

St George's School

	Suspension & Exclusion Policy	
	Committee: Students and Staff Committee	
	Co-ordinator : Mr M Tookey	
	Last Reviewed : Summer 2025	Next Review : Summer 2028 Every 3 years, or sooner if: ● There are changes to DfE guidance ● A student is permanently excluded
Policy links to: ● Anti-Bullying Policy ● Behaviour Management Policy ● DfE: Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement 2024. ● Drug & Substance Abuse Policy ● Rewards & Consequences Policy ● Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy		

1. Introduction

St George's School is committed to fostering an inclusive environment that promotes positive behaviour, high expectations, and the flourishing of each individual in line with our Christian ethos. We aim to respond to poor behaviour with fairness, compassion, and proportionality, always seeking opportunities for restoration and growth.

This policy sets out our approach to suspensions and permanent exclusions in accordance with statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), particularly *Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement* (August 2024). Any changes to the statutory DfE guidance will supersede the school's policy.

2. Principles

- Suspension or exclusion is a serious sanction, used only when absolutely necessary and always as a proportionate response.
- The Headteacher (or Acting Headteacher, as defined in the DfE guidance) is the only person authorised to suspend or permanently exclude a student.
- The Deputy Headteachers have the authority to Internally Suspend students.
- The school will consider the context of each incident, including safeguarding, SEND, and any mitigating factors.

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- The school is committed to equality of opportunity and will monitor exclusions to ensure they are applied fairly.

3. Definitions

- Permanent exclusion: A last-resort measure where a student is removed from the school roll.
- Suspension: A student is temporarily removed from school for a set number of days (maximum 45 days in an academic year).
 - Suspensions can also be issued as a series of lunchtimes (each lunchtime is equivalent to 0.5 days).
- Internal suspension: A student may be removed from lessons for a fixed period and supervised in isolation on site.
 - They will complete work set by their class teachers.
 - This is not classified as a statutory exclusion.
 - This is usually served for one day - as an incident warranting a longer sanction is liable to qualify for a formal Suspension.
 - It can also be issued as a series of lunchtimes or removal from specific lessons.

4. Reasons for Suspension or Exclusion

At St George's, suspensions and permanent exclusions are used only in response to serious or persistent breaches of the school's Expectations & Behaviour Policy, and where allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Examples of behaviours that may lead to suspension include:

- Repeated defiance or disruption: Persistent failure to follow instructions, refusal to comply with reasonable requests, or serious classroom disruption across subjects.
- Abuse or aggression: Verbal abuse or swearing at staff, bullying (including racist, sexist, homophobic, or sexualised behaviour), fighting, or intimidation.
- Harassment or harmful conduct: Including child-on-child abuse, coercive behaviour, or misuse of social media or technology to cause distress.
- Damage or dishonesty: Theft, vandalism, malicious accusations, refusal to comply with searches, or deliberate interference with safety equipment.
- Misconduct involving prohibited items: Possession of offensive weapons (including replicas or dangerous improvised items), illegal substances, or offensive material.
- Behaviour bringing the school into disrepute: Including online or off-site actions that cause significant concern or harm to the community.

A permanent exclusion may be considered for:

- A very serious one-off offence (e.g. serious violence, sexual assault, possession with intent to supply drugs, or deliberate endangerment of others).
- Persistent and escalating breaches of school expectations where all other interventions have failed.

All decisions must take account of individual context, including safeguarding considerations, special educational needs or disabilities, and any mitigating factors (e.g. provocation).

5. Decision-Making Process

“When establishing the facts in relation to a suspension or permanent exclusion decision the headteacher must apply the civil standard of proof, i.e., ‘on the balance of probabilities’ it is more likely than not that a fact is true, rather than the criminal standard of ‘beyond reasonable doubt.’ This means that the headteacher should accept that something happened if it is more likely that it happened than that it did not happen.” *Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (2024).*

When considering suspension or exclusion, the Headteacher will

- Refer to the relevant policies including the *Behaviour Management Policy* to ensure that:
 - A thorough investigation has taken place
 - The student is given a fair opportunity to present their version of events.
- The Headteacher will consider:
 - All available evidence.
 - Whether the student's actions were provoked or influenced by external factors.
 - The age of the student, their disciplinary record, and any exam obligations they may have.
 - Whether any safeguarding separation is required to protect other students or staff, or to avoid placing the student in an unsafe environment.
 - The views of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, where applicable.
 - Informing the police where a criminal offense may have taken place.
 - If the threshold has been met to make a Children's Services referral.
- The Headteacher will keep a clear written record of the process and decisions.

6. Notification and Review

- Parents/carers will be informed as soon as possible via phone and later in writing of the reason and duration of any suspension or exclusion.
- The Governing Body and Local Authority (as appropriate) will be informed according to statutory thresholds.
- A readmission meeting will take place following any suspension: Students have the opportunity to reflect and take responsibility for their actions, and pastoral interventions and support may be agreed.

7. Educational provision

- During the first five school days of any suspension (or permanent exclusion), when alternative provision is not possible or appropriate, the school will take reasonable steps to set and mark work for the student.
- From the sixth day, St George's will arrange suitable full-time education in line with the DfE guidance.
- If a student is permanently excluded, from the sixth day, responsibility to provide a structured, full-time education legally shifts to the local authority.

8. Appeals and Complaint

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Parents/carers have the right to make representations to the governing body and, where applicable, an independent review panel. Information on how to do this is provided with the formal notification of suspension or exclusion.

9. The Role of Governors

In the case of suspensions of five days or fewer:

- Governors will consider any representations from parents but are not required to meet.
- Governors do not have the power to reinstate or overturn the Headteacher's decision but may record their findings in the student's record.
- The Headteacher will report all suspensions to the Governing Body and Local Authority once per term.

In the case of suspensions of 6 to 15 days in any one term (single event or cumulative):

- Governors will convene to consider the suspension only if parents request a meeting.
- If parents do not make any representations, the Governing Body is not required to meet and cannot direct reinstatement.
- The requested meeting must occur within 50 school days of the suspension notice.
- Governors have the power to uphold the suspension or reinstate the student, either immediately or at an earlier date.

In the case of suspensions exceeding 15 days in any one term, and permanent exclusions governors must meet between the 6th and 15th school day after receiving notice of the exclusion to consider the case.

When forming a meeting of the Governing Body, the following persons should be present:

- Usually 3 or 5 governors
- A clerk (preferably independent of governors and staff)
- The Headteacher and relevant staff members
- The parents and student (attendance encouraged)
- A friend or representative of the parents
- A Local Authority (LA) representative (Children's Services or Education)
- Social worker (if applicable)
- Virtual School Head (if the student is Looked After)

When making decisions:

- Governors make their decision in private, with only the clerk present.
- Decisions are based on evidence presented during the hearing and documentation supplied beforehand.
- Governors must be satisfied that exclusion procedures have been correctly followed and that all relevant support strategies have been tried and exhausted.
- Governors must follow the statutory guidance.
- The decision must be communicated in writing to the parents, Headteacher, and Local Authority within one school day of the hearing.

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The role of the Local Authority:

- Advises parents on their right to appeal.
- Invites the student to an Integration Panel to discuss educational provision after exclusion.
- Note: Sixth-day provision is not required for students in their final year of compulsory education who have already taken or missed public examinations.

Students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP):

- Full-time suitable provision must be considered in line with the EHCP requirements.

10. Public Examinations

If a suspension or permanent exclusion would cause a student to miss a public examination, the governing board should convene as soon as possible and, as far as reasonably practicable, consider and decide on the suspension or exclusion before the exam date.

If it is not practical for enough governors to meet in time, the Chair of Governors may consider the suspension or exclusion alone and decide whether to reinstate the student.

11. Cancelling a Suspension or Exclusion

The Headteacher may cancel (withdraw or rescind) a suspension or exclusion that has not yet been reviewed by the governing board. When this happens, parents, the governing board, and the Local Authority must be informed promptly. If applicable, the student's social worker and Virtual School Head should also be notified.

12. Safeguarding Considerations

If the Headteacher determines that carrying out a suspension or exclusion may put a student at risk from a safeguarding perspective, alternative disciplinary actions will be considered to ensure consequences are issued while prioritising the student's safety.

13. Internal Suspensions, Offsite Direction, and Managed Moves

There are occasions when suspension or permanent exclusion may not be the most appropriate or effective response to a student's behaviour. In these cases, the school may use alternative strategies such as those outlined below.

Internal Suspensions

Internal suspension is used as a serious but supportive intervention for students whose behaviour requires removal from normal lessons without exclusion from the school site. It provides time for reflection and restorative work while maintaining access to education.

Offsite Direction

When targeted interventions and support strategies have been unsuccessful in improving a student's behaviour, the school may consider offsite direction as a positive

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alternative. The DfE define this as when the “school requires a pupil to attend another education setting to improve their behaviour”.

Such an arrangement will be time-limited, usually between 2 and 6 weeks, and involves dual registration at both St George's and the host school or alternative provision. During this time, the student becomes a member of the host school community and they participate fully in the curriculum of the setting.

Although parental consent is not legally required for offsite direction, the school will seek to obtain it wherever possible to ensure partnership and transparency.

Managed Move

A managed move is a voluntary and agreed process, supported by DfE guidance, enabling a student to transfer permanently to another mainstream school as a fresh start. This option is considered when all internal behaviour management strategies have been exhausted without the desired improvement and the student is at risk of permanent exclusion.

Managed moves require the agreement of all parties—St George's, the receiving school, parents/carers, and the student. Where appropriate, the school will submit a case to the relevant Inclusion Panel, where the student's circumstances will be reviewed. Parents/carers and the student will be invited to attend this panel to discuss next steps.

If agreed, a managed move arrangement allows the student to begin at a new provision with a tailored support plan, aiming to promote positive engagement and long-term success.