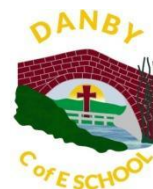




St Hilda's Moorland Federation
Egton CE (VA) School and Danby CE (VA) School



EXCLUSION POLICY (INCLUDING SUSPENSION)

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| Effective Date: | May 2025 |
| Date Due for Review: | Spring Term 2026 (annual) |
| Approved By: | St Hilda's Moorland Federation Governing Body |
| Approval Date: | 13th May 2025 |
| Signed by Chair of Governors |  Matthew White |

Our vision, as Church of England primary schools deeply rooted in a strong Christian tradition, is to 'inspire learning and develop children's potential as individuals within a caring, happy, and distinctively Christian family'.

The Bible verse that underpins our vision statement, aspirations and ethos is taken from the Bible verse:

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." John 10:10.

We wish to enable our children to flourish in their spiritual, physical, emotional, social, cultural and academic development enabling them to live their lives to the full.

Egton and Danby Schools are small, distinctively Christian, family based learning communities. We learn and grow together. Our key values underpin everything we strive for in our schools:

TRUST

Trust in the Lord and do good. *Psalms 37.3*

FRIENDSHIP

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity *Psalms 133.1*

RESPECT

In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you. *Matthew 7.12*

We live these core values out through our excellent relationships with our children, parents, governors, staff, communities and churches.

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1. Introduction

At St Hilda's Moorland Federation, we are committed to ensuring a calm, safe and respectful environment where every child can flourish. The use of suspension and exclusion is always a last resort and only considered when other appropriate strategies have been exhausted or when a serious incident occurs that threatens the safety or well-being of others.

This policy sets out how we apply suspensions and permanent exclusions fairly, lawfully and consistently, with the aim of promoting positive behaviour and safeguarding the rights of all children.

2. Aims of this Policy

This document outlines the circumstances under which a child may be suspended or permanently excluded from school. It aims to ensure that all decisions regarding suspension or exclusion are fair, reasonable, and proportionate, in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance. The policy is designed to support the safeguarding, emotional wellbeing, and educational needs of all children within St Hilda's Moorland Federation. It also provides clear guidance on the roles and responsibilities of staff, parents, and governors throughout the process.

3. Legal Framework

This policy is written with regard to the most recent version of the Department for Education's statutory guidance, "*Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement*". In addition, it takes into account the relevant legal frameworks, including the Education Acts 2002 and 2011, the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010, and the SEND Code of Practice. Headteachers, governing bodies, local authorities, and independent review panels must have regard to this statutory guidance when making decisions about suspensions and exclusions. This ensures that all actions are lawful, reasonable, and fair.

4. Definitions

- **Suspension (Fixed-Term Exclusion)**

A *suspension* (formerly known as a fixed-term exclusion) refers to the temporary removal of a child from school for a specified number of school days, not exceeding 45 days in a single academic year. Suspensions should be for the shortest time necessary to ensure a child's successful reintegration and to minimise disruption to their education. If a child receives more than 15 days of suspension in a term, the governing body must meet to review the suspension. In some circumstances, a lunchtime suspension may be used, though schools should take reasonable steps to resolve any underlying issues before resorting to this. In exceptional cases, a further suspension or a permanent exclusion may follow an initial suspension, in which case the headteacher must inform parents or carers of the change and the reasons for it in writing.

- **Permanent Exclusion**

A *permanent exclusion* means the child is removed from the school roll and will not return. This decision is taken when a child has committed a serious or persistent breach of the school's behaviour policy and where their continued presence would seriously harm the education or welfare of others in the school. The decision must be reviewed by a panel of governors, and both the child and their parent or carer will be given the opportunity to present their case, be represented, and be accompanied by a friend or advocate if they wish. If the governing body upholds the exclusion, the parent or carer has the legal right to request an Independent Review Panel to consider the decision.

5. Considerations Before Suspension or Exclusion

At St Hilda's Moorland Federation, suspension or exclusion will only be considered as a last resort, and only in response to serious or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy. The headteacher will always ensure that by allowing the child to remain in school it would not be seriously detrimental to the education or welfare of the child or others. This aligns with paragraph 11 of the Department for Education's statutory guidance, which states that, before excluding a pupil permanently, the headteacher must be convinced that there is

sufficient evidence that a disciplinary offence has been committed and that the pupil's continued presence in school would be detrimental to the wider school community.

Before making any decision to suspend or permanently exclude a child, the headteacher will thoroughly investigate the incident(s) and take into account a wide range of contextual factors. This includes the impact of the behaviour on the school community, any underlying special educational needs, safeguarding concerns, or other vulnerabilities. Reasonable adjustments will be made for children with additional needs, and a graduated response will be applied in line with the [NYCC Ladder of Intervention](#), which offers structured guidance and early help strategies for children with social, emotional and mental health needs.

The headteacher will carefully assess the situation by considering a range of factors, including:

5.1 Support Already Implemented

The headteacher will review any support or interventions that have already been put in place to help the child, including:

- Behaviour plans
- Specific learning or wellbeing support
- Whether sufficient time has been given for these measures to take effect

5.2 Patterns of Behaviour

The headteacher will consider if there is a pattern of repeated suspensions or exclusions for similar behaviours. This could indicate unmet needs that require a different approach.

5.3 Alternative Strategies Explored

The headteacher will ensure that all other alternatives have been explored before considering suspension or exclusion, including:

- Restorative approaches
- Managed moves
- Part-time timetables

5.4 External Support

The headteacher will consider seeking support and advice from external agencies, such as:

- SEND guidance and assessment (EHCP)
- Local Inclusion Panels or the Pupil Referral Service
- The SEND Hub, Educational Psychologists, Early Help, CAMHS, Youth Justice, and Children's Social Care

5.5 Early Help Assessment

In cases where appropriate, the headteacher, in partnership with parents and carers, may initiate an Early Help Assessment and Action Plan to provide further support for the child's needs.

This careful and multi-agency approach ensures decisions are fair, inclusive, and focused on securing the best outcomes for every child.

6. When Suspension or Exclusion May Be Used

Suspensions or exclusions may be considered in response to serious or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy. They may also be used where a pupil's behaviour poses a significant risk to the education or welfare of others in the school. In line with paragraph 11 of the Department for Education's statutory guidance, before any decision is made, the headteacher must be satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that a disciplinary offence has occurred, and that allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others.

Examples of behaviour that may warrant suspension or exclusion include:

- Physical assault on a child or adult
- Threatening, aggressive or abusive behaviour
- Bullying or discriminatory conduct
- Damage to school or personal property
- Repeated acts of defiance or disruption

Each incident is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the context of the behaviour, the child's needs (including any SEND or safeguarding factors), and the support that has already been put in place.

7. Decision-Making Process

Only the headteacher (or acting headteacher) has the authority to suspend or permanently exclude a child. In making this decision, the headteacher will act in accordance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance, ensuring that the decision is lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

The headteacher will:

- Base their decision on a thorough investigation and clear evidence
- Ensure the child has been given an opportunity to share their account of events
- Consider the child's individual circumstances, including any special educational needs or disabilities, and any relevant safeguarding concerns

Evaluate whether suspension or exclusion is a proportionate response, or whether alternative measures could be more appropriate

This process ensures that all exclusions and suspensions are made with fairness, consistency and in accordance with the school's legal responsibilities.

8. Notification Procedures

When a suspension or exclusion is issued, the headteacher will notify parents or carers as soon as possible, ideally by telephone, to ensure prompt communication. This will be followed by a written letter confirming the decision. The letter will include the reason(s) for the suspension or exclusion, the duration of the suspension (where applicable), and the parent's right to make representations to the governing board. It will also provide information on the arrangements for the child to receive and return schoolwork during the period of suspension, and the date and time of a reintegration meeting to support the child's return to school. In line with statutory requirements, the headteacher will also inform the local authority and the governing board where appropriate, depending on the length and nature of the suspension or exclusion.

9. Education During Suspension

During a suspension, the school will provide work for the child for the first five days of the suspension. This ensures that the child continues with their education while absent from school. From the sixth day of the suspension, or in the case of a permanent exclusion, the school or the local authority will arrange suitable full-time education provision, ensuring that the child's learning continues in an appropriate setting.

10. Reintegration After Suspension

Following a suspension, a reintegration meeting will be arranged with the child, their parent or carer, and a member of the senior leadership team. The purpose of this meeting is to reflect on the incident(s) that led to the suspension, restore relationships where appropriate, and create a behaviour support or pastoral plan to help the child reintegrate successfully. The meeting will also reaffirm the school's expectations for behaviour moving forward and provide encouragement to ensure a positive and supportive return to school.

11. Governance and Review

St Hilda's Moorland Federation governing board has a critical role in reviewing exclusions to ensure fairness and compliance with statutory requirements. The board will review any permanent exclusion and also consider suspensions in the following circumstances: if a child has been excluded for more than 15 days in a term, or if the suspension would cause the child to miss a public exam or statutory test. The governing board will consider any representations from parents or carers when requested, ensuring that all decisions are fair, non-discriminatory, and in line with the statutory guidance.

Parents or carers have the right to submit written representations to the governing board and to request a meeting with governors to present their views. In the case of a permanent exclusion, parents also have the right to appeal the decision to an independent review panel, in accordance with the Department for Education's guidance.

12. Monitoring and Equality

The headteacher will actively monitor and review patterns of suspensions and exclusions across the federation to ensure fairness and consistency in their application. This includes ensuring that no group, such as those with SEND, looked-after children, or specific ethnic groups, is disproportionately affected by suspensions or exclusions. The headteacher will

also address any trends in behaviour and exclusion proactively, with the goal of preventing further issues. An annual summary report will be shared with the governing board to keep them informed about the monitoring process and any identified patterns.

13. Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Justice (EDIJ)

At St Hilda's Moorland Federation, we are committed to ensuring that decisions relating to suspension and exclusion are fair, transparent, and inclusive. We recognise that suspensions and exclusions can disproportionately affect some children, particularly those from marginalised or vulnerable groups, and we take active steps to minimise this risk.

We believe that all children deserve to feel safe, understood and valued, regardless of their background or needs. Our approach to suspensions and exclusions is therefore rooted in the principles of **equity, diversity, inclusion and justice**:

- **Equity:** We acknowledge that some children face greater barriers to positive behaviour due to factors such as SEND, trauma, disadvantage or discrimination. We make every effort to understand these barriers and apply additional support and reasonable adjustments before considering exclusion.
- **Diversity:** We respect the diverse identities, cultures and experiences of our children and families. We ensure that cultural or communication differences are not misinterpreted as behaviour issues, and we seek to involve families meaningfully when behaviour concerns arise.
- **Inclusion:** We are committed to maintaining every child's place in the school community wherever possible. Exclusion is used only when absolutely necessary and after all other inclusive practices and support strategies have been explored.
- **Justice:** Our processes are transparent, consistent, and centred around the child's voice. Children are given a fair opportunity to explain their experience. We monitor exclusion data carefully to identify any disproportionality and take action where needed to ensure just and non-discriminatory outcomes.

We also provide training for staff in inclusive behaviour practices, unconscious bias, and trauma-informed approaches to promote equitable decision-making. Any concerns about discrimination in suspension or exclusion decisions will be treated seriously and investigated promptly in line with our complaints and equality procedures.

13. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related policies: the Behaviour Policy, the SEND Policy, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and the Anti-Bullying Policy. Each of these policies contributes to the broader framework for ensuring that all pupils are supported, treated fairly, and have a positive experience at school.

14. Conclusion

St Hilda's Moorland Federation believes in providing a positive and supportive learning environment for all pupils. While suspension and exclusion may be necessary in some circumstances, we remain committed to ensuring that these measures are used fairly, transparently, and only as a last resort. Through our approach to equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice, we aim to support all pupils in making positive changes and ensuring they succeed within our Federation community.