

Suspensions and Exclusions Policy



Policy Owner:	Lighthouse Multi Academy Trust
Approved/ Ratified:	Pat Hunt
Review Dates:	July 2027

Document Version Control Log

Version	Modification Date	Synopsis of Changes
1.0	September 2025	
2.0	July 2026	Policy updated and reviewed

Aims

Lighthouse Multi Academy Trust is committed to creating safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments where every pupil can achieve their full potential. Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious interventions which will only be used lawfully, fairly, proportionately and as a last resort, in accordance with statutory guidance.

The Lighthouse Multi Academy Trust aims to:

- Ensure that the exclusions process is applied fairly and consistently
- Help trustees, staff, parents and pupils understand the exclusions process
- Ensure that pupils in the academy are safe and happy
- Prevent pupils from becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training)
- Ensure all suspensions and permanent exclusions are carried out lawfully

Principles

Lighthouse Multi Academy Trust recognises that suspension and permanent exclusion are serious interventions which affect the education and wellbeing of children and young people.

Decisions will always be made in accordance with the following principles:

- legality;
- fairness;
- proportionality;
- consistency;
- transparency;
- safeguarding;
- inclusion;
- accountability.

The Trust expects Headteachers to exercise professional judgement in every case and not apply exclusion automatically.

A note on off-rolling

'Off-rolling' is a form of gaming and occurs where an academy makes the decision, in the interests of the academy and not the pupil, to:

- Remove a pupil from the academy roll without a formal, permanent exclusion, or
- Encourage a parent to remove their child from the academy roll, or
- Retain a pupil on the academy roll but does not allow them to attend the academy normally, without a formal permanent exclusion or suspension.

Accordingly, we will not suspend or exclude a pupil unlawfully by telling or forcing them to leave or not allowing them to attend the academy without following the statutory procedure contained in the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012 or formally recording the event.

Any suspension or exclusion will be made on disciplinary grounds, and will not be made:

- Because a pupil has special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) that the academy feels unable to support, or
- Due to a pupil's poor academic performance, or
- Because the pupil hasn't met a specific condition, such as attending a reintegration meeting

If any pupil is suspended or excluded on the above grounds, this will also be considered as 'off-rolling'

Examples of prohibited off-rolling include:

- encouraging elective home education to avoid suspension or permanent exclusion;
- requiring pupils to remain at home without formally recording a suspension;
- using unlawful part-time timetables to manage behaviour;
- encouraging parents to accept a managed move without informed agreement;
- removing pupils from roll primarily for the benefit of the ACADEMY rather than the pupil.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based upon the Department for Education statutory guidance **Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, including Pupil Movement**, which came into force on **26 July 2026**.

It is also based on the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Education Act 2002 (as amended)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012
- Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) (Application to Academies and Pupil Referral Units and Minor Amendments) Regulations 2026
- Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended)
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0–25 years
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance
- Academy Trust Handbook
- Human Rights Act 1998

This policy should be read alongside the Trust's:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Complaints Policy

The Trust will review this policy whenever statutory guidance changes, or sooner where legislative amendments require immediate implementation.

This policy should be read alongside the Trust Behaviour Policy and should not be interpreted in isolation.

Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

A suspension is where a pupil is temporarily prohibited from attending school for a fixed period because of a disciplinary incident. A suspension may be for part of a school day or one or more full school days.

A pupil may not be suspended for more than **45 school days in a single academic year**.

A permanent exclusion means a pupil is removed from the school roll because it has been determined that allowing them to remain would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others.

Permanent exclusion is the most serious sanction available to a Headteacher and will only be used:

- as a last resort;
- after careful consideration of all available evidence;
- where the decision is lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate;
- after consideration of whether appropriate support and interventions could reasonably prevent exclusion.

Before deciding upon permanent exclusion the Headteacher will consider:

- the individual circumstances of the pupil;
- safeguarding considerations;
- the impact on victims;
- whether reasonable adjustments have been made where appropriate;
- whether SEND has contributed to the behaviour;
- whether additional pastoral intervention could be effective;
- whether an Early Help assessment or multi-agency support is required;
- whether off-site direction could be appropriate;
- whether a managed move has been explored (where suitable and agreed).

Each case will be considered individually. There are no automatic offences leading to permanent exclusion.

Permanent exclusion should normally only be considered after appropriate support, intervention and reasonable adjustments have been explored, unless the seriousness of the incident is such that immediate permanent exclusion is justified to protect the education or welfare of others.

Preventing Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

Lighthouse Multi Academy Trust believes that promoting positive behaviour and providing appropriate support is the most effective way of reducing suspensions and permanent exclusions.

Each academy will develop a culture where:

- positive relationships are promoted;
- expectations are clear and consistently applied;
- early intervention is prioritised;
- barriers to learning are identified promptly;
- support is tailored to individual need.

Before considering suspension or permanent exclusion, schools should consider whether additional support may reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

This may include:

- pastoral mentoring;

- behaviour support plans;
- Early Help assessments;
- SEND assessment;
- Educational Psychology involvement;
- outreach services;
- alternative provision;
- off-site direction;
- managed moves;
- reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

Headteachers should regularly review patterns of behaviour and suspension data to identify pupils requiring additional intervention before behaviour escalates.

Keeping Pupils Apart for Safeguarding Purposes

In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to keep two or more pupils apart to manage an immediate safeguarding risk. This is not a suspension, permanent exclusion or informal exclusion.

Decisions will:

- be based on a clear safeguarding risk assessment;
- be proportionate;
- be reviewed regularly;
- minimise disruption to education;
- involve parents wherever appropriate;
- involve Children's Social Care or other agencies where necessary.

Appropriate records will be maintained explaining:

- the safeguarding concern;
- why separation is necessary;
- the review arrangements;
- how education will continue.

The Equality Act (2010) and Special Educational Need

The Trust recognises that some groups of pupils are statistically more likely to experience suspension or permanent exclusion.

The Trust will actively work to reduce this disproportionality through early identification, appropriate intervention and effective multi-agency working.

Before making a decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, the Headteacher will carefully consider whether:

- the pupil has identified or emerging SEND;
- reasonable adjustments have been made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010;
- the behaviour may be linked to unmet needs;
- further assessment is required;
- safeguarding factors have influenced the behaviour;
- the pupil has a social worker;
- the pupil is looked after or previously looked after;
- the pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan;
- exclusion could place the pupil at greater risk of harm.

Where appropriate, schools will seek advice from:

- parents;
- the SENDCo;
- Educational Psychology;
- Children's Social Care;
- Virtual School;
- Local Authority SEND Team;
- relevant health professionals.

Where a pupil has an EHCP, the Trust will consider whether an emergency or interim annual review should be requested before permanent exclusion is considered.

No pupil will be suspended or permanently excluded simply because the school is unable to meet their additional needs.

Where we have concerns about the behaviour, or risk of suspension/exclusion, of a child with additional needs, a pupil with an EHCP, looked after child, we will, in partnership with others (including the local authority as necessary), consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required. This will involve assessing the suitability of provision for a pupil's SEN.

Where a pupil has an EHC plan, we will evaluate whether there is a need to request a new annual review or interim/emergency review.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School

Deciding whether to suspend or exclude

Only the Headteacher (or, where applicable, the Executive Headteacher acting with delegated authority) has the legal authority to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil on disciplinary grounds.

The Headteacher may suspend or permanently exclude a pupil for behaviour occurring:

- on the school site;
- whilst travelling to or from school;
- whilst wearing school uniform;
- whilst representing the school;
- online where behaviour has school-related consequences;
- off-site where the behaviour could adversely affect the welfare of members of the school community or the orderly running of the school.

Permanent exclusion will only be used as a last resort after careful consideration of all available evidence and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others.

Each case will be considered individually. Decisions will be lawful, reasonable, fair, proportionate and made on the balance of probabilities.

The Headteacher will not operate a "zero tolerance" approach that automatically results in exclusion for particular behaviours without considering the individual circumstances of each case.

Before making a decision

Before deciding whether to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, the Headteacher will consider all relevant evidence, including:

- the facts of the incident;
- witness statements;
- CCTV or other available evidence;
- the pupil's explanation;
- whether the incident was provoked;
- previous behaviour records where appropriate;
- the age and understanding of the pupil;
- the impact on victims;
- safeguarding considerations;
- the wider context surrounding the incident.

The standard of proof applied will be the civil standard, namely **the balance of probabilities**.

Professional Curiosity

Before reaching a decision, the Headteacher should exercise professional curiosity and seek to understand the underlying causes of the pupil's behaviour. This should include consideration of whether the behaviour may be linked to unmet special educational needs, disability, safeguarding concerns, adverse childhood experiences, trauma, mental health needs, family circumstances or other vulnerabilities. Understanding the context of the behaviour does not excuse unacceptable conduct, but it should inform decision-making and help determine whether additional support or intervention is required alongside, or instead of, suspension or permanent exclusion.

Consideration of Vulnerable Pupils

Before making any decision, the Headteacher must carefully consider whether the pupil:

- has SEND or emerging SEND;
- has an Education, Health and Care Plan;
- is undergoing statutory assessment;
- has a disability;
- has a social worker;
- is a Child in Need;
- is subject to a Child Protection Plan;
- is looked after or previously looked after;
- is a young carer;
- is known to Youth Justice Services;
- has experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences;
- is at risk of exploitation.

The Headteacher should consider whether additional support or reasonable adjustments could prevent exclusion.

Where appropriate, advice should be sought from:

- the SENDCo;
- Children's Social Care;
- the Virtual School Head;
- Educational Psychology;
- Behaviour Support Services;
- Health professionals;

- the Local Authority.

Considering Alternatives to Exclusion

Before permanently excluding a pupil, the Headteacher should consider whether one or more alternative strategies may better meet the needs of the pupil and protect the wider school community.

These may include:

- additional pastoral support;
- restorative practice;
- behaviour intervention programmes;
- Early Help;
- multi-agency support;
- reasonable adjustments;
- off-site direction;
- alternative provision;
- a managed move (where appropriate and agreed).

The Headteacher should record why these alternatives were or were not appropriate.

Where pupils are directed off-site, academies will maintain regular oversight of attendance, safeguarding, educational progress and placement quality throughout the placement.

Victims

The Headteacher must also consider the welfare and safety of victims.

This includes:

- protecting victims from further harm;
- ensuring victims continue to feel safe within school;
- considering the impact of any decision on the wider school community;
- balancing the needs of all pupils when reaching a decision.

The Pupil's Views

Before any decision is reached, the pupil will normally be given the opportunity to explain their version of events.

The Headteacher should take account of:

- the pupil's age;
- maturity;
- understanding;
- communication needs;
- SEND;
- any additional vulnerabilities.

Where appropriate, pupils may be supported by:

- parents;
- carers;
- social workers;
- advocates;

- interpreters.

The Headteacher will explain how the pupil's views have been taken into account when making the decision.

Informing Parents:

If suspension or permanent exclusion is being considered, parents should be informed at the earliest appropriate opportunity so that they can contribute relevant information and discuss support available for their child.

Where a decision is made to suspend or permanently exclude, parents must be informed without delay.

Written notification must include:

- the reason for the decision;
- the period of suspension or confirmation of permanent exclusion;
- information about parents' rights to make representations;
- information about governing board meetings;
- the right to request a remote meeting;
- arrangements for education during the exclusion;
- parental responsibilities during the first five school days;
- the possibility of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice where applicable.

The letter should be written in clear, accessible language.

Education During Suspension

The school will ensure that suitable work is provided from the first day of suspension.

Where appropriate, work should:

- be accessible;
- be ambitious;
- be marked where possible;
- enable pupils to continue making academic progress.

Where pupils have SEND, reasonable adjustments will be made.

Where a pupil has a social worker or is looked after, the school will work with the Local Authority to secure appropriate provision from the earliest possible opportunity.

Informing the Lighthouse Multi Academy Trust and Governing Body:

The Headteacher must notify the Governing Board and the Trust without delay of:

- every permanent exclusion;
- suspensions totalling more than five school days in a term;
- suspensions resulting in a pupil missing a public examination or National Curriculum test;
- cancelled suspensions or permanent exclusions.

Notification should include sufficient information to enable governors to fulfil their statutory responsibilities.

Informing the Local Authority (LA)

The Headteacher must notify the Local Authority of every suspension and permanent exclusion without delay.

Where the pupil resides in another authority, the home Local Authority must also be notified.

The Local Authority notification must include:

- pupil details;
- reasons;
- length of suspension;
- safeguarding information where appropriate;
- cancellation details (where applicable).

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

Where a pupil has a social worker and/or is looked after or previously looked after, the Headteacher must notify them as early as possible if suspension or permanent exclusion is being considered.

Following a decision, notification must be made without delay.

The Trust recognises that early involvement of professionals can often prevent exclusion and improve outcomes for children.

Cancelling suspensions and permanent exclusions

The Headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion before it has been reviewed by the Governing Board where it is appropriate to do so.

Where this happens:

- parents must be informed immediately;
- the Local Authority must be notified;
- the Governing Board must be notified;
- any social worker and Virtual School Head must be informed;
- reasons for the cancellation must be recorded.

The pupil will return to school without delay and appropriate reintegration support will be arranged.

Providing education during the first 5 days of a suspension or permanent exclusion

During the first 5 days of a suspension, if the pupil is not attending alternative (AP) provision, the headteacher will take steps to ensure that achievable and accessible work is set and marked for the pupil.

Online pathways the academy regularly uses may be used for this.

If the pupil has a special educational need or disability, the Executive headteacher/Headteacher or Head of School will make sure that reasonable adjustments are made to the provision where necessary.

If the pupil is looked after or if they have a social worker, the academy will work with the LA to arrange Alternative Provision from the first day following the suspension or permanent exclusion. Where this isn't possible, the academy will take reasonable steps to set and mark work for the pupil, including the use of online pathways.

On the sixth day of an exclusion, the academy, under the direction of the headteacher (or local authority, in the event of a permanent exclusion) must arrange suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory academy age.

Lighthouse Academies are responsible for recording exclusions on the Arbor system in a timely manner.

Governance arrangements of the academy

The Board of Trustees has delegated responsibility for carrying out its statutory functions in relation to suspensions and permanent exclusions to the Local Governing Body (or designated committee), in accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

Governors and Trustees will ensure that all decisions relating to suspension and permanent exclusion are lawful, reasonable, fair, proportionate and made in accordance with current legislation and statutory guidance.

Governors must act independently, objectively and without bias when carrying out their statutory responsibilities.

Responsibilities of the Governing Board

The Governing Board (or delegated committee) is responsible for:

- considering representations made by parents in accordance with statutory timescales;
- considering whether a suspended or permanently excluded pupil should be reinstated;
- ensuring suspension and permanent exclusion procedures have been followed correctly;
- considering whether the Headteacher's decision was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair;
- considering the welfare of both the suspended or excluded pupil and the wider school community;
- considering the impact of the decision on victims where relevant;
- ensuring Equality Act 2010 duties have been fully considered;
- considering whether appropriate regard has been given to pupils with SEND;
- ensuring safeguarding duties have been fulfilled;
- ensuring decisions have been made on the balance of probabilities;
- ensuring statutory guidance has been followed throughout the decision-making process.

Governors must not simply substitute their own judgement for that of the Headteacher. Instead, they must determine whether the Headteacher acted within the law, followed statutory guidance and reached a decision that was reasonable in the circumstances.

Independence

Governors participating in suspension or permanent exclusion hearings must:

- have had no prior involvement in the decision;
- declare any conflicts of interest;
- remain impartial throughout proceedings;
- receive appropriate training in suspension and permanent exclusion procedures.

Monitoring Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

The Governing Board will receive regular reports regarding suspension and permanent exclusion across the academy.

The purpose of this monitoring is to provide appropriate challenge and assurance that exclusion powers are being used fairly, consistently and proportionately.

Governors should monitor:

- overall numbers of suspensions;
- permanent exclusions;
- repeat suspensions;
- cumulative suspension days;
- pupils approaching the statutory 45-day limit;
- use of off-site direction;
- use of alternative provision;
- managed moves;
- pupils educated otherwise than at school because of disciplinary reasons;
- reintegration following suspension;
- attendance following suspension;
- safeguarding concerns linked to suspension;
- pupils with social workers;
- looked after children;
- previously looked after children;
- pupils with SEND;
- pupils with EHCPs;
- pupils eligible for Pupil Premium;
- pupils from different ethnic backgrounds;
- any disproportionality affecting protected groups;
- trends by year group;
- trends by academy;
- trends by type of incident;
- trends by time of year;
- any repeat behaviour patterns.

Governors should seek assurance that:

- suspension is reducing inappropriate behaviour;
- early intervention is effective;
- vulnerable pupils receive appropriate support;
- reasonable adjustments are being implemented where required;
- alternative provision is of suitable quality;
- reintegration strategies are effective;
- behaviour policies are being implemented consistently.

Where patterns or disproportionality are identified, governors should seek assurance that leaders have appropriate action plans in place.

Off-site Direction

The Governing Board will monitor the academy's use of off-site direction.

Governors should receive assurance that:

- off-site direction is being used lawfully;
- placements are regularly reviewed;
- pupils continue to receive suitable full-time education;
- placements remain in the best interests of the pupil;
- parents have been appropriately involved;
- safeguarding arrangements remain effective.

Managed Moves

Governors should receive regular information regarding managed moves.

They should be satisfied that:

- managed moves are voluntary;
- parents have provided informed consent;
- the receiving school has agreed to the arrangement;
- the move is in the best interests of the pupil;
- managed moves are not being used as an alternative to lawful exclusion procedures;
- managed moves must no longer be used for a 'trial period'

Equality Monitoring

The Governing Board should regularly review suspension and permanent exclusion data to identify whether particular groups of pupils are disproportionately affected.

This should include consideration of:

- pupils with disabilities;
- pupils with SEND;
- pupils with EHCPs;
- pupils with social workers;
- looked after children;
- previously looked after children;
- pupils eligible for Pupil Premium;
- pupils with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Where disproportionality is identified, governors should seek evidence that appropriate action has been taken to address this.

Annual Review

At least annually, the Governing Board will review:

- suspension data;
- permanent exclusion data;
- behaviour trends;
- reintegration outcomes;
- off-site direction;
- managed moves;
- Equality Act monitoring;

- effectiveness of early intervention strategies;
- compliance with statutory guidance.

The findings of this review will be used to inform future improvements to behaviour, inclusion and safeguarding practice across the Trust.

Monitoring and analysing suspensions and exclusions data

The Trustees will review, challenge and evaluate the data on academies use of suspension, exclusion, off site direction to alternative provision, and managed moves.

The Trustees will consider:

- How effectively and consistently the academies behaviour policy is being implemented
- The academy register and absence codes
- Instances where pupils receive repeat suspensions
- Interventions in place to support pupils at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion
- Any variations in the rolling average of permanent exclusions, to understand why this is happening, and to make sure they are only used when necessary
- Timing of moves and permanent exclusions, and whether there are any patterns, including any indications which may highlight where policies or support are not working
- The characteristics of suspended and permanently excluded pupils, and why this is taking place
- Whether the placements of pupils directed off-site into alternative provision are reviewed at sufficient intervals to assure that the education is achieving its objectives and that pupils are benefiting from it
- The cost implications of directing pupils off-site

Considering the Reinstatement of a Pupil

The Governing Board (or delegated committee) will consider the reinstatement of a suspended or permanently excluded pupil in accordance with the statutory requirements set out in the Department for Education guidance and the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012.

The purpose of the meeting is to determine whether the Headteacher's decision should be upheld or whether the pupil should be reinstated.

The committee will act fairly, impartially and in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

When the Governing Board Must Meet

The Governing Board must meet to consider reinstatement where:

- the pupil has been permanently excluded;
- a suspension would result in the pupil being suspended for **more than 15 school days in a single term**;
- a suspension would result in the pupil missing a public examination or National Curriculum test.

The meeting must take place within the statutory timescales unless there are exceptional circumstances permitted by legislation.

Suspensions of More Than Five but Not More Than Fifteen School Days

Where a suspension is for **more than five but not more than fifteen school days in a single term**, the Governing Board must consider reinstatement if parents request a meeting.

The meeting must normally take place within **50 school days** of receiving notice of the suspension.

Suspensions of Five School Days or Fewer

Where a suspension totals **five school days or fewer in a single term**, parents may make written representations to the Governing Board.

The Governing Board is not required to hold a formal meeting but must consider any representations received.

Parents should submit representations within **three months** of the suspension.

Principles for Decision-Making

When considering reinstatement, the Governing Board must determine whether the Headteacher's decision was:

- lawful;
- reasonable;
- procedurally fair;
- proportionate.

The committee will consider:

- the seriousness of the incident;
- the evidence relied upon by the Headteacher;
- the pupil's explanation;
- the school's Behaviour Policy;
- safeguarding considerations;
- the welfare of staff and pupils;
- the impact on victims;
- whether Equality Act duties have been met;
- whether reasonable adjustments have been considered;
- whether SEND has been appropriately considered;
- whether statutory guidance has been followed;
- whether the decision was made on the balance of probabilities.

The committee should not simply substitute its own view for that of the Headteacher.

Representation at Meetings

The following individuals may attend and make representations:

- the Headteacher;
- the pupil's parent(s) or carer(s);
- the pupil, where appropriate considering their age and understanding;
- a friend or representative accompanying the parents;

- the pupil's social worker, where applicable;
- the Virtual School Head where the pupil is looked after or previously looked after;
- an interpreter or advocate where appropriate.

The Chair may invite any other individual whose attendance would assist the committee.

Participation of the Pupil

The Trust believes pupils should have their views heard wherever appropriate.

The committee will take account of:

- age;
- maturity;
- communication needs;
- SEND;
- emotional wellbeing.

Pupils may provide their views:

- in person;
- in writing;
- through a parent;
- through an advocate;
- through their social worker.

Remote Meetings

Parents may request that reinstatement meetings are held remotely.

The Governing Board will agree to remote attendance where:

- it enables meaningful participation;
- all parties can hear and be heard;
- the meeting remains fair;
- confidentiality can be maintained.

Where technology prevents effective participation, the meeting should be rearranged.

Decision of the Governing Board

After considering all available information, the Governing Board may:

- direct immediate reinstatement;
- direct reinstatement from a specified future date;
- decline to reinstate the pupil.

The decision will be reached on the balance of probabilities.

Written Decision

The Clerk will notify all relevant parties of the Governing Board's decision without delay.

Written notification will include:

- the decision reached;
- reasons for the decision;
- any actions required;
- information regarding further rights of review (where applicable);
- details of the Independent Review Panel process for permanent exclusions.

Copies will be sent to:

- parents;
- the Headteacher;
- the Local Authority;
- the pupil's home authority (where different);
- the pupil's social worker (where applicable);
- the Virtual School Head (where applicable).

Independent Review Panel (IRP)

Parents have the right to request an Independent Review Panel (IRP) if the Governing Board decides not to reinstate a pupil following a permanent exclusion.

The Independent Review Panel does not decide whether it would have permanently excluded the pupil. Instead, it considers whether the Governing Board's decision not to reinstate the pupil was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair.

The Trust will ensure that all Independent Review Panels are arranged in accordance with statutory requirements.

Requesting an Independent Review

Parents may request an Independent Review Panel within **15 school days** of receiving written notification of the Governing Board's decision not to reinstate the pupil.

Applications should:

- be made in writing;
- state the grounds for review;
- include any supporting information the parent wishes the panel to consider;
- indicate whether the parent wishes an SEN Expert to attend.

Applications received outside the statutory timescale may only be considered where legislation permits.

Constitution of the Independent Review Panel

The Trust will appoint an Independent Review Panel comprising three members.

The panel must consist of:

A Chair

A lay member who has not worked in any school in a paid capacity, other than as a governor or volunteer.

A School Governor

A current or former governor or trustee who has served for at least twelve consecutive months during the previous five years.

A Headteacher

A serving or recently serving Headteacher with appropriate knowledge and experience.

Panel members must have no prior involvement in the exclusion.

Independence

No member of the panel may:

- have participated in the original decision;
- have any conflict of interest;
- have a close connection with the academy;
- have a personal interest in the outcome;
- have failed to complete appropriate exclusion training within the previous two years.

The Trust will ensure that all appointments are demonstrably independent.

Role of the Independent Review Panel

The Independent Review Panel will review whether the Governing Board's decision was:

- lawful;
- reasonable;
- procedurally fair;
- proportionate.

The panel will have regard to:

- the statutory guidance;
- relevant legislation;
- Equality Act duties;
- Human Rights Act obligations;
- safeguarding responsibilities;
- the evidence considered by the Governing Board.

The panel must not simply substitute its own decision for that of the Governing Board.

Role of the SEN Expert

Parents have the right to request the attendance of an SEN Expert regardless of whether the pupil has an identified special educational need.

The SEN Expert's role is to provide impartial advice regarding:

- whether the school appropriately identified SEND;
- whether SEND may have contributed to the behaviour;
- whether reasonable adjustments were considered;
- whether the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and SEND legislation were met.

The SEN Expert does **not** make decisions regarding reinstatement.

The Trust will meet the cost of the SEN Expert.

Attendance at the Review

The following individuals may attend the review:

- parents;
- the pupil, where appropriate;
- a representative or friend accompanying the parents;
- the Headteacher;
- the Clerk;
- the Local Authority representative where appropriate;
- the pupil's social worker;
- the Virtual School Head;
- the SEN Expert;
- interpreters or advocates where required.

Parents may request that the review is conducted remotely where appropriate.

Evidence

The Independent Review Panel will consider the evidence available to the Governing Board when it made its decision.

Additional evidence may be considered where the panel is satisfied that:

- it was not reasonably available at the time of the Governing Board meeting; or
- consideration of the evidence is necessary in the interests of fairness.

The Headteacher may not introduce new reasons for the permanent exclusion.

The panel will disregard any attempt to justify the exclusion on grounds that were not relied upon by the Headteacher or Governing Board.

Decision of the Independent Review Panel

Following its review, the panel may:

Uphold the Governing Board's Decision

The permanent exclusion remains in place.

Recommend Reconsideration

The panel may recommend that the Governing Board reconsider its decision.

The Governing Board is expected to give careful consideration to the recommendation and must notify parents of its decision.

Quash the Decision and Direct Reconsideration

Where the panel concludes that the Governing Board's decision was flawed when considered in light of the principles applicable to judicial review, it may quash the decision and direct the Governing Board to reconsider the case.

The Governing Board must reconsider the decision within the statutory timescale.

Notification of the Decision

The Independent Review Panel will notify all parties of its decision without delay.

The written decision will include:

- the outcome;
- reasons for the decision;
- any recommendations made;
- any direction requiring reconsideration;
- details of any financial adjustment applicable under legislation;
- any amendments required to the pupil's educational record.

Reconsideration by the Governing Board

Where reconsideration is directed, the Governing Board must reconvene with governors who were not involved in the original decision wherever practicable.

The Governing Board must:

- consider the findings of the Independent Review Panel;
- review all relevant evidence;
- determine whether reinstatement should now occur;
- notify parents and all relevant agencies of its decision without delay.

Record Keeping

The Trust will retain records of:

- the Independent Review Panel proceedings;
- evidence submitted;
- minutes of meetings;
- decisions reached;
- reasons for decisions;
- correspondence relating to the review.

Records will be retained securely in accordance with the Trust's Records Management Policy.

Academy Registers

The Trust will maintain accurate admission and attendance registers in accordance with statutory requirements.

A permanently excluded pupil's name must not be removed from the admission register until the legal requirements for removal have been met.

Where parents request an Independent Review Panel within the statutory timescale, the pupil will remain on roll until the review process has concluded.

Attendance Recording

Whilst a pupil remains on roll, attendance will be recorded using the appropriate attendance code in accordance with the Department for Education attendance guidance.

Where a pupil attends alternative provision arranged by the school, the appropriate attendance code will be used.

Where the pupil is absent because of suspension, the statutory attendance code for suspension will be recorded.

Attendance records must accurately reflect the pupil's educational provision throughout the period of suspension or permanent exclusion.

Removal from the Admission Register

A pupil's name will only be removed from the admission register when one of the following applies:

- fifteen school days have elapsed since parents were notified of the Governing Board's decision not to reinstate and no Independent Review Panel has been requested;
- parents have confirmed in writing that they will not request an Independent Review Panel;
- the Independent Review Panel process has concluded and statutory requirements have been met.

The Trust will ensure that no pupil is removed from roll prematurely.

Making a return to the LA

Where a pupil is permanently excluded, the school will notify the Local Authority without delay.

The notification will include:

- pupil details;
- parent details;
- grounds for removal;
- destination school where known;
- new address where known;
- date of removal from roll.

Returns will be completed in accordance with statutory regulations.

Returning from a suspension

Lighthouse Multi Academy Trust believes that reintegration following suspension is an important opportunity to support positive behaviour and successful engagement with education.

The aim of reintegration is to reduce the likelihood of further suspension by addressing the factors that contributed to the incident and ensuring appropriate support is in place.

Reintegration Strategy

Every suspension should be followed by an appropriate reintegration strategy.

The strategy should be proportionate to the individual pupil's needs and may include:

- restorative conversations;
- behaviour support;
- mentoring;
- pastoral intervention;
- safeguarding support;
- SEND support;
- reasonable adjustments;
- Early Help;
- external agency involvement;
- attendance support;
- curriculum adjustments where appropriate.

The strategy should identify:

- strengths;
- barriers;
- protective factors;
- agreed expectations;
- review arrangements.

Reintegration Meeting

A reintegration meeting should normally take place before, or as soon as reasonably practicable following, the pupil's return.

The meeting should reinforce that:

- the pupil remains a valued member of the school community;
- the suspension has concluded;
- expectations moving forward are clear;
- appropriate support will be provided.

Parents will normally be invited.

Failure to attend the meeting will **not** delay or prevent the pupil's return to school.

Support Following Reintegration

Following reintegration the school will monitor:

- attendance;
- behaviour;
- wellbeing;
- safeguarding;
- academic engagement.

Support should be reviewed regularly and adapted where necessary.

Children with Additional Needs

Where the pupil:

- has SEND;
- has an EHCP;
- has a social worker;
- is looked after;
- is previously looked after;
- has experienced trauma;
- is known to external agencies,

the school will work collaboratively with those professionals to support successful reintegration.

Part-time Timetables

Part-time timetables will not be used to manage behaviour.

Where a reduced timetable is exceptionally necessary for medical or other lawful reasons, it will:

- be time limited;
- have parental agreement where appropriate;

- be regularly reviewed;
- comply with Local Authority guidance;
- support the pupil's return to full-time education as quickly as possible.

Remote access to meetings

Parents may request that meetings relating to suspension, permanent exclusion or Independent Review Panels are held remotely.

The Trust will accommodate this request wherever it is satisfied that:

- all participants can hear and be heard;
- all participants can participate fully;
- confidentiality can be maintained;
- procedural fairness is preserved.

The Trust may also arrange remote meetings where exceptional circumstances make face-to-face attendance impracticable.

Where technical issues prevent meaningful participation, the meeting will be adjourned and rearranged.

Social workers, Virtual School Heads and other professionals may attend remotely where appropriate.

Monitoring Arrangements

Lighthouse Multi Academy Trust is committed to continually reviewing the use of suspension and permanent exclusion to ensure decisions remain lawful, proportionate, equitable and effective.

The Trust Board, through its committees and senior leaders, will monitor the implementation of this policy and review relevant data at least annually.

Data Monitoring

The Trust will collect and analyse information relating to:

- suspensions;
- permanent exclusions;
- repeat suspensions;
- cumulative suspension days;
- reintegration outcomes;
- attendance following suspension;
- off-site direction;
- managed moves;
- alternative provision;
- safeguarding concerns;
- pupils with social workers;
- looked after children;
- previously looked after children;
- SEND;

- EHCPs;
- Pupil Premium;
- ethnicity;
- sex;
- year groups;
- academy comparisons.

Equality Monitoring

The Trust will regularly review data to identify whether any group of pupils is disproportionately affected by suspension or permanent exclusion.

Where disproportionality is identified, leaders will investigate:

- underlying causes;
- consistency of practice;
- effectiveness of early intervention;
- implementation of reasonable adjustments;
- effectiveness of behaviour support.

Appropriate action plans will be developed where necessary.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- annually;
- following significant legislative change;
- following revisions to statutory guidance;
- following any learning arising from complaints, Independent Review Panels or legal challenge.

Reporting

The Chief Executive Officer will provide assurance to Trustees regarding:

- compliance with statutory guidance;
- exclusion trends;
- safeguarding implications;
- effectiveness of reintegration;
- equality monitoring;
- recommendations for improvement.

The Trust will retain records relating to suspensions, permanent exclusions, governing board meetings, Independent Review Panels and associated correspondence in accordance with the Trust's Records Management Policy, Data Protection legislation and statutory retention requirements.

Appendix 1

Lighthouse Multi Academy Trust will ensure that all members of an Independent Review Panel and the appointed Clerk have received appropriate training within the **two years** preceding the review.

The purpose of this training is to ensure that panel members are able to carry out their statutory responsibilities fairly, independently and in accordance with current legislation and Department for Education statutory guidance.

Training will include, as a minimum:

- The requirements of the Education Act 2002, the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Department for Education statutory guidance **Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, including Pupil Movement (effective 26 July 2026)**.
- The principles applicable to judicial review and how these relate to the decision-making responsibilities of an Independent Review Panel.
- The requirement to act fairly, impartially and in accordance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.
- The respective roles and responsibilities of the Chair, panel members and the Clerk.
- The duties of Headteachers, Governing Boards and Independent Review Panels under the **Equality Act 2010**.
- The effect of **Section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998** and the requirement for public authorities to act compatibly with Convention rights.
- The role and purpose of the **Special Educational Needs (SEN) Expert**, including the limits of that role.
- The importance of considering the needs of vulnerable pupils, including pupils with SEND, Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), looked after children, previously looked after children and pupils with social workers.
- The statutory expectations relating to safeguarding, proportionality and reasonable adjustments when considering permanent exclusions.
- Confidentiality, data protection and appropriate record keeping throughout the review process.

Panel members should also maintain an awareness of changes to legislation and statutory guidance and undertake refresher training whenever significant amendments are introduced.



LIGHTHOUSE
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

HEADTEACHER DECISION-MAKING CHECKLIST

To be completed before any decision is made to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil.

EVERY DECISION MUST BE LAWFUL, REASONABLE, FAIR AND PROPORTIONATE

	A full investigation has been completed.	☐
	The pupil's account has been obtained and considered.	☐
	Victim(s) and witness accounts have been obtained and considered.	☐
	All available evidence (including CCTV / digital evidence) has been reviewed.	☐
	Safeguarding considerations have been made and relevant staff / agencies consulted.	☐
	Equality Act 2010 duties and Human Rights considerations have been taken into account.	☐
	The pupil's SEND and any reasonable adjustments have been considered.	☐
	EHCP / statutory assessments have been reviewed (where applicable).	☐
	The pupil's Social Worker / Virtual School has been informed and / or consulted (where applicable).	☐
	All reasonable alternatives to suspension or permanent exclusion have been considered (e.g. pastoral support, Early Help, interventions).	☐
	Off-site direction, alternative provision or a managed move has been considered (where appropriate).	☐
	The decision is a last resort and is proportionate to the incident and the pupil's needs.	☐
	Parents have been informed and given an opportunity to contribute (where appropriate).	☐
	The Local Authority, Governing Board / Trust, Social Worker (if applicable) have been informed without delay.	☐
	All decisions, reasons and actions have been clearly recorded.	☐



IMPORTANT

This checklist is a tool to support decision making and must be completed and retained on the pupil's file.