causing injury to the person; or intended by the person having it with him for such use by him.”*

These instances are not exhaustive but indicate the severity of such offences and the fact that such behaviour seriously affects the discipline and well-being of the School.

Exercise of discretion

In reaching a decision, the Executive Headteacher or Headteacher will always look at each case on its own merits. Therefore, a tariff system, fixing a standard penalty for a particular action, is both unfair and inappropriate.

In considering whether permanent exclusion is the most appropriate sanction, the Executive Headteacher or Headteacher will consider the gravity of the incident, or series of incidents, and whether it constitutes a serious breach of the School's Behaviour Policy and the effect that the student remaining in the School would have on the education and welfare of other students and staff.

In line with its statutory duty, these same tests of appropriateness will form the basis of the deliberations at a Governors suspension/exclusion appeals hearing/meeting, when it meets to consider the Headteacher's decision to suspend or permanently exclude.

Alternatives to suspension

- **Restorative placement**

A restorative placement within another class/area in the child's home school may be used as an alternative where suspension/exclusion is not felt appropriate or suitable. The child will spend their school day in another class within their setting and complete their work which will have been set by their class teacher.

An alternative would be for the child, with parents permission, to have a restorative placement(usually one school day) at one of our other Academy schools in their year group class. This would not detract from their learning but will give them space and time for reflection on their behaviour.

At Willow Tree Academy we are keen to offer a restorative placement as an alternative to suspension; children can be offered a restorative placement in any of our schools. However, this may not always be appropriate.

- **Managed move**

The School works closely with other local primary and junior schools to undertake managed moves where such a course of action would be of benefit both to the student and the two schools concerned. Although the threat of a permanent exclusion will never be used as the means to persuade parents/carers to move their son/daughter to another school we are mindful that the possibility of this may be a determining factor in their decision making and in our communication with the Inclusion Officer at the LA.

- **Off-site Direction**

Off-site direction is when a governing board requires a pupil to attend another education setting to improve their behaviour. Where interventions or targeted support have not been successful in

improving a pupil's behaviour, off-site direction can be used to arrange time-limited placements at an AP (alternative provision) or another mainstream school. During the off-site direction to another school, pupils must be dual registered. Where possible we will always use Willow Tree Schools and work closely with parents.

Lunchtime Suspension

Students whose behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive may be suspended from the school premises for the duration of the lunchtime period. This will be treated as a suspension and parents will have the same right to gain information and to appeal. One week of lunchtime suspension equates to 2.5 days suspension.

Behaviour Outside School

Student behaviour outside School on school "business", for example educational visits and journeys or away school sports fixtures is subject to the Academy's Behaviour Policy. Inappropriate behaviour in these circumstances will be dealt with as if it had taken place in school. If student' behaviour in the immediate vicinity of the school or on a journey to and from school is inappropriate and meets the school criteria for suspension or permanent exclusion then the Headteacher may decide to suspend or exclude.

The behaviour of a pupil outside school, this including that online, can be considered grounds for a suspension or permanent exclusion and sanctions will be applied to those children who have caused significant problems in the community.