

Norwich School

Suspension and Exclusion Policy



Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to make clear, to parents, pupils, Governors and other members of the school community, the circumstances in which a pupil might be excluded, temporarily or permanently, from the school for disciplinary offences.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour and Sanctions Policy and the Lower School Behaviour Policy.

Terminology

Suspension means that a pupil has been sent home for a limited period either as a disciplinary sanction or pending the outcome of an investigation or an appeal.

Expulsion means that the pupil has been required to leave the school permanently on the basis that it has been proven on the balance of probabilities that the pupil has committed a number of disciplinary offences or one or more serious disciplinary offences or brought the reputation of the school into disrepute.

Overview

If there is sufficient evidence that a pupil has committed a number of disciplinary offences or one or more serious disciplinary offences, or brought the reputation of the school into disrepute, and allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school, in these circumstances the pupil may be required to leave the school site for a fixed period ("suspension") or permanently ("expulsion").

If a pupil is accused of a criminal offence but the offence took place outside the school's jurisdiction, the Head Master will generally decide that it is in the interests of the pupil concerned and of the school community as a whole for that pupil to be educated off-site for a certain period, subject to review at regular intervals. The school reserves the right to investigate and to suspend the pupil if appropriate or to ask the parents to withdraw the pupil from the school. In the event that the pupil is found to have committed the offence, the school reserves the right to expel the pupil if appropriate, taking into account all the facts and circumstances of the case. Whilst the pupil will remain on the school roll, the school will continue to communicate with parents about academic work and with regards to the child's welfare.

The decision to suspend a pupil

A decision to suspend a pupil will only be taken where there has been a serious breach or repeated breaches of the school's rules and policies and procedures, whether in academic matters, for poor behaviour, law breaking and/or bringing the school into disrepute.

A decision to suspend a pupil may be taken by the Head Master or Principal Deputy Head for Senior School pupils or the Master of the Lower School for Lower School pupils.

Penalty notice in cases of suspension

Pupils will usually be suspended for between one to five days, although there may be circumstances where external investigations led by other agencies require this to be longer. During this time and, where appropriate, the school will work with the family to ensure that academic work is set for the pupil.

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However, during this time, the parents of the pupil in question must ensure that he or she is not present in a public place during normal school hours without reasonable justification. This requirement applies whether or not the pupil is in the company of a parent or guardian or on their own.

The decision to expel a pupil

A decision to expel a pupil is a serious one, and will only be taken where the basic facts have been clearly established on the balance of probabilities.

The final decision to expel a pupil will be taken only by the Head Master.

Expulsion is usually a last resort when a pupil has rendered his or her membership of the school untenable as a result of grave or sustained breaches of the school's rules and policies and procedures, affecting the well-being of themselves or others, or seriously affecting the education of others.

There will, however, be exceptional circumstances where, in the Head Master's judgement, it is appropriate to expel a pupil for a first or 'one off' offence, including (but not limited to):

- serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff or a third party;
- sexual abuse or assault;
- using or supplying illegal drugs, so called legal highs or banned controlled substances or possessing them with intent to supply them, distribute them, or encourage others to use them, whether on or off school premises, at any time when the school might be considered responsible for their actions;
- carrying an offensive weapon.

These instances are not exhaustive, but indicate the severity of such offences and the fact that such behaviour can affect the discipline and well-being of the school community.

Procedure for suspending or expelling a pupil

Whenever a pupil is suspended or expelled, the parents will be notified immediately, by telephone or in a meeting. The decision to suspend or expel a pupil, together with broad reasons for the decision, will be confirmed to the parents in writing usually within two working days.

Oversight

The Head Master will report any expulsion to the Governing Body.

Appeals Procedure

If the parents seek to appeal any decision by the Head Master to suspend a pupil for more than five days during term time (excluding holidays) or expel a pupil, they will be referred to the Clerk to the Governors for an Appeal Hearing. Appeals will only be considered if they are made in writing to the Clerk to the Governors within ten days of receiving the decision of the Head Master. The parents should clearly set out the detail of their dissatisfaction with the decision and the grounds of their Appeal. The parents should include with their letter a list of documents or materials that they believe the School is in possession of and that they wish the panel to see.

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The Clerk will acknowledge the parents' appeal in writing within five days of receipt and will call a panel hearing on behalf of the Chair of Governors. A panel hearing will be called as soon as is reasonably practicable, normally within twenty days of receiving the parents' appeal. The panel will not normally sit during the school holidays.

The Chair of Governors may nominate members of the panel ensuring that no panel member is themselves subject of or in any other way related to or conflicted by the Head Master's decision. The panel will consist of at least three people not involved in the original decision, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. The Chair shall nominate the chairmanship of the panel.

If the panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the decision be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties no later than five days prior to the hearing.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend, for example. As this Policy is conducted under the auspices of the school's policies and procedures, legal representation is not thought to be necessary. However, should the parents wish to be accompanied by a legal representative the school must be notified in writing at least five days before the hearing and the school will then be entitled to have its own legal representative in attendance at the hearing.

If possible, the panel will resolve the decision immediately without the need for further investigation. If the panel decides that further investigation is necessary, the hearing may be adjourned.

Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out.

After due consideration of all facts it considers relevant, the panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which shall be completed within ten days of the hearing or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Having reached a decision, the panel (through the Clerk to the Governors) will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it as soon as practically possible. The panel's findings and any recommendations will also be sent in writing to the Head Master and the Governors.

The decision of the panel will be final.