



## **Suspension and Exclusion Policy**

**Publication Date:** September 2026

**Review Date:** September 2027

**Hopebright School**

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### **Statement of Intent**

At Hopebright School, we believe that high standards of behaviour are fundamental to creating a safe, respectful, and effective learning environment where all pupils can thrive.

Suspension and exclusion are **serious disciplinary measures** used only when necessary and always as a **last resort**, where:

- a serious breach of behaviour policy has occurred, or
- persistent breaches have not improved despite intervention, or
- allowing a pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the welfare, safety, or education of others.

The School is committed to ensuring that all decisions are:

- lawful
- fair
- proportionate
- evidence-based
- non-discriminatory

This policy ensures compliance with statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education and supports inspection expectations under **Ofsted and ISI frameworks**, particularly in relation to safeguarding, leadership, behaviour culture, and inclusion.

Every pupil remains entitled to access education, and appropriate arrangements will be made following suspension or exclusion.

### Definitions

**Suspension:** Temporary removal from school for disciplinary reasons. A pupil may be suspended for fixed periods up to a maximum of **45 school days per academic year**.

**Permanent Exclusion:** Removal from Hopebright School where continued attendance would seriously harm the welfare or education of the pupil or others.

## **1. Legal Framework**

This policy is underpinned by, but not limited to:

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007
- School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations (as amended)

Statutory Guidance (DfE 2024–2026 applicable version)

- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England
- Behaviour in Schools (DfE)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools
- SEND Code of Practice (0–25 years)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025/26)

## **2. Grounds for Suspension or Exclusion**

Suspension or exclusion may be used in response to, but is not limited to:

- Physical assault against pupils or staff
- Serious verbal abuse or threatening behaviour
- Use or possession of an offensive weapon or prohibited item
- Serious bullying (including online/cyberbullying)
- Discriminatory behaviour (racist, homophobic, transphobic, disability-related or other protected characteristic abuse)
- Serious damage to property
- Repeated or persistent breaches of behaviour expectations
- Sexual misconduct or inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Drug, alcohol, or substance-related incidents

### 3. Headteacher's Authority and Decision-Making

Only the Headteacher of Hopebright School has the authority to issue a suspension or exclusion.

All decisions are made:

- on disciplinary grounds only
- using the **civil standard of proof ("balance of probabilities")**
- in accordance with Equality Act 2010 duties
- with consideration of SEND needs and vulnerabilities

Permanent exclusion is only considered where:

- a serious or persistent breach has occurred, and
- all reasonable alternatives have been exhausted, and
- continued attendance poses risk to safety, welfare, or education of others

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#### Governance and Oversight

Where a pupil reaches **15 cumulative days of suspension**, the Headteacher will consult senior leadership and governance representatives to review:

- behavioural trends and triggers
- effectiveness of interventions
- SEN/EHCP provision (if applicable)
- suitability of current placement
- alternative strategies and risk controls

No informal or unofficial suspensions are permitted.

#### **4. Factors to Consider**

Before any decision is made, the Headteacher will consider:

- The pupil's version of events
- Contextual safeguarding factors
- SEND, SEMH, or medical needs
- Trauma, mental health, or external stressors
- Bullying or peer influence
- Effectiveness of previous interventions
- Impact on staff and pupil safety
- Proportionality of sanction

The School ensures **no discriminatory escalation** of sanctions for pupils with protected characteristics.

## **5. Reintegration Meeting**

Hopebright School is committed to reintegration as a structured, supportive process.

A reintegration meeting will:

- support a “fresh start” approach
- reinforce expectations and boundaries
- identify support strategies
- rebuild belonging and engagement
- prevent recurrence of behavioural incidents

Purpose of Meeting:

- Review reasons for suspension
- Identify underlying causes
- Agree support and intervention plan
- Re-establish expectations and routines
- Consider pupil and parental views

Meetings will proceed even if parents/carers are unable to attend, though their participation is strongly encouraged.

Minutes will be recorded in the School Management System.

## **6. Cancelling a Suspension or Permanent Exclusion**

In exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher may cancel a suspension already issued.

Where this occurs:

- parents/carers and relevant professionals will be informed immediately
- written confirmation will be issued without delay
- the pupil will return to school promptly
- reintegration support will still be applied

All cancellations must be:

- fully documented
- logged in the suspension record system
- reported through internal governance reporting mechanisms

Permanent exclusions will not be cancelled once confirmed, except in line with DfE procedural requirements.

## **7. Managed Moves and Off-Site Direction**

Where appropriate, Hopebright School may consider a managed move or alternative placement as part of a child-centred approach.

A managed move will only occur:

- in the best interests of the child
- with agreement from all relevant parties where possible
- following intervention attempts at Hopebright School
- in line with statutory and local authority processes

Managed moves are:

- not automatic
- not a disciplinary sanction
- a supportive transition strategy

### **8. Duty to Inform Parents, Carers and Local Authorities**

Following a suspension decision, the School will:

- notify parents/carers immediately (verbal contact where possible)
- confirm in writing by the end of the school day

Written communication will include:

- reason for suspension
- duration
- reintegration arrangements
- educational provision during suspension
- parental legal responsibilities during suspension period

Parents are informed of their duty to ensure their child is not present in public during school hours without reasonable justification.

#### Local Authority Notification

Where required, the School will notify:

- Local Authority (for pupils with EHCP or safeguarding involvement)
- Social worker (if allocated)
- Virtual School Head (VSH) for looked-after or previously looked-after children



### **9. Multi-Agency Partnership Working**

Hopebright School actively works with:

- parents and carers
- local authorities
- social care services
- health professionals
- police (where appropriate)

The aim is to:

- prevent escalation to exclusion
- identify underlying needs
- implement early intervention strategies
- support sustained reintegration

## **10. Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Safeguarding is central to all suspension and exclusion decisions.

The School will always consider whether behaviour indicates:

- significant harm
- unmet educational needs
- emotional or mental health concerns

All concerns are managed in line with the **Hopebright School Child Protection Policy and KCSIE 2025/26**.

### **11. Behaviour Outside School Premises**

The School may apply sanctions, including suspension or exclusion, for behaviour:

- off-site
- during school transport
- online or via social media

where it:

- affects school order or safety
- poses safeguarding risk
- impacts pupils or staff
- damages school reputation or safety environment

### **12. Police Involvement**

Where behaviour may constitute a criminal offence or serious risk:

- the police may be contacted
- decisions will be made on a **child-centred, proportionate basis**
- guidance from the NPCC will be followed

All decisions to involve police are recorded and justified.

### **13. Complaints**

All stakeholders may raise concerns about suspension or exclusion decisions via the School Complaints Policy.

The School ensures:

- timely investigation
- transparent communication
- fair review process

Safeguarding-related complaints are managed under child protection procedures.

#### **14. Monitoring and Review**

This policy is reviewed annually by the Headteacher and approved by the School's governance body.

The School ensures compliance through:

- internal audits
- safeguarding governance reviews
- behaviour trend analysis
- statutory reporting obligations

Governance oversight ensures leadership accountability in line with **Ofsted and ISI expectations for effective school leadership and safeguarding culture.**