Exclusion Policy

Person responsible: Executive Headteacher

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Contents

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Roles and responsibilities
3. Grounds for exclusion
4. The Executive Head Teacher's power to exclude
5. Factors to consider when excluding a pupil
6. Duty to inform parents
7. Duty to inform the governing board and LA
8. Arranging education for excluded pupils
9. Considering exclusions
10. Reaching a decision
11. Notification of considered exclusions
12. Removing permanently excluded pupils from the school register
13. Independent review panel
14. Appointing a SEND expert
15. The role of a SEND expert
16. Appointing a clerk
17. The role of the clerk
18. The duties of the independent review panel members in the conduct of an independent review panel
19. Reconsidering reinstatement following a review
20. Criminal investigations
21. Training requirements
22. Monitoring and review

Appendix

a) Reviewing the Executive Head Teacher's Exclusion Decision

Statement of intent

At Queensbury School, we understand that good behaviour and discipline is essential for promoting a high quality education.

The school will not use suspension or permanent exclusion for non-disciplinary reasons, including academic attainment, attendance or unmet special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

The school is committed to a graduated and preventative approach to behaviour, ensuring that suspension or permanent exclusion is only used where appropriate support strategies and reasonable adjustments have been implemented.

The school will monitor exclusion data by SEND, FSM, ethnicity and looked-after status to identify and address disproportionality.

Amongst other disciplinary sanctions, the school recognises that suspension or permanent exclusion of pupils may be necessary where there has been a serious breach, or consistent breaches, of the school's Behavioural Policy. Suspension or permanent exclusion of a pupil may also be required in instances where allowing the pupil to remain in school would be damaging to the education and welfare of themselves or others; in all cases, excluding pupils should only be used as a means of last resort.

The school has created this policy to clearly define the legal responsibilities of the Executive Head Teacher, governing board and LA when responding to pupil suspensions or exclusions, to ensure that they are dealt with both fairly and lawfully, and in line with DfE statutory guidance.

This policy also aims to secure a pupil's right to an education despite having been suspended or permanently excluded, by ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to the related statutory legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2002
- The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education Act 1996
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007
- The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- The Equality Act 2010

1.2. This policy also has due regard to statutory and non-statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2024/2026) 'Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE 'Behaviour in Schools' (current statutory guidance)
- DfE (2015) ‘Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years’
- DfE (2018) ‘Mental health and behaviour in schools’

1.3. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies and procedures:

- Behavioural Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The LA is responsible for:

- Having due regard to the relevant statutory guidance when carrying out its duties in relation to the education of LAC.
- Arranging suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age excluded permanently, in coordination with the school.
- Reviewing and reassessing pupils’ needs in consultation with their parents where they have an EHC plan and are excluded permanently, with a view to identifying a new placement.
- Arranging for an independent review panel hearing to review the decision of the governing board not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil where required.

- Arranging the hearing without delay at a time, date and venue convenient for all parties.
- Ensuring the independent review panel consists of three or five members as appropriate, which represent the required categories.
- Appointing a clerk to provide advice to the panel and parties to the review on procedure, law and statutory guidance on exclusions.
- Ensuring all panel members and the clerk have received training within the two years prior to the date of the review.
- If requested by parents, appointing a SEND expert to attend the panel and covering the associated costs of this appointment.

2.2. The governing board is responsible for:

- Providing information to the Secretary of State and LA about any suspensions or permanent exclusions within the last 12 months.
- Arranging suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age suspended on a fixed-term basis.
- Considering parents' representations about suspensions or permanent exclusions within 15 school days of receiving notice if the appropriate requirements are met.
- Where a suspension would result in a pupil missing a public examination or test, considering the suspension before this date.
- Considering whether it would be appropriate for a pupil to be permitted onto the school premises to sit the public examination or test.
- Arranging the representation meeting at a time and date convenient to all parties, but in compliance with the statutory time limits.
- Adhering to its responsibilities to consider the reinstatement of pupils.
- Considering the interests and circumstances of the excluded pupil, including the circumstances in which they were suspended or excluded, and have due regard to the interests of others at the school.
- Using the civil standard of proof (based on the 'balance of probabilities', it is more than likely that the fact is true) when establishing the facts relating to a suspension or exclusion.
- Ensuring clear minutes are taken of the representation meeting.
- Noting the outcome of the representation meeting on the pupil's education record, along with copies of relevant papers for future reference.
- Notifying the pupil's parents, the Executive Head Teacher and LA of its decision and the reasons for it, without delay.
- Where appropriate, informing parents of where to apply for an independent review panel.
- Informing parents of relevant sources of information.
- Ensuring a pupil's name is removed from the school admissions register, where appropriate.
- Reconvening within 10 school days to reconsider reinstatement of a pupil where directed to do so by the review panel.

2.3. The clerk to the review panel is responsible for:

- Making reasonable efforts to inform the appropriate individuals that they are entitled to:
  - Make written representations to the panel.
  - Attend the hearing and make oral representations to the panel.
  - Be represented.
- Making reasonable efforts to circulate copies of relevant papers at least five school days before the review to all parties.
- Giving all parties details of those attending and their role, once the position is clear.
- Attending the review and ensuring that minutes are produced in accordance with instructions from the panel.

2.4. The Executive Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Implementing good levels of discipline to ensure all pupils can benefit from the opportunities provided by education and to minimise potential suspensions or permanent exclusions.
- Applying the civil standard of proof when establishing the facts in relation to a suspension or permanent exclusion.
- Complying with their statutory duties in relation to pupils with SEND when administering the exclusion process, as outlined in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy.
- Considering any contributing factors that are identified after an incident of poor behaviour has occurred, e.g. if a pupil has suffered bereavement, bullying or has a mental health issue.
- Considering the use of a multi-agency assessment for a pupil who demonstrates persistent disruptive behaviour.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of suspensions as a sanction, e.g. if a pupil has received multiple suspensions or is approaching the legal limit for suspensions in an academic year.
- Ensuring a formal reintegration meeting will take place following any suspension, including review of needs and a support plan.
- Considering what extra support may be needed to identify and address the needs of individual pupils, particularly those with SEND, eligible for FSM, LAC and those from certain ethnic groups.
- Engaging effectively with parents in supporting the behaviour of pupils with additional needs.
- Determining whether a pupil will be suspended or permanently excluded on disciplinary grounds.
- Withdrawing any suspensions that have not been reviewed by the governing board, where appropriate. If this occurs, the parents, the governing board and the local authority, must be notified and, if relevant, the social worker and VSH.
- Ensuring any decision to suspend or permanently exclude is lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate.
- Complying with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 when deciding whether to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil.

- Ensuring they have considered their legal duty of care when sending a pupil home following a suspension.
- Making the decision to suspend or permanently exclude based on the evidence available at the time, regardless of any police investigation and/or criminal proceedings.
- Notifying a pupil's parents without delay where the decision is taken to suspend or permanently exclude the pupil, including the days on which the parents must ensure the pupil is not present in a public place at any time during school hours, as well as any other necessary information statutorily required.
- Ensuring that all information provided to parents is clear and easily understood.
- Notifying the governing board and LA of their decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil where appropriate, as well as the pupil's home authority if required.
- Notifying the governing board once per term of any suspensions or permanent exclusions not already notified.
- Organising suitable work for pupils where alternative provision cannot be arranged.

3. Grounds for suspension or permanent exclusion

3.1. The school will only suspend or permanently exclude a pupil where it is absolutely necessary, and where all other possible disciplinary sanctions, as detailed in the school's Behavioural Policy, have failed to be successful. Suspension or permanent exclusion will only be used where there has been a serious breach of the behaviour policy or where allowing the pupil to remain would seriously harm others.

3.2. The following examples of behaviour may underline the school's decision to exclude a pupil:

- Any incident which poses a risk to other pupils or members of staff, e.g. bringing a weapon onto the premises
- Any incidents which breach the law
- Persistent and severe bullying
- Verbal and physical abuse
- Constant disruption
- A single, serious and major incident, e.g. serious assault on another individual leading to injury

3.3. Pupils can be suspended on a fixed-period basis, i.e. up to 45 school days within a year, or permanently. Similarly, pupils can be permanently excluded following a fixed-period suspension, where further evidence is presented.

3.4. In all cases, the Executive Head Teacher will decide which suspension or exclusion period a pupil will be subject to, depending on what the circumstances warrant.

3.5. The school has the power to direct a pupil off-site to improve their behaviour.

4. The Executive Head Teacher's power to exclude

4.1. Only the Executive Head Teacher has the power to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil from the school, and is able to decide whether this is on a fixed-period or permanent basis. All suspensions and exclusions will only be issued on disciplinary grounds.

4.2. The Executive Head Teacher is able to suspend pupils from the premises where their behaviour is disruptive during lunchtime. All lunchtime suspensions will be counted as half of a school day.

4.3. The Executive Head Teacher is able to consider a pupil's disruptive behaviour outside of the school premises as grounds for suspension or permanent exclusion, in accordance with the school's Behavioural Policy.

4.4. Any decision made to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil will be lawful, proportionate and fair, with respect to legislation relating directly to exclusions and the school's wider legal duties, including the ECHR.

4.5. All suspension or permanent exclusions will be formally recorded on the pupil information system.

4.6. When sending a pupil home following a suspension or permanent exclusion, the Executive Head Teacher will ensure that they exercise their duty of care at all times and will always inform the parents.

4.7. The Executive Head Teacher will apply the civil standard of proof when responding to the facts relating to a suspension or permanent exclusion, i.e. that 'on the balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that the facts are true.

4.8. The Executive Head Teacher may withdraw any suspensions or permanent exclusions that have not already been reviewed by the governing board.

4.9. At all times, the Executive Head Teacher will take into account their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years', ensuring that they do not discriminate on any grounds, e.g. race, sex, disability, and will not increase the severity of a pupil's suspension or permanent exclusion on these grounds.

4.10. The Executive Head Teacher will not issue any 'informal' or 'unofficial' suspensions, such as sending a pupil home to 'cool-off', regardless of whether or not the parents have agreed to this. The school will not engage in off-rolling or pressure parents to remove their child, including through elective home education.

4.11. The Executive Head Teacher will not use the threat of suspension or permanent exclusion as a means of instructing parents to remove their child from the premises.

5. Factors to consider when suspending or permanently excluding a pupil

5.1. When considering a suspension or permanent exclusion of a pupil, the Executive Head Teacher will:

- The views of the pupil will be sought and considered throughout the process in an age-appropriate manner.
- Take into account any contributing factors that are identified after a case of poor behaviour has occurred, e.g. if the pupil's wellbeing has been compromised, or they have been subjected to bullying.
- Take into consideration whether the pupil has received multiple suspensions or is approaching the legal limit of 45 suspended days per school year, and whether suspension is serving as an effective sanction.
- Consider early intervention to address underlying causes of disruptive behaviour, including liaising with external agencies, to assess pupils who demonstrate consistently poor behaviour.

5.2. The Executive Head Teacher will consider what extra support may be available for vulnerable pupil groups whose suspension rates are higher, to reduce their risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, including the following:

- LAC
- Pupils eligible for FSM
- Pupils with SEND
- Certain ethnic groups

5.3. The Executive Head Teacher will consider avoiding permanently excluding LAC pupils, those with SEMH issues or pupils with an EHC plan.

5.4. Where any member of staff has concerns about vulnerable pupil groups and their behaviour, they will report this to the Executive Head Teacher who will instigate a multi-agency assessment to determine whether the behavioural issues might be as a result of educational, mental health or other needs and vulnerabilities.

5.5. Where SEND or SEMH issues are identified, an individual behaviour plan will be created using the graduated response outlined in the school's Behavioural Policy. If the pupil continues to endanger the physical or emotional wellbeing of other pupils or staff, despite exhausting the graduated response process, then suspension or permanent exclusion may be considered.

5.6. Where a pupil has identified SEND or SEMH needs, the school will ensure appropriate support, interventions and reasonable adjustments are in place and that exclusion is proportionate and not due to unmet need. However, in exceptional circumstances, exclusion may still be necessary where there is a serious breach of the behaviour policy.

5.7. Where a pupil with SEND or SEMH issues is permanently excluded because of a SEND or SEMH-related need that could not be met at the school, detailed records will be kept highlighting that these pupils are closely tracked and show that the school has a close relationship with the pupil's next destination.

5.8. The Executive Head Teacher will work in conjunction with the parents of any pupil with additional needs, to establish the most effective support mechanisms.

6. Duty to inform parents

6.1. Following the Executive Head Teacher's decision to exclude a pupil, they will immediately inform the parents, in person or by telephone, of the period of the exclusion and the reasons behind this.

6.2. The Executive Head Teacher will inform the parents in writing (electronically if written permission has been received from the parents for notices to be sent this way) of the following:

- The reason(s) for the suspension or permanent exclusion
- The length of the suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent
- Their right to raise any representations about the suspension or permanent exclusion to the governing board, including how the pupil will be involved in this and how the representations will be made
- Their right to attend a meeting where there is a legal requirement for the governing board to consider the suspension or permanent exclusion, and the fact that they are able to bring an accompanying individual
- The arrangements that have been made for the pupil to continue their education prior to the organisation of any alternative provision, or the pupil's return to school
- Relevant sources of free, impartial information

6.3. Where the pupil is of compulsory school age, the Executive Head Teacher will inform the parents by the end of the afternoon session that:

- For the first five days of the suspension or permanent exclusion (or until the start date of any alternative provision or the end of the exclusion where this is earlier), parents are legally required to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without justification, and that parents may receive a penalty fine if they fail to do so.

6.4. Where the Executive Head Teacher has arranged alternative provision, they will also inform the parents of the following:

- The start and end date for any provision of full-time education
- The address at which the provision will take place
- Any information necessary for the pupil to identify the person they should report to on the starting date

6.5. Where the Executive Head Teacher is unable to provide information on alternative provision by the end of the afternoon session, they will provide the information in a subsequent written notice without further delay, and within 48 hours of the pupil beginning the provision.

6.6. If the alternative provision is due to begin before the sixth day of the suspension or permanent exclusion, the Executive Head Teacher is able to give less than 48 hours of notice, with parental consent.

6.7. If the Executive Head Teacher has decided to suspend the pupil for a further fixed period following their original suspension, or to permanently exclude them, they will notify the parents without delay and issue a new suspension or permanent exclusion notice to parents.

7. Duty to inform the governing board and LA

7.1. The Executive Head Teacher will inform the governing board and LA, without delay, of the following:

- Any permanent exclusions (including where a suspension is followed by a decision to permanently exclude the pupil)
- Any suspensions which would result in the pupil being suspended for more than five school days in a term (or more than 10 lunchtimes)
- Any suspension or permanent exclusion which would result in the pupil being absent from an examination or national curriculum test

7.2. For any suspensions or permanent exclusions, other than those above, the Executive Head Teacher will notify the governing board and LA once per term.

7.3. All notifications to the governing board and LA will include the reasons for suspensions or permanent exclusions and the duration of any suspensions.

7.4. If the pupil who is suspended or permanent excluded lives outside the LA in which the school is located, the Executive Head Teacher will notify the pupil's 'home authority'.

7.5. Informing the pupil's social worker and/or virtual school head (VSH)

If a:

- Pupil with a social worker is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the Executive Head Teacher will inform the social worker as early as possible
- Pupil who is a looked-after child (LAC) is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the Executive Head Teacher will inform the VSH as early as possible

This is in order to work together to consider what factors may be affecting the pupil's behaviour, and what further support can be put in place to improve the behaviour.

If the Executive Head Teacher decides to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil with a social worker / a pupil who is looked after, they will inform the pupil's social worker / the VSH, as appropriate, without delay, that:

- They have decided to suspend or permanently exclude the pupil
- The reason(s) for the decision

- The length of the suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent
- The suspension or permanent exclusion affects the pupils ability to sit a National Curriculum test or public exam (where relevant)

The social worker / VSH will be invited to any meeting of the governing board about the suspension or permanent exclusion. This is so they can provide advice on how the pupil's background and/or circumstances may have influenced the circumstances of their suspension or permanent exclusion. The social worker should also help ensure safeguarding needs and risks and the pupil's welfare are taken into account.

8. Arranging education for excluded pupils

8.1. For any suspension of more than five school days, the governing board will arrange suitable full-time education for the pupil, which will begin no later than the sixth day of suspension.

8.2. Where a pupil receives consecutive suspensions, these will be regarded as cumulative, and full-time education will still have to be provided from the sixth day of suspension.

8.3. For permanent exclusions, full-time education will also be provided for the pupil from the sixth day of exclusion.

8.4. The governing board will not arrange full-time education for any pupil who is currently in their final year of compulsory education, and who does not have any further public examinations to sit.

8.5. The governing board is aware that it is beneficial to suspended or excluded pupils to begin their alternative education arrangements before the sixth day of suspension or exclusion. The governing board will always attempt to arrange alternative provision before the sixth day.

8.6. Where it is not possible to arrange alternative provision during the first five days, the school will ensure that they take reasonable steps to set and mark work for the pupil.

8.7. If a pupil with SEND has been suspended or permanently excluded, the governing board will ensure that:

- Any alternative provision is arranged in consultation with the pupil's parents, who are able to request preferences.
- When identifying alternative provision, any EHC plan is reviewed/the pupil's needs are reassessed, also in consultation with the pupil's parents.

9. Considering exclusions

9.1. The governing board will consider any representations made by parents in regard to suspensions or permanent exclusions.

9.2. Parents and, where requested, a friend or representative, the Executive Head Teacher and a member of the LA will be invited to attend any consideration of suspension or permanent exclusion and will be able to make representations.

9.3. Any meeting to consider reinstatement of a pupil will be arranged at a date and time convenient for all parties, and in compliance with any statutory time limits.

9.4. The governing board will consider the reinstatement of a suspended or permanently excluded pupil, where:

- The exclusion is permanent.
- The suspension is fixed-period, and would bring the pupil's total number of suspended school days to more than 15 in any given term.
- The suspension would result in the pupil missing a public examination.

9.5. In the case of a fixed-period suspension where the pupil's total number of suspended days is more than five but less than 15 school days within a term, if requested by the parents, the governing board will consider suspensions within 50 school days of receiving notification.

9.6. In the case of a fixed period suspension, where the pupil's total number of excluded school days does not amount to more than five, in the absence of any such representations, the governing board is not required to meet and cannot direct the reinstatement of the pupil.

9.7. Where suspension would result in a pupil missing a public examination, the governing board will consider the suspension before the test to decide whether the pupil should be reinstated in time to take the examination.

9.8. If it is not practicable for a sufficient number of governors to consider the decision before the examination, the chair of governors will consider the suspension alone and decide whether or not to reinstate the pupil.

Academies only - If it is not practicable for a sufficient number of governors to consider the decision before the examination, a smaller sub-committee will consider the suspension and decide whether or not to reinstate the pupil.

9.9. In light of the above, the governing board will also consider whether it would be appropriate to allow the suspended pupil to enter the premises to take the examination.

9.10. When considering the reinstatement of a suspended pupil, the governing board will:

- Only discuss the suspension with the parties present at the meeting.
- Ask for any written evidence prior to the meeting.
- Circulate any written evidence and information to all parties, at least five school days in advance of the meeting.
- Allow pupils and parents to be accompanied by a person of their choice at the meeting.
- Consider what reasonable adjustments need to be made to support the attendance and contribution of parties at the meeting.

- Identify the steps needed to enable and encourage the suspended pupil to attend the meeting and speak on their behalf, or how they may contribute personal views by other means if attendance is not possible.
- Consider the interests and circumstances of the suspended pupil, including the grounds for suspension.

10. Reaching a decision

10.1. After considering suspensions, the governing board will either:

- Decline to reinstate the pupil.
- Direct the reinstatement of the pupil immediately, or on a specified date.

10.2. If reinstatement would make no practical difference, e.g. if the pupil has already returned to school following a suspension or the parents make clear they do not want their child reinstated, the governing board will still consider whether the pupil should be officially reinstated, and whether the Executive Head Teacher's decision to suspend the pupil was fair, lawful and proportionate, based on the evidence presented.

10.3. The governing board will apply the civil standard of proof when responding to the facts relating to a suspension or permanent exclusion, it is more likely than not that the facts are true.

10.4. To reach a decision, the governing board will:

- Identify the steps they intend to take to ensure that all parties involved will have the opportunity to participate and present their views.
- Ensure that minutes are taken of the meeting as a record of the evidence that was considered.
- Ask all parties to withdraw from the meeting before concluding their decision.
- Consider whether the suspension or permanent exclusion of the pupil was lawful, proportionate and fair, taking into account the Executive Head Teacher's legal duties and any evidence that was presented to the governing board in relation to the decision to suspend or permanently exclude.
- Record the outcome of the decision on the pupil's educational records, along with copies, which will be kept for at least six months.
- Make a note of their findings, where they have considered a suspension or permanent exclusion but cannot reinstate the pupil.

11. Notification of considered exclusions

11.1. The governing board will notify the parents of the suspended pupil, the Executive Head Teacher and the LA of their decision following the consideration of a suspension, in writing and without delay.

11.2. In the case of a permanent exclusion, where the governing board decides not to reinstate the pupil, they will notify the parents:

- That it is permanent, and their right for it to be reviewed by an independent review panel.
- Of the date by which an application for review must be made.
- Of the name and address of whom the review application should be submitted to.
- That any application should set out the grounds on which it is being made and that, where appropriate, this should include reference to how a pupil's SEND is considered relevant to the exclusion.
- That, regardless of whether a pupil has been identified as having SEND, the parents have a right to require the governing board to ensure a SEND expert attends the review.
- Of the role of the SEND expert that will attend the review, and that the parents will not be charged for this.
- That they are required to make it clear if they wish for a SEND expert to attend the review.
- That they may appoint someone at their own expense to make representations to the panel.

11.3. The governing board will also notify parents that, if they believe a suspension or permanent exclusion has been issued as a result of discrimination, then they are required to make a claim under the Equality Act 2010 to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND), and that this should be within six months of when the discrimination allegedly took place.

11.4. After any conclusion, the governing board will notify the parents, and all other parties involved, of the decision that was made and the reasoning for this, in sufficient detail.

12. Removing permanently excluded pupils from the school register

12.1. The Executive Head Teacher will remove pupils from the school register if:

- 15 school days have passed since the parents were notified of the governing board's decision not to reinstate the pupil and no application for an independent panel review has been received.
- The parents have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent panel review following a permanent exclusion.

12.2. If an application for an independent panel review has been made within 15 school days, the Executive Head Teacher will wait until the review has been determined, or abandoned, and until the governing board has completed any reconsideration that the panel recommended or directed it to carry out, before removing the pupil from the school register.

12.3. If a pupil's name is to be removed from the register, the Executive Head Teacher will make a return to the LA, which will include:

- All the particulars which were entered in the register.
- The address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides.
- The grounds upon which the pupil's name is to be removed from the register.

12.4. Any return to the LA will be made as soon as the grounds for removal are met and no later than the date in which the pupil's name was removed.

12.5. If a pupil's name has been removed from the register and a discrimination claim is made, the pupil may be reinstated following a decision made by the First-tier Tribunal (SEND) or County Court.

12.6. Whilst a pupil's name remains on the admissions register, the appropriate code will be used to mark the pupil's attendance:

- Code B: Education off-site
- Code D: Dual registration
- Code E: Absent and not attending alternative provision

13. Independent review panel

13.1. The LA will review the governing board's decision not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil, if the parents submit their application for this within the required time frame.

13.2. The LA will constitute an independent review panel of three or five members that represent the following categories:

- A lay member to chair the panel. This individual will not have worked in any school in a paid capacity.
- A current or former school governor who has served for at least 12 consecutive months in the last five years.
- A Executive Head Teacher or individual who has been a Executive Head Teacher within the last five years.

13.3. Parents are required to submit their applications within:

- 15 school days of the governing board's notification of their decision.
- 15 school days of the final determination of a discriminatory claim made under the Equality Act 2010.

13.4. Any application made outside of this timeframe will not be reviewed.

13.5. Parents are able to request an independent panel review even if they did not make a case to, or attend, the governing board's initial consideration of the exclusion.

13.6. Parents (if the pupil is under 18) or excluded pupils (if they are aged 18 years or older) can request a meeting to be held via the use of remote access but this should not be a default option. Governing boards or arranging authorities must hold the meeting via the use of remote access, if the request has been made

correctly as set out in the headteacher's written notification or the governing board's written notification to the parents that they can request an IRP.

Holding meetings via remote access must only be done if governing boards or arranging authorities are satisfied that the meeting is capable of being held fairly and transparently.

14. Appointing a SEND expert

14.1. If requested by parents in their application for an independent review panel, the LA will appoint a SEND expert to attend the panel and cover the associated costs of this appointment.

14.2. The LA will make arrangements to indemnify the SEND expert against any legal costs and expenses reasonably incurred as a result of any decisions or actions connected to the review and which are taken in good faith.

14.3. Parents have a right to request the attendance of a SEND expert at a review, regardless of whether the school recognises that their child has SEND.

14.4. The SEND expert's role is set out in section 15 of this policy.

14.5. Individuals will not serve as a SEND expert if they have, or at any time have had, any connection with the LA, school, parents or pupil, or the incident leading to the exclusion, which might reasonably be taken to raise doubts about their ability to act impartially; however, an individual is not taken to have such a connection solely because they are an employee of the LA.

14.6. The SEND expert will be a professional with first-hand experience of the assessment and support of SEND, as well as an understanding of the legal requirements on schools in relation to SEND. Examples of suitable individuals might include educational psychologists; specialist SEND teachers; SENCOs; and behaviour support teachers.

14.7. Recently retired individuals are not precluded from fulfilling this role; however, the LA will, during interview, assess the knowledge of such individuals in order to ensure that they have a good understanding of current practice and the legal requirements on schools in relation to SEND.

14.8. Whilst individuals are not automatically taken to be partial simply because they are an employee of, or contracted by, the LA, they will not have had any previous involvement in the assessment or support of SEND for the excluded pupil, or siblings of the excluded pupil. The LA will request that prospective SEND experts declare any conflict of interest at the earliest opportunity.

14.9. The final decision on the appointment of a SEND expert is for the LA to make, but it will take reasonable steps to ensure that parents have confidence in the impartiality and capability of the SEND expert. Where possible, this will include offering parents a choice of SEND expert. In order to meet its duties within the

statutory time frame, the LA will consider maintaining a list of individuals capable of performing the role of SEND expert in advance of a request.

14.10. The LA will determine the amount of any payment in relation to the appointment of the SEND expert, such as financial loss, travel and subsistence allowances.

15. The role of a SEND expert

15.1. The SEND expert's role is analogous to an expert witness, providing (orally and/or written) impartial advice to the panel on how SEND might be relevant to the exclusion. The SEND expert will base their advice on the evidence provided to the panel. The SEND expert's role does not include making an assessment of the pupil's SEND.

15.2. The focus of the SEND expert's advice will be on whether the school's policies which relate to SEND, or the application of these policies in relation to the excluded pupil, were legal, reasonable and procedurally fair. If the SEND expert believes that this was not the case, they will, where possible, advise the panel on the possible contribution this could have made to the circumstances of the pupil's exclusion.

15.3. Where the school does not recognise that a pupil has SEND, the SEND expert will advise the panel on whether they believe the school acted in a legal, reasonable and procedurally fair way with respect to the identification of any SEND that the pupil may potentially have, and any contribution that this could have made to the circumstances of the pupil's exclusion.

15.4. The SEND expert will not criticise a school's policies or actions simply because they believe a different approach should have been followed or because another school might have taken a different approach.

16. Appointing a clerk

16.1. The LA will decide whether to appoint a clerk to the independent review panel, or to make alternative arrangements to administer the panel.

16.2. The LA will ensure that the clerk did not serve as clerk to the governing board when the decision was made not to reinstate the pupil.

17. The role of a clerk

17.1. The clerk's role is to provide advice to the panel and parties to the review on procedure, law and statutory guidance on suspensions and permanent exclusions.

17.2. The clerk will:

- Identify, in advance of the meeting, whether the suspended or permanently excluded pupil wishes to attend the panel hearing, taking reasonable steps to enable the pupil to feedback their views, irrespective of their attendance.

- Identify, in advance of the meeting, whether any alleged victims of the incident(s) leading up to the suspension or permanent exclusion wish to attend the panel hearing, taking reasonable steps to enable them to feedback their views, irrespective of their attendance.
- Ensure that the panel is able to hear from any witnesses to the incident(s) leading to the suspension or permanent exclusion, taking into account the fact that some of these people may be pupils at the school (Pupils under 18-years-old will not be allowed to appear in person without parental consent).
- Inform the parents, Executive Head Teacher, governing board and the LA that they are entitled to: make oral and written representations to the panel; attend the hearing; and be represented.
- Ensure that all parties are:
  - Provided with copies of relevant papers at least five school days before the review, notifying the panel if any requested documents have not been provided in case the panel wishes to adjourn until a later date.
  - Informed about who is attending the meeting, and what their roles are.
- Attend the review and ensure that minutes are produced in accordance with instructions from the independent review panel.

17.3. Where a clerk is not appointed, the LA will undertake the functions outlined in paragraphs 16.1 and 16.2 of this policy.

18. The duties of independent review panel members in the conduct of a review panel

18.1. The role of the panel is to review the governing board's decision not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil. In reviewing the decision, the panel will consider the interests and circumstances of the excluded pupil, including the circumstances in which the pupil was excluded, and have regard to the interests of other pupils and people working at the school.

18.2. The panel will apply the civil standard of proof, rather than the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

18.3. Following the review, the panel will do one of the following:

- Uphold the decision.
- Recommend that the governing board reconsiders reinstatement.
- Quash the decision and direct that the governing board reconsiders reinstatement.

18.4. The panel's decision does not have to be unanimous and can be decided by a majority vote. It is binding on the pupil, parents, the governing board, Executive Head Teacher and the LA.

19. Reconsidering reinstatement following a review

19.1. Where the independent review panel instructs the governing board to reconsider their decision not to reinstate a pupil, they will do so within 10 school days of being given notice of the review panel's decision.

19.2. Maintained schools only - The school is aware that if, following an instruction to reconsider, the governing board does not offer to reinstate the pupil, then a £4,000 adjustment will be made to the school's budget.

19.3. Academies only - The school is aware that if, following an instruction to reconsider, the governing board does not offer to reinstate the pupil, then the school will be required to make a payment of £4,000 directly to the LA area in which the school is located.

19.4. Where the independent review panel recommends that the governing board should reconsider their decision not to reinstate a pupil, they will do so within 10 school days of being given notice of the review panel's decision.

19.5. The school is aware that if, following a recommendation to reconsider, the governing board does not offer to reinstate the pupil, it will not be subject to a financial adjustment.

19.6. If, following reconsideration, the governing board offers to reinstate the pupil but the parents decline, no adjustment will be made to the school's budget.

19.7. Following reconsideration, the governing board will notify the parents, the Executive Head Teacher and the LA of their reconsidered decision and the reasons for this.

20. Criminal investigations

20.1. The Executive Head Teacher will not postpone taking a decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil due to a police investigation being underway, or any criminal proceedings that are in place.

20.2. The Executive Head Teacher will give particular consideration when deciding to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil where evidence is limited by a police investigation, to ensure that any decision made is fair and reasonable.

20.3. If the governing board is required to consider the Executive Head Teacher's decision in these circumstances, they will not postpone the meeting and will make a decision based on the evidence available.

21. Training requirements

21.1. The LA will ensure that all independent review panel members and clerks have received training within the two years prior to the date of the review.

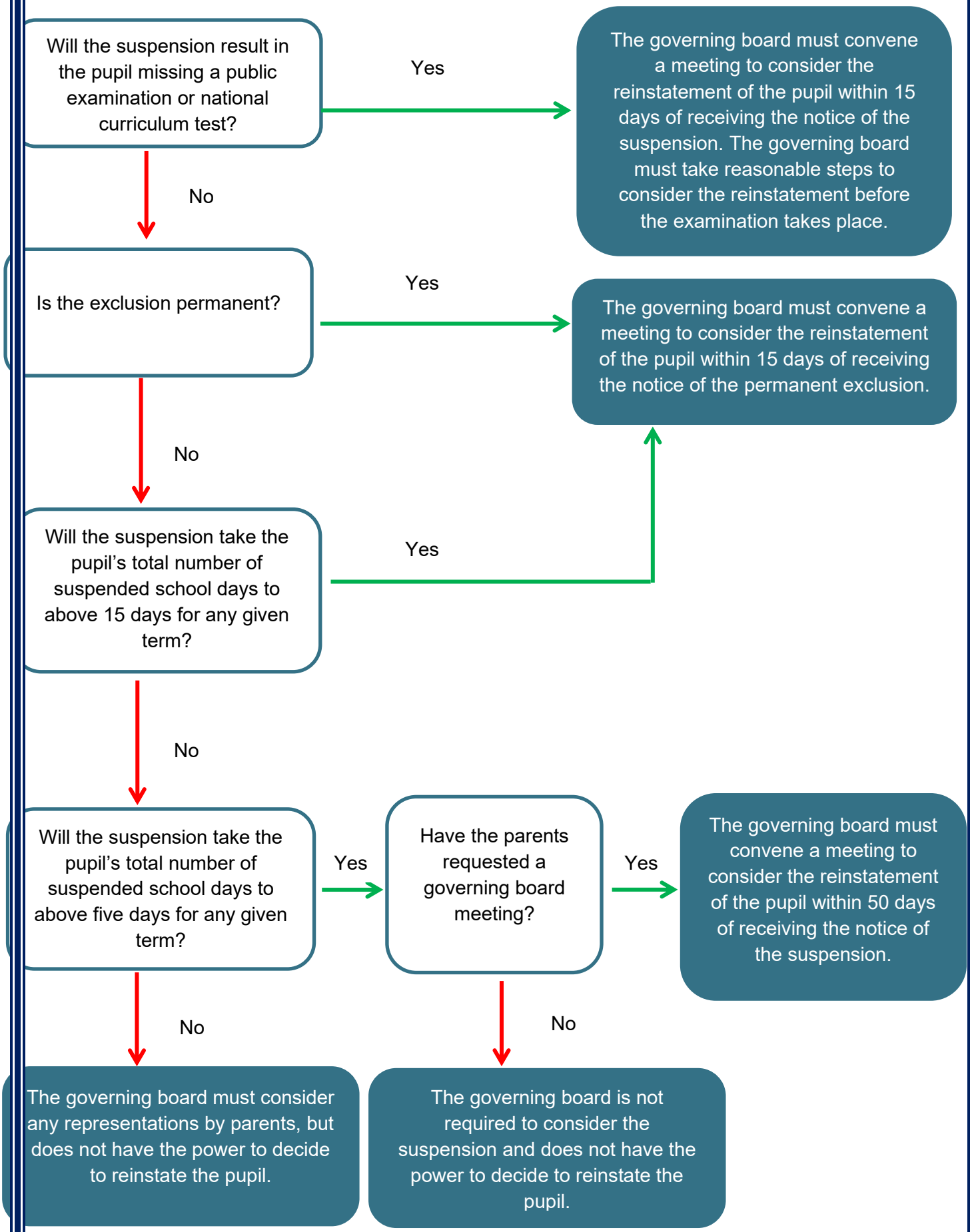
21.2. Training will cover:

- The requirements of the legislation, regulations and statutory guidance governing suspensions and permanent exclusions.
- The need for the panel to observe procedural fairness and the rules of natural justice.
- The role of the chair of a review panel.
- The role of the clerk to a review panel.
- The duties of Executive Head Teachers, governing boards and the panel under the Equality Act 2010.
- The effect of section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the need to act in a manner compatible with human rights protected by that Act.

21.3. Clerks will also have an up-to-date understanding on developments in case law which are relevant to suspensions and permanent exclusions.

22. Monitoring and review

22.1. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Head Teacher in conjunction with the governing board. The next scheduled review date for this policy is July 2026.

22.2. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

Reviewing the Executive Head Teacher's Exclusion Decision