

Bradford Forster Academy

Procedure for Managing Suspensions and Exclusions

Our aim at Bradford Forster Academy is to support our students to be aspirational, confident, caring young individuals who have the belief, knowledge, and life skills to make a positive contribution to their local community and wider society.

We strive to reflect our academy Christian values of respect, growth, and community whilst following our strapline of '**Everything is possible for one who believes**' Mark 9:23.



Bradford Forster Academy Mission Statement



Bradford Forster Academy models and expects impeccable behaviour through the example set by adults and student role models, the behaviour policy and by having high expectations. Learning that there are consequences to inappropriate behaviour is an important aspect of education and the behaviour strategy has clear sanctions for when expectations are not met.

There are occasions when it is necessary and appropriate to suspend/exclude students for a fixed period, or, in very rare cases, exclude them permanently. In most cases suspension/exclusion will be the last resort after a range of measures has been tried to improve student's behaviour and engender a sense of personal responsibility. Whenever suspensions and/or exclusions are used the Government Guide to Exclusions is followed.

Where possible, Bradford Forster Academy students identified as being at risk of suspension/exclusion are provided with strategies to meet individual needs so that we can support the student and their family as much as possible and therefore embodying our value of Endurance. Suspension/exclusion is viewed as the strongest sanction possible and is available only through the authority of the Headteacher.

A decision to suspend/exclude a student from the Academy should be taken only:

- a) in response to serious breaches of the Academy's behaviour policy or
- b) if allowing the student to remain in the Academy building could seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others

c) If it negatively impacts the school and/or its wider community and brings the Academy into disrepute.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the process for suspensions (fixed term suspensions) and permanent exclusions for the benefit of parents, staff and students so as to ensure a consistent and fair process for all concerned.

Prevention of Exclusion

1. Where appropriate, and in line with the Behaviour Policy, the Academy will use the sanction of seclusion for a fixed number of days whereby students will be placed in the seclusion room and kept out of circulation with work provided.
2. The behaviour and attitudes of students is monitored frequently by the Pastoral Team, daily behaviour logs indicate students who are gaining large numbers of behaviour points. Once identified, students are given a variety of support, including, report cards, or mentoring. Identified students may also be referred to external agencies such as CAMHS or the SCIL team.
3. Students may be given behaviour placements at other local schools where they would be in the host school's ~~internal~~ seclusion room for a number of days rather than suspended.
4. Students may be referred to the BACS panel for consideration of an Off-site direction to avoid permanent exclusion. This offers the student a fresh start in a new school, which, if successful, will lead to the permanent transfer to the new school.

Suspensions (Fixed Term Suspensions)

A suspension means that a student is not allowed to come to the Academy for a certain number of days. Students can also be suspended for lunchtime periods if behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive. A suspension can be for a fixed period of 1 to 45 days in an academic year but any suspensions over 15 days in a term must be referred to the Governors' Pupil Discipline Committee and this committee must convene if parents/carers request a meeting of this committee for any suspensions amounting to 6 days or over.

Situations leading to a suspension

The Academy's behaviour strategy clearly states the situations which will normally lead to suspensions, but it is also at the discretion of the Headteacher to suspend or exclude for an incident which may not be covered by the behaviour strategy, and which is deemed to be of equal seriousness. Students can be suspended for serious breaches of the school behaviour policy when they are not in school (including but not limited to their journeys to and from school) if their behaviour has a serious negative impact on other students, the school community or brings the school into disrepute. Bringing a mobile phone into the academy (without medical need or in other exceptional pre-agreed circumstances) when highly visible and very clear systems are in place for students to put them into pouches, will be seen as serious defiance and could lead to suspension. The February 2026 DfE 'Mobile Phone Guidance' says, 'All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default; anything other than this should be by exception only' and 'As part of this policy, schools should develop a mobile phone policy that prohibits the use of mobile phones throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.' However, suspensions will not be used for minor incidents; poor academic performance, punctuality concerns or breaches of uniform rules (except where the latter is resulting in persistent and open defiance of such rules). The length of suspension is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

A record of suspension/exclusion decisions is kept by the Vice Principal (Behaviour and Attitudes) to ensure a consistent approach to the decision making.

Procedure before a decision to suspend a student has been made

The decision to suspend may only be taken by the Headteacher. The standard of proof to be applied is the balance of probabilities, i.e., if it is more probable than not that the student did what he or she is alleged to have done, the Headteacher may suspend the student.

Before deciding whether to suspend a student the Headteacher will:

- a) Ensure that an appropriate investigation has been carried out
- b) Consider all the evidence available to support the allegations, taking account of the Academy's behaviour and equal opportunities policies,

and, where applicable, Race Relations legislation and Disability Discrimination legislation

- c) Allow the student to give their version of events of any incident which has taken place
- d) Check whether the incident may have been provoked, for example by bullying or by racial or sexual harassment
- e) Review previous incidents of the same behaviour before deciding on the length of suspension

Procedure after a decision to suspend a student has been made

1. Parents/carers will be informed by telephone where possible that a decision to suspend has been made. This will be followed by a letter of confirmation outlining the reasons for the decision and the appeal process.
2. Any exclusion over 15 days in a term must be referred to the Governors' Pupil Discipline Committee. This committee must convene if parents/carers request such a meeting for any suspensions amounting to 6 days or over. If the suspension is for less than 6 days, parents/carers can make representation to the Pupil Discipline Committee, but it is not obligatory for them to meet. The Pupil Discipline Committee must meet within 30 days of the committee being notified of a hearing.
3. Before a meeting of the Pupil Discipline Committee, the School will send all the relevant material to the parents/carers and the governors on the panel. New material cannot be introduced by the Academy at the meeting. Parents/carers have the right to be accompanied by a friend or representative.
4. Students will have a reintegration meeting after a suspension where it is expected that parents/carers will attend. The purpose of the meeting is to promote an improvement in behaviour, to emphasise the joint responsibility between school and parents/carers regarding the student and to explore measures to prevent further misbehaviour.

5. Any student who has been suspended will have to spend some time in the school's seclusion rooms.
6. The student may be required to sign a formal behaviour contract.
7. The Academy will keep a formal record of all suspensions.

Student welfare during suspension

1. The student must leave site immediately and may not re-enter the Academy grounds during the period of suspension; the parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that this does not happen.
2. Parents/carers are legally responsible for the student during a suspension and the student must not be in public places during Academy hours e.g., parks, shopping centres.
3. If the suspension is for 6 days or more, the Academy will arrange for alternative temporary education after day 5 of the suspension – usually at a different local school, or at a Pupil Referral Unit.
4. If a student is suspended at lunchtimes and is entitled to Free School Meals, then the Academy can make arrangements for a packed lunch to be provided if parents/carers wish.

Permanent Exclusion

The decision to permanently exclude a student is never taken lightly. A permanent exclusion means that a student is never allowed to come back into the Academy; the responsibility for finding the student his or her next educational establishment lies with the Local Authority.

Situations leading to permanent exclusion

Permanent exclusion may result from serious on-going behaviour problems or the failure of an Off-site Direction. Permanent exclusions for persistent disruptive behaviour will only be issued if the Headteacher feels that for the student to remain in school would be seriously detrimental to the student's education as well as to the education and welfare of both staff and other students.

There will, however, be exceptional circumstances where, in the Headteacher's judgment, it is appropriate to permanently exclude a student for a first or 'one-off' offence. These may include:

- a) Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff
- b) Sexual abuse or assault
- c) Supplying or being in possession of drugs (including alcohol)
- d) Carrying an offensive weapon
- e) Unnecessary / malicious activation of the fire alarm

These instances are not exhaustive but indicate the severity of such offences and the fact that such behaviour can affect the discipline and well-being of the Academy community.

Procedure for decision making

The decision to permanently exclude may only be taken by the Headteacher. The standard of proof to be applied is the balance of probabilities, i.e., if it is more probable than not that the student did what he or she is alleged to have done, the Headteacher may exclude the student.

Permanent exclusion will not be imposed in the heat of the moment. Before deciding whether to exclude a student permanently the Headteacher will:

- a) Ensure that a thorough investigation has been carried out
- b) Consider all the evidence available to support the allegations, taking account of the Academy's behaviour and equal opportunities policies, and, where applicable, Race Relations legislation and Disability Discrimination legislation
- c) Allow the student to give their version of events
- d) Check whether the incident may have been provoked, for example by bullying or by racial or sexual harassment.

- e) If necessary, consult others, but not anyone who may later have a role in reviewing the Headteacher's decision, for example a member of the Governing Body.

This means a student may be suspended pending investigation which may lead to a permanent exclusion while the above is completed. It will be done as quickly as reasonably possible to inform the decision.

Procedure after a decision to permanently exclude has been made

1. Parents/carers will be informed immediately that a decision to permanently exclude has been made – either by telephone, letter or preferably in a meeting with the Headteacher or delegated member of SLT. This will be followed by a letter of confirmation outlining the reasons for the decision and the appeal process.
2. The Academy will inform the parent/carer of the date of a Governors' Pupil Discipline Committee meeting at which governors will hear the Academy's case and representation from parents/carers and the student.
3. Before the meeting the Academy will send all the relevant material to the parents/carers and the Governors on the committee. New material cannot be introduced by the Academy at the meeting.
4. The Governors will hear the case, at which parents/carers may be accompanied by a friend or representative and come to a decision which they will inform parents/carers and governors of within 24 hours.
5. Parents/carers do have a right of appeal to an independent panel in the event the Governors uphold the exclusion and information regarding this will be included in the letter sent to parents/carers. However, under the Education Act 2011 this panel can only suggest a reinstatement of the student and not overturn the Governors' decision.

Student welfare following a permanent exclusion

1. The student may not come into the Academy grounds unless invited in.
2. Parents/carers are responsible for the child during exclusion and the student should not be in public places during Academy hours.
3. After day 5 of exclusion the Local Authority will arrange for alternative temporary education – usually at a Pupil Referral Unit.

Independent Review Panel

In the extremely rare event of a student being permanently excluded, parents have the right to ask the Local Authority to convene an independent review panel, regardless of whether or not they have appealed to the governing body. Parents must make this request within 15 school days of receiving notification of the exclusion, and the panel should meet to review the case within 15 days of the notification. Parents have a right to require the Local Authority to appoint an SEN expert to attend the review, regardless of whether the student has recognised special educational needs.

The panel may make one of three decisions:

- To uphold the exclusion
- To recommend that the governing body reconsiders its decision
- To quash the decision and direct that the governing body reconsiders the exclusion within 10 days

The panel may only quash the decision where it considers that it was flawed when viewed in light of the principles applicable for application for a judicial review (i.e., the decision was illegal, irrational or there was procedural impropriety).

The panel, however, cannot redirect reinstatement, but it can remove the permanent exclusion from a student's record. It may also deduct £4,000 from the Academy budget to support the Local Authority in making alternative provision.