



Suspension & Permanent Exclusion Policy

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INTRODUCTION

Cornerstone Academy is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. We aim to create and promote an environment in which students, parents/carers and staff are treated fairly and with respect, and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities. We take an inclusive approach and we feel strongly that every student has the right to an education and the support that they require.

We follow DFE guidance: Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement Guidance for maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units in England
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PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS/CARERS

Parents/carers working in partnership with the school to consistently reinforce the school's expectations is an important factor in every child's success. At Cornerstone Academy, we will work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure that expectations are clear and parents/carers can reinforce them with their children. This includes ensuring that parents/carers are kept informed about decisions made in response to a child's negative behaviour, so that we can work together in the best interests of students to ensure expectations for behaviour are made clear. Parents/carers will also be supported, and successful strategies that have worked in school will be shared with home.

The school is responsible for communicating to students, parents/carers and staff its expectations of standards of conduct. A range of policies and procedures are in place to promote positive behaviour and appropriate conduct. These are:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Home-School Agreement

SUPPORTING STUDENTS TO SUCCEED

We aim to include, not exclude, and we approach all challenging behaviour in a supportive and positive way. We recognise that such behaviour can sometimes be symptomatic of a real, deeper need for our support and understanding. All children can go through times of inappropriate and negative behaviour, and we recognise that each person has a unique contribution to make to school life and we want to support them to achieve this in the most positive way possible.

We will use behaviour data to assess patterns of challenging behaviour in students. Where patterns emerge, we will systematically intervene, drawing up an action plan with the student, parent and teacher. Data will be shared with school staff and monitored and evaluated regularly. It is the staff team's, parents/carers' and the students's responsibility to ensure the action plan, resulting from the data, is followed.

No suspension will be initiated without first attempting other strategies or, in the case of a serious single incident, a full investigation is carried out.

TYPES OF SUSPENSION (formerly exclusion)

Internal Suspension

Internal suspension is when a student is excluded from the rest of the school and must work away from their class for a fixed amount of time. This will be in a different classroom.

An internal suspension is a discretionary measure, where a student's behaviour is escalating and more serious measures need to be taken but there are not yet grounds for an external / fixed-term suspension. Typically, a student receiving a consequence of this level should be receiving additional support in managing their behaviour. The intention of this is to help them to avoid their behaviour escalating to a point where a fixed term suspension is necessary (examples: behaviour chart to address specific behaviours causing a problem, support from the pastoral or academic support teams.)

Temporary / Fixed-Term suspension

A temporary / fixed term suspension is when a student is suspended from school and must remain home for a fixed amount of time. This should be for the shortest time necessary to ensure minimal disruption to the student's education, whilst mindful of the seriousness of the breach of policy.

Permanent exclusion

A permanent exclusion is when a student is permanently excluded from school and not allowed to return. This is a very serious decision and the Headteacher and the CEO of The YES Trust will consult with senior leaders and Chair of the Governing Body as soon as possible in such a case.

REASONS FOR SUSPENSION and EXCLUSION

A decision to exclude a student, either internally, for a fixed period or permanently is seen as a last resort by the school. The physical and emotional health of our students and staff is our primary concern, and we therefore accept, that in some serious situations, suspension may be necessary, if all other strategies have been exhausted.

The decision will usually follow a range of strategies and be seen as a last resort, or it will be in response to a very serious breach of school rules and policies or a disciplinary offence such as:

- Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff
- Possession or use of an illegal drug on school premises
- Persistent bullying
- Persistent prejudice based harassment or hatred based acts
- persistently poor behaviour or a serious single incident
- Spitting

Persistent or cumulative problems Internal and temporary/fixed-term suspension may be used in response to a persistent negative behaviour which breaches school rules and policies. In the most serious cases where the problem persists, and there is no improvement a permanent suspension may be necessary.

These would be imposed only when the school had already offered and implemented a range of support and management strategies. These could be joint action plans with parents/carers, student and school staff, behaviour intervention with teaching assistants, learning mentors or pastoral staff, target setting, home/school communication book etc.

The length of a suspension will depend upon a number of factors, such as the severity of the incident, and the likely impact on the student's progress and ability to succeed on returning to the Academy. Such decisions will be made in the best interests of the student, whilst also mindful of the need to maintain order and reinforce the rules and expectations of the school in a clear and consistent way.

Single incidents, internal and temporary/fixed-term suspension may be used in response to a very serious breach of school rules and policies or a disciplinary offence. In the most serious cases where the problem persists and there is no improvement a permanent exclusion may be necessary.

In such cases the Headteacher or a member of the senior leadership team will investigate the incident and consider all evidence to support the allegation, taking account of the school's policies. The student will be encouraged to give his/her version of events and the Headteacher will check whether the incident may have been provoked, for example by bullying or racial harassment.

Associates of The Local Support Board (LSB) will be informed of all suspensions on a termly basis; and additional consultation may also take place about key incidents with the Chair of the board.

THE DECISION TO SUSPEND

If the Headteacher decides to suspend a student s/he will:

- Ensure that there is sufficient recorded evidence to support the decision
- Explain the decision to the student if the student is in the state of mind to listen to the decision
- Contact the parents/carers, explain the decision and ask that the student be collected
- Send a letter to the parents/carers confirming the reasons for the suspension, whether it is a permanent or temporary suspension
- The local authority will also be informed of this decision.
- The length of the suspension and any terms or conditions agreed for the student's return
- In cases of more than a day's suspension, ensure that appropriate work is set and that arrangements are in place for it to be marked
- Plan how to address the student's needs and integration back into their class on his/her return

- Plan a meeting with parents/carers and student on his/her return to be conducted by a suitable senior member of staff.

SAFEGUARDING

A suspension will not be enforced if doing so may put the safety of the student at risk. In cases where parents/carers will not comply by, for example, refusing to collect the student (or be present to meet the student at home), the student's welfare is the priority. In this situation, depending on the reason for suspension, the Academy may consider an internal suspension until the end of the day, implementing the original suspension decision from the time the student is collected from school (or be present to meet the student at home), or, in more severe circumstances the Academy may contact Social Services and/or the Police to safely take the student off site.

RE-INTERGRATION FOLLOWING A FIXED TERM/INTERNAL SUSPENSION

The student and parent/carer will be requested to attend a reintegration meeting with a senior member of staff. At this meeting the behaviour leading to suspension will be discussed and targets will be set for improvement. Support around behaviour will be also be discussed. The meeting will be recorded on the school re-integration form and a copy retained by the parent, child and school.

WORK SET

When a student is suspended for more than one day, work should be set by the Academy within a reasonable time-scale, and this should be returned when the suspension is over. If a student is suspended at the end of a school day, then it may not be possible to arrange for work to be set until the following morning. A student can be suspended for up to 10 continuous days on a fixed term basis. On the 6th continuous day, the school is responsible for providing education for the student, which could involve staff visiting the students home, online support (home education) or be at another location, such as local libraries.

BEHAVIOUR IN THE COMMUNITY

Students' behaviour outside the Academy e.g. on school trips, at sports events, is subject to the school's behaviour policy. Unacceptable behaviour in such circumstances will be dealt with as if it had taken place in school, and additionally this includes the any serious breach of policy which could 'bring the Academy into disrepute. Students will always be accompanied by staff within the community and will be transported to and from the Academy. However, if a student is displaying negative behaviour within the community, this will be dealt with in accordance with the Academy's Behaviour Policy.

REMOVAL FROM THE SCHOOL FOR OTHER REASONS

The Headteacher may send a student home after consultation with the student's parents/carers and a health professional as appropriate, if the student poses an immediate and serious risk to the health and safety of other students and staff, for

example because of a diagnosed illness such as a notifiable disease. This is not an suspension and should be for the shortest possible time.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Governing Body recognise that it is unlawful to take into account anyone's gender, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age, or sexual orientation. Full consideration has been given to this during the formulation of this policy as it is the associates of the board aim that no one at Cornerstone Academy should suffer discrimination, either directly or indirectly, or harassment on any of these grounds.

REINTEGRATION MEETING

After every period of fixed term suspension, the parent/carer and student will be offered a reintegration meeting with a senior member of school's staff. At this meeting targets will be agreed for improving behaviour and a written agreement produced for all parties to sign.

PROCEDURE FOR APPEAL

If parents/carers wish to appeal the decision to exclude, the matter will be referred to the Local Support Bard (LSB) and handled through the Academy's complaints procedure. For further information please refer to The YES Trust Complaints policy.