



MAIDA VALE SCHOOL

MVS Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

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1. Introduction

Maida Vale School is committed to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where all students can thrive both academically and personally. In line with this commitment, the school regards suspension and permanent exclusion as a last resort. This policy outlines the circumstances under which suspensions and permanent exclusions may be applied and the procedures that will be followed.

All students and staff at Maida Vale School are entitled to learn and work in a safe and supportive environment where everyone is valued. We believe that effective learning takes place where high moral, ethical, and personal standards are clearly communicated. All members of the school community are expected to show kindness, respect, and tolerance, and to understand the impact of their behaviour on the mental health and wellbeing of others. Maida Vale School takes a child-centered approach; all procedures in this policy operate with the best interests of the child at heart.

This policy applies to all students at the school and should be read in conjunction with the School's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

2. Aims of the Policy

- To ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency in the process regarding suspensions and permanent exclusions
- To promote a safe and positive learning environment for all students
- To uphold the welfare of the individual while protecting the interests of the wider school community
- To comply with applicable legal and regulatory requirements, including the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

3. Definition of Suspension and Permanent Exclusion

Suspension: A short-term removal of the student from the school for a fixed period, depending on the severity of the incident.

Permanent Exclusion: The student is removed from the school roll and is not permitted to return

4. Grounds for Suspension or Permanent Exclusion

Suspension may be considered when a student has committed a serious breach of the School's Behaviour Policy or has demonstrated a pattern of behaviour that undermines the ethos of the school or poses a risk to the welfare of others.

Permanent Exclusion may occur in cases of very serious misbehaviour or misconduct. The headmaster has the discretion to permanently exclude any student. In the event of permanent exclusion, the headmaster will invite and give due consideration to representations from the parents and will consult the Managing Director (or other Directors, if unavailable) before making a final decision.

Examples of conduct that may lead to suspension and/or permanent exclusion include (but are not limited to):

- Physical assault against a student or staff member
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour, including discriminatory comments against protected characteristics (age, disability, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation)
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Possession, use, or supply of drugs, alcohol, or offensive weapons
- Possession, use, or supply of tobacco or nicotine-based products in school (including vaping)
- Theft or damage to property
- Persistent truanting
- Persistent disruptive behaviour
- Child-on-child abuse
- Sexual misconduct or harassment
- Breaches of academic integrity (e.g., plagiarism or cheating)
- Misuse of digital technology (e.g., viewing or sharing inappropriate content)

Each case will be considered individually, based on its facts and merits. Permanent exclusion is subject to a right of appeal, as outlined in Section 5 and 6.

Admissions Register Duty

In the event of a permanent exclusion, the student's name is deleted from the admission register, which triggers a notification to the local authority under the 2024 Registration Regulations.

5. Investigation and Procedure

Before any decision on suspension or permanent exclusion is made, the following steps will be taken:

a) Investigation

The Senior Deputy Head, and or other appropriate members of the Pastoral Leadership Team, will conduct a fair and thorough investigation, including interviews with the students, staff, and relevant witnesses. Where possible, CCTV footage may be used to support the investigation. Students will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegations.

b) Decision-Making

Following the investigation, the Head will determine whether a suspension or permanent exclusion is appropriate. This decision will be based on the evidence gathered, the seriousness of the offence, the student's prior conduct, and any mitigating circumstances.

c) Notification

Parents/guardians will be informed in writing of:

- The reason, length, and type of suspension (or permanent exclusion)
- Any conditions for return (in the case of suspensions)
- Their right to appeal (for permanent exclusions)

The school will then follow the following process.

Provisional recommendation

If the Headmaster considers that permanent exclusion may be appropriate, parents will be notified in writing of the provisional recommendation, the reasons for it, and the evidence relied upon. Parents will be invited to submit written representations.

Opportunity to make representations

Parents may request a meeting with the Managing Director and at least one other Director to present their views in person. Parents may be accompanied by a friend or representative. If requested, an independent observer may attend the meeting to support procedural fairness. Alternatively, parents may choose to make written representations only.

Review of the recommendation

The Managing Director (together with the other Director) will consider any written and/or oral representations and make any enquiries considered appropriate before providing advice to the Headmaster. The Headmaster may attend the meeting to explain the school's decision-making and answer questions but will not take part in the review of the representations.

Final decision

Having considered all the available evidence, the parents' representations and the advice received, the Headmaster will decide whether to confirm the permanent exclusion. Parents will be notified of the decision in writing, together with the reasons for the decision and details of their right of appeal.

6. Appeal Process

Parents have the right to appeal a permanent exclusion decision.

Appeal

Parents may appeal a decision to permanently exclude their child by submitting written notice to the Headmaster and the Board of Directors within ten working days of the date of the decision.

Appeal panel

The appeal will be heard by a panel of at least three individuals who have had no prior involvement in the case or the original decision. No person who advised the Headmaster or participated in the review of the provisional recommendation may sit on the appeal panel.

Appeal hearing

Parents and, where appropriate, the student will be invited to attend the appeal hearing and may be accompanied by a friend or representative. The panel will consider all relevant evidence before reaching its decision.

Final outcome

The decision of the appeal panel is final and will be communicated to parents in writing.

7. Impact on Fees and Records

In the event of permanent exclusion, fees for the current term remain payable.

- The school is not obligated to refund any fees paid in advance.
- The student's record will reflect the permanent exclusion exclusion, in line with data protection laws and the school's archiving procedures.

The non-payment of fees is a contractual matter under the parent contract, not a disciplinary exclusion under this policy.

8. Support for Students

Where a student is permanently excluded, the school will offer appropriate support to ensure their wellbeing, including referrals to external agencies if needed.

For suspensions, parents and the student will be invited to a reintegration meeting with the headmaster and/or other members of the leadership team to support the student's return.

During a suspension, academic staff will provide appropriate work for students to complete at home.

9. Equality and Safeguarding

All decisions will be made in accordance with the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Children Act 1989. Students with SEND or other vulnerabilities will receive additional consideration and support throughout the process.

Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

Before any decision to suspend or permanently exclude a student is made, the Headteacher must give express consideration to whether the pupil's behaviour arose in consequence of a disability, in accordance with section 15 of the Equality Act 2010 (discrimination arising from disability). The Headteacher must also consider whether the school has complied with its anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments and whether any further reasonable adjustments or alternative strategies could prevent the need for suspension or permanent exclusion. The outcome of these considerations must be considered as part of the decision-making process.

Consideration for Vulnerable Pupils

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), the school will take particular care when considering suspension or permanent exclusion for looked-after children, previously looked-after children, children with a social worker, and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be involved in every decision relating to a permanent exclusion to ensure that relevant safeguarding information and the student's wider circumstances have been fully considered before a final decision is made.

Prohibition of Off-Rolling and Informal Exclusions

The school will not use suspension or permanent exclusion as a means of off-rolling a student or encouraging a student to leave the school roll for reasons other than those permitted by law.. Any suspension or permanent exclusion are carried out in accordance with the school's statutory duties and applicable Department for Education guidance and are formally recorded and communicated to parents.

10. Review and Monitoring

A central record of major sanctions is maintained by the Senior Deputy Head. It is reviewed regularly by the headmaster and annually by the Managing Director.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head and approved by the Board of Directors. It may also be updated in response to legal or regulatory changes.

Complaints

Where parents are dissatisfied with the way in which a suspension or permanent exclusion has been managed, or with the school's compliance with its published procedures, they may raise their concerns under the school's Complaints Policy, which is available on the school's website. If the matter remains unresolved following completion of the school's complaints process, parents or carers may refer the complaint to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), where appropriate and in accordance with the applicable regulatory framework.

Date of Next Review: September 2027