



Exclusion Policy

Next Review: March 2026

Signed by:

Headteacher

Date: 01/03/2025

Proprietor

Date: 01/03/2025

Rationale

This document is set out to deal with the policy and practice which informs Darwin School's use of exclusion. From September 2022 the DFE has introduced new guidance on Suspensions and Permanent exclusions. (Note from guidance: fixed-term exclusions are now referred to as suspensions). Key guidelines referred to when producing this policy- the SEND code of practice, KCSIE, Education Act 2002 and the Equality Act 2010. The list is not exhaustive. This policy is underpinned by three key factors;

- Darwin School is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
- Darwin School aims to provide a caring and nurturing environment in which all can learn and succeed.
- Darwin School aims to include all children and young people and aims to keep the number of suspensions to a minimum.

Introduction

Darwin School's culture, values and ethos encourages and rewards good behaviour. Poor behaviour is addressed through the use of consequences that carry differentiated severity matched to the circumstances and individual pupil needs. Staff are supported in the commitment to inclusion through relevant training which assists in managing challenging behaviour. Through a system of pastoral support, staff work in partnership with parents/carers in terms of understanding, supporting and managing the behaviour of the children and young people. There is also close partnership working with professionals from placing authorities to ensure that every pupil has an appropriate behaviour support plan in place. This is all in line with statutory guidance- 'The 1996 Education Act' and 'Getting It Right For Every Child 2008'.

Permanent exclusion or suspension is an extreme sanction. The decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil will be taken in the following circumstances: -

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

Suspension or exclusion, whether fixed term or permanent may be used for any of the following, all of which constitute examples of unacceptable conduct -

- Actions which put the pupil or others in danger
- Verbal abuse including racist or homophobic abuse to staff and others

- Verbal including racist or homophobic abuse to peers
- Physical abuse to/attack on staff
- Physical abuse to/attack on pupils
- Indecent behaviour
- Damage to property
- Misuse of illegal drugs
- Misuse of other substances
- Theft
- Serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff
- Sexual abuse or assault
- Supplying an illegal drug
- Carrying an offensive weapon
- Arson
- Unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported and for which school sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the pupil's behaviour. This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other situations where the Headteacher makes the judgement that suspension exclusion is an appropriate sanction.

Suspension procedure

- Most suspensions are of a fixed term nature and are of short duration (usually between one and three days).
- The DfE regulations allow for the exclusion of a pupil for one or more fixed periods not exceeding 45 school days in any one school year. Darwin School will adhere to this advice.
- Following suspension, parents are contacted immediately by the SLT. A meeting will be called and a letter sent by post giving details of the suspension and the date the suspension ends. Parents have a right to make representations to the leadership of the school.
- It is school practice to place the pupil returning from suspension under close monitoring usually for one week to monitor behaviour and work.

- During the course of a suspension, parents are advised that the pupil is not allowed on the school premises, and that daytime supervision is their responsibility, as parents/carers.
- Suspensions for looked after young people must be managed in accordance with the guidance from the young person's placing authority. Suspensions for looked after young people must be avoided wherever possible. Where unavoidable, liaison with the young person's social worker and virtual school head must take place ahead of the suspension being enacted.

Permanent Exclusion

The decision to exclude a pupil permanently is a serious one. Permanent exclusion would be with the agreement of the placing authority in dialogue with parents and carers.

The decision to permanently exclude a pupil will only be taken after a concerted process of intervention and following the use of a wide range of behaviour strategies which have been employed without success.

There may be occasions when permanent exclusion is the first and only option. This option would only be implemented in extreme circumstances and the decision would be made in conjunction with the placing authority, and only by the headteacher.

General factors the school considers before deciding to exclude:

Suspension and exclusion will not be imposed instantly unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of others in the school or the pupil concerned. Before deciding whether to exclude a pupil either permanently or suspend for a fixed period the headteacher will:

- Ensure appropriate investigations have been carried out by appropriate staff
- Consider all the evidence available to support the allegations considering the pupil behaviour, their individual needs and whether there are reasons not to exclude
- Allow the pupil the opportunity to give her/his version of events
- Check whether the incident may have been provoked for example by bullying or by racial or sexual harassment

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 exclusion may be the outcome.

Exercise of discretion

In reaching a decision on suspension or permanent exclusion, 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.

Alternatives to Exclusion

Alternative strategies to exclusion are always used if possible. However, the threat of a permanent exclusion will never be used as a behavioural control mechanism.

Behaviour Outside School

Pupils' behaviour outside school on school "business" for example school trips and journeys, travelling to and from school, away school sports fixtures or a work experience placement is subject to the Behaviour Policy. Poor or challenging behaviour in these circumstances will be dealt with as if it had taken place in school.

Drug Related Suspensions and Exclusions

In deciding on whether to exclude for a drug-related offence the headteacher will have regard to the school's policy on substance misuse and will also seek advice from the placing authorities on drug and substance misuse services. The decision will depend on the precise circumstances of the case and the evidence available. In some cases, fixed term suspension will be more appropriate than permanent exclusion. The headteacher will make a judgement set against the criteria in the school's Drugs, Alcohol and Misuse of Substances Policy.

Other Relevant Policies

Behaviour Policy

Drugs, Alcohol and Misuse of Substances

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher in conjunction with the proprietor. The next scheduled review date for this policy is March 2026.