



## EXCLUSION POLICY

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## > 1. Introduction and overview

Merrywood Education is committed to valuing diversity and equality of opportunity. We aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents/carers and staff are treated fairly and with respect, and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities.

## > 2. Partnership with parents/carers

Parents/carers working in partnership with the school consistently reinforcing the school's expectations is an important factor in every pupil's success. At Merrywood Education, we will work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure that expectations are clear and parents/carers can reinforce them with their pupils. This includes ensuring that parents/carers are kept informed about decisions made in response to a pupil's misbehaviour so that we can work together in the best interests of pupils and to ensure expectations for behaviour are made clear. The school is responsible for communicating to pupil's parents/carers and staff its expectations of standards of conduct. A range of policies and procedures are in place to promote good behaviour and appropriate conduct. These are:

- a) Positive Behaviour Policy
- b) Anti-Bullying Policy.
- c) Home-School Agreement
- d) Weapons Policy
- e) E-Safety Policy

## > 3. Supporting pupils to succeed

We aim to include, not exclude, and we approach all challenging behaviour in a supportive and positive way. We recognise that such behaviour can sometimes be symptomatic of a real, deeper need for our support and understanding. All pupils can go through times of inappropriate behaviour, and we strive to never “give up” easily on a pupil as we recognise that each person has a unique contribution to make to school life and we want to support them to achieve this. We will use behaviour data to assess patterns of challenging behaviour in pupils. Where patterns emerge, we will systematically intervene, drawing up an action plan with the pupil, parent/carer and teacher. The Assistant Head has overall responsibility for sharing data with all staff and analysing the data. It is the class teacher, parent/carers and the pupil’s responsibility to ensure the action plan is followed. No exclusion will be initiated without first attempting other strategies or, in the case of a serious single incident, a detailed staff debrief, followed by consultation with the Head of School.

## > 4. Reasons for exclusion

A decision to exclude a pupil, either internally, for a fixed period or permanently is seen as an absolute last resort by the school. The physical and emotional health of our pupils and staff is our primary concern, and we therefore accept, that in some serious situations, exclusion may be necessary. The decision to exclude will usually follow a range of strategies and be seen as a last resort, or it will be in response to a very serious breach of school rules and policies or a disciplinary offence such as:

- a) Serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff.
- b) Possession or use of an illegal drug on school premises.
- c) Possession of/bringing a weapon on to school premises.
- d) Persistent bullying.
- e) Persistent prejudice-based harassment or hate-based acts.
- f) Ongoing refusal to engage in learning and deliberately sabotaging the rest of the pupils's learning.
- g) Damage to school property

Exclusion may be the result of persistently poor behaviour or a serious single incident. Any exclusion will be at the decision of the Head of School, usually in consultation with other members of the senior leadership team (particularly if they were involved in debriefing the incident).

## > 5. Types of exclusion

### **5.1. Internal Exclusion/Reflection Time**

Internal exclusion or Reflection Time is when a pupil is excluded from the rest of the school group and must work and reflect, away from their class for a fixed amount of time. This will be in a different classroom and will take part in psychoeducation, a reflective intervention, that enables the pupil to thinking time. An internal exclusion/reflection time is a discretionary measure, where a pupil's behaviour is escalating and more serious measures need to be taken, but there are not yet grounds for an external, fixed-term exclusion.

Typically, a pupil receiving a consequence of this level should be receiving additional support for their behaviour, intended to help them to avoid their behaviour escalating to a point where a fixed term exclusion is necessary (examples support from the teacher and or the therapist, meetings with parent/carers etc).

### **5.2. Temporary / Fixed-Term exclusion**

A temporary / fixed term exclusion is when a pupil is excluded from school and must remain home for a fixed amount of time. This should be for the shortest time necessary to ensure minimal disruption to the pupil's education, whilst mindful of the seriousness of the breach of policy. A reintegration meeting with the parent/carer and pupils should be held on or before the day of return to school. However, the period of exclusion must not be extended to accommodate this.

### **5.3. Permanent exclusion**

A permanent exclusion is when a pupil is permanently excluded from school and not allowed to return. This is a very serious decision and the Head of School will consult with Merrywood staff. The case will be brought to the Head of School to be heard with both the pupil and parent/carer present. The Head of School will make a recommendation. If the recommendation is to permanently exclude, the Head of School will meet with the advisory board to discuss further and a meeting will be held with the Local Authority as soon as possible. The advisory board will be informed of the decision.

## > 6. Persistent or cumulative problems

Internal and temporary / fixed-term exclusion may be used in response to a persistent poor behaviour which breaches school rules and policies. These would be imposed only when the school had already offered and implemented a range of support and management strategies. These could be joint action plans with parents/carers, pupil and school, behaviour intervention with the teacher, target setting, home/school communication book etc.



## > 7. The length of an exclusion

This will depend upon a number of factors, such as the severity of the incident, and the likely impact on the pupil's learning and ability to succeed on returning to school. Such decisions will be made in the best interests of the pupil, whilst also mindful of the need to maintain order and reinforce the rules and expectations of the school in a clear and consistent way. Single incident internal and temporary / fixed-term exclusions may be used in response to a very serious breach of school rules and policies or a disciplinary offence.

In the most serious cases where a problem persists and there is no improvement, a permanent exclusion/ managed move may be necessary. In such cases the Head of School will investigate the incidents/concerns and consider all evidence to support taking account of the school's policies. The pupils will be encouraged to give his/her version of their circumstances/incidents and the Head of School will check whether the incident/s may have been provoked, for example by bullying or racial harassment. The Local Authority will be informed of all decisions to exclude.

## > 8. The decision to exclude

If the Head of School decides to exclude a pupil, they will:

- a) Ensure that there is sufficient recorded evidence to support the decision.
- b) Explain the decision to the pupils, if the pupils is in the state of mind to listen to the decision.
- c) Notify the local authority without delay regarding the length and reasons for exclusion
- d) If a child has a social worker or is looked after the Headteacher will inform the social worker and/or virtual school head without delay.
- e) Send information to the parents/carers confirming the reasons for the exclusion, whether it is a permanent or temporary/fixed term exclusion.
- f) The length of the exclusion and any terms or conditions agreed for the pupil's return.
- g) Plan how to address the pupil's needs and integration back into their school site on their return.

Plan a meeting with parents/carers and pupils on their return to be conducted by a suitable member of staff, prior to their return wherever reasonably practical. This may also happen over the telephone.

## > 9. Safeguarding

***An exclusion will not be enforced if doing so may put the safety of the pupils at risk.***

In cases where parents/carers will not comply with; for example, refusing to collect the pupil, be at home to receive the pupil, then the pupil's welfare is the priority. In this situation, depending on the reason for exclusion, the school may consider an internal exclusion until the end of the day, implementing the original exclusion decision from the time the pupil is collected from school, or, in more severe circumstances the school may contact Social Services and/or the Police to safely take the pupils off site.

## > 10. Re-integration Meeting

After every period of fixed term exclusion, the pupils and parent/carer will be offered a reintegration meeting with a senior member of staff. At this meeting the behaviour leading to exclusion will be discussed and targets will be set for improvement. Support around behaviour will also be discussed. The meeting will be recorded, and a copy retained by the parent/carer, pupil and school. Whilst reintegration is an opportunity to reflect and recall the behaviour expectations the time post-reintegration will be viewed as a fresh start and will foster a sense of belonging within the Merrywood family. This meeting may well be held over the telephone, due to the distance away from the pupil's home. If a meeting with parents is not able to be held this will not affect the date of the child's reintegration back into school.

## > 11. Work set

When a pupil is excluded for more than one day, work should be set by the school within a reasonable time-scale and this should be returned to the school when the exclusion is over.

If a pupil is excluded at the end of a school day, then it may not be possible to arrange for work to be set until the following morning. A pupil can be excluded for up to 10 continuous days on a fixed term basis. On the 6th continuous day, the school is responsible for providing education for the pupils, which could be at another school, or nearby location, such as the local library, or by providing home education

## > 12. Behaviour outside school

Pupils's behaviour outside school on school business e.g. on school trips, at sports events, is subject to the school's behaviour policy. Unacceptable behaviour in such circumstances will be dealt with as if it had taken place in school; additionally, this includes any serious breach of policy which could 'bring the school into disrepute'.

The school must take account of any special educational needs when considering whether or not to exclude a pupil. The Head of School should ensure that reasonable steps, have been taken by the school to respond to a pupils's disability so the pupils is not treated less favourably for reasons related to the disability.

## > 13. Giving notice on placement

In cases where the Head of School and parents/carers agree that the progress of the pupils has been unsatisfactory and the pupils is unwilling or unable to profit from the educational opportunities offered, or if a parent's/carers failure to engage in strategies implemented by the school are resulting in a continuing pattern of poor behaviour or lack of improvement in behaviour, the Head of School may consult with the Local Authority and serve notice on placement. This is not exclusion and in such cases the Head of School may assist the parents/carers in placing the pupils in another school.

## > 14. Removal from the school for other reasons

The Head of School may send a pupils home, after consultation with that pupil's parents/carers, if the pupil poses an immediate and serious risk to the health and safety of other pupils and staff, for example because of a diagnosed illness such as a notifiable disease. This is not an exclusion and should be for the shortest possible time. A pupil cannot be 'sent home' for other reasons, including poor behaviour.



## > 15. Equal Opportunities

The school recognise that it is unlawful to take into account anyone's gender, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age, or sexual orientation. Full consideration has been given to this during the formulation of this policy as it is the school's aim that no-one at Merrywood Education should suffer discrimination, either directly or indirectly, or harassment on any of these grounds.

## > 16. Procedure for appeal

If parents/carers wish to appeal the decision to exclude, the matter will be referred to the Advisory Board for further guidance and support.

**Date:** September 2023

**Date of review:** September 2024



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