Discovery Trust

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

Version: V6

Status: Mandatory

Applicable to: All Discovery Trust schools and provisions to which the statutory suspension and permanent exclusion framework applies

Approved by: Education Standards Committee

Policy owner: Director of Specialist Provision / Trust Head of Safeguarding

Review frequency: Annually and following any material change to legislation or statutory guidance

Next review: Review annually

1. Purpose

Discovery Trust is committed to safe, inclusive and ambitious schools in which every pupil has the opportunity to belong, learn and succeed.

This policy sets out the Trust's approach to suspension and permanent exclusion. It should be read alongside the Discovery Trust Ready to Learn Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, SEND Policy, Equality Policy, Attendance Policy and Scheme of Delegation.

Our approach reflects the Trust values of Belonging, Ambition and Equity and the principles within Ready to Learn:

- clear and consistent expectations;
- strong relationships;
- early identification of need;
- appropriate support and reasonable adjustments;
- safeguarding and pupil welfare;
- pupil voice;
- proportionate responses to behaviour;
- repair, restoration and successful reintegration.

Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious disciplinary measures. They will only be used where the relevant requirements are met and the decision is lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

The Trust does not permit informal or unlawful exclusion.

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2. Legal and statutory framework

This policy has been developed with regard to current legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Department for Education, *Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement*, in force from 26 July 2026;
- *Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff*;
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*;
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children*;
- *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*;
- DfE guidance on alternative provision;
- SEND Code of Practice;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Human Rights Act 1998;

- Education Act 1996;
- Education Act 2002;
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended; and
- Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended and as modified by the Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) (Application to Academies and Pupil Referral Units and Minor Amendments) Regulations 2026.
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006;

In exercising functions under this policy, the Trust and its schools will have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, including the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Where legislation or statutory guidance changes, the current statutory requirements take precedence over this policy.

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3. Scope

This policy applies to pupils on the admission register of Discovery Trust schools where the statutory suspension and permanent exclusion framework applies.

It applies to behaviour:

- on school premises;
- travelling to or from school;
- during educational visits, sporting activities, work experience or alternative provision;
- during activities organised by or on behalf of the school; and
- outside school, including online behaviour, where the school is lawfully entitled to respond under its behaviour policy.

The policy covers:

- suspension;
- permanent exclusion;
- cancellation of an exclusion;
- statutory review and Independent Review Panels;
- reintegration;
- safeguarding separation;

- managed moves;
- off-site direction; and
- alternative provision.

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4. Core principles

4.1 Ready to Learn

Schools will use the Trust's Ready to Learn framework to establish clear expectations, promote positive behaviour and intervene early when concerns emerge.

Suspension or permanent exclusion will not be used as a substitute for appropriate:

- behaviour support;
- safeguarding intervention;
- SEND provision;
- reasonable adjustments;
- pastoral support; or
- multi-agency intervention.

This does not prevent a Headteacher from suspending or permanently excluding where the relevant threshold is met.

4.2 Individual decision-making

There are no automatic exclusions.

Each case will be considered individually, taking account of:

- the behaviour and its seriousness;
- available evidence;
- the pupil's account;
- impact on others;
- safeguarding information;
- SEND and disability;
- reasonable adjustments;
- relevant vulnerabilities;
- previous support and intervention; and
- risk to the education or welfare of the pupil or others.

4.3 Standard of proof

When establishing the facts, the Headteacher will apply the civil standard of proof: the balance of probabilities.

4.4 Pupil voice

Pupils should be given an appropriate opportunity to explain what happened and express their views before a decision is made.

Communication and participation will take account of the pupil's:

- age;
- understanding;
- communication needs;
- SEND;
- disability; and
- individual circumstances.

Where appropriate, pupils will be supported to express their views through an advocate, including a parent or social worker. The pupil should be informed, in an age - and communication appropriate way, how their views have been taken into account in reaching the decision.

4.5 Equality and SEND

Before reaching a decision, the Headteacher will consider whether behaviour may be connected to:

- disability;
- special educational need;
- communication need;
- mental health need;
- safeguarding concern; or
- another relevant unmet need.

The Headteacher will consider whether appropriate provision and reasonable adjustments were in place and whether further reasonable adjustments are required.

These considerations do not prevent suspension or permanent exclusion where the relevant threshold is met.

The decision record must demonstrate how these matters were considered.

4.6 Safeguarding

Safeguarding considerations form part of decision-making where relevant.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead must be involved where behaviour may be connected to abuse, neglect, exploitation, harmful behaviour, trauma or another safeguarding concern.

A safeguarding concern does not automatically require suspension or permanent exclusion. Any decision related to behaviour must be considered separately and follow the statutory process.

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5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 Headteacher

Only the Headteacher, Principal or person formally acting in that role may suspend or permanently exclude a pupil.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- establishing the facts;
- considering the pupil's views;
- considering safeguarding, SEND and equality matters;
- applying the appropriate threshold;
- recording the rationale;
- completing statutory notifications;
- ensuring appropriate education is provided; and
- supporting reintegration where applicable.

For a proposed permanent exclusion, the Headteacher will consult the Director of Specialist Provision wherever reasonably practicable.

This is a Discovery Trust procedural requirement. It does not transfer the statutory decision from the Headteacher.

5.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will ensure relevant safeguarding information informs decision-making and that safeguarding responsibilities continue during any period away from school.

The Headteacher, DSL, SENCO, Attendance Lead and provider (where applicable) will coordinate attendance arrangements during off-site education and following return. Responsibilities include confirming expected sessions, ensuring accurate coding, arranging prompt follow-up of unexplained absence and linking reintegration support with any existing Attendance Improvement Plan.

5.3 SENCO

The SENCO should contribute where SEND, disability, reasonable adjustments or the suitability of existing provision are relevant.

Where a pupil with an EHCP is at significant risk of permanent exclusion, the school should consider urgently requesting an early review of the EHCP.

5.4 Discovery Trust

The Trust will:

- monitor suspension and permanent exclusion;
- identify patterns and disproportionality;
- quality assure decision-making;
- support and challenge schools; and
- ensure governance arrangements comply with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

5.5 Pupil Behaviour Review Panel

Statutory governing-board functions for Discovery academies are exercised by the Discovery Trust Board or a committee to which those functions have been formally delegated under the current Scheme of Delegation.

For this policy, that delegated committee is referred to as the Pupil Behaviour Review Panel.

No local or advisory body has authority to exercise these functions unless that authority has been expressly delegated by the Trust Board.

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6. Decision-making before suspension or permanent exclusion

Before deciding to suspend or permanently exclude, the Headteacher should:

1. establish the facts;
2. consider all relevant evidence;
3. obtain and consider the pupil's account;
4. consider the impact on any victim and the wider school community;
5. consider safeguarding information;
6. consider SEND, disability and reasonable adjustments;
7. consider relevant support and intervention;
8. consider whether the proposed response is proportionate;
9. apply the correct threshold; and
10. record the reasons for the decision.

The decision must be based on the circumstances of the individual case. Where relevant, the Headteacher will consider attendance patterns, emotionally based school avoidance, barriers to curriculum access and any existing attendance improvement plan alongside behaviour, safeguarding and SEND information. Suspension and permanent exclusion must not be used to address poor attendance. Relevant attendance support will inform the assessment of the individual case without replacing the behaviour threshold or preventing a lawful response.

6.1 Police involvement and parallel criminal proceedings

The existence of a police investigation or criminal proceedings does not remove the Headteacher's responsibility to determine whether a suspension or permanent exclusion decision should be made under the statutory framework. Where police or criminal proceedings overlap with an incident under consideration, the school will take account of the statutory guidance and relevant safeguarding considerations when determining how and when its own disciplinary process should proceed.

7. Suspension

7.1 When suspension may be used

A suspension is a temporary disciplinary removal from school.

The Headteacher may suspend where they conclude that suspension is a lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate disciplinary response to the behaviour concerned.

Suspension should normally be for the shortest appropriate period and accompanied by a clear reintegration plan that identifies what will change in the pupil's provision, support or reasonable adjustments on their return, to reduce the likelihood of further suspension. See Section 8 below for further details.

A pupil may not be suspended for more than 45 school days in a school year, whether through one suspension or several suspensions.

Schools will maintain a reliable record of cumulative suspension days within the academic year, including relevant suspension information received from a pupil's previous school, to ensure that the statutory 45-school-day maximum is not exceeded.

Where suspensions are becoming a regular occurrence for an individual pupil, the Headteacher will review whether suspension remains an effective response and what additional strategies, support or intervention should be put in place to address the behaviour and reduce the likelihood of further suspension.

A lunchtime suspension counts as half a school day.

7.2 Informal exclusion

Discovery Trust does not permit informal or unofficial exclusion.

A pupil must not be sent home for disciplinary reasons without a formal suspension or permanent exclusion.

This includes:

- "cooling-off" periods;
- requiring a pupil to remain at home while an incident is investigated;
- conditional readmission;

- extending a suspension because a parent cannot attend a meeting; or
- unrecorded part-day exclusions; or
  reducing a pupil's school day, week or timetable because of behaviour or because the school is experiencing difficulty meeting the pupil's needs.

A reintegration meeting must never be used as a condition of the pupil returning to school.

7.3 Part-time or reduced timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. In some circumstances, education may be provided partly at school and partly at another educational setting, or through education otherwise than at school under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42 or 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Time away from school to receive education in these ways must be recorded using the appropriate attendance code. A temporary part-time timetable is distinct from these arrangements and must not be used as a disciplinary sanction, to manage behaviour, as an alternative to suspension or permanent exclusion, or as a means of informally excluding a pupil.

A temporary part-time timetable may only be considered in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the individual pupil's best interests and is necessary to meet their individual needs.

Any part-time timetable must:

- have the agreement of the school and the parent with whom the pupil normally lives;
- have a clear ambition and purpose;
- form part of the pupil's wider support, healthcare or reintegration plan;
- take account of the pupil's views, age, communication needs, SEND and individual circumstances;
- specify the sessions the pupil is expected to attend;
- include regular review dates involving the pupil and their parent;
- be in place for the shortest period necessary;
- have a proposed end date and a clear plan for return to full-time education at school or alternative provision; and
- be recorded accurately within the attendance register using the appropriate statutory attendance code, normally Code X or C2 as applicable.
- Registration must take place at the same time for all registered pupils, including pupils who are subject to a part-time timetable.

Where a pupil is receiving a full-time education but only part-time at the school, including through dual registration or alternative provision, Code C2 must not be used; the appropriate code for the education or setting attended must be used instead.

A part-time timetable must never be imposed simply because the school cannot currently meet a pupil's behaviour, SEND or support needs.

Where the pupil has an EHCP, the school will discuss the proposed part-time timetable with the maintaining local authority so that the pupil's provision and support package can be reviewed promptly. Where the pupil has a social worker, the social worker will be kept informed and involved.

Any extension beyond the proposed end date must arise from a documented review of the pupil's individual circumstances and remain in the pupil's best interests. The objective should remain a return to suitable full-time education, except where individual circumstances, such as a long-term health condition, justify a longer arrangement.

7.4 Notification

Parents must be informed without delay of a suspension.

When a pupil is required to leave school following a suspension or permanent exclusion, the Headteacher must take account of the school's legal duty of care and ensure that arrangements for the pupil leaving the premises are safe and appropriate to their age and circumstances.

The written notification will include the information required by current statutory guidance, including:

- the reason;
- start and end dates;
- arrangements for education;
- relevant parental responsibilities;
- the right to make representations;
- how the pupil may participate; and
- applicable review arrangements.

The school will also notify the local authority, Trust governance body and relevant professionals within the statutory requirements.

Where the pupil has a social worker or is looked after, the relevant social worker and Virtual School Head will be notified as required.

7.5 Education during suspension

During the first five school days, the school will set and mark suitable work. Work should be adapted and accessible to meet pupils' needs.

Where a suspension continues beyond five consecutive school days, the Trust will arrange suitable full-time education from the sixth school day.

Reasonable adjustments and SEND requirements remain relevant to the education provided.

7.6 Review by the Pupil Behaviour Panel

The statutory review arrangements depend on the cumulative number of suspension days in a term.

Five school days or fewer

Parents may make representations.

The Panel must consider representations but cannot direct reinstatement.

More than five but no more than 15 school days

Where representations are made, the Panel must consider whether the pupil should be reinstated.

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

More than 15 school days

The Panel must consider reinstatement within 15 school days of receiving notice.

Public examination or national curriculum test

Where the suspension would result in the pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test, the Panel must consider reinstatement and, so far as reasonably practicable, meet before the examination or test.

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8. Reintegration following suspension

Following suspension, the school should support the pupil to make a successful return.

The reintegration strategy should:

- offer a fresh start;
- reinforce Ready to Learn expectations;
- consider what contributed to the incident;
- identify support or reasonable adjustments;
- address safeguarding concerns;
- support repair and restoration where appropriate; including a post incident learning forms
- identify a key adult where helpful; and
- establish appropriate review arrangements.

A reintegration meeting should normally take place before or at the beginning of the pupil's return. The above will be recorded using the appropriate paperwork

A pupil must not be prevented from returning because a parent or carer is unable or unwilling to attend.

Pupil absence on the expected return date triggers the normal same day attendance and safeguarding response, not an automatic extension of suspension.

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9. Permanent exclusion

9.1 Threshold

Permanent exclusion is the most serious disciplinary sanction available to a school.

A pupil will only be permanently excluded where the Headteacher is satisfied that:

> there has been a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of the school's behaviour policy; and
>
> allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others.

Both parts of the test must be met.

Permanent exclusion may follow persistent breaches or, exceptionally, a single sufficiently serious incident.

Permanent exclusion is a last resort. In reaching the decision, the Headteacher will consider relevant strategies, support and interventions previously provided, together with SEND provision and reasonable adjustments where applicable. This does not prevent permanent exclusion following a single sufficiently serious incident where both limbs of the statutory threshold are met.

9.2 Trust consultation

Before issuing a permanent exclusion, the Headteacher will consult the Director of Specialist Provision wherever reasonably practicable.

Where safeguarding issues are relevant, the DSL should also be consulted.

This consultation provides professional support and challenge but does not fetter the Headteacher's statutory decision-making responsibility.

9.3 Notification

Parents must be informed without delay.

Written notification will include all information required by current statutory guidance, including:

- the decision;

- reasons;
- effective date;
- arrangements for education;
- the right to make representations;
- the Pupil Behaviour Panel process;
- participation rights; and
- relevant review rights.

The local authority and relevant Trust governance body will be notified in accordance with statutory requirements.

Where applicable, the pupil's social worker and Virtual School Head will also be notified.

9.4 Education following permanent exclusion

The local authority is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education from the sixth school day following permanent exclusion.

The school will cooperate with the local authority and relevant agencies to support continuity of education and safeguarding.

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10. Pupil Behaviour Panel — permanent exclusion

The Pupil Behaviour Panel must meet to consider a permanent exclusion within 15 school days of receiving notice.

The Panel will consider:

- the Headteacher's decision;
- evidence relied upon;
- representations from parents and the pupil;
- safeguarding information;
- SEND and equality considerations;
- reasonable adjustments;
- relevant professional representations; and
- whether the decision was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair.

The Panel may:

- reinstate the pupil immediately;
- reinstate the pupil from a specified date; or
- decline to reinstate.

The Panel must give clear reasons for its decision.

The outcome of the Panel's consideration will be recorded on the pupil's educational record and relevant papers retained with the record. Where representations are considered but reinstatement is not directed, the Panel will consider whether its findings should also be recorded on the pupil's educational record.

A clerk will support the meeting and maintain an accurate record.

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11. Remote meetings

The normal expectation is that Pupil Behaviour Panel and Independent Review Panel meetings take place in person.

Remote access will be provided where a valid request is made and the statutory conditions for a fair and transparent remote meeting are satisfied.

Any remote meeting must enable all participants to:

- hear and be heard;
- participate effectively;
- access relevant information; and
- receive reasonable adjustments where required.

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12. Independent Review Panel

Where the Pupil Behaviour Panel declines to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil, the parent or eligible adult pupil may apply for an Independent Review Panel (IRP).

The application must normally be made within 15 school days of notice of the Panel's decision.

The applicant may request the attendance of an SEN expert at no cost, whether or not the pupil has formally identified SEN.

The request for an SEN expert should be made when the IRP application is submitted.

The IRP may:

- uphold the decision;
- recommend that the Pupil Behaviour Panel reconsiders; or
- quash the decision and direct reconsideration where the statutory test for doing so is met.

Where reconsideration is required, the Pupil Behaviour Panel will reconvene within the statutory timescale.

13. Cancellation of suspension or permanent exclusion

The Headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion where permitted by the statutory framework.

An exclusion cannot be cancelled once the Pupil Behaviour Panel has begun its meeting to consider reinstatement.

Where an exclusion is cancelled, the Headteacher will, without delay:

- notify the parent or eligible adult pupil;
- explain the reason;
- notify the Pupil Behaviour Panel;
- notify the local authority;
- notify the social worker and Virtual School Head where applicable;
- offer an opportunity to discuss the circumstances; and
- allow the pupil to return without delay.

Days already spent suspended before cancellation continue to count towards the 45-school-day annual maximum.

A permanent exclusion must not be cancelled where the pupil has already been excluded for more than 45 school days in the academic year, or where they would have exceeded that limit by the date on which the cancellation takes effect.

Cancellation must not be used to avoid statutory scrutiny.

14. Safeguarding separation

There may be rare circumstances where pupils need to be kept physically apart because of an identified safeguarding risk. Where this prevents a pupil attending the school premises, it will only be used where separation is essential to safeguard pupils and cannot practicably be achieved while enabling the pupil to remain on the school premises.

Safeguarding separation is not a disciplinary sanction and must not be used as an informal exclusion.

Where temporary separation from the school premises is considered necessary:

- the Headteacher remains accountable for the decision;
- the DSL will lead the safeguarding assessment;
- the pupil's views will be considered;
- safe on-site alternatives must first be considered;

- the reasons and proportionality must be recorded;
- education and welfare arrangements must be established;
- relevant agencies will be involved where required;
- the arrangement will be reviewed regularly; and
- it will end as soon as it is no longer necessary.

The parent will be informed of the reason for the temporary separation and the relevant Trust governance body will be notified without delay.

Where a pupil is temporarily prevented from attending the school premises for safeguarding rather than disciplinary reasons, arrangements for continuing education will be made in accordance with the relevant statutory duties, including the local authority's responsibility where applicable.

Any subsequent suspension or permanent exclusion must be a separate disciplinary decision following the statutory process.

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15. Managed moves

A managed move is a voluntary permanent transfer to another mainstream school.

It must:

- be in the pupil's best interests;
- have the agreement of all relevant parties;
- involve the pupil and parent;
- be supported by appropriate information sharing; and
- have a clear educational rationale.

Agreement must be informed and voluntary and include the parent, the original school and the receiving school's admission authority. The pupil's views must be sought and considered in a way appropriate to their age, understanding and communication needs. The move must comply with the School Admissions Code and applicable in-year admissions requirements; agreement between schools does not override those requirements.

A managed move should form part of a planned intervention. The original school should be able to evidence appropriate initial support and intervention, including relevant multi-agency support and any statutory assessments undertaken or explored before the move is proposed.

Where a pupil has an EHCP, the school will contact the maintaining local authority before progressing a proposed move. Where the local authority, both schools and parents agree to a change of placement, the local authority must follow the statutory procedures for amending the plan. Agreement between schools and parents does not replace this process.

Before the move, the schools should share relevant information securely, including prior and current attainment, academic potential, educational and support needs, effective support strategies, safeguarding information, relevant risk assessments and advice on managing identified risks. Records must be transferred in accordance with Section 18. The receiving school should establish an effective integration strategy that supports curriculum continuity, appropriate provision and a sense of belonging.

As a Trust procedural requirement, the schools will record the arrangements in writing before the transfer. The record will include the educational rationale, the pupil's and parent's views, the informed agreement of the relevant parties, the permanent transfer date, lawful admission-register arrangements, named contacts, transition and integration support, curriculum continuity, practical arrangements and review dates.

Follow-up reviews will involve the pupil and parent and assess the effectiveness of support, integration and progress, with adjustments made where needed. Reviews must not determine whether the pupil has passed a trial or make the permanent placement conditional on a successful probationary period.

A managed move must not be used:

- as a threat;
- as an alternative imposed on a family to avoid permanent exclusion;
- as an informal exclusion; or
- to remove a pupil from the admission register unlawfully.

A pupil must not be suspended or permanently excluded because the pupil or parent refuses a managed move. Any exclusion must be a separate disciplinary decision that independently meets the applicable legal requirements and follows the statutory process.

Parents who feel pressured into a managed move or are unhappy with how it has been arranged may raise their concerns through the Trust Complaints Policy. This does not replace any statutory review or other legal rights referred to in Section 20.

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16. Off-site direction

From 26 July 2026, the statutory off-site direction framework applies to Discovery academies.

Off-site direction may be used as a temporary measure to improve behaviour. It is not a punishment for past misconduct and must not be used to avoid suspension or permanent exclusion.

The Trust remains responsible for the pupil's:

- education;
- safeguarding;
- attendance oversight;
- progress; and
- reintegration.

Before the placement begins, the Trust will ensure that appropriate safeguarding and suitability checks have been completed.

Written notice will be provided to the parent or eligible adult pupil and, where the pupil has an EHCP, the maintaining local authority:

- as soon as practicable; and
- at least two school days before the placement begins.

The notice will include the statutory information, including:

- placement address;
- reporting arrangements;
- proposed duration;
- reasons;
- objectives; and
- session times.

The placement will be reviewed at intervals appropriate to the pupil's needs.

Where a written review request is received from the parent, eligible adult pupil or relevant local authority, a review will take place as soon as reasonably practicable unless a review has taken place within the preceding 10 weeks.

Participants will receive at least six days' notice of the review.

The written decision and reasons will be issued no later than six days after the review.

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17. Alternative provision

Alternative provision will only be commissioned where it is suitable for the pupil's:

- age;
- ability;
- aptitude;
- SEND;
- safeguarding needs; and
- educational requirements.

The commissioning school retains responsibility for oversight of the pupil. Before a pupil begins a placement the following must be established, documented and communicated to all relevant stakeholders:

- Expected sessions and reporting times.
- A named school lead and provider contact.
- Daily confirmation of attendance.
- Same-day follow-up of unexplained absence.
- Immediate safeguarding escalation where risk requires it.

Schools will:

- undertake appropriate safeguarding due diligence;
- share relevant information;
- monitor attendance;
- monitor educational progress;
- review the placement;
- maintain contact with the pupil; and
- plan for reintegration or transition.
- Expected sessions and reporting times.
- A named school lead and provider contact.
- Daily confirmation of attendance.
- Same-day follow-up of unexplained absence.
- Immediate safeguarding escalation where risk requires it.

Alternative provision must not be used as an informal exclusion.

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18. Admission register and records

Following permanent exclusion, the pupil must not be removed prematurely from the admission register.

The pupil's name will only be deleted when permitted under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, including completion or expiry of the relevant review process.

Deletion will not be backdated to the date of permanent exclusion.

Attendance codes will reflect the pupil's actual circumstances and current DfE attendance guidance. Code E will be used where a pupil is suspended or permanently excluded on disciplinary grounds, remains on the admission register and no alternative provision has

been made for the session. Where the pupil attends alternative provision, the appropriate attendance code for that provision will be used; where the pupil attends another school at which they are registered, Code D will be used; it is not proof the pupil actually attended.

Other off-site codes depend on the commissioning and attendance circumstances.

Completing work remotely does not, by itself, make a pupil present in the attendance register.

Discovery Trust will apply a 15-school-day Common Transfer File and educational-record transfer standard across its schools.

This is a Trust procedural standard where the statutory CTF requirement does not directly apply.

The DSL will ensure that the child-protection file is transferred:

- separately from the main pupil file;
- securely;
- with confirmation of receipt;
- within five days for an in-year transfer; or
- within the first five days of a new term, as applicable.

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19. Monitoring and quality assurance

Headteachers will monitor:

- numbers and duration of suspensions;
- repeat suspensions;
- permanent exclusions;
- reasons;
- pupil groups;
- SEND;
- pupils with EHC plans;
- looked-after and previously looked-after pupils;
- pupils with social workers;
  use and duration of part-time or reduced timetables;
  reasons for their use;
  SEND/EHC-plan status of pupils on part-time timetables;
  progress towards return to full-time education;
- disproportionality; and
- effectiveness of reintegration and intervention.

Discovery Trust will undertake Trust-wide quality assurance to identify:

- patterns;
- inconsistencies;
- safeguarding themes;
- disproportionality;
- emerging risks; and
- opportunities to strengthen inclusive practice.

Monitoring will support the Trust's commitment to Belonging, Ambition and Equity while maintaining safe and effective learning environments.

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20. Complaints and statutory review

Statutory representation and review arrangements take precedence where they apply.

The Trust Complaints Policy does not replace:

- representations to the Pupil Behaviour Panel;
- Independent Review Panel arrangements; or
- rights available under equality legislation.

Concerns about administrative or service matters falling outside the statutory review process may be considered under the Trust Complaints Policy where appropriate.

20.1 Equality Act rights

Nothing in this policy affects rights under the Equality Act 2010. Where a parent or eligible adult pupil considers that unlawful discrimination has occurred in connection with an exclusion, a disability discrimination claim may be made to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability), and claims concerning other forms of unlawful discrimination may be brought in the County Court. The normal time limit is six months from the alleged discrimination.

Schools will retain the evidence and records relating to an exclusion for at least six months and thereafter in accordance with the Trust's records-retention requirements.

21. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where there is a material change to:

- legislation;
- DfE statutory guidance;
- safeguarding guidance;
- attendance regulations;

- exclusion regulations;
- relevant case law; or
- Discovery Trust governance arrangements.

The Trust Board retains ultimate responsibility for ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place.

Appendix 1 — Headteacher decision checklist

Before issuing a suspension or permanent exclusion, record:

Evidence

- What happened?
- What evidence has been considered?
- Has the pupil given their account?
- Has the balance-of-probabilities test been applied?

Context

- What was the impact on others?
- Are there safeguarding considerations?
- Is SEND/disability relevant?
- Were reasonable adjustments appropriate and in place?
- Are there communication or mental-health needs?
- Is the pupil looked after or supported by a social worker?

Decision

- What alternatives were considered?
- Why is the response proportionate?
- For permanent exclusion, are both limbs of the statutory test met?
- Has the rationale been recorded clearly?

Process

- Have parents/eligible pupil been notified?
- Has the local authority been notified?
- Has the Trust governance body been notified where required?
- Have the social worker/VSH been notified where applicable?
- Has education been arranged?
- Have review rights been explained?

Appendix 2 — Statutory review summary

Circumstance	Pupil Discipline Panel requirement
Suspension totaling 5 days or fewer in a term	Consider representations if made; cannot direct reinstatement
Suspension totaling more than 5 but no more than 15 days	If representations are made, consider reinstatement within 50 school days
Suspension totalling more than 15 days	Consider reinstatement within 15 school days
Suspension causing missed public examination/national curriculum test	Consider reinstatement and, where reasonably practicable, meet before the examination/test
Permanent exclusion	Consider reinstatement within 15 school days
Permanent exclusion upheld	Parent/eligible pupil may apply for an IRP within 15 school days

Appendix 3 — Reintegration record

Record:

1. pupil and suspension details;
2. pupil voice;
3. parent/carer views;
4. what happened and what has been learned;
5. safeguarding considerations;
6. SEND and reasonable adjustments;
7. Ready to Learn support;
8. key adult/check-in arrangements;
9. restorative or repair work where appropriate;
10. curriculum/pastoral support;
11. external-agency involvement;
12. agreed expectations;
13. review date.

A pupil's return must not be delayed because a parent cannot attend the meeting.

Appendix 4 — Permanent exclusion Headteacher report

The report to the Pupil Behaviour Panel should contain:

1. pupil details;
2. exclusion decision and date;
3. factual chronology;
4. evidence;
5. pupil account;

6. impact on others;
7. safeguarding considerations;
8. SEND/disability and reasonable adjustments;
9. previous relevant support;
10. statutory permanent-exclusion test;
11. proportionality assessment;
12. consultation undertaken;
13. statutory notifications;
14. education arrangements; and
15. Headteacher's rationale.

Appendix 5 — Pupil Behaviour Panel checklist

Before the meeting:

- confirm statutory deadline;
- confirm delegation under the Scheme of Delegation;
- confirm at least three appropriately appointed and impartial members where required by the applicable governance arrangements;
- identify conflicts of interest;
- appoint a clerk;
- issue papers;
- confirm participation and reasonable adjustments;
- confirm remote-access arrangements where applicable.

During the meeting:

- hear all relevant representations;
- enable pupil participation;
- consider evidence;
- consider safeguarding;
- consider SEND/equality;
- consider procedural fairness;
- consider the statutory test;
- record reasons.

After the meeting:

- issue the decision without delay;
- explain reasons;
- provide IRP information where applicable;
- explain the free SEN-expert right;

- explain relevant deadlines;
- retain an accurate confidential record.

Appendix 6 — Off-site direction record

Record:

- legal authority/delegation;
- pupil and parent views;
- reason for direction;
- objectives;
- why the placement is suitable;
- safeguarding due diligence;
- SEND considerations;
- provider details;
- start date;
- proposed duration;
- session times;
- notice date;
- EHC-plan local-authority notification where applicable;
- attendance arrangements;
- education arrangements;
- review dates;
- progress;
- safeguarding;
- reintegration plan;
- review outcome and reasons.

Appendix 7 — Safeguarding separation record

Record:

- safeguarding concern;
- affected pupils;
- pupil voice;
- DSL assessment;
- agency advice;
- why separation is necessary;
- on-site alternatives considered;

- equality and reasonable-adjustment considerations;
- education arrangements;
- welfare arrangements;
- parent communication;
- governance notification where required;
- review dates;
- safeguarding plan;
- reintegration arrangements; and
- date the separation ended.

Appendix 8 — Required model communications

Discovery Trust will maintain centrally controlled templates for:

1. suspension notification;
2. permanent exclusion notification;
3. Pupil Behaviour Panel invitation;
4. Pupil Behaviour Panel outcome;
5. cancellation of suspension/permanent exclusion;
6. alternative provision arrangements;
7. off-site direction notification;
8. off-site direction review invitation and outcome; and
9. reintegration arrangements.

Templates must be reviewed whenever the DfE statutory guidance changes and must contain all information required by the statutory framework in force at the time of use.
