

OAK GROVE COLLEGE



Everyone matters, every day counts

# EXCLUSION POLICY

Policy created:

Policy first adopted:

Signed chair of Management Committee:

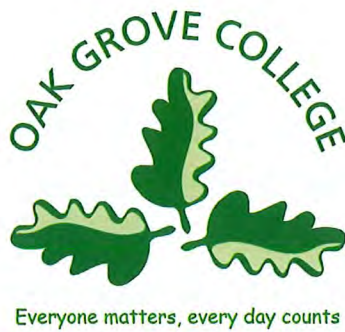
Re-adopted & signed:

*Chris Chalmer*

15. 11. 21

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Consultation with SLT team

September 2021  
September 2021



## Exclusion Policy

### 1. Principles

This policy, which is a supplement to the College Positive Relationships Policy, deals with the policy and practice, which informs the use of exclusion. It is underpinned by the shared commitment of all members of the College community to achieve two important aims:

1. The first is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the College community, and to maintain an appropriate educational environment in which all can learn and succeed;
2. The second is to realise the aim of reducing the need to use exclusion as a sanction.

Oak Grove College is a values led community and our vision is summed up in the following statement: 'Everyone matters, every day counts'. Thus, a decision to exclude a student either of a fixed period or permanently is a last resort.

The college is responsible for communicating to students, parents and staff its expectations of standards of conduct. A range of policies and procedures are in place to promote good behaviour, positive relationships, and appropriate conduct.

The college will take account of any special educational needs when considering whether or not to exclude a student.

The Headteacher will ensure that reasonable steps have been taken by the college to respond to a student's disability, so the student is not treated less favourably for reasons related to the disability.

### 2. Aims

Our school aims to ensure that:

- Students in school are safe and happy
- The exclusions process is applied fairly and consistently
- The exclusions process is understood by governors, staff, parents and students
- Students do not become NEET (not in education, employment or training)

### 3. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on statutory guidance from the Department for Education: Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and student referral units (PRUs) in England.

It is based on the following legislation, which outline schools' powers to exclude students:

- Section 52 of the Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011
- The School Discipline (Student Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012
- In addition, the policy is based on:
  - Part 7, chapter 2 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which looks at parental responsibility for excluded students
  - Section 579 of the Education Act 1996, which defines 'school day'
  - The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Students) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended by The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Students) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014

#### **4. The decision to exclude**

Only the headteacher, or acting headteacher, can exclude a student from school. A permanent exclusion will be taken as a last resort.

Our college is aware that off-rolling is unlawful. Ofsted defines off-rolling as:

"...the practice of removing a student from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school roll, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the student."

We are committed to following all statutory exclusions procedures to ensure that every child receives an education in a safe and caring environment.

A decision to exclude a student will be taken only:

- In response to serious or persistent breaches of the colleges positive relationships policy, **and**
- If allowing the student to remain in college would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

Before deciding whether to exclude a student, either permanently or for a fixed period, the headteacher will:

- Consider all the relevant facts and evidence, including whether the incident(s) leading to the exclusion were provoked
- *Allow the student to give their version of events if they are able to do so or allow someone to advocate for them if they are not able to do so*
- Consider the student's special educational needs (SEN). The Headteacher will ensure that reasonable steps have been taken by the college to respond to a student's special educational needs and disability so the student is not treated less favourably for reasons related to these.

**Reasonable steps** will include:

- Differentiation in the college's Behaviour Policy (Positive Relationships Policy)
- Developing strategies to support, improve or prevent the student's behaviour
- Requesting external help with the student
- Personalised behaviour management plans (Including Positive Handling Plans)
- Staff training

Where reasonable adjustments to policies and practices have been made to accommodate a student's needs and to avoid the necessity for exclusion as far as possible, exclusion may be justified if there is a material and substantial reason for it.

A specific incident affecting order and discipline in the college may be such a reason.

No exclusion will be initiated without having first exhausted other strategies or, in the case of a serious single incident, a thorough investigation.

## **5. Definition**

For the purposes of exclusions, school day is defined as any day on which there is a school session. Therefore, INSET or staff training days do not count as a school day.

## **6. Roles and responsibilities**

### **6.1 The Headteacher**

#### **Informing parents**

The headteacher will immediately provide the following information, in writing, to the parents of an excluded student:

- The reason(s) for the exclusion
- The length of a fixed-term exclusion or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent
- Information about parents' right to make representations about the exclusion to the governing board and how the student may be involved in this
- How any representations should be made
- Where there is a legal requirement for the governing board to meet to consider the reinstatement of a student, and that parents have a right to attend a meeting, be represented at a meeting (at their own expense) and to bring a friend

The headteacher will also notify parents by the end of the afternoon session on the day their child is excluded that for the first 5 school days of an exclusion, or until the start date of any alternative provision where this is earlier, parents are legally required to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without a good reason. Parents may be given a fixed penalty notice or prosecuted if they fail to do this.

If alternative provision is being arranged, the following information will be included when notifying parents of an exclusion:

- The start date for any provision of full-time education that has been arranged
- The start and finish times of any such provision, including the times for morning and afternoon sessions, where relevant
- The address at which the provision will take place
- Any information required by the student to identify the person they should report to on the first day

Where this information on alternative provision is not reasonably ascertainable by the end of the afternoon session, it may be provided in a subsequent notice, but it will be provided no later than 48 hours before the provision is due to start. The only exception to this is where alternative provision is to be provided before the sixth day of an exclusion, in which case the information can be provided with less than 48 hours' notice with parents' consent.

### **Exercise of discretion**

In reaching a decision, the Headteacher will always look at each case on its own merits. Therefore, a tariff system, fixing a standard penalty for a particular action, is both unfair and inappropriate.

In considering whether permanent exclusion is the most appropriate sanction, the Headteacher will consider:

1. the gravity of the incident, or series of incidents, and whether it constitutes a serious breach of college discipline and
2. the effect that the student remaining in the college would have on the education and welfare of other students and staff.

In line with its statutory duty, these same two tests of appropriateness will form the basis of the deliberations of governors when it meets to consider the Headteacher's decision to exclude. This governing board will require the Headteacher to explain the reasons for the decision and will look at appropriate evidence, such as the student's college record, witness statements and the strategies used by the college to support the student prior to exclusion. In addition, the governing board must ensure that the decision was fair, reasonable and procedurally correct.

### **Informing the governing board and local authority**

The headteacher will immediately notify the governing board and the local authority (LA) of:

- A permanent exclusion, including when a fixed-period exclusion is followed by a decision to permanently exclude a student
- Exclusions which would result in the student being excluded for more than 5 school days (or more than 10 lunchtimes) in a term

For a permanent exclusion, if the student lives outside the local authority in which the school is located, the headteacher will also immediately inform the student's 'home authority' of the exclusion and the reason(s) for it without delay.

For all other exclusions, the headteacher will notify the governing board and local authority once a term.

## **6.2 The governing body**

Responsibilities regarding exclusions is delegated to the governing board exclusion panel consisting of at least 3 governors.

The governing board exclusion panel has a duty to consider the reinstatement of an excluded student (see section 6).

The governing board has a duty to consider the reinstatement of an excluded student (see section 6).

Within 14 days of receipt of a request, the governing board will provide the Secretary of State and the local authority with information about any exclusions in the last 12 months.

For a fixed-period exclusion of more than 5 school days, the local authority will arrange suitable full-time education for the student. This provision will begin no later than the sixth day of the exclusion.

Provision does not have to be arranged for students in the final year of compulsory education who do not have any further public examinations to sit.

### **6.3 The Local Authority**

For permanent exclusions, the local authority is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education to begin no later than the sixth day of the exclusion.

### **7. Considering the reinstatement of a student**

The governing board exclusion panel will consider the reinstatement of an excluded student within 15 school days of receiving the notice of the exclusion if:

- The exclusion is permanent
- It is a fixed-term exclusion which would bring the student's total number of school days of exclusion to more than 15 in a term

If requested to do so by parents the governing board exclusion panel will consider the reinstatement of an excluded student within 50 school days of receiving notice of the exclusion if the student would be excluded from college for more than 5 school days, but less than 15, in a single term.

The governing board exclusion panel can either:

- Decline to reinstate the student, or
- Direct the reinstatement of the student immediately, or on a particular date

In reaching a decision, the governing board exclusion panel will consider whether the exclusion was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair and whether the headteacher followed their legal duties. They will decide whether or not a fact is true 'on the balance of probabilities', which differs from the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt', as well as any evidence that was presented in relation to the decision to exclude.

Minutes will be taken of the meeting, and a record of evidence considered kept. The outcome will also be recorded on the student's educational record.

The governing board exclusion panel will notify, in writing, the headteacher, parents and the local authority of its decision, along with reasons for its decision, without delay.

Where an exclusion is permanent, the governing board exclusion panel decision will also include the following:

The fact that it is permanent

Notice of parents' right to ask for the decision to be reviewed by an independent review panel, and:

- The date by which an application for an independent review must be made
- The name and address to whom an application for a review should be submitted
- That any application should set out the grounds on which it is being made and that, where appropriate, reference to how the student's SEN are considered to be relevant to the exclusion
- That, regardless of whether the excluded student has recognised SEN, parents have a right to require the local authority to appoint an SEN expert to attend the review
- Details of the role of the SEN expert and that there would be no cost to parents for this appointment
- That parents must make clear if they wish for an SEN expert to be appointed in any application for a review
- That parents may, at their own expense, appoint someone to make written and/or oral representations to the panel, and parents may also bring a friend to the review

If parents believe that the exclusion has occurred as a result of discrimination, they may make a claim under the Equality Act 2010 to the first-tier tribunal (special educational needs and disability), in the case of disability discrimination, or the county court, in the case of other forms of discrimination. A claim of discrimination made under these routes should be lodged within 6 months of the date on which the discrimination is alleged to have taken place.

### **8. An independent review**

If parents apply for an independent review, the local authority will arrange for an independent panel to review the decision of the governing board not to reinstate a permanently excluded student.

Applications for an independent review must be made within 15 school days of notice being given to the parents by the governing board exclusion panel of its decision to not reinstate a student.

A panel of 3 or 5 members will be constituted with representatives from each of the categories below. Where a 5-member panel is constituted, 2 members will come from the school governors category and 2 members will come from the headteacher category.

- A lay member to chair the panel who has not worked in any school in a paid capacity, disregarding any experience as a school governor or volunteer
- School governors who have served as a governor for at least 12 consecutive months in the last 5 years, provided they have not been teachers or headteachers during this time

- Headteachers or individuals who have been a headteacher within the last 5 years
- A person may not serve as a member of a review panel if they:
  - Are a member of the local authority or governing board of the excluding school
  - Are the headteacher of the excluding school, or have held this position in the last 5 years
- Are an employee of the local authority or the governing board, of the excluding school (unless they are employed as a headteacher at another school)
- Have, or at any time have had, any connection with the local authority school, governing board, parents or student, or the incident leading to the exclusion, which might reasonably be taken to raise doubts about their impartiality
- Have not had the required training within the last 2 years (see appendix 1 for what training must cover)

The panel's decision can be decided by a majority vote. In the case of a tied decision, the chair has the casting vote.

## **9. School registers**

A student's name will be removed from the college admissions register if:

- 15 school days have passed since the parents were notified of the exclusion panel's decision to not reinstate the student and no application has been made for an independent review panel, or
- The parents have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent review panel

Where an application for an independent review has been made, the governing board will wait until that review has concluded before removing a student's name from the register.

Where alternative provision has been made for an excluded student and they attend it, code B (education off-site) or code D (dual registration) will be used on the attendance register.

Where excluded students are not attending alternative provision, code E (absent) will be used.

## **10. Returning from a fixed-term exclusion**

Following a fixed-term exclusion, a re-integration meeting will be held involving the student, parents, a member of senior staff and other staff, where appropriate.

The following measures may be implemented, for example, when a student returns from a fixed-term exclusion:

- Amending behaviour management/support plan
- Reasonable adjustments to the timings of their school day / specific activities within

## **11. Monitoring arrangements**

The safeguarding casework supervision panel monitors the number of exclusions every term and the senior leader responsible for behavior reports back to the governors. They also liaise with the local authority to ensure suitable full-time education for excluded students.

This policy will be reviewed by the senior leader responsible for behaviour every 3 years. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.



## Appendix 1: Independent review panel training

The local authority must ensure that all members of an independent review panel and clerks have received training within the 2 years prior to the date of the review.

Training must have covered:

- The requirements of the primary legislation, regulations and statutory guidance governing exclusions, which would include an understanding of how the principles applicable in an application for judicial review relate to the panel's decision making.
- The need for the panel to observe procedural fairness and the rules of natural justice.
- The role of the chair and the clerk of a review panel.
- The duties of headteachers, governing boards and the panel under the Equality Act 2010.
- The effect of section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 (acts of public authorities unlawful if not compatible with certain human rights) and the need to act in a manner compatible with human rights protected by that Act.

Appendix 2:

Reintegration Meeting

Student:	Date:
Attendees:	
What I can change - how will I be kind, be safe and be respectful?	
What Oak Grove College can change - to prevent any further exclusions	
What home can change - to support at home and school	
How we will know this is working	
Review Date:	
Signed:	