

St Martin's C of E Primary School

Suspension and Exclusion Policy



This policy is written in conjunction with the guidance set out by the DFE 2023. 'Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement' which can be found by following this link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1181584/Suspension_and_permanent_exclusion_guidance_september_23.pdf

and as such, incorporates their advice on following the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 'schools must not discriminate against, harass or victimise pupils because of their: age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, because of a pregnancy/maternity reasons or because of gender reassignment'. St Martins recognises that the decision to exclude a pupil must be lawful, reasonable and fair and that it will only be used as a last resort, in response to a serious breach, or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy.

Rationale

This policy details the procedures which will be followed at St Martins Church of England Primary School in relation to any exclusions, either fixed-term (suspensions) or permanent. The policy is underpinned by the shared commitment of all members of the school community to achieve the safety and well-being of all members of the school community, and to maintain an appropriate education environment in which all pupils can learn and succeed. This policy will also aim to ensure that the rigorous strategies we use to support pupils will reduce the need for any type of exclusion.

Introduction

At St Martin's we recognise that good behaviour is essential to ensure all pupils can fully benefit from the opportunities offered by the school and we take great care to ensure that parents, children and staff are absolutely clear on the high expectations of behaviour we have. We know that children learn more effectively in environments that make them feel safe and have developed a strong Behaviour Policy to support this.

The decision to exclude a pupil can only be made by the Headteacher and will be based on disciplinary grounds. It will only be taken when there has been a single serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or another member of the school.

A decision to exclude a pupil, either for a fixed period (suspension) or permanently is seen as a last resort by the school and will only be taken when all other routes have been exhausted. The causal

details of all exclusions will be thoroughly investigated and formally recorded, with the correct procedures being adhered to in every case. The Headteacher will consider all the evidence available to support the allegations, taking into account the Behaviour Policy, Equality Policy and the Anti-bullying Policy and will make a decision based on the 'balance of probabilities' as to whether the facts relating to the actions of a pupil are true or not i.e. if it is more likely that something happened than it did not. (See DFE Guidance paragraph 115.) It is not appropriate for exclusion to be used for minor incidents such as academic performance or lateness. Informal or unofficial exclusions such as sending pupils home to 'cool off' are unlawful, regardless of whether they occur with the agreement of the parents.

Dealing with persistent or cumulative behaviour problems

As stated above, the decision to exclude a pupil for persistent or cumulative behaviour will only take place once the school has exhausted all other options and where the school has identified the needs of a disruptive pupil and offered and implemented a range of support and behaviour management strategies to meet these needs.

At St Martin's, these support strategies may include (but are not limited to):

- Discussion with the pupil and their parents
- Mentoring by a teacher or member of learning support staff
- Checking/investigating any trigger points or provocation by other pupils
- Detention i.e. missed playtimes
- Internal exclusion
- Referral to outside agencies such as the behaviour support team or the Educational Psychologist
- Pastoral support programme with the child including proactively-taught behaviour strategies on an individual or small-group basis
- Investigation and establishment of any Special Educational Needs through involvement with Local Authority agencies
- Identification of any concerns regarding mental health of the child and referral to any appropriate Local Authority agencies.

The school will put into place an action plan utilising any specialist advice and ensure this is shared and agreed by a child's parents/carers. Teachers and support staff will ensure that all recommended strategies are consistently adhered to over the recommended time period by the outside agencies and the Headteacher.

Unacceptable behaviour outside of school

Pupil's behaviour outside school on school business, e.g. sports fixtures, trips or a school journey, is subject to the school's Behaviour Policy and as such, is subject to exclusion. Unsuitable behaviour in such circumstances will be dealt with as if it had taken place at school. For behaviour outside of

school, not on school business, the Head teacher may exclude a pupil if there is a clear link between that behaviour and maintaining good behaviour and discipline amongst the rest of the pupils as a whole, or if it is deemed to be damaging to the reputation of the school.

Supporting pupils from groups with disproportionately high rates of exclusion or vulnerable pupils

St Martin's knows the groups of pupils represented within its demographic and will ensure that it monitors very carefully the steps taken to support pupils who fall within the groups with the highest rates of exclusion nationally.

The Headteacher will take into account any Special Educational Needs when making the decision to exclude a pupil and will have due regard to the SEN Code of Practice, ensuring it is complying with its statutory duties. St Martin's will work with the parents/carers of any pupils with additional needs or Looked After Children to support their behaviour and will seek advice from agencies within the Local Authority. If necessary, an interim review of the provision listed within a pupil's Statement of Special Educational Needs will be organised by the SENCO/Inclusion Manager if the Head teacher identifies that more support is needed for that pupil's behaviour.

The Decision to Exclude

Only the Headteacher can make the decision to exclude a pupil which must be for disciplinary reasons. If there is a serious incident or consistent breach of the school's Behaviour Policy and all the support strategies have failed to positively impact on a pupil's behaviour the Headteacher will take the following steps (where realistically practicable):

- 1) Ask the pupil to confirm his/her version of events detailing timescales, location, witnesses, actions and the staff response all of which will be recorded in writing on CPOMs. This information will already have been reviewed; the purpose of this is ensure that all the information has been included.
- 2) Ensure that there is sufficient recorded evidence to support the decision to exclude including investigations to ascertain if there was any provocation or contributing factors such as bullying or racial harassment or any exceptional circumstances such as bereavement or mental health issues. Witness statements from staff or pupils will be taken and added to CPOMs. Extenuating circumstances may mean that the decision is taken not to exclude a pupil.
- 3) Inform the Chair of Governors or in their absence the Vice Chair and the Local Authority.
- 4) Explain to the pupil that the decision has been made to exclude them. If possible, this will be done in the presence of another senior member of staff such as the Deputy Head or a Phase Leader. The school will aim for the child's parents to be present during this.
- 5) The Headteacher will contact the child's parents, inform them of what has happened giving a detailed explanation and ask that they come and collect their child.
- 6) Provide the parents with a written confirmation of the details of the type and length of the exclusion, and of their right to make representations about the exclusion to the Governing Body. The Headteacher will use the model letter provided by the local authority. Parents must be informed of any terms and conditions for the pupil's return and the date of the reintegration meeting which will take place upon the pupil's return to school.

7) Ensure appropriate work is set by the class teacher and that arrangements are in place for it to be returned to school to be marked.

8) Inform the rest of the staff.

9) Meet with the SENDCo/behaviour lead to plan for the pupil's needs upon their return, ensuring continuing support is in place for the pupil to support their behaviour on return to school.

Safeguarding Pupils who have been excluded

The Headteacher will take into account the circumstances of any pupil when making a decision to exclude. For example, if there is a worry or concern that the pupil will not be adequately supervised if an external exclusion is given, the Headteacher may decide that it would be more appropriate to give a pupil an internal exclusion. This may be the case for any child who is subject to a Child Protection Plan. However, within these circumstances the school will inform Social Services or the relevant social care professional with their concerns.

The decision to exclude on a fixed term (suspension) should never be taken lightly, only be used as a last resort and should always be for the shortest possible period. Before making a decision on a suspension, the headteacher must check that, if a child has SEND needs, all reasonable and legal provision has been put in place to support the child, including meeting the targets on an EHCP. They should also investigate how a situation was de-escalated, including whether it could have been avoided through more decisive action, and be satisfied that the behaviour meets the threshold for exclusion as outlined in the behaviour policy. The headteacher will examine all evidence available and make a decision based on 'the balance of probabilities'.

If a child has been excluded on multiple occasions but the behaviour persists, then the school must consider alternative options, which will include a review of the procedures used and a detailed analysis of events that may have triggered the behaviour.

Preventing exclusion

All efforts should be taken to prevent exclusion.

At the point of suspension

A letter containing all the appropriate legal information should be sent home. A conversation should take place with the parents about the reasons for the suspension. A reintegration meeting should be arranged with the child and parent for the first day back at the earliest point in the day.

The reintegration meeting

The reintegration meeting is an opportunity to work together to prevent further suspensions. The purpose of the reintegration meeting is to achieve three things:

1. Supporting the child to reflect on the behaviour and identify goals to move forward with
2. School and parents to work together to find a positive way forward and discuss a strategy for supporting the child with their behaviour
3. Welcome the child back to school and ensure they know they are loved and forgiven

A pastoral programme of support such as reactive work around regulating emotions, emotional nurturing and a proactive structured programme may be put in place. Any behaviour plan will be reviewed. External agencies may be contacted to provide additional support as needed.

November 2023