



Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

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ACT Trust Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy
Including DfE 2024, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Guidance

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Introduction

At ACT Trust, our vision is to create truly inclusive schools where every child and young person is valued, supported, and enabled to thrive regardless of background, need, or circumstance. We are committed to removing barriers to learning and participation, fostering a culture of belonging, respect, and high expectations for all.

Our practice across ACT schools is underpinned by therapeutic theory. This means we prioritize understanding the underlying causes of behaviour, building trusting relationships, and using restorative and trauma-informed approaches to support pupils' emotional well-being and development. We believe that positive change is achieved through empathy, consistency, and proactive intervention.

Exclusion, whether suspension or permanent exclusion-is only ever considered when all other strategies and interventions have been exhausted, and there is no other option to ensure the safety, well-being, and educational entitlement of all members of our school community. Our approach is rooted in early intervention, restorative practice, and partnership with families and external agencies. We recognize that exclusion can have a significant impact on pupils and their families, and we are determined to use it only as a last resort, in line with statutory and local guidance.

This policy sets out how ACT Trust applies exclusions fairly, lawfully, and consistently, always seeking to uphold our vision of inclusion and to support every pupil to succeed.

1. Aims

ACT Trust is committed to following all statutory exclusions procedures to ensure every child receives an education in a safe and caring environment. Our aims are to:

- Apply the exclusions process fairly and consistently.
- Help governors, staff, parents/carers, and pupils understand the exclusions process.
- Ensure pupils in school are safe and happy.
- Prevent pupils from becoming NEET (not in education, employment, or training).
- Ensure all suspensions and permanent exclusions are carried out lawfully and in line with statutory and local guidance.

A note on off-rolling:

Off-rolling is unlawful. ACT Trust will not remove a pupil from the school roll without following the formal exclusion process, nor encourage parents to remove their child to avoid exclusion. All exclusions will be made on disciplinary grounds, not due to SEND, academic performance, or failure to meet specific conditions (e.g., attending a reintegration meeting).

2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on:

- DfE statutory guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>.
- Education Act 2002 (as amended), Education Act 2011, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Education Act 1996, School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012, Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014.
- Local authority guidance: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Exclusion Guidance (2023/24).

3. Definitions

- **Suspension:** Temporary removal from school (fixed period).
 - **Permanent exclusion:** Permanent removal from school and roll.
 - **Off-site direction:** Temporary placement at another setting to improve behaviour.
 - **Managed move:** Voluntary, permanent transfer to another school, agreed by all parties.
 - **Parent/carer:** Anyone with parental responsibility or care of the child.
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4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Headteacher

Deciding to suspend or exclude:

Only the headteacher (or acting headteacher) can suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, for behaviour inside or outside school. Permanent exclusion is a last resort. Decisions must be:

- In line with the school's behaviour policy, or Individual Risk Management Plan if the pupil has one.
- Lawful, reasonable, fair, and proportionate.
- Based on the balance of probabilities.
- Informed by the pupil's views (with support if needed).
- Considerate of SEND, vulnerability, and alternative strategies (e.g., detentions, off-site direction, managed moves).

Informing parents/carers:

Parents/carers must be informed without delay (in person or by phone, followed by written notice) of:

- The reason(s) for exclusion.
- The period (or permanence) of exclusion.
- Their right to make representations to the governing board.
- Arrangements for alternative provision (if applicable).
- Their duty to ensure the child is not in a public place during school hours for the first 5 days.

Informing the governing board, Trust and LA:

The headteacher must notify the governing board, Trust and local authority of:

- All permanent exclusions.
- Suspensions exceeding 5 days in a term.
- Any exclusion resulting in a pupil missing a public test ie, SATs.
- All exclusions for looked-after children or those with a social worker.

N.B. The headteacher will notify the Chair of Governors and Director of Inclusion for ACT Trust of all suspensions regardless of length of time.

Cancelling exclusions:

A headteacher may cancel an exclusion before the governing board has met to consider reinstatement. All parties must be notified, and the pupil must be allowed back into school without delay.

4.2 The Governing Board

- Must consider representations from parents/carers and decide on reinstatement within statutory timeframes (see section 5).
- Must monitor and analyse exclusion data for patterns and equality issues.
- Must ensure suitable full-time education is arranged from the sixth day of exclusion (or earlier for looked-after children).

4.3 The Local Authority

- For permanent exclusions, the LA arranges suitable full-time education from the sixth day (primary) or as per local SLA (secondary).
 - For looked-after children, provision must start from day one.
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5. Safeguarding and Child-on-Child Abuse

Safeguarding Responsibilities

ACT Trust schools have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. In cases where an exclusion may be linked to safeguarding concerns-including incidents of child-on-child abuse-a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (or deputy) must be consulted.

- All exclusions must be considered alongside the school's safeguarding policy and the statutory guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education."
 - Where a safeguarding investigation is ongoing, exclusion decisions should be made in partnership with relevant agencies (e.g., children's social care, police).
 - The best interests of the child must always be paramount.
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6. Educational Provision During Exclusion

- For the first five days of a suspension or exclusion, the school will set and mark work for the pupil, ensuring it is accessible to the pupil and appropriate to their needs.
 - Where a pupil has SEND, reasonable adjustments will be made to enable access.
 - If the exclusion is for a looked-after child or a pupil with a social worker, the school will work with the local authority to arrange suitable provision from day one.
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7. Alternative Provision and Off-Site Direction

Alternative Provision

Before deciding on **permanent exclusion**, the Headteacher should consider whether a direction to attend alternative provision or a managed move would be a reasonable alternative.

- Off-site direction may be used to support behaviour, following unsuccessful in-school interventions.
 - Any use of alternative provision must be based on the pupil's needs, including SEND or health needs, and should not be used as a sanction for behaviour, but as a supportive tool.
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- The objectives, duration, and review process for alternative provision must be clearly defined and agreed with all parties.
 - Pupils must continue to receive a broad and balanced education during any period of alternative provision.
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8. Considering the Reinstatement of a Pupil

The governing board (or delegated committee) must consider reinstatement:

- Within 15 school days for permanent exclusions, suspensions over 15 days, or exclusions causing a pupil to miss a public exam/test.
 - Within 50 school days for suspensions over 5 but less than 16 days, if parents request a meeting.
 - All relevant parties (parents/carers, pupil, headteacher, social worker, VSH, LA) must be invited.
 - Decisions must be based on the balance of probabilities and consider the welfare of all pupils.
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9. Independent Review

If parents/carers request an independent review within 15 school days, the LA/academy trust must arrange a panel (with a lay chair, governor(s), and headteacher(s)). Parents may request a SEN expert. The panel may uphold, recommend reconsideration, or quash the governing board's decision if it was flawed. The panel's decision is binding.

Independent Review Panel Composition

When an independent review of a permanent exclusion is requested, ACT Trust will convene a panel that includes:

- A lay member to chair the panel (not previously employed by a school in a paid capacity).
- School governors who have served as a governor for at least 12 consecutive months in the last 5 years (not as teachers or headteachers during this time).
- Headteachers or individuals who have been a headteacher within the last 5 years.

Please refer to the DfE guidance on Exclusions for more information on this process.

10. School Registers

A pupil's name is removed from the register if:

- 15 school days have passed since parents were notified of non-reinstatement and no IRP application has been made.
 - Parents state in writing they will not apply for an IRP.
 - The school must make a return to the LA with all required details.
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11. Returning from a Suspension

Reintegration strategy:

A plan must be in place to support the pupil's return, including:

- Regular contact during suspension.
 - Designated pastoral support.
 - Mentoring.
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- Regular reviews with parents/carers.
- Information on external support.
- Part-time timetables only as a short-term, agreed reintegration measure.

Reintegration meeting:

Held before or on return, with pupil, parents/carers, and relevant staff. Non-attendance by parents does not prevent return.

12. Remote Access to Meetings

Parents/carers (or pupils aged 18+) may request remote meetings. All participants must have access to required technology, and meetings must be fair and transparent. Social workers and VSHs may always join remotely.

13. Parental Rights and Advocacy

- Parents/carers have the right to make representations at all stages of the exclusion process, including requesting remote meetings.
 - Parents/carers may be accompanied by a representative or friend at meetings.
 - Where a pupil has SEND, parents/carers may request the appointment of a SEN expert for the independent review panel, at no cost.
 - All parties must be informed of their rights in writing at the time of exclusion.
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14. Monitoring Arrangements

The school will collect and analyse data on attendance, exclusions, use of alternative provision, and stakeholder perceptions. Data will be reviewed regularly (at least annually) and reported to the governing board. Patterns or disparities will prompt policy review.

Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements

- The Headteacher will monitor the number and nature of suspensions and exclusions each term and report to the Governing Board via the Head teacher report and the Safeguarding report to Governing Boards.
 - The Director of Inclusion will monitor exclusions across all ACT Trust schools and report to the Trust Board.
 - Data will be analysed for patterns, including repeat exclusions, vulnerable groups, and equality issues.
 - Findings will inform policy review and school improvement planning.
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15. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to:

- Behaviour policy
 - SEND policy
 - SEN information report
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- Safeguarding policy
 - Other relevant policies
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16. Local Authority Contacts

Cambridgeshire:

- SEND Services (Primary): 01223 728311 / 01353 612802 / 01480 373470
- Access and Inclusion Manager: Fenland - [Kirsty Yare](#) /Hunts - [Elizabeth Allen](#)/ South Cambs- [Tom Wales](#)/
Cambridge City - [Janine Hobson](#)/ East Cambs - [Jane Ransome](#)
- Virtual School: 01223 699883 / virtualschool@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Peterborough:

- Jason Wing, Alternative Provision Manager: 07484 900439
 - Nikki Turner, Deputy Manager: 07920 160662
 - Natalie Ulugun, Behaviour Inclusion Officer: 07554 171671
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17. Managed Moves

- Managed moves are voluntary, agreed by all parties, and used as an alternative to permanent exclusion.
 - The process must follow local protocols (see Cambridgeshire and Peterborough guidance for forms, criteria, and review procedures).
 - The original school retains responsibility for the pupil until the move is complete.
 - All managed moves must be documented and reviewed regularly.
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18. Appendices

- For model letters for all exclusion scenarios see local authority guidance for templates, depending on which authority the school sits. Each school within ACT Trust hold their own letter templates for Exclusions relevant to their local authority.
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19. Version History

- **Version number-1**
 - **Summary of changes**
 - **Author/responsible person- Rebecca Bliss, Director of Inclusion**
 - **Date of approval**
 - **Date of next review**
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**This policy must be reviewed annually and updated in line with statutory and local guidance.
For further detail, refer to the full DfE 2024 guidance and local authority documents.**