

SUSPENSION AND EXCLUSIONS PROCEDURE

Date of last review	March 2026	Review Board	2 years
Date of next review	March 2028	AC or Board Approved	Board
Type of policy	Trust	Signed (Chair)	<i>10 C. J. An</i>

Victoria Academies Trust Suspension and Exclusions Procedures

1. Principles and decision to suspend or permanently exclude

A decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil is a serious one and will be taken only by the Headteacher (or acting Headteacher) and only:

- **a)** in response to serious breaches, or persistent breaches, of the school's Behaviour Policy; and
- **b)** where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

Reasons for suspension or permanent exclusion must be consistent with each academy's Behaviour Policy. Policies must clearly state the types of behaviour which can lead to a suspension or permanent exclusion. These may be serious one-off incidents or continued, persistent behaviours.

This document sets out the paperwork, timelines and processes to be followed when making a decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Each Local Authority (LA) may have its own paperwork and procedures, which must be followed in conjunction with this Trust guidance. Where an LA does not have its own paperwork, the Trust's generic paperwork should be used.

2. Suspensions (fixed-period exclusions)

2.1 Length and proportionality

When suspending a pupil for a fixed period, the length of the suspension must be:

- Consistent with the academy's Behaviour Policy; and
- Proportionate to the incident(s) and any relevant contextual factors.

Lunchtime suspensions count as a half-day suspension for the purposes of recording.

2.2 Informing parents and setting work

- **Informing parents/carers:** Parents/carers must be informed without delay, ideally by telephone in the first instance, of the decision to suspend, the reason(s), and the length of the suspension.
- **Written notification:** A formal letter (see Trust/LA templates) must be provided, setting out:
 - The reason(s) for the suspension;
 - The length of the suspension;
 - The parents' right to make representations to the Academy Council (governing board) and how to do so;
 - The arrangements for setting and completing work during the suspension;
 - The arrangements for a reintegration meeting on the pupil's return.

- **Work during suspension:** Suitable work should be set for the pupil to complete at home during the period of suspension.

2.3 Reintegration meeting

On return from a suspension, parents/carers and the pupil should attend a reintegration meeting with a senior member of staff. This meeting should:

- Review the incident(s) leading to the suspension;
- Consider any contributing factors (including SEND, safeguarding, or unmet needs);
- Agree strategies and support to reduce the risk of further incidents;
- Reinforce expectations in line with the Behaviour Policy.

2.4 Academy Council/IEB consideration of suspensions

The Academy Council duties and thresholds follow DfE statutory guidance. In summary:

- **Total of more than 15 school days of suspension in a term:** The Academy Council must convene a meeting to consider the suspension(s).
- **Suspension leading to the pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test:** The Academy Council must, where practicable, meet before the date of the examination/test.
- **Parent representations:** Parents have the right to make representations to the Academy Council for any suspension.
 - For suspensions totalling **5 school days or fewer** in a term, the Academy Council must consider any representations but is not required to meet and cannot direct reinstatement; it can, however, place a note on the pupil's record.
 - For suspensions totalling **more than 5 but not more than 15 school days** in a term, the Academy Council must meet if requested by parents and may uphold the suspension or direct reinstatement.
 - For suspensions totalling **more than 15 school days** in a term, the Academy Council must meet regardless of whether parents request it.

All meetings must be held within the timescales set out in current DfE guidance (measured in school days).

3. Permanent exclusions

3.1 Decision-making

A decision to permanently exclude must:

- Be consistent with the academy's Behaviour Policy;
- Take account of all relevant evidence, including any previous interventions and support;
- Consider whether a further suspension or alternative sanction would be appropriate;

- Consider whether the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities and whether reasonable adjustments or additional support have been, or could be, put in place.

The law does not allow for extending a fixed-period suspension or 'converting' a suspension into a permanent exclusion. In exceptional cases, usually where further evidence comes to light, a further suspension may be issued to begin immediately after the first period ends, or a permanent exclusion may be issued to begin immediately after the end of the suspension.

3.2 Informing parents and LA

In the first instance, parents must be informed without delay that the exclusion is permanent.

Written notification must include:

- The reason(s) for the permanent exclusion;
- The fact that it is permanent;
- Parents' right to make representations to the Academy Council and how to do so;
- The duty of the Academy Council to consider the exclusion;
- The right to request an Independent Review Panel (IRP) if the Academy Council upholds the exclusion;
- Sources of impartial advice.

Work must be set for the first 5 school days of the exclusion. The relevant LA must be notified promptly so that suitable full-time education can be arranged from the sixth school day.

The permanent exclusion may be withdrawn if, following a full investigation, it is determined that the threshold for permanent exclusion has not been met.

4. Academy Council hearing for permanent exclusion

A meeting of the Academy Council/IEB Disciplinary Committee must be convened to consider the permanent exclusion.

- **Timescale:** The meeting must normally take place within 15 school days of the Academy Council being notified of the permanent exclusion (see DfE guidance for specific timescales and exceptions).
- **Panel composition:** The panel should consist of an odd number of members to allow for a clear majority decision. Reserves should be identified in case of absence or conflict of interest.
- **Notice and paperwork:**
 - Parents must be given at least 5 school days' notice of the meeting.
 - All relevant paperwork should be sent to the clerk in good time and distributed to all parties at least 5 school days before the hearing.

Parents may attend the meeting and may be accompanied by a representative or friend. The LA may send a representative. The meeting can proceed in the absence of parents if they choose not to attend or cannot be reasonably persuaded to attend.

5. Independent Review Panel (IRP)

If the Academy Council upholds a permanent exclusion, parents have the right to request an Independent Review Panel in line with DfE guidance.

5.1 Panel composition

The IRP will consist of three members:

- **One lay member** who will chair the panel (someone who has not worked in any school in a paid capacity).
- **One current or former AC/trustee** of a maintained school or academy (not an AC or trustee of the excluding school and not involved in the decision to exclude).
- **One headteacher or former headteacher** (within the last 5 years), not from the excluding school.

All panel members must:

- Have received appropriate and up-to-date training within the last 2 years;
- Have had no prior involvement with the case, the pupil, the parents, or the decision to exclude;
- Be independent of the excluding school and, where required by DfE guidance, independent of the Trust's decision-making in relation to the exclusion.

5.2 Timescales and outcomes

- Parents must lodge a request for an IRP within the timescale set out in DfE guidance.
- The IRP must meet within 15 school days of the request, where reasonably practicable.
- The IRP may:
 - Uphold the Academy Councils decision;
 - Recommend that the Academy Council reconsiders its decision; or
 - Quash the decision and direct the Academy Council to reconsider.

The IRP cannot itself reinstate the pupil but can direct reconsideration and, in some circumstances, recommend a financial adjustment (e.g. readmission adjustment) in line with DfE guidance.

6. Paperwork required for a permanent exclusion meeting

The following list is indicative; additional evidence may be required depending on the nature of the behaviour, involvement of other agencies, and the pupil's needs:

- **Headteacher's report:** Background on the pupil and events leading up to the decision, including a reasoned explanation of why permanent exclusion is considered appropriate.
- **Letters to parents:**
 - Any letters relating to suspensions pending investigation;
 - The letter notifying parents of the decision to permanently exclude.
- **Permanent exclusion form:** Any LA-required forms and/or Trust forms needed to organise alternative provision.
- **Incident reports and witness statements.**
- **Record of previous suspensions** and other sanctions or interventions.
- **Copy of the academy Behaviour Policy**, clearly showing that the behaviours leading to permanent exclusion are covered.
- **Behaviour support plans, target sheets, or tracking records.**
- **Reports or profiles from external agencies** (e.g. Educational Psychology, CAMHS, social care), where relevant.
- **Attendance certificate** and any relevant attainment or progress information.
- **Any safeguarding or SEND documentation** relevant to the case, ensuring compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements.

7. Exclusion meeting procedure (AC board hearing)

The following procedure should be followed at a Academy Council hearing to consider a suspension or permanent exclusion:

1. **Elect a Chair** (if not already appointed).
2. **Panel agrees the procedure** for the hearing, in line with DfE guidance and Trust policy.
3. **Chair welcomes and introduces** everyone present and explains the purpose of the meeting and the procedure to be followed.
4. **Headteacher presents the case** for the suspension/permanent exclusion.
5. **Parents/carers have the opportunity to question** the Headteacher.
6. **Panel members and any LA representative** have the opportunity to question the Headteacher.
7. **Parents/carers present their case** and any written or oral representations.
8. **Headteacher has the opportunity to question** the parents/carers.
9. **Panel members and any LA representative** have the opportunity to question the parents/carers.
10. **Headteacher makes final comments.**

11. **Parents/carers make final comments.**
12. **Parents/carers, Headteacher and LA representative withdraw** while the panel deliberates.
13. **Panel considers the evidence** and reaches a decision, having regard to DfE guidance, the law, the Behaviour Policy, and any equality/SEND considerations.
14. **Parents/carers, Headteacher and LA representative are invited back** to be informed verbally of the panel's decision, where practicable.
15. **Written notification:** The Chair must ensure that the decision and reasons are confirmed in writing to parents, the Headteacher and the LA within 1 school day of the meeting (or as soon as reasonably practicable), including information about further rights (e.g. IRP for permanent exclusions).
16. **Advice on alternative provision:** The Chair may invite the LA representative to advise parents on alternative provision, where appropriate.
17. **Confidentiality:** The clerk collects all paperwork for secure storage and/or confidential shredding in line with Trust data protection and retention policies