The Buckinghamshire Primary Pupil Referral Unit

Perseverance Respect Understanding

SUSPENSION AND PERMANENT EXCLUSION POLICY

This policy was agreed by the Management Committee: Summer 2026

This policy will be reviewed: Summer 2027

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

Rationale

This policy should be followed in conjunction with the PRU's Relational Policy. It deals with the policy and practice which informs the PRU's use of suspension or permanent exclusion. We recognise that good discipline is essential to ensure that the pupils we support have the best opportunity to succeed academically and behaviourally.

The support we provide is holistic in nature and we work closely with families and other professionals to help ensure the best possible outcomes for the pupils we support. All members of the PRU community are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all, and to maintain an appropriate educational environment in which all can learn and succeed. The PRU will follow both local and national (DfE) guidance in making decisions about whether suspension or permanent exclusion is the most appropriate action, or if alternatives steps are required.

The PRU will have regard to the Department for Education statutory guidance: Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, including Pupil Movement (July 2026, effective from 26 July 2026), together with Behaviour in Schools, Keeping Children Safe in Education, the SEND Code of Practice and Equality Act guidance when making decisions relating to suspension or permanent exclusion.

The Buckinghamshire Council Schoolsweb has links to the most up to date national guidance and also includes local guidance. Local guidance provides clear advice and instructions for both suspensions and permanent exclusions. There are also resources available to support decision making. These documents must be referred to prior to taking any action.

Exclusions Procedures | SchoolsWeb

The DfE statutory guidance (July 2026) can also be found on the Gov UK website:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions

A copy is also held with the PRU suspension and exclusion policy in the shared drives.

The PRU will consult with other professionals involved in the care of the child to ensure that any decision taken is appropriate and proportionate for the circumstances. In addition, because of the nature and rationale for placements at the PRU, the PRU will also consult, as appropriate, with teams such as the Attendance team, the Exclusions and Reintegration team, iSEND and the GRT team as part of the decision-making process.

Introduction

The decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil will be taken in the following circumstances:

- In response to a serious breach of the PRU's Behaviour Policy
- If allowing the pupil to remain in the PRU would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the PRU.

Suspensions and permanent exclusions are an extreme sanction and can only be authorised by the Headteacher (or, in the absence of the Headteacher, the member of the Senior Leadership Team who is acting in that role). The PRU recognises that suspension and permanent exclusion should only be used where necessary and proportionate. Prior to considering exclusion, the PRU will consider alternative strategies where appropriate, including additional pastoral support, reasonable adjustments, managed moves, off-site direction and multi-agency intervention.

Suspension or permanent exclusion may be used for any of the following, all of which constitute examples of unacceptable conduct:

- Unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported and for which PRU sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the pupil's behaviour
- Verbal or physical abuse of other pupils or PRU staff
- Aggression towards other pupils leading to the possibility of physical or emotional harm
- Indecent behaviour

This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other situations where the Headteacher makes the judgment that a suspension or permanent exclusion is an appropriate sanction.

Suspensions and permanent exclusion

Suspensions are of a fixed term nature and are of short duration. Prior to taking a decision to suspend a pupil, the PRU will have worked closely with the parents and pupil to put in place strategies to impact positively on the behaviour of the child. If all such strategies have failed to have the necessary impact, and the incident is serious, then a suspension will be considered. Parents will be informed and a letter will be sent, warning them that their child's behaviour is placing them at risk of suspension; and seeking their support by emphasising the seriousness of the situation.

The Headteacher will ensure that any decision to suspend or permanently exclude is lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate. Particular consideration will be given to pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), looked-after children, previously looked-after children and other vulnerable pupils.

In extreme or very difficult cases where all strategies tried by the PRU staff have failed to have a positive impact, then a suspension would be used to enable PRU staff to consult with other professional agencies (e.g. Educational Psychologists, CAMHs etc.) and parents in order to formulate the best way to support the child and address their needs.

In the event that the incident places the child, other pupils or staff at significant risk of injury, significant damage to property or the incident has already caused injury or damage, then the Headteacher (or in their absence someone authorised to act in their place) may decide to proceed straight to suspension, without issuing an “at risk” letter, if that is in the best interests of the wider PRU community. Such decisions are not taken lightly and the matter will be discussed with other professionals before taking action.

The ultimate sanction of permanently excluding a pupil would only be used in the most extreme circumstances when every other strategy had failed or when the safety of others in the PRU were at risk. The decision would be made by the Headteacher in consultation with other staff and other professionals involved in the care of the pupil, including the Exclusions and Reintegration team.

The DfE regulations allow the Headteacher to suspend a pupil for one or more fixed periods not exceeding 45 school days in any one school year. Decisions and/or advice will be discussed with the Exclusions and Reintegration team, so that the most appropriate decision can be made; taking into account the circumstances of incident, the needs of pupil and the needs of the PRU as a whole.

The members of the Management Committee have established arrangements to review promptly all permanent exclusions from the PRU and all suspensions that would lead to a pupil being excluded for over 15 days in a school term or missing a public examination (the PRU has adopted the Buckinghamshire Council guidelines).

The members of the Management Committee have established arrangements to review suspensions which would lead to a pupil being suspended for over five days but not over 15 days in a school term where a parent has expressed a wish to make representations.

Following a decision to suspend a pupil, parents/carers are contacted immediately where possible. A letter will be sent by post or handed directly to the parent/carer giving details of the suspension and the date the suspension ends. Parents/carers have a right to make representations to the Management Committee and the LA as directed in the letter. Parents will be signposted to the help that is available to them to support them through the process.

Where the pupil has an allocated social worker, the PRU will notify the social worker without delay of any suspension or permanent exclusion. Where the pupil is looked after by a local authority, the Virtual School Head will also be notified without delay.

The Local Authority will be notified of all suspensions and permanent exclusions without delay, regardless of the length of the suspension.

A reintegration meeting will be held following the expiry of the suspension and this will involve a member of the Senior Leadership Team and other staff and/or professionals where appropriate. The pupil will be supported and encouraged to participate in reintegration arrangements and their views will be considered in accordance with their age, maturity and understanding.

During the course of a suspension where the pupil is to be at home, parents/carers are advised that the pupil is not allowed on the PRU premises, and that daytime supervision is their responsibility, as parents/carers.

Work will be provided by the class teacher.

Cancellation of Exclusions

The Headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion before the Management Committee has met to consider reinstatement. Where an exclusion is cancelled, the parent, Local Authority, Management Committee and, where appropriate, the pupil's social worker and Virtual School Head will be informed without delay. Appropriate arrangements will then be made to support the pupil's return to education.

Permanent Exclusion

The decision to exclude a pupil permanently is a serious one. There are two main types of situation in which permanent exclusion may be considered:

1. The final, formal step in a concerted process for dealing with disciplinary offences following the use of a wide range of other strategies, which have been used without success. It is an acknowledgement that all available strategies have been exhausted and is used as a last resort. This would include persistent and defiant misbehaviour including bullying (which would include racist or homophobic bullying).

2. When a serious criminal act has been committed, the PRU will involve the police in any such offence.

Prior to deciding to permanently exclude a pupil, the Headteacher will consider whether further support, intervention, managed moves, off-site direction or other reasonable alternatives may be appropriate. Permanent exclusion will only be used as a last resort.

General factors the PRU considers before making a decision to suspend or permanently exclude:

Suspension will not be imposed instantly unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of others in the PRU or the pupil concerned. Before deciding whether to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, the Headteacher will:

- Ensure that all appropriate steps and support have been put in place to minimise the need for taking such a serious action
- Ensure appropriate investigations have been carried out
- Consider all the evidence available to support the allegations, taking into account the PRU's policies
- Allow the pupil to give his/her version of events
- Check whether the incident may have been provoked.
- Consider whether the behaviour may be linked to an unidentified or unmet Special Educational Need or disability Consider whether reasonable adjustments have been implemented and reviewed where a disability is identified Have regard to the Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice
- Consider the views of the pupil, taking account of age, understanding and individual needs
- Consider whether safeguarding concerns may have contributed to the incident
- Consider whether temporary separation arrangements for safeguarding purposes may be appropriate instead of exclusion where this can safely meet the needs of all pupils and staff

If the Headteacher is satisfied that, on the balance of probabilities, the pupil did what he or she is alleged to have done, suspension or permanent exclusion will be the outcome.

It is the role of the Management Committee to determine whether a permanently excluded pupil should be reinstated. The Management Committee will regularly monitor suspension and permanent exclusion data, including patterns relating to pupils with SEND, pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium, looked-after children and pupils with protected characteristics. This monitoring will be used to ensure compliance with equality duties and to identify any emerging trends that require further action. This involves reviewing the decision of the Headteacher and considering the outcome of an independent review panel hearing.

Remote Access Meetings

Where permitted by legislation and guidance, meetings of the Management Committee and any Independent Review Panel may be held remotely. Remote meetings will only be arranged where statutory requirements are satisfied and where this allows all participants to engage fully in the process. Face-to-face meetings will remain the preferred option wherever practicable.

Signed: .....
(Chair of the Management Committee)

Dated: .....

Signed:
(Headteacher)

Dated: