

Exclusions Policy



Document Management Information

Applicable to:	All staff and pupils in all Academies.
Dissemination:	The policy will be available to staff via the Trust's Policy Centre on the Central Services SharePoint site. The policy will also be published on academy websites.
Training:	Available to Staff on request
Review frequency:	This policy will be reviewed annually
Policy Author:	Owen McColgan - Chief Executive
Executive Policy Owner:	Cathy Reid - Director of Education
Approval by:	Level 1 - Board of Directors
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Revision History

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V1.0	Initial Policy drafted from Browne Jacobson policy toolkit	March 2024
V1.1	Minor updates to reflect	March 2025

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Howard Academy Trust's (THAT) exclusion policy aims to set out the process that will be followed and the additional considerations around suspensions and exclusions that the academies within the Trust will apply. Good behaviour and self-discipline lead to effective learning and help prepare children and young people for life beyond the school gate.
- 1.2 Suspensions and permanent exclusions will sometimes be necessary as a last resort. This is to ensure that other pupils and teaching staff are protected from disruption and can learn in safe, calm, and supportive environments.
- 1.3 Academies within THAT will always have regard to the Statutory Guidance on Suspensions and Exclusions (September 2023) when making decisions on suspensions and exclusions and will follow the law, as set out in the relevant School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulation 2012 (as amended).
- 1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the behaviour policy and the SEND policy for the Trust.

2 Application of policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all members of the Trust community. Each academy within the Trust will apply suspensions and exclusions in accordance with this policy and ensure that its contents are relayed to all staff, parents and pupils.

3 Types of exclusion

Suspensions and permanent exclusions are different:

- 3.1 Suspensions (previously called fixed-term exclusions) are where a pupil is prevented from attending the school for a fixed period. At the end of the period, they are expected to return to school following a reintegration meeting. A pupil may receive a maximum of 45 days of suspension in an academic year before being permanently excluded.
- 3.2 Permanent exclusions are where, subject to a decision of the Local Academy Board to reinstate the pupil to the school, the pupil is prevented from attending the school again. A decision to permanently exclude will only be taken 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, such as staff or pupils, in the school.

4 Roles and responsibilities

All members of the THAT community are expected to follow this policy. Roles, responsibilities and expectations of each section of the THAT community are set out in detail below.

4.1 The Principal

All decisions to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil will be taken by the Principal after considering the circumstances. Every decision made will be proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour with reference to the Trust's behaviour policy.

4.2 The Local Academy Board

The Local Academy Board is responsible for forming committees to review exclusions and suspensions when it is required to do so, it is requested by parents, or it is, in its view, prudent to review an individual decision. In each case, the decision of the relevant committee formed by the governing board will be to decide whether to uphold the exclusion or suspension, or instead to reinstate the pupil to the school.

4.3 Parents

Parents will be informed without delay of any suspension or exclusion and there is an ability to make representations in regard to any suspension or exclusion decision. Details will be provided on the rights parents have with every letter that is sent from the Principal.

4.4 Pupils

All pupils of the academies in the Trust are expected to follow the expectations regarding their behaviour to ensure that all pupils can learn and participate in school life effectively. Where those expectations are breached, the behaviour policy will apply.

5 CCTV, witness evidence and pupil views

5.1 The Trust uses Close Circuit Television (CCTV) within some of its premises. This is to provide a safe and secure environment for pupils, staff and visitors. If behavioural incidents are recorded on CCTV, the footage may be viewed as part of the investigation and the content considered before imposing a sanction. If CCTV is relied upon for a decision on a suspension or exclusion, then it will be shown in some format (redacted as necessary) at any Local Academy Board review meeting. Please see the Trust's CCTV policy and privacy notices for more information.

5.2 Where witness evidence is relied upon, whether that be from a pupil or a staff member, the statement(s) will be provided at any Local Academy Board review meeting.

5.3 Before taking a decision to suspend or exclude and where appropriate, the Principal will take the pupil's views into account, considering these in light of their age and understanding, and inform the pupil about how their views have been factored into any decision made. Where relevant, the pupil will be given support to express their view, including through advocates such as parents or, if the pupil has one, a social worker.

6 Reintegration strategy meetings following suspension or off-site direction

6.1 Where a pupil is suspended or is directed to be educated off-site, upon return to the school both the pupil and parents will be invited to a reintegration strategy meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- offer the pupil a fresh start;
- help them understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others;
- teach them to how meet the high expectations of behaviour in line with the school culture;
- foster a renewed sense of belonging within the school community; and

- build engagement with learning,

so that further suspensions are not needed. School staff will work with the pupil to understand what led to the behaviour and to establish if any changes can be made or further support implemented from a pastoral or practical perspective that might reduce the chance of repeat behaviours. Previous behaviour is not seen as an obstacle to future success.

6.2 The school used various measures to support a pupil's successful reintegration including:

- Contact with a designated professional in-school
- Use of targets and rewards
- Mentoring by a trusted adult or a local mentoring charity where appropriate
- Contact with the pupil and parents to raise and address any concerns
- Informing the pupil, parents and staff of potential external support where applicable
- High quality Inclusive teaching
- Staff who are trained and able to offer pastoral support

6.3 Whilst reintegration meetings are highly encouraged by the Trust, pupils will not be prevented from being admitted to the school or being put in classes because a meeting has not taken place. However, we would point out to parents and carers that it is much more helpful to their child or young person for this meeting to take place.

7 Cancelling a suspension or exclusion

7.1 A suspension or exclusion can be cancelled by the Principal as long as the suspension or exclusion has not been considered by the Local Academy Board. In relation to an exclusion, it cannot be cancelled if the total time the pupil was excluded or suspended that academic year would be over 45 days at the point of the decision to cancel the exclusion.

7.2 Where a suspension or exclusion is cancelled, the relevant parties will be informed by the Principal or their representative in accordance with the Statutory Guidance on Suspensions and Exclusions.

8 Suspensions before a permanent exclusion

8.1 In exceptional circumstances, pupils may receive a suspension prior to a permanent exclusion. For each decision, the Principal will send the relevant letter setting out the rights of parents. A suspension cannot be converted into a permanent exclusion and so any subsequent permanent exclusion would be a fresh decision due to commence immediately after the suspension had ended. Exceptional circumstances may include where further evidence has come to light.

9 Directing off-site and managed moves

- 9.1 Before taking any decision to permanently exclude a pupil, the Principal will consider whether a direction to attend alternative provision and/or a managed move as part of a planned intervention would be a reasonable alternative that should be considered. This will be dependent on if a Managed Move is agreed by another school and the parent/carer or if there are alternative provision places available. If this is as an alternative to a permanent exclusion, there will not be an initial direction off site but directly to managed move.
- 9.2 In the case of directing a pupil off-site to alternative provision, the aim of any direction is for it to be used as a short-term measure as part of the school's behaviour management strategy to improve a pupil's behaviour where in-school interventions and/or outreach have been unsuccessful or are deemed inappropriate.
- 9.3 For a managed move to take place there needs to be agreement between the School, the parents and the new school that a managed move should occur. We will share relevant information with the new school.

10 Independent review panels (IRPs)

- 10.1 The Trust arranges its own IRPs, and requests for an IRP where a permanent exclusion has been upheld should be made to enquires@that.org.uk within 15 school days. Further details on the role and powers of IRPs can be found in Part Ten of the Statutory Guidance on Exclusions and Suspensions.

11 Reconsideration by the Local Academy Board

Where an IRP either recommends reconsideration or quashes the initial decision of the governing board, the decision will be considered within 10 school days. This may involve a rehearing with oral evidence given by the School and parents or may be a reconsideration with only the governing board members and the clerk present. The IRP has no power to direct the local academy board to reinstate the pupil.

12 Remote Meetings

- 12.1 Any Governor/or an IRP meeting may be conducted remotely where the parents request for it to be conducted remotely and the meeting can be fairly held remotely, with all participants having access and are able to make representations. A meeting may also take place remotely where there is an extraordinary event or unforeseen circumstance that means it's not reasonably practicable to hold the meeting in person. Such events can include, but are not limited to, floods, fire, and an outbreak of an infectious disease.
- 12.2 In addition, where a child's social worker or the virtual school head are due to attend a meeting, they may join an in-person meeting remotely as long as it can be fairly accessed, the technology is available, and everyone would be able to make representations.

13 Complaints

If parents have any concerns or complaints over the application or implementation of this policy or feels that they are being pressured into a managed move, they should raise their concerns with a staff member or the Principal in accordance with the Trust's complaints policy. If the concern relates to an exclusion, the statutory procedure set out in the Statutory Guidance on Exclusions and Suspensions will be followed.

14 Equality impact

The Trust does all it can to ensure that its policies do not discriminate against pupils or others, either directly or indirectly, in line with any Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics. This includes race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and sex. [Before bringing this policy into effect the Trust consulted stakeholders on this policy to gain their views and responses. The consultation responses have informed this policy.]

15 Monitoring arrangements

The Governors/Directors review data on suspensions and exclusions to ensure that the use of suspensions and exclusions is appropriate. The following are monitored by the governors to ensure the processes and support for pupils are appropriate:

- the interventions put in place for pupils at risk of suspension and permanent exclusion;
- the processes in place for determining and reviewing directions to alternative provision and that such placements are reviewed at sufficient intervals to assure that the education is achieving its objectives and that pupils are benefitting from it;
- the full-time educational provision for pupils of compulsory school age from the sixth consecutive school day of a suspension, in particular checking the provision is suitable and quality-assured to ensure that:
 - any previous placements have been evaluated, including support for any applicable SEND;
 - there is a process in place to monitor the pupil's attendance and behaviour at the provision;
 - the correct attendance code is being used;
 - the pupil's child protection file and any other information relevant to the pupil's safeguarding and welfare has been securely transferred to their new setting as early as possible;
- whether there is any variation within the year on suspensions and permanent exclusions and the characteristics of pupils;
- the cost implications of directing children to be educated off-site in alternative provision and whether there are any patterns to the reasons or timing of moves;
- whether the school register and absence codes have been recorded correctly
- how the behaviour policy is applied and specifically its consistency;
- the circumstances in which pupils receive repeat suspensions;
- whether Personal Education Plans for looked after children have been reviewed on a termly basis.