



Culford School

Exclusion, Suspension and Required Removal Policy

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1. Introduction

The School may require parents to remove their child from the School for a number of reasons, unrelated to behaviour, including medical or financial matters, and pupils not making sufficient progress or unreasonable parental behaviour or conduct. Exclusion and suspensions are, in most cases, sanctions for serious breach of discipline. Non-exhaustive examples of the sorts of behaviour that may result in exclusion, suspension or removal are set out below and amended from time to time.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils at Culford School (the “School”) and sets out the School’s approach to exclusion, suspension and requiring parents to remove their child from the School.

This policy applies to behaviour or conduct online and offline and inside and outside of School premises to such an extent as is reasonable.

The School reserves the right to impose sanctions for conduct or behaviour which falls short of required removal or exclusion, including but not limited to the imposition of a period of suspension.

3. Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School’s:

- Alcohol Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy;
- Sanctions Policy
- Child on Child Abuse Policy;
- Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy;
- Parent Protocol;
- Parental Complaints Policy; and
- Parent Contract with School Terms and Conditions.

4. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

‘Exclusion’ means the formal, immediate and permanent exclusion of pupils.

‘Suspension’ means the exclusion of pupils either:

- i. as a precautionary measure and to allow an investigation to be carried out, pending a decision;
or
- ii. as a sanction, for a finite period, after which pupils will be reinstated.

‘Required Removal’ means the requirement of parents to remove their child from the School permanently. However, the School may, at its discretion and where appropriate, continue to provide support and allow the pupil to visit as an Old Culfordian.

'Parent(s)' has the meaning given in the School's standard Terms and Conditions for parents (Parent Contract).

'Working days' refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time when the School is open, excluding bank holidays (except May bank holiday which is a working day) and half term. Accordingly, matters before or during the School holidays may take longer to resolve due to the non-availability of relevant staff. The School will take reasonable steps to limit any such delay where practicable.

"School Rules" means the body of rules and policies of the School which set out our expectations concerning the conduct and behaviour of our pupils and parents, as may be amended from time to time. A copy of the documents comprising the rules is available from the School at any time upon request.

5. Guiding Principles

The School endeavours to operate this Policy in accordance with the following principles of natural justice:

- Pupils are not pre-judged.
- Procedures and the outcome reached are fair, unbiased, impartial and proportionate.
- All necessary investigations are carried out, and in a way which is appropriate to a school, without formal legal procedures;
- Pupils and parents are given the opportunity to be heard; and
- Pupils and parents are informed of the consequences of exclusion/required removal and of the review mechanism.

6. Circumstances in which a pupil may be suspended, excluded or parents may be asked to remove their child

6.1 Suspension (as a neutral act, pending a decision)

A pupil may be placed under suspension, including from boarding, for up to three weeks (term-time weeks), with immediate effect, without prejudice, while an allegation is investigated by the School or as a sanction in its own right.

Where the School deems it appropriate to refer the matter to an external agency, such as the police, any internal investigation may need to be delayed or suspended and the pupil may be required to remain off site where it is considered that there is a risk of, or actual, harm to another pupil, other members of the School community and/or School property.

The School will take into account advice from appropriate external agencies in deciding whether a suspension is appropriate, and work with the relevant agencies to ensure that there is a periodic review. The School will arrange for education and support to be provided remotely to the extent that this is reasonable and proportionate (including, for example, by sending the Parents/pupil work assignments electronically).

6.2 Required Removal/Change of Status

For a serious breach of School discipline falling short of one for which exclusion is necessary, but such that the pupil cannot expect to remain a member of the School community, Parents may be required to remove their child from the School permanently or, to remain at the School, the pupil may be required to change their status to become, as applicable, a Boarder or a Day Pupil.

Parents may be asked to remove their child from the School permanently, or change their child's status from, as applicable, a Boarder or a Day Pupil, for reasons not relating to a serious breach of School discipline.

Circumstances that might merit required removal or a change of status include the following:

- Conduct or behaviour (including conduct or behaviour outside of School) which is unsatisfactory and/or in the reasonable opinion of the Head, the removal or status change is in the School's best interests, and/or those of the child and/or other children;
- Where a pupil's attendance is unsatisfactory and/or, in the reasonable opinion of the Head, the removal or required status change is in the School's best interests and/or those of the pupil in question and/or of other children;
- Where a pupil's progress is unsatisfactory and/or, in the reasonable opinion of the Head, the removal or required status change is in the School's best interests and/or those of the pupil in question and/or of other children;
- The School is unable to meet a child's needs, including cases where the School cannot reasonably accommodate adjustments or reasonably provide the nature or level of support required by the child; and
- Unreasonable parental behaviour (see Section 7 of this policy for further information).

Subject to payment of all outstanding fees (the deposit being returned or credited to the account) the pupil will be given reasonable assistance in making a fresh start at another school.

6.3 Suspension (as a sanction) and Exclusion

The most serious of offences may result in a temporary exclusion (suspension), as a sanction, requiring the pupil to be temporarily removed from the School, or permanent exclusion.

Examples of such offences include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Abuse on grounds of race, religion/belief, special educational needs and/or disability (SEND), gender, sexual orientation, or any form of unlawful discrimination;
- Behaviour which puts the safety of the pupil, or any other person, in jeopardy;
- Bringing illegal, inappropriate or dangerous items into School, such as: drugs, alcohol, knives and weapons, firearms, fireworks, stolen items, pornographic material, any item that a member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to property of, any person (including the pupil concerned) etc;
- Bullying and child on child abuse, including through social media and other forms of cyber bullying;
- Committing a criminal offence;
- Drug and alcohol misuse (including supply/possession/use);
- Fighting;
- Misconduct which adversely affects or is likely to adversely affect the welfare of a member or members of the School community;
- Misconduct which brings or is likely to bring the School into disrepute;

- Persistent disruptive behaviour or behaviour that breaches the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy or School Rules;
- Physical assault against other pupils or adults;
- Sexual harassment or misconduct, including the sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos (otherwise known as 'youth-produced sexual imagery');
- Theft or unauthorised possession of any property belonging to the School, or another pupil, staff member or organisation;
- Vandalism or computer hacking;
- Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against pupils or adults; and
- Wilful damage to property.

A permanent exclusion means that the pupil's name will be expunged from the roll of the School and reference to the facts and circumstances will be made in response to every request for a reference. All outstanding fees up to and including the term of exclusion shall be payable and any deposit shall be retained by the School.

The Head will act fairly and in accordance with the principles of natural justice and not exclude a pupil other than for a serious breach of discipline.

Exclusion, suspension or required removal may also be imposed as a sanction for a series of minor misdemeanours or other breaches of the School Rules. All aspects of the child's record may be taken into account.

7. Parental Behaviour

As set out in the School's Terms and Conditions, the School may require the removal of a pupil in circumstances where the Head considers in their discretion that the behaviour or conduct of one or both Parent(s) :

- is unreasonable;
- represents a serious or persistent breach of any code of conduct in place with regards to parents;
- causes a breakdown of trust and confidence;
- adversely affects (or is likely to affect) the pupil's or other pupil's progress at the School, and/or the wellbeing of School staff;
- brings (or is likely to bring) the School into disrepute (among the School community or the general public);
- is not in accordance with the parents' obligations under the Parent Contract.

The School reserves the right to take other actions for unreasonable parental behaviour, including but not limited to placing restrictions on a Parent's access to School/School events, communications with the School and/or the imposition of a warning (up to and including a final written warning).

8. The Disciplinary Procedure

8.1 Conducting an Investigation

In the event of the report or suspicion of a serious breach of discipline occurring, the Head or Deputy Head in the Head's absence will appoint a senior member of staff to conduct the investigation. The School reserves the right to appoint a third-party investigator where it deems necessary for reasons of capacity or complexity.

The investigation may include:

- i. gathering evidence;
- ii. segregation of pupils;
- iii. interviews with pupils, members of staff and others; and
- iv. liaison where appropriate with Parents and other agencies (e.g. police, Children's services).

In gathering evidence apart from interviews, searches of pupils' rooms etc. should only be conducted with their permission unless a search is deemed necessary without their consent, for example in order to protect others or to prevent disorder or crime. Reference must be made to the, '*Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools*' (DfE 2022).

Parents will be informed as soon as practicable if an investigation is to be carried out in relation to their child, unless the School is advised not to inform Parents by an external agency (e.g. the police).

It may be necessary to segregate pupils on the School's premises, in which case they may be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. The School will reserve the right to confiscate a pupil's mobile phone or other means of remote communication in such circumstances for such period as it reasonably deems necessary, to ensure reliable segregation. Alternatively, it may be necessary to suspend a pupil, as a neutral act. In either case the pupil and their Parents should be told of the reason for their segregation/suspension and education and support will be provided remotely or off site where appropriate.

The School will usually report to the police any activity which it believes may amount to a criminal activity which takes place either within the School grounds, outside of its grounds or online. The decision to report to the police will be made with due regard to the National Police Chief's Council guidance: 'When to call the Police'. Other agencies, for example Children's Social Care, may also be notified where necessary and appropriate to the facts of the case. In such circumstances, or where the matter otherwise involves another external agency or the Parents instigate legal action against the School regarding the matter, the School investigation may need to be suspended pending the outcome of the investigation. The School will take into account advice from relevant external agencies, and its legal advisers, where appropriate in determining whether the School's investigation or any element of this process should be suspended.

There are no hard and fast rules about who should be present at an interview. However, in the case of an alleged serious disciplinary matter, the School will usually follow these guidelines:

- The pupil will be informed of the case against them and another member of staff will be present to note the main points of the interview in writing and to act as a witness.
- In addition, if the pupil so wishes, the Tutor, Head of Year, Housemaster, Housemistress may be present to offer moral support.

- The date, start and end times should be noted carefully.
- Following the interview, the main points should be read over to the interviewee, amended if necessary, and initialled by the person conducting the interview.
- Alternatively, where it is considered appropriate, a pupil may be asked to follow up with a written statement.

When an investigation has been completed and before a hearing (if required) takes place, the following questions should be addressed.

- i. Are further enquiries needed?
- ii. Would an objective bystander consider the proceedings fair?
- iii. What is the pupil's standing in the School (disciplinary record etc.)?
- iv. In consultation with the Head of Learning Development, have any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) been considered, in relation to either the investigation process and/or the outcome (particularly with reference to the statutory DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance)?
- v. Has the nature of the offence, any prior conduct of the pupils, and any other relevant circumstances been considered?
- vi. Is it appropriate to hold a disciplinary hearing?
- vii. Who should be notified of the outcome of the investigation?

In the most significant cases, the School may consider it appropriate that, given the seriousness of the alleged offence, the pupil should be suspended until a decision is made following a hearing with the Parents. Any such decision to suspend would normally be communicated to the pupil by the Head or a Deputy Head in a meeting with the relevant Tutor, Head of Year, Housemaster or Housemistress present. It would not normally be appropriate for the Parents to be present at this meeting, although they would of course be invited to attend the subsequent hearing.

8.2 Notifying Pupils, Parents/Guardians and others

Parents will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable if a complaint or allegation under investigation is of a nature that could result in the pupil being removed (required removal) or permanently excluded. This may happen after the investigation is completed, when the Head, after consultation with the Chair of Culford Governing Body ("Chair of Governors") if appropriate, will write to the pupils concerned and their Parents/guardians, notifying them of the allegations and the disciplinary sanction/s that could be imposed, providing copies of the evidence obtained and setting out details for the hearing (date, time, place, purpose and who will be attending). Any such documents provided to Parents by the School may be redacted, or presented in an alternative format, for reasons of data protection and/or confidentiality.

Although the School will endeavour to process investigations and disciplinary steps as swiftly as reasonably practicable, there may be factors which require the School to pause or delay their internal processes.

The hearing will normally take place within 15 working days of the completion of the investigation. The hearing will normally take place at the School but may be carried out virtually. The Parents may also write to the Head setting out any evidence or argument of their own. All written submissions must be presented at least two working days before the hearing. In the case of potential exclusion or removal, a Parent should accompany pupils to the hearing. The pupil and Parents/guardians may be accompanied by a friend or relative who should not be legally trained or qualified. In circumstances involving the possibility of the pupil's required removal on the grounds of unreasonable parental behaviour, only the Parents need attend.

8.3 The Hearing

The hearing will generally be taken by the Head or, in their absence, by the Deputy Head or another appropriate senior member of staff appointed by the Head. The typical agenda for the hearing will be:

- i. a description of the alleged offence and the disciplinary sanction/s (required removal or exclusion) that could be imposed;
- ii. an explanation of how the hearing will be conducted and the role of those present;
- iii. a summary of the evidence;
- iv. an account of the pupil's version of events;
- v. an opportunity for the pupil and his Parents to be heard and ask questions; and
- vi. an explanation of the review procedure that applies if a disciplinary sanction is imposed.

The meeting will be minuted by a senior member of staff whose role is to record the main points and to act as a witness.

8.4 The Decision

In all but the most straightforward cases, the Head will adjourn the hearing before notifying the pupil and Parents/guardians of the decision. The decision may be communicated face to face and will always be confirmed in writing, normally within five working days of the hearing. The letter will state the decision in relation to the charge (or each of them), the sanction, when it takes effect, the reasons and to whom the Parents may request a review, together with the deadline to do so. The letter will also offer support, if appropriate.

In accordance with established procedures, the Head should notify the Chair of Governors of the decision to exclude or require the removal of a pupil as soon as practicable and within one working day. No other details of the case should be notified to Governors, pending a potential parental request for a review of a decision to exclude or require the removal of a pupil.

Other agencies may be notified at any stage of the procedure, as and when necessary and appropriate to the facts of the case.

9. Recording and monitoring

Each part of the School (Pre-Prep, Prep and Senior) has a confidential central register of all sanctions imposed for serious misbehaviour. The entries on this register include the pupil's name, gender, year group, pupil status, and the location, nature, month/year of the offence. Any sanctions for serious misbehaviour, including the written report on the investigation, will form part of the pupil's disciplinary record.

10. Parental Right to Appeal and Review

The Parent(s) may wish to appeal the Head's decision to permanently exclude or require the removal of a pupil from the School and request a review by The Culford Governors ("Governors' Review"). Any request for review must be sent to the Clerk of Governors within five working days of being informed of the decision and must clearly set out the grounds on which parents are asking for a review and the

outcome that they seek. For clarity, the pupil will remain permanently excluded or removed from the School pending the outcome of the appeal.

The right to a hearing, appeal and review does not extend to suspensions (whether pending an investigation or a sanction).

A Governors' Review will be conducted under fair procedures in accordance with the requirements of natural justice.

If a decision is taken by the Parents to withdraw the pupil, the Parents will waive any right to an appeal or review.

11. Review Hearing (under Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure)

As per Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure, the review will be undertaken by two members of the Governing Body and at least one person who is independent of the school. None of the panel should have detailed prior knowledge of the case and parents will be notified in advance of the names of the members making up the review panel. The meeting will take place within the timeframes set out in the School complaints policy.

Those present at the hearing will usually be:

- members of the review hearing and the Clerk to the Governing Body;
- the Head, and any relevant members of staff whose presence the Head considers to be necessary to secure a fair outcome for the pupil;
- the pupil (where appropriate);
- the pupil's parents and, if they wish, the parents may be accompanied by a friend or relation who is not legally qualified.

The review meeting is an internal procedure and all those involved, or who are concerned in the procedure, will be reminded to keep its proceedings confidential.

12. Conduct of the Review Hearing

Culford School will follow the process set out in the Complaints Procedure when conducting a Stage 3 Panel Hearing. In addition, the following arrangements will be in place:

- As with the meeting, the review hearing will be conducted in an informal, non-adversarial manner appropriate to the age, understanding and maturity of the pupil involved (where they are in attendance), taking into account any additional needs of the pupil in all circumstances;
- The Chair of the panel should ensure that all those present have the opportunity to ask questions and make appropriate comment;
- The Chair of the panel may at their discretion adjourn or terminate the hearing. If the hearing is terminated without a conclusion being reached, the original decision of the Head will stand.

13. Appeal Hearing Decision

The panel will consider the grounds for the review and may decide either to:

- uphold the decision of the Head and, if minded to do so, with agreement of the Head, discuss the pupil's leaving status (i.e. permanent exclusion, required removal, or withdrawal) with a view to reaching an agreement; or
- recommend the Head reviews their decision and, if minded to do so, recommend an alternative sanction;
- overturn the Head's decision and order reinstatement (either immediately or by a particular date);

A note of the panel's decision will be placed on the pupil's school record with copies of relevant papers.

The panel must inform the parents and the Head of their decision and the reasons for the decision. This will be in writing and within the appropriate timescales set out in the School Complaints Procedure.

The outcome of the appeal process is final and there shall be no further right to appeal.

14. Deleting a pupil from the school roll

Where a pupil is permanently excluded or is required to leave, the pupil should not be removed from the school roll until such time as the timeframe for appealing the Head's decision has passed and/or the outcome of any Stage 3 panel appeal process is known.

A pupil who has been permanently excluded can lawfully be deleted from the admission register according to the grounds prescribed in the *School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024*.

15. Useful References

- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Education Act 2002, Part 10
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 as amended including by the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2018 (**ISS Regulations**)
- 'Behaviour and Discipline in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff', DfE, February 2024
- The ISI Inspection Framework, September 2025
- The ISI Inspection Handbook, September 2025
- The Equality Act 2010
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, September 2022
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE, September 2025