
ST MATTHEW'S BLOXAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL



Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy 2026-27

Updated for the Department for Education statutory guidance, July 2026

School	St Matthew's Bloxam Church of England (VC) Primary School
Policy owner	Headteacher
Approved by	Governing Board
Effective from	September 2026
Review	Annually, and sooner following statutory or regulatory change
Statutory guidance	Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (DfE, July 2026)

Policy status

This policy replaces the school's November 2023 Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy. It has been revised against the July 2026 statutory guidance and the legislative changes effective from 26 July 2026. The school will apply the policy alongside its behaviour, safeguarding, attendance, SEND and equality duties.

1. Aims and principles

The school is committed to a calm, safe and supportive environment in which pupils and staff are respected and pupils can learn. Suspension and permanent exclusion are lawful behaviour-management tools, but most behaviour should be addressed through the school's behaviour systems and appropriate support. Permanent exclusion will be used only as a last resort.

- Apply suspension and permanent exclusion fairly, consistently, lawfully, reasonably, proportionately and with procedural fairness.
- Protect the education, safety and welfare of pupils and staff.
- Ensure pupils and parents understand the process, their rights and routes to representation or review.
- Take account of safeguarding, SEND, disability, equality, vulnerability and the pupil's individual circumstances.
- Avoid unlawful exclusion and off-rolling, and scrutinise patterns in pupil movement.
- Support successful reintegration following suspension, cancelled exclusion, off-site direction or safeguarding separation.

2. Legal and statutory framework

This policy has regard to the Department for Education statutory guidance published in July 2026. It should not be read in isolation.

- Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011.
- School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended.
- Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Education Act 1996.
- Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended.
- Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) (Application to Academies and Pupil Referral Units and Minor Amendments) Regulations 2026.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Behaviour in Schools; Keeping Children Safe in Education; Working Together to Improve School Attendance; Working Together to Safeguard Children; and statutory guidance on Alternative Provision.

3. Definitions

Suspension: A fixed-period exclusion on disciplinary grounds. It may be for one or more fixed periods and may include part of a school day.

Permanent exclusion: Exclusion on disciplinary grounds where the pupil is no longer allowed to attend the school unless reinstated.

Cancelled exclusion: An exclusion cancelled by the headteacher before the governing board has met to consider reinstatement.

Off-site direction: A temporary requirement for a pupil to attend another education setting in order to improve future behaviour. It is not a punishment for past misconduct.

Managed move: A voluntary, planned process leading to a permanent transfer to another mainstream school, agreed by all relevant parties and used only where it is in the pupil's best interests.

Parent: Includes a birth parent, a person with parental responsibility and a person who has care of the child.

Alternative provision (AP): Suitable education arranged for a pupil away from their usual school, including provision required from the sixth school day of qualifying exclusions.

4. Decision to suspend or permanently exclude

Only the headteacher, or the person formally acting as headteacher, may suspend or permanently exclude a pupil on disciplinary grounds. Behaviour outside school may be relevant. A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year.

A permanent exclusion will only be taken:

- in response to a 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 others, including staff or pupils.

Before making a decision, the headteacher will:

- establish the facts on the balance of probabilities;
- act lawfully, reasonably, fairly and proportionately;
- consider the pupil's views in light of age and understanding and explain how they have been taken into account, unless it would be inappropriate to seek them;
- provide appropriate support or advocacy for the pupil to express their views where needed;
- consider relevant contributing factors and whether suitable support or intervention has been attempted;
- consider safeguarding, SEND, disability, health, equality and vulnerability, including whether reasonable adjustments have been made;
- where a pupil has an EHC plan, engage the local authority early and consider whether an early annual review is appropriate;
- where a pupil has a social worker, involve the social worker, DSL and parents as early as possible; and for a looked-after child involve the Designated Teacher and Virtual School Head (VSH);
- consider off-site direction or a managed move where these are appropriate preventative measures.

Successive exclusions

A suspension cannot simply be extended or converted into a permanent exclusion. Where further evidence emerges, a further suspension or a permanent exclusion may be issued to begin immediately after the first suspension ends. A new notice must be issued and the relevant parties informed without delay.

5. Unlawful exclusions and off-rolling

Any time a pupil is sent home or prevented from attending for disciplinary reasons, however short the period, the formal suspension or permanent exclusion process must be followed and the action recorded. The school will not use informal or unofficial exclusions.

- A pupil will not be excluded simply because the school considers itself unable to meet SEND or disability needs.
- A pupil will not be excluded for low academic attainment or ability.
- Reinstatement will not be made conditional on attendance at a reintegration meeting.

- A pupil will not be sent home for disciplinary reasons without a formal suspension, even with parental agreement.
- A part-time timetable will not be used to manage behaviour.
- Parents will not be pressured to electively home educate, agree to a managed move, or remove their child from roll.
- A pupil will not be permanently excluded because a parent or pupil declines a managed move.

6. Safeguarding separation

In rare circumstances, it may be necessary to temporarily prevent a pupil from attending the school premises in order to keep pupils apart for safeguarding purposes, for example while an allegation of harm by one pupil against another is investigated. This is distinct from an exclusion on disciplinary grounds.

- The decision will be case-specific, led by the DSL or deputy and informed by appropriate agencies where required.
- Separation from the premises will be used only when essential and when separation cannot practicably be achieved while the pupil remains on site.
- Parents will be told the reason and the governing board will be notified without delay.
- The school will consider its duties under safeguarding guidance, the Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998 and public-law principles.
- Appropriate education must continue. Where neither the school nor parent arranges education, the local authority has the relevant duty under section 19 of the Education Act 1996.
- The arrangement will be kept under review and included within governing-board scrutiny of pupil movement.

7. Off-site direction and managed moves

Off-site direction

Off-site direction is a temporary intervention to improve future behaviour. It is not a sanction for past misconduct. The governing board is responsible for the direction and will comply with the 2026 regulations and statutory alternative provision guidance.

- The needs of the pupil, including SEND and health needs, will be identified and objectives, duration and review arrangements agreed in advance.
- The pupil will continue to receive a broad and balanced education, with appropriate support and reasonable adjustments.
- Parents, and the local authority where the pupil has an EHC plan, will receive the prescribed written notice as soon as practicable and no later than two school days before the placement begins.
- The notice will include the placement address, reporting arrangements, number of days, reasons and objectives, and session times.
- Parents, or the local authority for a pupil with an EHC plan, may request a review meeting. The governing board must arrange this as soon as reasonably practicable unless a review has already taken place in the previous 10 weeks.
- The governing board will keep the placement under review, invite parents and the local authority where relevant at least six days before a review meeting, and notify the parent of the review decision and reasons no later than six days after the meeting.
- Relevant educational, safeguarding, attainment and risk-management information will be shared securely before placement.

Managed moves

- Managed moves are voluntary, planned, permanent transfers and must be agreed by relevant parties, including parents and the admission authority of the new school.
- There is no lawful concept of a “trial managed move” or “trial admission”. A temporary placement to improve behaviour should use the off-site direction framework.
- A move will only proceed where it is in the pupil’s best interests and appropriate intervention and information sharing have taken place.
- For a pupil with an EHC plan, the local authority must be involved before a managed move and the statutory process for amending the plan followed.
- Managed moves remain subject to admissions law and the School Admissions Code.

8. Notification following an exclusion

The headteacher will notify parents without delay of the type and period of exclusion and the reasons. Written notification will also be provided without delay and will include the information required by statutory guidance, including rights to make representations and, where applicable, attend the governing-board meeting, bring a friend or representative, and request remote access.

- For pupils of compulsory school age, parents will be notified of the days on which they must ensure the child is not present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification.
- The school will provide required details of alternative provision and, where information cannot be identified on day one, will provide it without delay and normally at least 48 hours before the provision begins.
- The local authority will be notified of every suspension and permanent exclusion without delay, regardless of duration. The home authority will also be notified of a permanent exclusion where applicable.
- The governing board will be notified without delay of any permanent exclusion; exclusions taking the pupil over five school days or ten lunchtimes in a term; and any exclusion causing the pupil to miss a public examination or National Curriculum test. The headteacher will additionally report once per term any other suspensions not previously notified.
- Where the pupil has a social worker or is looked after, the social worker and/or VSH will be notified as required without delay.
- Notifications will be accessible and will signpost parents to free and impartial advice, including the DfE parent guidance, local SENDIASS, Coram Child Law Advice and IPSEA.

9. Education during an exclusion

- During the first five school days, where the pupil is not attending AP, the school will take reasonable steps to set and mark accessible, achievable work. SEND and disability duties continue.
- For a suspension lasting more than five school days, the governing board must arrange suitable full-time education for a compulsory-school-age pupil to begin no later than the sixth school day. Consecutive suspensions are cumulative for this purpose.
- Following permanent exclusion, the local authority must arrange suitable full-time education to begin no later than the sixth school day after the exclusion began.
- For a looked-after child or a child with a social worker, the school and local authority should work together to arrange AP from the first day following suspension or permanent exclusion.
- The governing board will assure itself that AP is suitable and full-time, quality assured, supportive of SEND, correctly recorded for attendance and supported by timely safeguarding information transfer.

10. Cancelling an exclusion

The headteacher may cancel an exclusion that has begun, or has not yet begun, only before the governing board has met to consider reinstatement.

- Parents, the governing board and local authority, and where relevant the social worker and VSH, will be notified without delay and given the reason.
- The pupil must be allowed to return without delay.
- Parents will be offered a meeting with the headteacher without delay to discuss the circumstances.
- Days already spent out of school count towards the 45-day annual maximum.
- A permanent exclusion cannot be cancelled where the pupil has already exceeded, or would exceed when the cancellation takes effect, 45 school days of exclusion in the academic year.

11. Reintegration

Following a suspension, cancelled exclusion, off-site direction or safeguarding separation, the school will design an appropriate reintegration strategy. The strategy will offer a fresh start, reinforce high expectations, rebuild belonging and engagement with learning, address unmet needs and reduce the likelihood of further exclusion.

- A reintegration meeting will normally take place before or at the beginning of the pupil's return and will clearly communicate the strategy.
- Parents will be involved where possible, but a pupil must not be prevented from returning to the mainstream classroom because a parent cannot or will not attend.
- The strategy may include pastoral contact, mentoring, personalised targets, academic catch-up, external support and regular reviews.
- Any part-time timetable must not be used to manage behaviour. Where exceptionally appropriate for another lawful reason, it will be time-limited, reviewed regularly and attendance procedures followed.

12. Governing board consideration and reinstatement

The governing board may delegate consideration to a committee of at least three governors. It has a duty to consider parents' representations and, in the circumstances below, to decide whether a pupil should be reinstated.

Circumstance	Governing board action	Timescale
Permanent exclusion; suspension taking total above 15 school days in a term; or exclusion causing a missed public exam/National Curriculum test	Convene and decide on reinstatement	Within 15 school days of notice; for a test/exam, take reasonable steps to meet before it
Suspension taking total above 5 but not above 15 school days in a term, where parent makes representations	Convene and decide on reinstatement	Within 50 school days of notice
Suspension taking total to 5 school days or fewer in a term	Consider any parental representations; no power to direct reinstatement	No meeting required

At a required meeting, the governing board will consider the pupil's interests and circumstances alongside those of other pupils, staff and the school community. It will apply the balance of probabilities, consider whether the headteacher's decision was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair, and expressly consider

welfare, safeguarding, equality, SEND and relevant evidence. The pupil will be supported to participate according to age and understanding.

The governing board may decline to reinstate or direct reinstatement immediately or on a specified date. Clear minutes and reasons will be recorded and the required parties notified in writing without delay.

13. Permanent exclusion and independent review

When the governing board declines to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil, its decision letter will explain the right to request an Independent Review Panel (IRP), the 15-school-day application deadline, where to apply, remote-access rights, the right to request an SEN expert at no cost regardless of whether SEN is recognised, representation rights, and routes for discrimination claims.

- If received within the legal time limit, the local authority will arrange the IRP at its own expense.
- The IRP may uphold the decision, recommend reconsideration, or quash the decision and direct reconsideration where the decision was flawed on judicial-review principles.
- If the IRP recommends or directs reconsideration, the governing board must reconvene within 10 school days of notice.
- Where an IRP directs reconsideration and orders a financial adjustment, the amount is £4,000 unless the governing board decides to reinstate within 10 school days.
- Records relating to exclusion will be retained for at least six months where relevant to potential discrimination claims; IRP records are retained by the arranging authority in accordance with its statutory responsibilities.

14. Remote access to meetings

In-person meetings are the default. Where a parent correctly requests remote access, the governing board or arranging authority must hold the meeting remotely if satisfied it can be conducted fairly and transparently. A remote meeting may also be used without a parental request where extraordinary events or unforeseen circumstances make an in-person meeting not reasonably practicable.

- Participants must be able to hear and be heard and, when video is used, see and be seen, and must be able to participate fully.
- Social workers and VSHs must be permitted to join remotely, including where the main meeting is held in person, where the required conditions are satisfied.
- If technology prevents fair and effective participation and cannot reasonably be resolved, an in-person meeting will be arranged without delay.
- Remote meetings will not be paper-only exercises and all normal procedural, equality and representation rights continue to apply.

15. School admission and attendance registers

- Following permanent exclusion, the pupil's name will be removed from the admission register only when the statutory conditions are met. Deletion will not be backdated.
- Where an IRP application has been made in time, the school will wait until the review is determined or abandoned and any required governing-board reconsideration is complete.
- The school will make the required return to the local authority when the pupil's name is removed.
- While the pupil remains registered, the correct attendance code will be used. This may include Code D for dual registration, Code B where applicable for approved off-site educational activity, or Code E where the permanently excluded pupil is not attending AP.

- Following transfer to a new school, the Common Transfer File will be sent within the required timescale, and safeguarding information will be transferred securely and promptly in accordance with KCSIE.

16. Police involvement and parallel criminal proceedings

The headteacher need not postpone an exclusion decision solely because a police investigation or criminal proceedings are underway. The decision will be made on the evidence available, with extra steps taken as necessary to ensure fairness where evidence is limited. A governing board required to consider reinstatement cannot postpone its meeting solely for this reason and will decide on the available evidence. Any IRP will determine whether an adjournment is necessary by considering fairness, available evidence, likely delay and the effect on all relevant parties.

17. Monitoring, equality and governance oversight

The governing board will routinely challenge and evaluate data on suspension, permanent exclusion and pupil movement so that it can assure itself that decisions are necessary, lawful and equitable and that support is effective.

- suspensions, permanent exclusions and repeat suspensions;
- pupils removed from roll and pupils attending education off-site;
- off-site directions, managed moves and safeguarding separations;
- attendance codes and the quality, cost and impact of alternative provision;
- timing and reasons for pupil movement;
- characteristics of pupils affected, including SEND, disability and other protected characteristics;
- interventions for pupils at risk of exclusion and patterns that may indicate policy or provision weaknesses;
- attainment, progress, safeguarding, wellbeing and other relevant contextual data.

The Headteacher will report relevant data and themes to governors at least termly. Where disproportionate patterns or other concerns are identified, leaders and governors will investigate root causes and take appropriate action.

18. Policy review and linked policies

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner when legislation or statutory guidance changes. It will be approved by the governing board.

- Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy and SEN Information Report
- Attendance Policy
- Equality Policy/Objectives
- Alternative Provision procedures
- Complaints Policy

Appendix 1: Operational checklist following a suspension or permanent exclusion

1. Headteacher confirms the decision and records the factual basis, pupil views, relevant contextual factors and consideration of SEND, equality and safeguarding.
2. Parent is informed without delay and written notification is issued with the required information and rights.
3. Local authority is notified without delay. Governing board, social worker, VSH and home authority are notified where required.
4. Education for days 1-5 is arranged and marked where AP is not in place; day-six provision is triggered where applicable.
5. Exclusion days are added to the pupil's academic-year total to monitor the 45-day limit.
6. Any required governing-board review is diarised against the statutory deadline and the appropriate parties are invited.
7. Reintegration is planned and communicated before or at return.
8. Records, register codes, safeguarding information, AP quality assurance and governor reporting are completed as applicable.

Appendix 2: Key 2026 changes reflected in this policy

- Explicit alignment with the July 2026 statutory guidance and the Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) (Application to Academies and Pupil Referral Units and Minor Amendments) Regulations 2026.
- A distinct safeguarding-separation process, clarifying that temporary non-attendance to keep pupils apart for safeguarding purposes is not a disciplinary exclusion when the statutory conditions are met.
- Expanded off-site direction requirements, including written notice, objectives, review requests, review invitations and decision notices.
- Clarification that trial admissions/trial managed moves are not lawful mechanisms; temporary placements should use off-site direction where appropriate.
- Updated admission-register and attendance references to the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Updated reintegration expectations following safeguarding separation as well as suspension, cancelled exclusion and off-site direction.
- Clearer governing-board oversight of safeguarding separations and wider pupil movement.
- Updated remote-access principles, while retaining in-person meetings as the default.
- Clarified approach to police investigations and parallel criminal proceedings.

Source note

This policy is based on the school's November 2023 policy and the Department for Education publication "Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement", statutory guidance, July 2026. The DfE guidance itself should be consulted for the complete legal framework and detailed procedural requirements.