



**Holy Cross Catholic
Multi Academy**

Suspensions and Exclusions

Information for parents

It is recognised that good discipline in schools is vital. The decision to suspend or exclude a pupil is a very serious matter which only the school headteacher, or delegated authority, can undertake. The decision to suspend or exclude a pupil must be lawful, reasonable and fair. The headteacher may decide to suspend or exclude a pupil only when he/she is sure that:

- The pupil has broken the school's behaviour policy (the school rules)
- And/or if the pupil remaining in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school

Suspension and exclusion

- A suspension (fixed period exclusion) means that a pupil is excluded from school for a fixed number of days and a date is set for a return to school. Whilst a pupil has a suspension, they should not return to the school premises, nor should they be in a public place during school hours.
- Permanent exclusion should only be used as a last resort. Headteachers will usually only permanently exclude after a series of interventions to support the pupil. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where one instance leads to a permanent exclusion.

Schools and headteachers have a statutory duty not to discriminate against pupils on the basis of characteristics such as age, disability or race. Schools are advised by the Government to give particular consideration to the fair treatment of pupils from groups who are vulnerable to exclusion.

It is unlawful to exclude a pupil for non-disciplinary reasons such as: the actions of the pupil's parents; the pupil having additional needs or a disability that the school feels unable to meet; academic ability or attainment; or the pupil failing to meet specific conditions before he/she is reinstated. However, pupils who repeatedly disobey their teachers' academic instructions could be subject to exclusion.

It is unlawful just to send a pupil home to "cool off" even if parents or carers agree. Schools should not pressurise a family to withdraw their child from their school or find an alternative school placement if they are at risk of permanent exclusion.

What happens after an exclusion?

A headteacher should notify parents immediately following a suspension or permanent exclusion. This should include the following information:

- The reason for the suspension/exclusion.
- The period of a suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent.
- Parents/carers' right to make representations about the suspension/exclusion to the governing board and how the pupil may be involved in this.
- How any representations should be made.
- Where there is a legal requirement for the governing board to consider the suspension/exclusion, that parents have a right to attend a meeting, to be represented at that meeting (at their own expense) and to bring a friend.

What should you do if you disagree with an exclusion?

Firstly, request to meet with the headteacher to share any concerns and ask them whether or not they will reconsider the exclusion. However, if the exclusion is permanent the headteacher might not agree to this. The governors must arrange a meeting to review the headteacher decision within 15 school days.

Secondly, ask governors to review the decision. As a parent, you can send a letter to the Clerk of the Discipline Committee (addressed to the school) as soon as possible after you get the letter telling you about the suspension/exclusion. You should have access to any documents regarding the suspension/exclusion at least 5 days before the meeting and should be notified of your right of access to your child's school record.

If the governors uphold a permanent exclusion, parents have the right to appeal to an Independent Review Panel. The panel can uphold the permanent exclusion, recommend that the governing body reconsiders the exclusion or quash the decision and direct that the governing body considers the exclusion again. The panel cannot directly reinstate the pupil.

Further information about suspensions and permanent exclusions can be found in the downloadable leaflets.

Useful contacts

- Coram Children's Legal Centre <http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com/> (an independent national advice centre): 08088 020 008 (Monday-Friday, 8am-8pm).
- The Advisory Service for Education (ACE) <http://www.ace-ed.org.uk/> 03000 115 142 (Monday-Wednesday, 10am-1pm during term-time).
- National Autistic Society (NAS) School Exclusion Service (England): 0808 800 4002 or schoolexclusions@nas.org.uk
- Independent Parental Special Education Advice <http://www.ipsea.org.uk/>
- SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS): 024 7669 4307 (Monday-Thursday, 9am-5pm; Friday, 9am-4.30pm) or IASS@coventry.gov.uk

Downloads

- Suspensions (fixed period exclusion) leaflet
http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/27056/fixed_period_exclusion_leaflet
- Permanent exclusion leaflet
http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/27056/fixed_period_exclusion_leaflet
- Exclusion FAQs
http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/27058/exclusion_faqs

Information for schools

Please see downloads and links to support schools in the exclusions process.

Downloads

- Model letters
http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/27059/model_letters
- Checklist for Headteachers
http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/27060/checklist_for_headteachers
- Exclusion flowchart
http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/27061/exclusion_flowchart

Useful links

- Primary Pupil Passport
<http://www.coventry.gov.uk/primarypupilpassport>
- Secondary Pupil Passport
<http://www.coventry.gov.uk/primarypupilpassport>