



Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

This policy is underpinned by the commitment of Discovery Schools Academy Trust to ensure the safety and well-being of the whole school community and to maintain an appropriate educational environment in which all can learn and achieve.

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Document History

Version	Version Date	Author	Summary of Changes
V0.1	June 2018	Paul Stone	Draft policy created
V0.2	July 2018	Anna Mousley	Appendices added
V0.3	August 2018	Helen Stockill	Added sample letters and formatting changes
V1.0	20.11.2018	Helen Stockill	Approved by the Education Standards Committee
V1.1	08.08.2019	Helen Stockill	References to the Cluster Board removed
V1.2	11.03.2020	Helen Stockill	LA contacts updated
V2.0	02.09.2022	Chris Bruce	Updated in line with DfE Sept 2022 guidance
V3.0	May 2023	Zack Minton / Chris Bruce	Updated in line with DfE guidance.
V3.1	September 2023	Zack Minton / Chris Bruce	Additional DfE updates September 2023: • Allow remote access to governing board meetings and independent review panels (IRPs). • Clarify the tightened rules around cancelling suspensions and exclusions. • Strengthen clarity on timelines for the governing body or delegated panel to meet to consider representations. • Ensure there is a formal process for informing the Virtual School Head about an exclusion. • Clarify that if pupils are 18 or over, they should be involved directly in the process rather than their parents or carers. • Ensure that when the governing body or delegated panel considers reinstatement, the clerk is present to record the discussion and how decisions have been reached.
V3.2	May 2025	Zack Minton	• Updated key wording to fit Ofsted framework. • Updated “on roll” to “admission register”. • Changed the word child to pupil to ensure the policy is fit for all schools within the trust. • Changed child discipline panel to pupil discipline panel. Grammatical changes

V4.0	July 2026	Zack Minton	Updated to align with Department for Education <i>Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement</i> (in force from 26 July 2026), including revised expectations relating to off-site direction, school attendance regulations, safeguarding separation arrangements, review processes and procedural clarification. Further updated to clarify panel membership, impartiality, clerking expectations, review records, the addition of a dedicated clerk guidance appendix, and governance terminology so that references align with the pupil discipline panel.
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Trustee Approval Summary

Purpose of this paper

This summary accompanies the revised Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy and sets out the purpose of the update, the key changes made and the approval requested from the Education Standards Committee.

Why the policy has been updated

The policy has been updated to align with the Department for Education statutory guidance *Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement*, published in July 2026 and in force from 26 July 2026. The revised policy has also been refined against the published guidance to ensure that the Trust's framework is legally compliant, operationally clear, safeguarding-informed and aligned with current expectations relating to suspension, permanent exclusion, pupil movement, review processes and pupil participation.

Key changes made

- Updated statutory references to reflect the July 2026 guidance and linked guidance on attendance and alternative provision.
- Strengthened the sections on suspension and permanent exclusion so that notification duties, first five school day arrangements and education from the sixth school day are more clearly set out.
- Clarified that safeguarding separation arrangements must not be misused as suspensions unless the statutory threshold has been met.
- Strengthened pupil voice and participation so that pupils are given an opportunity to share their account, are supported to do so where needed and are informed, in an age-appropriate way, how their views have been considered.
- Strengthened reintegration expectations so that schools plan actively for a pupil's return and do not prevent reinstatement because a parent or carer cannot attend a meeting.
- Expanded the policy to reflect current expectations relating to managed moves, off-site direction and alternative provision, including the prohibition on trial managed moves and the need for formal review of off-site direction arrangements.
- Updated the complaints, representations and review section to reflect pupil discipline panel responsibilities, Independent Review Panel rights, SEN expert entitlement and remote-access meeting

arrangements where permitted.

- Tightened governance language so that the policy reflects the Trust's pupil discipline panel arrangements under the Scheme of Delegation.
- Improved overall clarity, consistency and inspection-readiness across the document.

Assurance

The revised policy maintains the Trust's strong emphasis on safeguarding, inclusion, proportionality, pupil voice and careful decision-making, whilst providing clearer procedural detail in the highest-risk sections. The document has been updated so that it is better able to withstand scrutiny from governors, trustees, families, Independent Review Panels, Ofsted and the Department for Education.

Approval requested

The Education Standards Committee is asked to review and approve Version 4.0 of the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy for implementation from 26 July 2026.

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1. Introduction and Purpose

Discovery Trust is committed to providing safe, inclusive and ambitious learning environments where all pupils can thrive. The Trust serves pupils across a range of phases and provisions, including primary, secondary and specialist settings, together with provision for pupils aged 18 and over. High standards of behaviour support effective learning, positive relationships, safeguarding and the wellbeing of the whole school community.

This policy sets out the Trust’s approach to suspension and permanent exclusion and establishes the principles, expectations and responsibilities that apply when these sanctions are being considered or implemented. It reflects Discovery Trust’s commitment to Belonging, Ambition and Equity by promoting inclusive practice, high expectations and fair decision-making for all pupils.

Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious interventions and will only be used where they are lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate, and where the Headteacher is satisfied that the statutory threshold has been met. Decisions will be made on an individual basis, taking account of the specific circumstances of each case, the safety and welfare of pupils and colleagues, and the impact on the wider school community.

Discovery Trust is committed to a culture of inclusion, early intervention and high expectations. Schools are expected to identify emerging concerns at the earliest opportunity and provide appropriate support to reduce the likelihood of suspension or permanent exclusion wherever possible. Suspension and permanent exclusion will not be used as a substitute for effective behaviour support, safeguarding intervention, SEND provision or reasonable adjustments.

The Trust recognises that behaviour may be influenced by a range of factors, including safeguarding concerns, trauma, adverse childhood experiences, mental health needs, special educational needs and disabilities, exploitation, family circumstances and wider contextual factors. Where these factors are present, they must be appropriately considered as part of decision-making. Understanding the causes of behaviour does not remove accountability for behaviour, but it should inform professional judgement, support planning and assessments of proportionality.

Safeguarding considerations are central to all suspension and permanent exclusion decisions. Where safeguarding concerns are identified, they must be considered alongside behaviour, SEND and equality considerations to ensure that decisions are informed, balanced and focused on maintaining safe, orderly and supportive learning environments.

Discovery Trust adopts a Protect • React • Learn approach:

Protect – through clear expectations, effective support, early intervention and strong safeguarding arrangements.

React – through lawful, proportionate and consistent responses to behaviour that breaches school expectations.

Learn – through reflection, review and analysis of incidents, trends and outcomes to strengthen practice and improve provision.

This policy should be read alongside the Trust’s Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, SEND Policy and Equality Policy and applied consistently across all Trust schools and provisions.

The Trust will review this policy regularly to ensure that it remains aligned with legislation, statutory guidance and best practice.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Discovery Trust schools and provisions where the statutory suspension and permanent exclusion framework applies.

It applies to all pupils on a school’s admission register, including pupils attending primary, secondary and specialist provision, together with pupils aged 18 and over. Where statutory rights, responsibilities or communication arrangements differ for pupils who have reached adulthood, schools must ensure that decisions are implemented in accordance with relevant legislation, statutory guidance and the individual circumstances of the pupil.

This policy applies to behaviour occurring:

- On school premises.
- Whilst travelling to and from school.
- Whilst attending educational visits, sporting activities, work-related learning, alternative provision placements or any activity organised by, or on behalf of, the school.
- Outside of school, including online behaviour, where the behaviour could have a detrimental impact on the safety, welfare or education of pupils or colleagues, adversely affect the orderly running of the school, or bring the school into disrepute.

This policy covers:

- Suspension.
- Permanent exclusion.
- The decision-making processes associated with suspension and permanent exclusion.
- Statutory notification, review and governance arrangements.
- Reintegration and post-incident support.
- Managed moves and alternative provision.

This policy must be read alongside the Trust's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, SEND Policy, Equality Policy and any other relevant Trust policies, procedures or guidance.

Discovery Trust recognises that some pupils may require additional support, intervention or adjustment in order to meet behaviour expectations. The principles and expectations contained within this policy apply equally to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), social workers, Child in Need Plans, Child Protection Plans, and those who are looked after or previously looked after.

This policy does not apply to decisions relating solely to attendance or participation in wraparound care, holiday provision or other non-statutory services delivered outside the school day. Such decisions must be managed through safeguarding arrangements, behaviour expectations, risk assessment and contractual processes and must not result in an informal or unlawful exclusion from education.

All schools and provisions are expected to implement this policy consistently, ensuring that suspension and permanent exclusion decisions are supported by evidence, recorded appropriately and applied in accordance with legislation, statutory guidance and Trust expectations.

3. Legal Framework and Statutory Guidance

Discovery Trust will ensure that all decisions relating to suspension and permanent exclusion are made in accordance with current legislation, statutory guidance and the principles of fairness, proportionality and procedural integrity.

This policy has been developed with reference to the following guidance and legal duties in force at the time of review:

- Department for Education *Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement* (July 2026; in force from 26 July 2026).
- Department for Education *Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff* (February 2024).

- Department for Education *Keeping children safe in education 2025*.
- Department for Education *Working together to improve school attendance*.
- Department for Education *Working together to safeguard children 2026*.
- Department for Education *Arranging alternative provision: a guide for local authorities and schools*.
- The SEND Code of Practice.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- The Human Rights Act 1998.
- Relevant education legislation and regulations governing behaviour, suspension, permanent exclusion, off-site direction, attendance and pupil movement, including the Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) (Application to Academies and Pupil Referral Units and Minor Amendments) Regulations 2026.

The Trust recognises that suspension and permanent exclusion decisions engage a range of statutory duties beyond behaviour management. Decisions may involve safeguarding responsibilities, equality duties, SEND obligations, responsibilities relating to pupil welfare and access to education and, where relevant, considerations associated with pupils who have reached adulthood.

When considering suspension or permanent exclusion, schools must have due regard to:

- Their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- Their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, including the requirement to consider reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Their duties towards pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Their responsibility to maintain safe, orderly and effective learning environments.
- Their duties relating to notification, the arrangement of suitable education, pupil discipline panel review, independent review processes and the involvement of social workers and Virtual School Heads where applicable.
- Any additional legal responsibilities that may apply where a pupil has reached adulthood.

When establishing the facts of a case, Headteachers must apply the civil standard of proof. Decisions should be based on whether, on the balance of probabilities, it is more likely than not that the alleged behaviour occurred.

Schools must also ensure that statutory duties relating to notification, pupil discipline panel consideration, the arrangement of suitable education for excluded pupils, the involvement of social workers and Virtual School Heads where applicable, and access to review processes are discharged in

line with current legal requirements and statutory guidance.

All decisions must be lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate. They must be capable of withstanding scrutiny from parents or carers, pupils where statutory rights transfer directly to them, the pupil discipline panel operating in accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation, Independent Review Panels, Ofsted, the Department for Education and any other relevant reviewing body.

Where legislation or statutory guidance is updated, amended or replaced, Discovery Trust will interpret references within this policy as referring to the most current version until the policy is formally reviewed.

Nothing within this policy overrides legislation or statutory guidance. Where there is any inconsistency between this policy and statutory requirements, the statutory requirements will take precedence.

4. Principles

The implementation of this policy is underpinned by a number of core principles that support consistent, lawful and effective decision-making across Discovery Trust.

4.1 Safeguarding First

Safeguarding is central to all decisions relating to suspension and permanent exclusion. Behaviour may be influenced by a range of safeguarding factors, including abuse, neglect, exploitation, trauma, mental health needs, child-on-child abuse and wider contextual risks.

Where safeguarding concerns are known or suspected, they must be appropriately considered as part of the decision-making process. Suspension and permanent exclusion must never be viewed in isolation from a school's safeguarding responsibilities.

4.2 Inclusion and Early Intervention

Discovery Trust is committed to inclusive practice, early intervention and high expectations for all pupils.

Schools are expected to identify concerns at the earliest opportunity and provide appropriate support, intervention and reasonable adjustments to reduce the likelihood of suspension or permanent exclusion wherever possible.

Suspension and permanent exclusion will not be used as a substitute for effective behaviour support, safeguarding intervention, SEND provision, pastoral support or reasonable adjustments.

4.3 Lawfulness, Fairness and Proportionality

All decisions must be lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

Each case must be considered on its individual merits, taking account of the specific circumstances,

available evidence, the level of risk presented and the impact on the wider school community.

The Trust does not operate automatic sanctions. Professional judgement must be exercised in every case, and decisions must be capable of withstanding appropriate scrutiny.

4.4 Equality, SEND and Individual Need

Schools must actively consider their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice when making decisions relating to suspension and permanent exclusion.

Where relevant, schools must consider whether behaviour may be influenced by a pupil's special educational needs, disability, communication needs, mental health needs, safeguarding vulnerabilities or other individual circumstances, and whether appropriate support and reasonable adjustments have been implemented.

The Trust recognises that some groups of pupils are disproportionately represented within national suspension and exclusion data and is committed to promoting inclusive practice whilst maintaining safe and effective learning environments.

4.5 Pupil Voice and Participation

Pupils should be given an opportunity to share their views and account of events before a decision is made, unless there is a compelling reason why this would not be appropriate.

Schools should take account of the pupil's age, understanding, communication needs and individual circumstances when seeking and considering their views.

Where pupils have reached adulthood, their views, rights and involvement in decision-making should be considered in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance.

4.6 Accountability and Continuous Improvement

All suspension and permanent exclusion decisions must be supported by clear evidence, accurate recording and a documented rationale.

Schools, the pupil discipline panel and the Trust will review exclusion practice to promote consistency, strengthen decision-making and identify opportunities to improve outcomes for pupils.

Learning from individual cases, trends, complaints, reviews, quality assurance activity and external scrutiny will be used to support continuous improvement and reduce the need for future exclusions wherever possible.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Effective implementation of this policy relies upon clear accountability, appropriate professional challenge and robust governance oversight.

5.1 Headteacher

Only the Headteacher, or in their absence the designated Acting Headteacher, has the authority to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all suspension and permanent exclusion decisions are lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate and are informed by a thorough consideration of the available evidence, relevant safeguarding information, SEND and equality considerations, and the individual circumstances of the pupil.

The Headteacher must ensure that statutory notification requirements are met, records are maintained appropriately and suitable arrangements are made to support the pupil's education, welfare and reintegration.

As a Trust procedural expectation, and in addition to statutory requirements, the Headteacher must consult the Director of Education and the Director of Specialist Provision before issuing a permanent exclusion wherever reasonably practicable.

Where a pupil has reached adulthood, the Headteacher must ensure that any statutory rights, responsibilities and communication arrangements that transfer directly to the individual are appropriately recognised and respected.

5.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding considerations are appropriately reflected within the decision-making process.

Where safeguarding concerns are known or suspected, the DSL should provide relevant information, advice and professional challenge to support informed decision-making and ensure that safeguarding responsibilities continue to be fulfilled throughout any suspension or exclusion process.

The DSL does not make suspension or permanent exclusion decisions but should be appropriately involved where safeguarding concerns are relevant to a case.

5.3 Senior Leaders

Senior leaders are responsible for supporting the consistent implementation of this policy, promoting positive behaviour, ensuring effective intervention and support, and helping to maintain safe, inclusive and orderly learning environments.

They should support the Headteacher in ensuring that decisions are informed, evidence-based and consistent with Trust expectations.

5.4 Director of Education

The Director of Education provides strategic oversight of suspension and permanent exclusion practice across Discovery Trust.

This includes providing support and challenge to school leaders, promoting consistency of decision-

making, reviewing patterns, trends and disproportionality across the Trust and providing oversight of proposed permanent exclusions.

Where concerns are identified regarding practice, disproportionality, compliance or outcomes, the Director of Education may provide additional challenge, support or intervention as appropriate.

5.5 Trust Head of Safeguarding

The Trust Head of Safeguarding provides strategic safeguarding oversight in relation to suspension and exclusion practice.

This includes monitoring safeguarding themes, vulnerability factors and emerging risks associated with exclusion activity, supporting schools where safeguarding concerns are relevant to decision-making and contributing to Trust-wide quality assurance and review processes.

5.6 Pupil discipline panel

The pupil discipline panel, operating in accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation, must fulfil its statutory responsibilities in relation to suspension and permanent exclusion in accordance with current legislation and statutory guidance.

For the purposes of this policy, references in statutory guidance to the governing body or delegated panel should be read as referring to the pupil discipline panel operating in accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

The pupil discipline panel shall consist of not fewer than three members drawn from the Trust's governance structure, none of whom shall be the Headteacher. Any member with prior involvement in the incident, a connection to the pupil, or prior knowledge that could reasonably affect their impartiality must withdraw from the panel.

The pupil discipline panel is responsible for providing effective scrutiny and challenge, seeking assurance that decisions are lawful, reasonable and proportionate and ensuring that safeguarding, SEND, equality and vulnerability considerations have been appropriately addressed.

5.7 Discovery Trust

Discovery Trust is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented consistently across all schools and provisions and that suspension and exclusion practice is subject to appropriate monitoring, quality assurance and governance oversight.

The Trust will review trends, patterns and outcomes, identify areas of strength and concern and provide support, challenge and intervention where required.

5.8 Colleagues

All colleagues are responsible for promoting positive behaviour, maintaining safe learning environments and implementing school policies and procedures consistently.

Colleagues must report and record concerns appropriately, contribute to early intervention and support arrangements and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities in accordance with Trust expectations.

5.9 Parents, Carers and Pupils

Parents and carers are expected to work in partnership with the school, engage with support and intervention strategies and support their child to meet school expectations.

Pupils are expected to engage positively with support offered, follow school expectations and contribute to restorative, reintegration and support processes where appropriate.

Where pupils have reached adulthood, they are expected to engage directly with processes, decisions and support arrangements that relate to them, in accordance with their rights and responsibilities under relevant legislation and guidance.

6. Grounds and Thresholds for Suspension and Permanent Exclusion

Discovery Trust expects all pupils to engage positively with the standards of behaviour set out within their school's Behaviour Policy. Schools should promote positive behaviour through clear expectations, positive relationships, effective safeguarding arrangements, early intervention and appropriate support.

Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious sanctions and will only be used where the statutory threshold has been met and where the Headteacher is satisfied that the decision is lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate in all the circumstances of the case.

A suspension or permanent exclusion may be considered where a pupil has committed a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of the school's Behaviour Policy and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would significantly affect the safety, welfare or education of the pupil or others, or the orderly operation of the school.

The Trust recognises that every incident occurs within a unique context. Decisions must therefore be based upon the individual circumstances of the case rather than the behaviour alone. Headteachers must exercise professional judgement and consider all relevant information before determining an appropriate response.

Certain behaviours are likely to be regarded as particularly serious due to their potential impact on safety, welfare and safeguarding. These may include serious violence, physical assault, possession or use of a weapon, drug-related incidents, harmful sexual behaviour, serious child-on-child abuse, significant discriminatory behaviour, serious threats, intimidation or behaviour that creates a substantial safeguarding risk.

Behaviour occurring outside school, including online behaviour, may also meet the threshold for suspension or permanent exclusion where it has a detrimental impact on the safety, welfare or education of pupils or colleagues, adversely affects the orderly running of the school, or brings the school into disrepute.

The examples outlined above are not exhaustive and should not be viewed as automatic triggers for suspension or permanent exclusion. Equally, behaviour not specifically identified within this policy may still meet the threshold where the circumstances justify such a response.

In reaching a decision, the Headteacher must consider the seriousness of the behaviour, the impact on victims and the wider school community, the risk presented by the behaviour, any relevant safeguarding information and the individual circumstances of the pupil.

Discovery Trust recognises that behaviour may be influenced by a range of factors, including trauma, adverse childhood experiences, mental health needs, communication differences, special educational needs, disability, exploitation, family circumstances and other vulnerabilities. These factors must be appropriately considered as part of the assessment of proportionality. Their presence does not prevent suspension or permanent exclusion where the statutory threshold has been met, but they should inform professional judgement and decision-making.

Schools are expected to demonstrate a commitment to inclusion and to take reasonable steps to identify and address emerging concerns before behaviour escalates to the point where exclusion becomes necessary. Suspension and permanent exclusion will not be used as a substitute for effective behaviour support, safeguarding intervention, SEND provision or reasonable adjustments.

There may, however, be exceptional circumstances where a single incident is of such seriousness that immediate suspension or permanent exclusion is justified.

All decisions must be supported by clear evidence and a documented rationale that demonstrates why the chosen response was considered appropriate in the circumstances.

7. Decision-Making Process

Decisions relating to suspension and permanent exclusion must be made carefully, objectively and in accordance with the principles set out within this policy. The purpose of the decision-making process is to establish the facts, understand the context of the behaviour, assess risk and determine an appropriate response.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that decisions are informed by a thorough consideration of all relevant information. This includes the circumstances of the incident, the available evidence, the impact on victims and the wider school community, any relevant safeguarding information and the individual circumstances of the pupil.

When establishing the facts, Headteachers must apply the civil standard of proof. Decisions should be based on whether, on the balance of probabilities, it is more likely than not that the behaviour occurred. Professional judgement must be informed by the available evidence and should not be based on assumption, speculation or unsubstantiated allegation.

Pupils should be given an opportunity to share their account of events before a decision is made, unless there is a compelling reason why this would not be appropriate. Schools should take account of the pupil's age, understanding, communication needs and individual circumstances when seeking and

considering their views. Where relevant, pupils should be supported to express their views, including through parents, carers, advocates or, if they have one, their social worker.

The Headteacher should ensure that the pupil is informed, in an age-appropriate and accessible way, how their views have been considered within the decision-making process.

Where a pupil has reached adulthood, schools should ensure that the individual's rights, views and involvement in the decision-making process are considered in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance.

Safeguarding considerations must form part of every suspension and permanent exclusion decision. Behaviour may be linked to abuse, neglect, exploitation, trauma, mental health difficulties, child-on-child abuse or other safeguarding concerns. Where safeguarding concerns are known or suspected, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be appropriately involved and relevant safeguarding information considered before a decision is reached.

Where it is necessary to keep pupils apart for safeguarding purposes, schools must distinguish clearly between a disciplinary exclusion and a non-disciplinary safeguarding separation arrangement. Temporary separation for safeguarding reasons must not be recorded or presented as a suspension unless the statutory threshold for suspension has been met.

Headteachers must also consider whether a pupil's SEND, disability, vulnerability or other protected characteristic is relevant to the behaviour under consideration. The availability and effectiveness of previous support, intervention and reasonable adjustments should form part of the overall assessment of proportionality.

Where a pupil is looked after, previously looked after or has a social worker, schools should involve relevant professionals in accordance with statutory guidance before a final decision is reached, wherever reasonably practicable.

The Trust expects decision-makers to consider not only the behaviour itself, but also the context in which it occurred, the risk presented by the behaviour, the effectiveness of previous interventions and the likely impact of any proposed sanction. Decisions should reflect an appropriate balance between supporting individual pupils and maintaining the safety, welfare and education of others.

Before determining that suspension or permanent exclusion is appropriate, the Headteacher must be satisfied that all relevant information has been considered and that the proposed response is lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

All decisions must be supported by a clear rationale demonstrating how the available evidence, safeguarding considerations, equality duties, SEND responsibilities and wider contextual factors informed the outcome.

The Trust expects all suspension and permanent exclusion decisions to be capable of withstanding scrutiny by parents or carers, pupils where statutory rights transfer directly to them, the pupil discipline panel, Independent Review Panels, Ofsted, the Department for Education and any other relevant reviewing body.

Effective decision-making is characterised by professional curiosity, sound judgement, careful consideration of context and a clear focus on the safety, welfare and educational interests of all pupils.

8. Suspension Process

A suspension is a temporary removal of a pupil from school for a fixed period. It is a serious sanction and should only be used where the Headteacher has determined that the statutory threshold has been met and that suspension represents a lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate response to the circumstances of the case.

Only the Headteacher, or in their absence the designated Acting Headteacher, has the authority to suspend a pupil.

The Trust expects suspension to be used thoughtfully and proportionately. The duration of any suspension should reflect the seriousness of the behaviour, the circumstances surrounding the incident and the intended outcome of the sanction. Suspensions should be for the shortest appropriate period necessary. A pupil may not be suspended for more than 45 school days in a single academic year, including where they have changed school.

Informal, unofficial or unlawful exclusions are not permitted. Pupils must not be sent home, required to remain at home or otherwise prevented from attending school unless a formal suspension has been issued in accordance with statutory guidance. Separate arrangements made to keep pupils apart for safeguarding purposes must not be recorded or presented as a suspension unless the statutory threshold for suspension has been met.

Where a suspension is issued, parents or carers must be informed without delay and provided in writing with the reason for the suspension, the duration, the arrangements for the first five school days, the parent's duty to ensure that the pupil is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five school days, and details of their right to make representations in accordance with statutory guidance. Where a pupil has reached adulthood, schools must ensure that communication and procedural rights are managed in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance.

Schools must ensure that all statutory notifications to the pupil discipline panel (referred to in statutory guidance as the governing body or delegated panel), local authority and other relevant parties are completed within the required timescales and that relevant professionals are informed where required.

Schools must set and mark work for the first five school days of a suspension. Where a suspension is for more than five school days, the school must arrange suitable full-time education for the pupil from the sixth school day, in accordance with statutory requirements.

The Trust recognises that suspension can be a significant event for pupils and families. Communication should therefore be clear, respectful and focused on maintaining positive engagement and supporting a successful return to education.

Throughout any period of suspension, schools remain responsible for promoting the welfare and

education of the pupil. Appropriate educational arrangements must be made in accordance with statutory requirements and particular consideration should be given to pupils who are vulnerable or who may face increased safeguarding risks during periods away from school.

Where a pupil is looked after, previously looked after, has a social worker, is subject to a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need Plan, or is otherwise considered vulnerable, schools should ensure that safeguarding considerations continue to be actively monitored and addressed throughout the period of suspension.

Lunchtime suspensions may be used where appropriate and count as half a school day for the purpose of the statutory limit.

Headteachers should consider patterns of suspension and cumulative suspension history when determining whether further suspension is appropriate and whether additional assessment, intervention, review or support may be required. Repeated suspensions may indicate the need for a broader review of a pupil's needs, provision or support arrangements.

Following a suspension, schools should take reasonable steps to support a successful return to education. A reintegration meeting should normally be arranged following a suspension unless there is a good reason why this would not be appropriate, and any support, expectations and follow-up actions should be recorded.

Headteachers should monitor the use of suspension within their school to identify patterns, trends, disproportionality and areas requiring further intervention or review. This information should inform safeguarding oversight, behaviour planning, inclusion strategies and school improvement activity.

The Trust expects all suspensions to be supported by clear evidence, accurate recording and a documented rationale demonstrating why suspension was considered the most appropriate response in the circumstances.

9. Permanent Exclusion Process

Permanent exclusion is the most serious sanction available to a school and should only be used as a last resort. It may be appropriate where there has been 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.

The decision to permanently exclude a pupil may only be made by the Headteacher, or in their absence the designated Acting Headteacher. Before reaching a decision, the Headteacher must be satisfied that all relevant information has been carefully considered and that permanent exclusion represents a lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate response to the circumstances of the case.

Permanent exclusion decisions must be informed by the individual circumstances of the pupil and the context in which the behaviour occurred. Relevant safeguarding information, known vulnerabilities, SEND, disability, equality considerations, previous interventions and the views of the pupil must all be considered as part of the decision-making process.

Discovery Trust recognises that behaviour may be influenced by a range of factors, including trauma,

adverse childhood experiences, mental health needs, communication differences, exploitation, family circumstances and unmet needs. Where such factors are present, they must be appropriately considered. However, the existence of additional needs or vulnerabilities does not prevent permanent exclusion where the statutory threshold has been met and the Headteacher concludes that permanent exclusion remains a lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate response.

Prior to issuing a permanent exclusion, the Headteacher must consult the Director of Education and the Director of Specialist Provision wherever reasonably practicable. Where safeguarding concerns are relevant to the case, advice should also be sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, where appropriate, the Trust Head of Safeguarding.

Parents or carers must be informed of the decision without delay and provided in writing with the reasons for the exclusion, the date on which the exclusion takes effect, the arrangements for the first five school days, details of the pupil discipline panel's role, and information about their right to make representations and request an Independent Review Panel where applicable. Where a pupil has reached adulthood, schools must ensure that communication and procedural rights are managed in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance.

Schools must ensure that all statutory notifications to the pupil discipline panel, local authority and other relevant parties are completed within the required timescales and that relevant professionals are informed where required.

Where a pupil is looked after, previously looked after, has a social worker, is subject to a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need Plan, or is otherwise considered vulnerable, schools should ensure that relevant professionals, including the social worker and Virtual School Head where applicable, are informed and involved in accordance with statutory guidance.

The local authority must arrange suitable full-time education for a permanently excluded pupil from the sixth school day. Schools must cooperate with the local authority and other relevant agencies to support transition and continuity of education.

Permanent exclusion does not remove a school's safeguarding responsibilities. Schools must continue to work with families, the local authority and other relevant agencies to support future educational arrangements and promote the welfare of the pupil throughout the transition process.

Schools should also consider whether any review of safeguarding, SEND, pastoral support, placement arrangements or wider provision is required following a permanent exclusion decision in order to identify learning and support future planning.

Given the significance of permanent exclusion, schools should ensure that decisions are supported by clear evidence, accurate records and a documented rationale demonstrating how the available information informed the outcome and why permanent exclusion was considered necessary.

Permanent exclusions will be subject to pupil discipline panel review, Trust oversight and ongoing monitoring to ensure that practice remains lawful, consistent and aligned with the expectations of Discovery Trust.

The Trust expects permanent exclusion decisions to be rare, carefully considered and capable of

withstanding scrutiny from the pupil discipline panel, Independent Review Panels, Ofsted, the Department for Education and any other relevant reviewing body.

10. Cancellation of Suspension or Permanent Exclusion

The Headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion where this is permitted by statutory guidance and where the relevant pupil discipline panel review (referred to in statutory guidance as the governing body or delegated panel review) has not yet taken place.

A decision to cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion should only be made where further consideration of the available evidence indicates that the original decision is no longer appropriate, proportionate or justified. This may arise where new information becomes available, where relevant circumstances were not previously known, or where a review of the evidence demonstrates that the original decision should not proceed.

Cancellation must not be used to avoid accountability, governance scrutiny or statutory review processes. Any decision to cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion must be supported by a clear rationale and be capable of withstanding external scrutiny.

Where a suspension or permanent exclusion is cancelled, parents or carers must be informed without delay and provided with the information required by statutory guidance. Where a pupil has reached adulthood, schools must ensure that communication and procedural rights are managed in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance.

Schools must ensure that all relevant statutory notifications are completed, attendance and admissions registers are amended where required, and appropriate records are maintained.

Where a pupil is looked after, previously looked after, has a social worker, is subject to a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need Plan, or is otherwise considered vulnerable, schools should ensure that relevant professionals are informed as soon as reasonably practicable.

The pupil must be permitted to return to school without delay and appropriate arrangements should be made to support a successful reintegration where required.

A clear record of the original decision, the cancellation, the reasons for cancellation and any associated safeguarding, SEND, equality or vulnerability considerations must be retained in accordance with the Trust's recording and information management requirements.

The Trust expects cancellation decisions to be rare and to reflect careful professional judgement, transparency and fairness.

11. Managed Moves, Off-Site Direction and Alternative Provision

Discovery Trust is committed to ensuring that managed moves, off-site direction and alternative provision placements are used appropriately, transparently and in the best interests of pupils.

Managed moves, off-site direction and alternative provision should form part of a planned and supportive approach to meeting a pupil's needs. They must not be used as a substitute for permanent

exclusion, as a means of avoiding accountability or as a mechanism for removing pupils from a school's roll without following appropriate processes.

A managed move is a voluntary arrangement whereby a pupil transfers permanently to another educational setting with the agreement of all relevant parties, including parents or carers and the admission authority of the new school. Managed moves should only be considered where there is a clear educational benefit for the pupil and where there is a realistic prospect of improved engagement, wellbeing, behaviour or educational outcomes. Managed moves must be formally agreed and appropriately recorded; they should not be presented as trial admissions, trial managed moves, exclusions or informal removals from roll.

Before a managed move is agreed, schools should ensure that the pupil's needs have been appropriately considered, relevant support and intervention strategies have been explored, safeguarding information has been reviewed and shared appropriately, and the views of the pupil and parents or carers have been taken into account. Where a pupil has reached adulthood, their views, rights and participation in the process must be considered in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance.

Managed moves should be formally agreed, appropriately documented and subject to clear planning. Schools should ensure that the purpose of the move, intended outcomes, safeguarding arrangements and information-sharing expectations are clear from the outset.

Off-site direction may be used in accordance with current legislation and guidance where this is a lawful and appropriate response to support improved behaviour. Off-site direction is a time-limited measure to improve a pupil's behaviour and must not be used as a sanction or punishment for past misconduct. Where a pupil is directed off-site, the school retains responsibility for the pupil's education, safeguarding and outcomes. The placement must be suitable to the pupil's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs or disability.

Where off-site direction is used, the pupil discipline panel (referred to in statutory guidance as the governing body or delegated panel) must ensure that parents or carers, and where applicable the local authority for a pupil with an Education, Health and Care Plan, are notified in writing with the information required by statutory guidance. Off-site direction arrangements must be reviewed at appropriate intervals so that the education is achieving its intended objectives and remains suitable, safe and in the pupil's best interests.

Alternative provision may be used where a pupil's needs cannot currently be met fully within their existing setting or where a period of alternative provision is considered necessary to support engagement, behaviour, attendance, wellbeing or educational progress.

Where a pupil attends alternative provision, the school retains overall responsibility for the pupil's education, safeguarding and outcomes. Placement in alternative provision does not transfer accountability for the pupil's welfare or educational experience.

Schools must be satisfied that any alternative provision used is suitable for the pupil's age, ability, aptitude and needs, has appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place and is capable of meeting any identified SEND, health, welfare or support needs.

The placement of a pupil in alternative provision should be supported by clear objectives, ongoing monitoring and regular review. Schools should maintain effective communication with the provider, the pupil and, where appropriate, parents or carers to ensure that placements remain appropriate, safe and effective.

The implementation of a managed move, off-site direction or alternative provision placement does not diminish a school's safeguarding responsibilities. Schools must continue to share information appropriately, maintain oversight of vulnerable pupils, respond promptly to safeguarding concerns and work collaboratively with relevant professionals and agencies.

Particular consideration should be given to pupils who may be vulnerable to exploitation, serious violence, child-on-child abuse, poor attendance, mental health difficulties or becoming missing from education.

The Trust will monitor the use of managed moves, off-site direction and alternative provision to ensure that arrangements remain lawful, transparent, pupil-centred and consistent with the Trust's commitment to safeguarding, inclusion and educational excellence.

12. Reintegration and Post-Incident Support

Discovery Trust believes that effective reintegration is an important part of promoting positive behaviour, safeguarding wellbeing and reducing the likelihood of future incidents.

Following a suspension, schools should take reasonable steps to support a successful return to education. Reintegration arrangements should be proportionate to the circumstances of the incident, the needs of the pupil and any identified safeguarding, SEND, health, welfare or pastoral considerations.

The purpose of reintegration is not simply to facilitate a pupil's return to school, but to understand what support may be required to help the pupil engage positively with education and meet behaviour expectations moving forward.

Schools should design a reintegration strategy that offers the pupil a fresh start, helps them understand the effect of their behaviour on themselves and others, supports them to meet the school's behaviour expectations and fosters a renewed sense of belonging within the school community.

The reintegration strategy should be clearly communicated at a reintegration meeting before, or at the beginning of, the pupil's return to school wherever reasonably practicable. Where possible, this meeting should include the pupil and their parents or carers. A pupil must not be prevented from returning to school because a parent or carer is unable or unwilling to attend a reintegration meeting.

Schools should work collaboratively with pupils, parents or carers and, where appropriate, external professionals to identify any underlying factors that may have contributed to the behaviour and to determine whether additional support, intervention, assessment or reasonable adjustments may be required.

Where a pupil has reached adulthood, schools should ensure that the individual's views, rights and

involvement in planning are appropriately recognised in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance.

Reintegration planning should be informed by a holistic understanding of the pupil and may take account of safeguarding concerns, SEND, disability, communication needs, mental health needs, attendance, family circumstances, previous patterns of behaviour, multi-agency involvement and any existing support plans.

The Trust recognises that behaviour is often influenced by a range of interacting factors. Reintegration arrangements should therefore focus not only on accountability, but also on understanding, support and the promotion of positive change.

Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan, Child in Need Plan, Child Protection Plan, social worker or other significant professional involvement, schools should consider whether additional review meetings, planning arrangements or professional input are required following a suspension or significant behavioural incident.

Where a period of off-site direction or safeguarding separation has been used, schools should plan actively for reintegration and ensure that the strategy is reviewed and adapted where necessary in collaboration with the pupil, parents or carers and relevant professionals.

Schools should ensure that any agreed support, intervention, assessment, reasonable adjustment or safeguarding measure is implemented, monitored and reviewed appropriately. The effectiveness of these arrangements should form part of ongoing behaviour, attendance and safeguarding oversight.

All significant reintegration discussions, agreed actions and support arrangements should be recorded in accordance with the Trust's recording expectations.

By adopting a supportive and structured approach to reintegration, Discovery Trust aims to strengthen engagement, improve outcomes, promote inclusion and reduce the likelihood of repeated suspensions, permanent exclusion or disengagement from education.

13. Monitoring, Quality Assurance and Oversight

Discovery Trust is committed to ensuring that suspension and permanent exclusion decisions are subject to effective monitoring, quality assurance and governance oversight. Robust scrutiny promotes lawful decision-making, supports consistency across schools and provisions and helps ensure that exclusion remains a measure of last resort.

Headteachers are responsible for monitoring suspension and exclusion activity within their own schools. This should include consideration of patterns, trends, repeat suspensions, vulnerable groups of pupils and the effectiveness of interventions implemented to reduce the need for exclusion.

Schools should regularly review suspension and exclusion information alongside safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, SEND and wellbeing information in order to identify emerging concerns, evaluate the impact of interventions and inform future planning.

Particular attention should be given to pupils who experience repeated suspensions and to groups of

pupils who may be disproportionately represented within suspension and exclusion data. This includes, where relevant, pupils with SEND, pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans, pupils attending specialist provision, looked after and previously looked after pupils, pupils with social workers and other vulnerable groups.

The pupil discipline panel plays an important role in providing support, challenge and oversight. In addition to fulfilling its statutory responsibilities, it should seek assurance that suspension and exclusion decisions are lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate and that safeguarding, SEND, equality and vulnerability considerations have been appropriately addressed. It should also receive sufficient information about off-site direction and alternative provision arrangements to assure itself that placements are reviewed at appropriate intervals and remain suitable and effective.

The Trust will monitor suspension and exclusion practice across all schools and provisions to identify patterns, trends, emerging risks and areas requiring additional support or challenge. This monitoring will support the identification of effective practice, promote consistency across the Trust and help ensure that decisions are aligned with statutory guidance and Trust expectations.

The Director of Education will maintain strategic oversight of suspension and permanent exclusion activity and will work with Headteachers where concerns, trends, inconsistencies or areas of risk are identified.

The Trust Head of Safeguarding will contribute to the review of safeguarding themes, vulnerability factors and contextual issues associated with suspension and exclusion activity, helping to ensure that safeguarding considerations remain central to decision-making and school improvement activity.

The Trust may undertake quality assurance activity, including case reviews, thematic reviews, data analysis and professional dialogue with school leaders, to evaluate the effectiveness, consistency and impact of suspension and exclusion practice.

Where monitoring identifies concerns regarding decision-making, disproportionality, compliance, safeguarding practice or educational outcomes, appropriate support, challenge and intervention will be provided.

The Trust will use learning arising from quality assurance activity, complaints, governance reviews, safeguarding reviews, exclusion trends and external scrutiny to strengthen practice, improve outcomes for pupils and reduce the need for future exclusions wherever possible.

All monitoring, review and oversight activity should contribute to a culture of accountability, continuous improvement, inclusion and safeguarding excellence across Discovery Trust.

14. Data, Recording and Information Management

Accurate recording and effective information management are essential to ensuring that suspension and permanent exclusion decisions are transparent, evidence-informed and capable of withstanding scrutiny.

Discovery Trust expects all records relating to suspension and permanent exclusion to be factual, objective, timely and professionally recorded. Records should clearly demonstrate how decisions

were reached, what information was considered and the rationale for the outcome.

Schools must maintain appropriate records relating to suspension and permanent exclusion in accordance with statutory requirements, Trust expectations, data protection legislation and information governance requirements.

The Trust recognises the distinction between behaviour records and safeguarding records. Formal suspension and permanent exclusion records should be maintained within the school's management information systems, whilst safeguarding concerns, vulnerabilities and contextual information should be recorded within the Trust's safeguarding recording arrangements in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Where safeguarding concerns are relevant to a suspension or permanent exclusion decision, schools must ensure that safeguarding information appropriately informs decision-making. Records should demonstrate how safeguarding considerations were taken into account without creating unnecessary duplication across systems.

The rationale for any suspension or permanent exclusion must be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate:

- The behaviour or incident that led to the decision.
- The evidence that was considered.
- Any safeguarding, SEND, equality or vulnerability considerations.
- The assessment of risk and proportionality.
- Why the decision was considered lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

Schools should maintain a clear chronology of significant events, decisions and actions relating to suspension and permanent exclusion. Recording should support transparency, accountability, effective review and continuity where multiple professionals or agencies are involved.

Where a pupil has reached adulthood, schools must ensure that records, communication, consent and information-sharing arrangements appropriately reflect any legal rights or responsibilities that transfer directly to the individual. Schools should ensure that information is shared lawfully, proportionately and in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance.

Information should be shared appropriately where this is necessary to safeguard pupils, support decision-making, fulfil statutory duties or promote educational outcomes. Information sharing must be undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation, statutory guidance and professional responsibilities.

Headteachers are responsible for ensuring that records relating to suspension and permanent exclusion are complete, accurate and retained in accordance with statutory and Trust requirements.

The Trust may review records as part of quality assurance activity, governance oversight, safeguarding

review, complaints investigations, exclusion reviews or other legitimate monitoring processes. Schools should therefore ensure that records clearly demonstrate professional judgement, compliance with statutory guidance and adherence to Trust expectations.

Effective recording supports not only accountability and scrutiny, but also learning, reflection and continuous improvement across Discovery Trust.

15. Equality, SEND and Vulnerable Pupils

Discovery Trust is committed to ensuring that all pupils are treated fairly, consistently and with dignity. Decisions relating to suspension and permanent exclusion must reflect the Trust's commitment to inclusion whilst recognising the need to maintain safe, orderly and effective learning environments.

When considering suspension or permanent exclusion, schools must comply with their duties under the Equality Act 2010, the SEND Code of Practice and relevant safeguarding legislation and guidance.

The Trust recognises that some groups of pupils are disproportionately represented within national suspension and exclusion data. This includes, but is not limited to, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), pupils attending specialist provision, looked after and previously looked after pupils, pupils with social workers, pupils experiencing mental health difficulties and pupils affected by safeguarding concerns or adverse life experiences.

Where suspension or permanent exclusion is being considered, schools must take reasonable steps to understand whether a protected characteristic, disability, special educational need, safeguarding concern, health need or other vulnerability may be relevant to the behaviour under consideration.

Headteachers must ensure that decisions are informed by an understanding of the pupil's individual circumstances and that appropriate consideration has been given to the support, intervention, assessment and reasonable adjustments that have been provided or may be required.

The Trust recognises that behaviour may sometimes be influenced by unmet needs, communication differences, trauma, mental health needs, exploitation, family circumstances, safeguarding concerns or other vulnerabilities. These factors must be appropriately considered as part of the decision-making process and the assessment of proportionality.

However, the existence of a vulnerability, disability, safeguarding concern or special educational need does not prevent suspension or permanent exclusion where the statutory threshold has been met and where the Headteacher concludes that the sanction remains lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan, schools should consider whether the provision identified within the plan remains appropriate and whether additional assessment, review or professional involvement may be required. Where appropriate, schools should engage with parents or carers, the Local Authority and relevant professionals as part of this process.

Where a pupil is looked after, previously looked after or has a social worker, schools should ensure

that relevant professionals are informed and involved in accordance with statutory guidance.

Where a pupil has reached adulthood, schools should ensure that relevant rights, responsibilities, support arrangements and, where applicable, involvement from adult services are appropriately considered as part of decision-making.

The Trust will monitor suspension and exclusion data to identify patterns of disproportionality and to support the continuous improvement of inclusive practice across its schools and provisions.

Discovery Trust expects all decisions to demonstrate fairness, professional curiosity and a genuine consideration of the individual needs and circumstances of the pupil, whilst maintaining appropriate regard for the safety, welfare and education of others.

16. Complaints, Representations and Reviews

Discovery Trust is committed to ensuring that suspension and permanent exclusion processes are transparent, fair and open to appropriate review.

Parents or carers have the right to make representations regarding suspension and permanent exclusion decisions in accordance with statutory guidance. Where a pupil has reached adulthood, any rights that transfer directly to the individual must be recognised and communicated appropriately.

Schools must ensure that information regarding review rights, relevant timescales and available processes is provided at the point that a suspension or permanent exclusion decision is communicated.

The pupil discipline panel will fulfil its statutory responsibilities in relation to suspension and permanent exclusion in accordance with statutory guidance and the Trust's Scheme of Delegation. In undertaking this role, it should consider the available evidence, the circumstances of the case and whether statutory requirements and Trust expectations have been met.

Where a meeting of the pupil discipline panel is required or convened, a clerk should be present to support the process, maintain an accurate written record of the proceedings and decision, and assist in ensuring that statutory timescales and procedural requirements are met. The record should set out who attended, the key issues considered, the decision reached and the reasons for that decision.

Outcome letters should be issued without delay following the meeting and should explain the decision clearly, together with any further review rights that apply. Panel members should receive the confidential record of the meeting as soon as reasonably practicable in accordance with Trust governance procedures.

Relevant records may be shared with parents, carers or eligible pupils on request where lawful and appropriate to do so, subject to data protection requirements and the redaction of confidential or third-party information where necessary.

Where a permanent exclusion is upheld, parents, carers or eligible pupils may have the right to request an Independent Review Panel. Information regarding this process, the relevant timescales and the right to request the attendance of an SEN expert must be provided in accordance with

statutory requirements.

The Trust recognises the importance of ensuring that review processes are accessible, transparent and fair. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments should be made to support participation by pupils, parents, carers, advocates or representatives. Where permitted by statutory guidance, meetings may take place by remote access provided that the requirements of the guidance are met and the meeting remains fair and accessible to all parties.

Complaints relating to suspension and permanent exclusion should normally be addressed through the relevant statutory review process where one exists. Matters that fall outside statutory review arrangements may be considered through the Trust's Complaints Policy where appropriate.

The existence of a complaint, representation or review does not prevent schools, the pupil discipline panel, or the Trust from carrying out their statutory responsibilities. Equally, the completion of a statutory review process does not prevent concerns regarding procedure, administration or service delivery from being considered through the appropriate channels where applicable.

Discovery Trust expects all review, representation and complaints processes to be conducted professionally, respectfully and in a manner that promotes confidence in the fairness, transparency and integrity of decision-making.

The Trust will use learning arising from complaints, representations, governance reviews, Independent Review Panels and other review activity to strengthen practice, improve consistency and support continuous improvement across its schools and provisions.

17. Application Across Different Phases and Provisions

Discovery Trust operates a diverse family of schools and provisions, including primary schools, secondary schools, special schools, school-based nursery provision and provision for pupils aged 18 and over. Whilst the context, needs and developmental stages of pupils may vary across these settings, the principles and expectations set out within this policy apply throughout the Trust.

All decisions relating to suspension and permanent exclusion must be made lawfully, fairly and proportionately, taking account of the age, developmental stage, needs and circumstances of the pupil concerned.

The Trust recognises that behaviour may present differently across phases and provisions and that pupils may require differing levels of support, intervention, assessment and adjustment. Decision-making should therefore be informed by professional judgement, knowledge of the pupil and careful consideration of the individual context of each case.

Within specialist settings, schools should carefully consider the impact of identified needs, disabilities, communication differences, sensory needs, health needs and associated vulnerabilities when assessing behaviour and determining an appropriate response. However, pupils attending specialist provision remain subject to the same statutory suspension and permanent exclusion framework as pupils attending mainstream provision.

Where suspension or permanent exclusion is being considered for a pupil with complex needs,

schools should ensure that relevant information, professional advice and safeguarding considerations have been appropriately reviewed before a decision is reached.

Discovery Trust includes provision for pupils who have reached adulthood. Where statutory rights, responsibilities or communication arrangements differ for adult pupils, schools must ensure that decisions are implemented in accordance with relevant legislation, statutory guidance and the individual circumstances of the pupil. Where appropriate, consideration should also be given to the involvement of adult services and other relevant professionals.

For pupils attending school-based nursery provision where the statutory suspension and permanent exclusion framework applies, decisions must be made in accordance with current legislation and statutory guidance, taking account of the age, developmental stage and needs of the pupil.

The Trust recognises that some services delivered by schools, including wraparound care, holiday provision and other non-statutory activities, may operate outside the statutory suspension and permanent exclusion framework. Decisions relating to participation in these activities must be managed through appropriate behaviour expectations, safeguarding arrangements, risk assessment and contractual processes. Such decisions must not be used to create an informal or unlawful exclusion from education.

Headteachers remain responsible for ensuring that this policy is applied consistently and appropriately within their setting, whilst taking account of the specific context of their school and the needs of their pupils.

Regardless of phase or provision, all decisions must reflect Discovery Trust's commitment to safeguarding, inclusion, educational excellence and the welfare of pupils and colleagues.

18. Policy Review

Discovery Trust is committed to maintaining policies that are current, effective, legally compliant and reflective of best practice.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually to ensure that it remains aligned with legislation, statutory guidance, regulatory requirements and the strategic priorities of the Trust.

The policy may also be reviewed outside of the normal review cycle where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, case law, regulatory expectations or Trust practice that may affect the implementation of the policy.

Learning arising from suspension and permanent exclusion cases, complaints, governance reviews, safeguarding reviews, quality assurance activity, external scrutiny or Trust-wide monitoring may also result in an earlier review where this is considered necessary to strengthen practice or improve outcomes.

Responsibility for the review and maintenance of this policy rests with the designated policy owner, working in consultation with relevant leaders, schools and stakeholders as appropriate.

The Board of Trustees retains ultimate responsibility for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are

in place for the lawful, fair and effective management of suspension and permanent exclusion across Discovery Trust.

Following approval, Headteachers are responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented consistently within their schools and provisions and that colleagues understand their responsibilities under it.

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through governance oversight, quality assurance activity, safeguarding review, exclusion data analysis, stakeholder feedback and ongoing evaluation of suspension and permanent exclusion practice across the Trust.

Discovery Trust will use learning arising from implementation of this policy to strengthen practice, improve outcomes for pupils and support continuous improvement across all schools and provisions.

This policy should be read in conjunction with associated Trust policies, procedures and guidance relating to behaviour, safeguarding, inclusion, SEND and governance.

Appendix 1. Suspension Letter Templates

Template A – Suspension letter where the total does not exceed 5 school days in a term

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to confirm my decision to suspend [Pupil Name] from [School Name] for [number] school day(s), from [start date] to [end date inclusive]. [Pupil Name] is expected to return to school on [return date].

This decision has been taken because [clear factual reason(s) for the suspension]. In reaching this decision, I have considered the available evidence, the circumstances of the incident, the views of [Pupil Name] where appropriate, and the need to ensure that the response is lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

During the first five school days of the suspension, you must ensure that [Pupil Name] is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification. Failure to do so may result in a fixed penalty notice or prosecution.

Work will be provided for [Pupil Name] for the duration of the suspension. [Insert arrangements for collection/online access/submission.]

You have the right to make representations to the pupil discipline panel. The pupil discipline panel must consider any representations you make, but it cannot direct reinstatement and is not required to hold a meeting.

If you wish to make representations, please send them to [name/role/contact details].

You may request that any meeting which you are entitled to attend is held by remote access, provided the statutory conditions for a fair and transparent meeting can be met. If you wish to request this, please contact [name/role/contact details].

If [Pupil Name] has a social worker or is looked after, the relevant professionals will also be informed in accordance with statutory guidance.

For free and impartial advice, you may wish to contact:

- [Local SENDIAS contact details]
- Coram Child Law Advice: 0300 330 5485 / childlawadvice.org.uk
- IPSEA: ipsea.org.uk

If you would like support or clarification, please contact [name/role/contact details].

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher name]
[Headteacher title]

Template B – Suspension letter where the total is more than 5 but not more than 15 school days in a term

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to confirm my decision to suspend [Pupil Name] from [School Name] for [number] school day(s), from [start date] to [end date inclusive]. [Pupil Name] is expected to return to school on [return date].

This decision has been taken because [clear factual reason(s) for the suspension]. In reaching this decision, I have considered the available evidence, the circumstances of the incident, the views of [Pupil Name] where appropriate, and the need to ensure that the response is lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

During the first five school days of the suspension, you must ensure that [Pupil Name] is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification. Failure to do so may result in a fixed penalty notice or prosecution.

Work will be provided for [Pupil Name] for the duration of the suspension. [Insert arrangements for collection/online access/submission.]

[If the suspension or consecutive suspensions mean full-time education is required from the sixth school day: Suitable full-time education will be arranged from the sixth school day. Further details will be provided to you separately.]

You have the right to make representations to the pupil discipline panel. If you make representations, the pupil discipline panel must consider them within 50 school days of receiving notice of the suspension.

If you wish to make representations, please send them to [name/role/contact details].

You may request that any meeting which you are entitled to attend is held by remote access, provided the statutory conditions for a fair and transparent meeting can be met. If you wish to request this, please contact [name/role/contact details].

If [Pupil Name] has a social worker or is looked after, the relevant professionals will also be informed in accordance with statutory guidance.

For free and impartial advice, you may wish to contact:

- [Local SENDIAS contact details]
- Coram Child Law Advice: 0300 330 5485 / childlawadvice.org.uk
- IPSEA: ipsea.org.uk

If you would like support or clarification, please contact [name/role/contact details].

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher name]

[Headteacher title]

Template C – Suspension letter where the total exceeds 15 school days in a term or where the pupil will miss a public examination or national curriculum test

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to confirm my decision to suspend [Pupil Name] from [School Name] for [number] school day(s), from [start date] to [end date inclusive]. [Pupil Name] is expected to return to school on [return date].

This decision has been taken because [clear factual reason(s) for the suspension]. In reaching this decision, I have considered the available evidence, the circumstances of the incident, the views of [Pupil Name] where appropriate, and the need to ensure that the response is lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

During the first five school days of the suspension, you must ensure that [Pupil Name] is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification. Failure to do so may result in a fixed penalty notice or prosecution.

Work will be provided for [Pupil Name] for the duration of the suspension. [Insert arrangements for collection/online access/submission.]

[If the suspension or consecutive suspensions mean full-time education is required from the sixth school day: Suitable full-time education will be arranged from the sixth school day. Further details will be provided to you separately.]

The pupil discipline panel must meet to consider reinstatement within 15 school days of receiving notice of the suspension. If the suspension will cause [Pupil Name] to miss a public examination or national curriculum test, the pupil discipline panel must take reasonable steps to meet before the date of the examination or test.

You have the right to attend the meeting, to be accompanied or represented (at your own expense), and to submit written representations.

You may request that the meeting is held by remote access, provided the statutory conditions for a fair and transparent meeting can be met. If you wish to request this, please contact [name/role/contact details].

If [Pupil Name] has a social worker or is looked after, the relevant professionals will also be informed in accordance with statutory guidance.

For free and impartial advice, you may wish to contact:

- [Local SENDIAS contact details]
- Coram Child Law Advice: 0300 330 5485 / childlawadvice.org.uk
- IPSEA: ipsea.org.uk

If you would like support or clarification, please contact [name/role/contact details].

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher name]

[Headteacher title]

Template D – Follow-up information where alternative provision is arranged

Dear Parent/Carer,

Further to my earlier letter, I am writing to confirm the arrangements for [Pupil Name]'s education during the suspension.

From [date], suitable full-time education will be provided at:

Provider: [name]

Address: [address]

Start date: [date]

Start time: [time]

End time: [time]

Report to: [named contact if known]

Please ensure that [Pupil Name] attends as required.

If you have any questions about these arrangements, please contact [name/role/contact details].

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher name]

[Headteacher title]

Appendix 2. Permanent Exclusion Guidance for Parents, Carers and Pupils

Purpose

This appendix provides a short guide for parents, carers and, where applicable, pupils aged 18 or over, about what happens when a permanent exclusion is issued.

What permanent exclusion means

A permanent exclusion means that the pupil is no longer allowed to attend the school unless the pupil discipline panel reinstates them following review.

What the school must do

The school must notify parents or carers without delay, explain the reasons for the permanent exclusion in writing and provide information about review rights. The school must also notify the local authority and other relevant professionals in accordance with statutory guidance.

Education from the sixth school day

The local authority must arrange suitable full-time education from the sixth school day after the first day of the permanent exclusion.

Right to make representations

Parents or carers, or the pupil if they are 18 or over, have the right to make representations to the pupil discipline panel.

Independent Review Panel

If the pupil discipline panel does not reinstate the pupil, parents or carers, or the pupil if they are 18 or over, may have the right to request an Independent Review Panel. Information about timescales and how to apply must be provided in writing.

SEN expert

Where an Independent Review Panel is requested, there is a right to request the attendance of a SEN expert. This applies whether or not the school has formally identified SEN.

Pupil participation

The pupil should be enabled and encouraged to participate in the process in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and needs. Where a pupil is 18 or over, rights may transfer directly to them.

Support

Parents, carers and pupils should be signposted to appropriate support and independent advice, including SENDIAS where relevant.

Appendix 3. Headteacher Report Template for the Pupil Discipline Panel

Suggested report structure

1. Pupil details

- Name
- Date of birth
- Year group
- SEND / EHCP status
- Social worker / looked after / previously looked after status

2. Exclusion details

- Type of exclusion
- Date decision made
- Dates of exclusion
- Date of return (if applicable)

3. Summary of incident(s)

- Factual account of the behaviour leading to the exclusion
- Any impact on victims, staff or the wider school community

4. Evidence considered

- Statements
- CCTV / physical evidence
- Chronology
- Pupil account

5. Pupil voice

- How the pupil's views were sought
- Summary of what the pupil said
- How those views were considered

6. Context and individual circumstances

- Safeguarding considerations
- SEND / disability considerations
- Health / mental health considerations
- Family or contextual factors relevant to decision-making

7. Support and intervention prior to exclusion

- Behaviour support
- Pastoral support
- SEND support / reasonable adjustments
- Multi-agency involvement

8. Decision-making rationale

- Why the statutory threshold was considered met

- Why the decision was lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate
- Why alternative responses were not considered sufficient

9. Statutory process

- Notification completed
- LA informed
- Social worker / VSH informed where relevant
- Education arrangements confirmed

10. Recommendation / outcome for panel consideration

- Suspension: whether reinstatement is applicable
- Permanent exclusion: summary rationale and outcome sought

Appendix 4. Pupil Discipline Panel Terms of Reference

Purpose

To consider suspension and permanent exclusion cases in accordance with statutory guidance, the Trust's Scheme of Delegation and this policy.

Membership

- The panel shall consist of not fewer than three members drawn from the Trust's governance structure and appointed in accordance with the Trust's governance arrangements and statutory requirements.
- The Headteacher must not be a member of the panel.
- Any member with prior involvement in the incident, a connection to the pupil, or prior knowledge that could reasonably affect their impartiality must withdraw from the panel.
- Quoracy and delegation must reflect the Scheme of Delegation.

Core functions

- Consider representations regarding suspension and permanent exclusion.
- Decide reinstatement issues within the relevant statutory timescales.
- Ensure decisions are lawful, reasonable, fair and procedurally sound.
- Consider safeguarding, SEND, equality and vulnerability factors.

Principles

- Act fairly, impartially and within statutory timescales.
- Consider the interests of the pupil and the wider school community.
- Apply the civil standard of proof where relevant to factual determinations.
- Ensure an accurate written record is kept and that reasons for decisions are recorded clearly.

Clerk support

A clerk should support the panel, record proceedings, assist with the decision letter and help ensure that procedural requirements and statutory timescales are met.

Appendix 5. Pupil Discipline Panel Guidance

Before the meeting

- Read all papers in advance.
- Ensure the statutory timescale is understood.
- Be clear whether the case concerns suspension or permanent exclusion.
- Confirm that panel membership is quorate, impartial and consistent with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

During the meeting

- Consider all written and oral representations.
- Ensure the pupil is enabled to participate where appropriate.
- Consider the incident, context, evidence, safeguarding factors, SEND, equality and proportionality.
- Allow all parties a fair opportunity to present their case.
- Ensure the clerk maintains an accurate written record of the proceedings and decision.

Decision-making

- Focus on whether the exclusion decision was lawful, reasonable, fair and procedurally sound.
- Record reasons clearly.
- Avoid irrelevant factors and conflicts of interest.

After the meeting

- Confirm the decision in writing without delay.
- Ensure the letter explains rights of review where applicable.
- Ensure the confidential record is finalised and retained in accordance with Trust governance procedures.

Appendix 6. Pupil Discipline Panel Template Agenda

Suggested agenda

1. Welcome, introductions and confirmation of purpose
2. Confirmation of those present and their roles
3. Explanation of process by the Chair
4. Headteacher presentation of case
5. Questions to Headteacher
6. Parent/carers and/or pupil representations
7. Questions to parent/carers and/or pupil
8. Any further professional representations (social worker, VSH, local authority where applicable)
9. Final comments from both sides
10. All parties withdraw except panel members and clerk
11. Panel deliberation and decision
12. Confirmation that decision will be communicated in writing without delay

Appendix 7. Sample Letter Following the Pupil Discipline Panel Decision

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to confirm the decision of the pupil discipline panel, following its meeting on [date], to [uphold / overturn] the decision to [suspend / permanently exclude] [Pupil Name].

The panel considered the written and oral representations available to it, including those from the school, yourself and [Pupil Name] where applicable. The reasons for the decision were as follows:

[summary of reasons]

[If suspension and reinstatement directed:] The panel directed that [Pupil Name] should be reinstated [immediately / from date].

[If suspension upheld:] The panel decided not to direct reinstatement.

[If permanent exclusion upheld:] The panel decided not to reinstate [Pupil Name]. You have the right to request an Independent Review Panel. Any request must be made by [date – 15 school days from notice being given]. Your request should be sent to [details].

If you request an Independent Review Panel, you also have the right to request the attendance of a SEN expert. This right applies whether or not the school has formally identified SEN. Any request for a review should set out the grounds on which it is made and, where appropriate, how [Pupil Name]’s SEN is considered relevant to the permanent exclusion.

You may request that the review meeting is held by remote access, provided the statutory conditions for a fair and transparent meeting can be met. If you wish to request this, please contact [details].

If you believe there has been unlawful discrimination in relation to the permanent exclusion, you may also have a right to make a claim under the Equality Act 2010.

For free and impartial advice, you may wish to contact:

- [Local SENDIAS contact details]
- Coram Child Law Advice: 0300 330 5485 / childlawadvice.org.uk
- IPSEA: ipsea.org.uk

If you require further information or support, please contact [details].

Yours sincerely,

[Clerk / Chair name]

[Role]

Appendix 8. Reintegration Meeting Template

Reintegration Meeting Record

Pupil name:

Year group:

Date of meeting:

Return date:

Attendees:

1. Reason for suspension / incident summary

2. Pupil voice

What does the pupil say about what happened?

What support do they think will help?

3. Parent/carers views

4. Safeguarding / wellbeing considerations

5. SEND / health / reasonable adjustments

6. Support plan on return

- Key adult
- Check-in arrangements
- Curriculum / classroom adjustments
- Pastoral support
- External agency support

7. Expectations and next steps

8. Review date

Signed:

Headteacher / leader:

Parent/carers:

Pupil (where appropriate):

Appendix 9. Headteacher Step-by-Step Guide for Permanent Exclusions

Step 1 – Establish the facts

Gather evidence, statements, chronology and the pupil's account. Apply the civil standard of proof.

Step 2 – Consider context

Review safeguarding, SEND, equality, health, vulnerability and any contextual factors. Ensure pupil voice has been considered.

Step 3 – Review prior support

Consider previous intervention, reasonable adjustments, pastoral support and multi-agency involvement.

Step 4 – Consult

Consult the Director of Education and the Director of Specialist Provision wherever reasonably practicable. Seek DSL input where safeguarding concerns are relevant.

Step 5 – Decide whether the statutory threshold is met

Be satisfied that permanent exclusion is lawful, reasonable, fair, proportionate and a last resort.

Step 6 – Notify without delay

Notify parents/carers or the pupil if they are 18 or over, and provide written reasons and review rights. Notify the local authority and relevant professionals.

Step 7 – Arrange transition and records

Ensure all records are complete, accurate and retained appropriately. Support onward education arrangements and safeguarding handover.

Step 8 – Prepare for panel review

Complete the Headteacher report, organise evidence, ensure chronology is clear and confirm statutory notifications have been completed.

Appendix 10. Headteacher Permanent Exclusion Decision Letter

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to inform you that I have decided to permanently exclude [Pupil Name] from [School Name] with effect from [date].

This decision has been taken because [clear factual reason(s) for the permanent exclusion]. In reaching this decision, I have considered the available evidence, the circumstances of the incident, the views of [Pupil Name] where appropriate, the individual circumstances of your child, and the need to ensure that the response is lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

During the first five school days following the permanent exclusion, you must ensure that [Pupil Name] is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification. Failure to do so may result in a fixed penalty notice or prosecution.

The local authority is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education from the sixth school day following the first day of the permanent exclusion. Further information about those arrangements will be shared with you as soon as possible. [If known at the point of writing, insert the start date, address, times and reporting arrangements.]

You have the right to make representations to the pupil discipline panel regarding this permanent exclusion. A meeting will be arranged in accordance with statutory guidance, and you will receive further information about the date, time and process. You have the right to attend the meeting, to be accompanied or represented (at your own expense), and to submit written representations.

You may request that the meeting is held by remote access, provided the statutory conditions for a fair and transparent meeting can be met. If you wish to request this, please contact [name/role/contact details].

If [Pupil Name] has a social worker, or is looked after, the relevant professionals will also be informed in accordance with statutory guidance.

For free and impartial advice, you may wish to contact:

- [Local SENDIAS contact details]
- Coram Child Law Advice: 0300 330 5485 / childlawadvice.org.uk
- IPSEA: ipsea.org.uk

If you would like support or clarification, please contact [name/role/contact details].

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher name]

[Headteacher title]

Appendix 11. Pupil Discipline Panel Meeting Invitation Letter

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to invite you to attend a meeting of the pupil discipline panel to consider the [suspension / permanent exclusion] of [Pupil Name].

Date: [date]

Time: [time]

Location: [location / remote access details if applicable]

The purpose of the meeting is to consider the Headteacher's decision and any representations you wish to make.

You have the right to attend the meeting, to be accompanied or represented (at your own expense), and to submit written representations in advance. [Pupil Name] may also be enabled and encouraged to participate in the process in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and needs.

If you wish to submit written information, please send it to [name/role/contact details] by [date].

If you wish to request that the meeting is held by remote access, please contact [name/role/contact details] as soon as possible. Remote access can only be used where the statutory conditions for a fair and transparent meeting can be met.

[If applicable:] The social worker and/or Virtual School Head have also been informed of the meeting in accordance with statutory guidance.

If you require any reasonable adjustments to support your participation in the meeting, please contact [name/role/contact details].

Yours sincerely,

[Clerk / Chair name]

[Role]

Appendix 12. Suspension Review Outcome Letter

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to confirm the decision of the pupil discipline panel, following its consideration of the suspension of [Pupil Name] on [date].

The panel considered the written and oral representations available to it, including those from the school, yourself and [Pupil Name] where applicable.

The panel decided to [uphold / not uphold] the Headteacher's decision. The reasons for the decision were as follows:

[summary of reasons]

[If applicable:] The panel directed that [Pupil Name] should be reinstated [immediately / from date].

If you require further information or support, please contact [name/role/contact details].

Yours sincerely,

[Clerk / Chair name]

[Role]

Appendix 13. Cancellation of Exclusion Letter

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to confirm that the [suspension / permanent exclusion] of [Pupil Name], originally notified to you on [date], has now been cancelled.

This decision has been made because [brief explanation of the reason for cancellation].

[Pupil Name] may return to school on [date]. We will make appropriate arrangements to support a successful return to school.

The school will ensure that all relevant records and notifications are updated in accordance with statutory guidance. [If applicable: The pupil discipline panel's duty to consider reinstatement no longer applies because the exclusion was cancelled before that meeting took place.]

If you would like to meet to discuss the circumstances that led to the exclusion being cancelled, please contact [name/role/contact details] and we will arrange this without delay.

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher name]
[Headteacher title]

Appendix 14. Reintegration Meeting Invitation or Confirmation Letter

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to invite you to a reintegration meeting for [Pupil Name] following their suspension.

Date: [date]

Time: [time]

Location: [location]

The purpose of the meeting is to support [Pupil Name]'s successful return to school, discuss any support that may be needed and agree the next steps.

Where possible, we would like you and [Pupil Name] to attend. However, [Pupil Name] will still return to school as planned even if you are unable to attend.

If you are unable to attend, please contact [name/role/contact details] so that we can consider an alternative arrangement where appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher / senior leader name]

[Role]

Appendix 15. Off-Site Direction Notification Letter to Parents or Carers

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to inform you that the pupil discipline panel of [School Name] has directed that [Pupil Name] attend educational provision off-site at [name of provision] from [start date].

This arrangement has been made as a temporary measure to improve [Pupil Name]’s behaviour and support their continued progress in education.

Details of the off-site direction

Provider: [name of provision]

Address: [address]

Report to: [named contact if known]

Start date: [date]

Number of days / duration: [number of days / expected duration]

Session times: [times]

Reasons and objectives

The reasons for this arrangement are: [brief explanation].

The objectives of the placement are: [clear objectives linked to improved behaviour, engagement or support needs].

[School Name] remains responsible for [Pupil Name]’s education, safeguarding and outcomes while this arrangement is in place.

You have the right to request, in writing, that the pupil discipline panel hold a review meeting to consider the off-site direction, unless a review meeting has already taken place within the previous 10 weeks. The pupil discipline panel must also keep the placement under review at appropriate intervals.

If [Pupil Name] has an Education, Health and Care Plan, the local authority will also be informed in accordance with statutory guidance.

If you have any questions about this arrangement, please contact [name/role/contact details].

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Role]

Appendix 16. Off-Site Direction Review Meeting Invitation and Outcome Letter

Review meeting invitation

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to invite you to a review meeting regarding the off-site direction currently in place for [Pupil Name].

Date: [date]

Time: [time]

Location: [location]

The purpose of the meeting is to review whether the off-site direction should continue, whether any changes are required, and what further support or reintegration arrangements may be needed.

You are invited to attend and may also submit your views in writing before the meeting. If [Pupil Name] has an Education, Health and Care Plan, the local authority will also be invited in accordance with statutory guidance.

If you are unable to attend, please contact [name/role/contact details].

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Role]

Review meeting outcome letter

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to confirm the outcome of the review meeting held on [date] regarding the off-site direction for [Pupil Name].

Following consideration of the information available, the pupil discipline panel has decided that the off-site direction will [continue / end / continue with amendments] until [date if applicable].

The reasons for this decision are: [summary reasons].

Any updated objectives, support arrangements or reintegration plans are as follows: [summary].

If you have any questions about this decision, please contact [name/role/contact details].

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Role]

Appendix 17. Clerk Guidance for Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Review Meetings

Purpose

This appendix provides practical clerk guidance for meetings of the pupil discipline panel considering suspension or permanent exclusion. It should be read alongside the main policy, the Trust's Scheme of Delegation and relevant governance procedures.

Exclusion type / trigger	Meeting requirement	Timescale	Panel power / next step	Clerk notes
Suspension totalling 5 school days or fewer in a term and no public examination or national curriculum test missed	No meeting required, but representations must be considered if received	Within a reasonable period in accordance with statutory guidance	Cannot direct reinstatement	Record any representations received and the outcome of the consideration
Suspension totalling more than 5 but not more than 15 school days in a term and no public examination or national curriculum test missed	Meeting required only if parents, carers or eligible pupil request one	Within 50 school days of receiving notice of the suspension	May direct reinstatement if the statutory threshold is met	Check request date, arrange papers and confirm whether remote access has been requested
Suspension totalling more than 15 school days in a term, or where a pupil would miss a public examination or national curriculum test	Meeting required	Within 15 school days of receiving notice of the suspension, or before the examination or test where reasonably practicable	May direct reinstatement if the statutory threshold is met	Ensure all parties are invited, papers are circulated and the decision letter is issued without delay
Permanent exclusion	Meeting required	Within 15 school days of receiving notice of the permanent exclusion	May direct reinstatement or decline to reinstate; if upheld, IRP rights apply	Ensure invitation letter, papers, record of proceedings, outcome letter and IRP information are completed without delay

Clerk checklist

Before the meeting

- Confirm which statutory route applies and the relevant deadline.
- Confirm panel membership, quoracy and impartiality.
- Issue invitation letters and circulate papers within the required timescale.
- Check whether any reasonable adjustments or remote access arrangements are required.

During the meeting

- Record attendance, apologies and roles.
- Note the process followed and the key points raised by each party.
- Record the panel's decision and the reasons for it clearly.

After the meeting

- Prepare the confidential record of proceedings as soon as reasonably practicable in accordance with Trust governance procedures.
- Issue the outcome letter without delay and include any applicable review rights.
- Retain records securely and share them only where lawful and appropriate to do so.
- Support any subsequent governance reporting in accordance with Trust procedures

