Olive Academies Independent School
OA-North View
Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

Document control table	
Title	Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy
Date approved	February 2026
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Updates/revisions included:	This policy has been updated to reflect the Independent Schools Standards • Added explicit references to the Independent School Standards (ISS) to ensure the policy clearly demonstrates compliance with Part 3 (Welfare, health and safety of pupils). • Strengthened the link between exclusions, the behaviour policy, and anti-bullying measures to reflect ISS expectations. • Added a new section outlining safeguarding responsibilities during off-site direction and alternative provision, ensuring alignment with ISS safeguarding requirements. • Included a statement confirming that the school maintains a written record of all sanctions, including suspensions and permanent exclusions, as required under ISS. • Added a monitoring and review section to include the Independent School Standards as a regulatory framework and DfE guidance
This policy applies to Olive Academies Independent School, OA-North View and should be implemented consistently throughout the school. Proposed amendments should be referred to the Head of School/Executive Headteacher and OAISB for consideration.	

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1. Introduction

OA-North View is a specialist independent school dedicated to supporting pupils with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. We believe that every young person thrives when provided with a safe, predictable, and highly supportive learning environment built on mutual respect and restorative principles.

We recognise that the behaviours leading to potential suspension or exclusion are often manifestations of a pupil's underlying SEMH needs or trauma. Consequently, this policy balances our commitment to unconditional positive regard and restorative intervention with our absolute legal duty to safeguard the physical and psychological well-being of all pupils and staff.

2. Aims

The Olive Academies Independent Schools Board (OAISB) and the Head of School at OA-North View are committed to achieving the following aims through this policy:

- Prioritise Inclusive Practice: We actively aspire to maintain a school environment with zero suspensions and permanent exclusions by embedding early, therapeutic intervention into our daily routines.
- Guarantee Safety and Well-being: We maintain a secure environment where the rights, safety, and physical protection of all members of the school community are firmly upheld.
- Ensure Exclusion is a Last Resort: We guarantee that a suspension or permanent exclusion is only ever utilized as a protective measure following a critical incident, or when all alternative restorative interventions have been thoroughly exhausted.

- Foster Restorative Approaches: We ensure that any period of suspension runs concurrently with a robust, reflective restorative framework designed to address the root causes of the incident and prepare the pupil for a successful return to learning.
- Embed Family-Centred Partnership: We actively involve families, carers, and key external agencies at the earliest stage of any disciplinary boundary, ensuring that the student's home support network is integral to the restorative process.
- Maintain Rigorous Governance and Oversight: The OAISB will systematically analyse internal data regarding pupil moves, suspensions, and pupil characteristics to monitor equity, identify trends, and ensure that exclusions are applied safely, fairly, and only when necessary.

A suspension is a measure only used following serious incidents or when all other interventions have been exhausted. Careful consideration is given when discussing a potential suspension. The restorative approach runs alongside any suspensions and at OA-North View, the family will be included in this process. At OA-North View we aim to ensure that:

- the suspension and permanent exclusion process is applied fairly and consistently
- the suspension and permanent exclusion process is understood by the Olive Academies Independent Schools Board members, staff, parents and pupils
- pupils in our school are safe and happy
- pupils do not become NEET (not in education, employment or training)
- all suspensions and permanent exclusions are carried out lawfully

3. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is designed to ensure full compliance with the regulatory framework governing independent schools in England. It is based on:

- **The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations:** Specifically Part 3 (Welfare, health and safety of pupils) and **Part 7** (Manner in which complaints are handled).
- **The Equality Act 2010:** Ensuring the school meets its statutory duties not to discriminate against pupils with protected characteristics and fulfills its obligations regarding reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.
- **The Children and Families Act 2014:** Safeguarding the provisions and rights of children holding an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

While the statutory Department for Education (DfE) guidance on suspensions and permanent exclusions strictly applies only to state-maintained schools and academies, OA-North View adopts its core principles as a framework of best practice. These principles are adapted to reflect our specialist therapeutic setting, proprietor governance model, and local authority commissioning contracts.

4. The Equality Act (2010) and Special Educational Needs

The school a statutory duty not to discriminate against pupils based on protected characteristics. We will consider pupils who are more vulnerable, based on national figures, to be excluded, and those groups who, in our school, are vulnerable to exclusion.

For disabled children, we will make reasonable adjustments to policies and practices and the provision of auxiliary aids as appropriate. We will not create policies or use practices that discriminate against pupils with protected characteristics by unfairly increasing their risk of exclusion. We will comply with our statutory duties in relation to SEND when administering the exclusion process. This includes considering the SEND Code of Practice.

All our pupils have identified SEND needs and an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). Where we have concerns about the behaviour, or an increased risk of suspension or permanent exclusion of a pupil we will, in partnership with others (including the local authority as necessary), consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required. This will involve assessing the suitability of the provision and may lead to a request for an early annual review or interim/emergency review.

5. Definitions

Suspension – when a pupil is removed from the school for a fixed period.

Permanent exclusion – when a pupil is removed from the school permanently and taken off the school roll. This is sometimes referred to as an 'exclusion'.

For the purposes of exclusions, a school day is defined as any day on which there is a school session. Therefore, INSET or staff training days do not count as a school day.

6. Roles and responsibilities

The Olive Academies Independent Schools Board (OAISB)

The OAISB holds ultimate legal and regulatory accountability for the school under the Independent School Standards. The OAISB will:

- Maintain Oversight**:** Ensure the school's exclusion and suspension policy is lawful, non-discriminatory, and consistently applied in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Review Trends: Monitor the school's data on suspensions and exclusions to identify trends, ensure equity, and review the effectiveness of behavioral interventions.
- Secure Independent Review**:** Ensure that infrastructure exists to rapidly appoint a legally compliant, independent third party to serve on panel hearings if an exclusion appeal is raised.
- Review Decisions: Meet to review permanent exclusions and cases where a pupil's total suspensions exceed statutory or contractually agreed thresholds (e.g., more than 5 school days in a term).
- Assess Reinstatement: Evaluate whether the Head of School's decision to exclude or suspend was fair, reasonable, and proportionate, taking into account the pupil's SEMH needs and trauma history.
- Accountability: Maintain written records of all reviews, outcomes, and directions given to the school leadership team.

The Head of School (in consultation with the Executive Headteacher)

The Head of School holds the operational authority to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. The Head of School will:

Pre-Decision Duties (Evidential & Legal Safeguards)

- Establish the Standard of Proof: Evaluate all relevant facts, statements, and evidence. The Head must make the decision on the balance of probabilities (i.e., that it is more likely than not that the incident occurred).
- Uphold Procedural Fairness: Ensure the pupil is given a meaningful opportunity to present their version of events. If the pupil's SEMH needs prevent them from doing so effectively, the Head must facilitate an internal or external advocate (such as a parent, carer, key worker, or social worker).
- Conduct an Equality Act Review: Actively verify that the suspension does not amount to unlawful discrimination. The Head must consider whether the behavior was a direct manifestation of the pupil's underlying SEMH/trauma needs and whether all "reasonable adjustments" to their behavior plan were actively in place prior to the incident.
- Assess Safeguarding and Vulnerability: Factor in whether the pupil is exceptionally vulnerable. If the child has an allocated social worker or is a Looked After Child (LAC), the Head must assess the immediate safety and safeguarding risks of sending them home.

Immediate Communication Duties (Without Delay)

- Notify Parents/Carers: Contact the parents immediately by telephone, followed by a formal written notice sent without delay (by the end of the afternoon session on the day of the suspension). The written notice must explicitly state:
    - The precise reasons for the suspension.
    - The exact length of the suspension (start and end dates).
    - The parents' right to make formal representations to the OAISB and how to do so.
- Notify the Commissioning Local Authority (LA): Inform the pupil's funding/placing LA without delay by securely transmitting a copy of the parental notification letter.
- Notify Multi-Agency Professionals: If applicable, immediately alert the pupil's allocated **Social** Worker and/or Virtual School Head (VSH) to ensure multi-agency safeguarding loops are maintained while the pupil is away from school.

Educational & Welfare Duties During Suspension

- Arrange Remote Education: Under Part 3 (Welfare) of the ISS, the Head must ensure the pupil's right to education is maintained. The Head must arrange for individual coursework, therapeutic reflections, or remote learning materials to be sent home immediately.
- Coordinate Alternative Education **:** If a suspension exceeds 5 school days (or if contractually required by your Local Authority Service Level Agreements), the Head must secure and verify an off-site alternative educational placement starting from Day 6. The Head must notify parents of the start times, dates, address, and contact person for this provision no later than 48 hours before it begins.

Administrative and Recording Duties

- Maintain the Sanctions Record: In strict compliance with Part 3 of the ISS, the Head must ensure a written record of the sanction is logged on the school's central management system (Arbor). This must detail the pupil's name, the nature of the offence, the date, and the duration of the suspension.
- Track Cumulative Thresholds: Monitor the pupil's cumulative suspension days within the term. The Head must trigger a formal notification to the Chair of the OAISB if a single suspension (or cumulative total) exceeds 5 school days in a single term, or if the suspension will cause the pupil to miss a public examination.

The Governance Professional (Clerk to the OAISB)

The Governance Professional manages the administrative integrity and procedural fairness of the process. The Governance Professional will:

- Manage Timelines: Ensure all statutory and contractual deadlines for notifications, hearings, and appeals are met.
- Convene Panels: Coordinate the independent panel for appeals, verifying that composition rules are strictly met and that no member has a conflict of interest.
- Distribute Documentation: Circulate all evidence packets to panel members and attendees ahead of hearings and distribute written outcomes to all parties without delay.

Parents and Carers

The school views parents and carers as essential partners in managing behavior and transitions. Parents and Carers are expected to:

- Engage Early: Work collaboratively with the school when early interventions or behavior support plans are flagged to prevent exclusions.
- Manage Remote Learning: Ensure their child engages with the remote learning or alternative coursework provided by the school during the initial days of a suspension or exclusion.
- Participate in Reviews: Attend OAISB review meetings and appeal hearings if requested, ensuring their child's perspective is fully represented.

7. Considering the reinstatement of a pupil

The Olive Academies Independent Schools Board (OAISB) has responsibility for reviewing serious disciplinary sanctions to ensure fairness, proportionality, and transparency.

The OAISB panel will meet within **15 school days** of receiving notice from the Head of School to consider the reinstatement of a suspended or excluded pupil under any of the following circumstances:

- The exclusion is permanent.
- The suspension is a fixed-period measure that brings the pupil’s total cumulative suspended school days to more than 15 school days within a single term.

- The suspension or exclusion would result in the pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test.
- For any other fixed-period suspensions totaling between 6 and 15 school days in a single term, the OAISB panel will convene a review meeting within 50 school days if the parents or carers formally request to make representations. For suspensions totaling 5 school days or fewer in a term, the OAISB will consider any written representations made by parents, but is not required to arrange a formal meeting.

Hearing Procedure and Representations

The following parties will be invited to the OAISB panel meeting and allowed to share information or make oral/written representations:

- The parents or carers (and, where requested, a representative or supportive friend).
- The pupil, where appropriate to their age, understanding, and emotional readiness.
- The Head of School and the Executive Headteacher.
- The pupil's allocated Social Worker (if applicable).
- The Virtual School Head (VSH), if the pupil is a looked-after child.

As a specialist provision catering entirely to pupils with complex social, emotional, and mental health needs, the panel will heavily weigh the pupil's specific therapeutic profile, trauma history, and EHCP provisions before reaching a conclusion.

The Panel's Decision

Following a full review of the evidence on the balance of probabilities, the OAISB panel can decide to:

- Decline to reinstate the pupil, thereby upholding the Head of School's decision.
- Direct the reinstatement of the pupil immediately, or on a specified future date.

Formal Notification of the Outcome

The Governance Professional will notify all stakeholders in writing of the panel's decision and the explicit reasons behind it, without delay and typically within 3 school days. This includes the parents, the Head of School, the commissioning Local Authority, and any involved multi-agency professionals (Social Worker/VSH).

Where the exclusion is permanent and the OAISB panel has decided to uphold the decision, the written notice will explicitly state:

- Confirm that the exclusion is permanent.
- Outline the parents' and commissioning Local Authority's right to appeal the decision by requesting an Independent Panel Hearing under Section 7 of this policy.
- State the deadline for submitting an appeal, which is 15 school days from the date on which the written notice of the OAISB's decision is given.
- Provide the name, email, and address to which the formal application for appeal must be submitted.
- Remind parents that they may, at their own expense, appoint a representative to make oral or written representations to the appeal panel, or bring a supportive friend to the hearing.

8. Appeals Against Permanent Exclusion

If parents or the commissioning Local Authority wish to appeal a decision by the OAISB panel to uphold a permanent exclusion, they may invoke the school's formal appeals process. This process is designed to mirror the principles of fairness and independence set out in Paragraph 33 (Part 7) of the Independent School Standards.

Applications for an independent panel hearing must be made in writing to the Governance Professional within 15 school days of the date on the formal notice of exclusion.

Panel Composition:
The Governance Professional will convene a panel consisting of at least three members who have no prior connection to the school, the pupil, or the incident leading to the exclusion. In accordance with the Independent School Standards:

- Independent Member: At least one member of the panel will be completely independent of the management, governance, and running of Olive Academies (i.e., someone who is not a trustee, member, employee, or governor within the trust).
- Remaining Members: The remaining members will be drawn from experienced educational leaders or governors who have had no direct involvement in the matters leading to the exclusion.
- Right to Attend: Parents have the right to attend the hearing, be accompanied, and be represented at their own expense.
- The Hearing and Specialist Input: The panel will meet to review the decision-making process. Because OA-North View is a specialist SEMH provision catering to commissioned pupils:
- SEND and Therapeutic History: The panel will actively seek and have regard to evidence regarding the pupil's SEND, EHCP provisions, and therapeutic history.
- Multi-Agency Viewpoints: Where a pupil has an allocated Social Worker or a Virtual School Head (VSH), they will be invited to submit representations regarding the pupil's safety, welfare, and safeguarding risks.

The Decision
The panel will review whether the decision to exclude was fair, reasonable, and proportionate, and whether the school met its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Following the hearing, the panel can make findings and recommendations to:

- Uphold the OAISB panel's decision to permanently exclude.
- Direct that the OAISB panel reconsiders its decision and evaluates options for reinstatement or a managed transition to an alternative setting.

The panel's decision is reached by a majority vote. The panel will issue its written findings and recommendations to the parents, the Head of School, the OAISB, and the commissioning Local Authority, typically within 5 school days of the hearing. A copy of these findings will be kept available on the school premises for inspection by the proprietor and the Head of School.

9. Training for Panel Members

The Olive Academies Independent Schools Board (OAISB) ensures that all governance members, independent panel members, the Head of School, and the Governance Professional receive regular training, renewed at least every 2 years.

This training is specifically designed to ensure legal safety and procedural equity within an independent special school context and covers:

- The Independent School Standards: With specific focus on the application of Part 3 (Welfare, health and safety of pupils) and the procedural mechanics of Part 7 (Manner in which complaints/appeals are handled).
- The Equality Act 2010: Understanding the legal definitions of disability, the prohibition of direct and indirect discrimination, the duty to make reasonable adjustments, and how to conduct a robust manifestation review for SEMH pupils.
- The Rules of Natural Justice and Procedural Fairness: Ensuring all panels observe the right to a fair hearing, unbiased decision-making, and objective balancing of evidence based on the balance of probabilities.
- Multi-Agency Integration: Understanding the roles of commissioning Local Authorities, Social Workers, and Virtual School Heads (VSH) in safeguarding vulnerable learners during transitions.

10. School registers

A pupil's name will not be automatically or unilaterally removed from the school admissions register (off-rolled) following a permanent exclusion. All pupils at OA-North View hold an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), therefore the school works strictly within the framework of local authority and placement regulations.

Criteria for Removal from Roll

The Head of School will only remove a permanently excluded pupil's name from the admissions register when **both** of the following conditions are met:

1. The Appeals Window Has Concluded: At least 15 school days have passed since the parents/carers were notified in writing of the OAISB panel's decision to uphold the exclusion, and no application for an Independent Panel Hearing has been lodged (or the parents have confirmed in writing that they waive their right to appeal). Where an appeal *has* been lodged, the pupil remains on roll until the independent process has fully concluded.

2. Local Authority Consultation is Complete: The commissioning Local Authority has been formally consulted via an emergency or interim EHCP review meeting, and a destination or alternative educational provision has been identified to ensure the child does not become NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training).

Attendance Register Coding During Exclusion

While a pupil remains on the school roll but is out of school due to a permanent exclusion or suspension, the attendance register will be coded accurately to reflect their educational status:

- Code B (Off-site Educational Activity): Used if the school or the commissioning Local Authority has arranged alternative education that the pupil is actively attending.
- Code D (Dual Registration): Used if the pupil has been provisionally or fully registered at another dual placement or alternative provider.
- Code E (Absent): Used during the initial days of a suspension or exclusion where alternative educational provision is not yet active, provided the school has sent coursework or remote learning materials home.

Statutory Returns to the Local Authority

In all cases where a pupil's name is removed from the admissions register due to a permanent exclusion, the school will submit a formal return to the commissioning Local Authority without delay. This return must include:

- The pupil's full name, date of birth, and unique pupil number (UPN).
- The full names, emergency telephone numbers, and residential addresses of the parents/carers.
- The explicit regulatory grounds for removal (Permanent Exclusion).
- The name of the new school or alternative provider and the date the pupil is due to start, if known.
- The pupil's new home address and transition date, if the family is relocating.

11. Returning from a suspension

Following any period of suspension, a formal re-integration meeting will be scheduled before or on the day of the pupil's return to the classroom. This process is structured to preserve the student's dignity and uphold our commitment to unconditional positive regard.

The Reintegration Meeting

The meeting must involve the pupil, parents or carers, a member of the Senior Leadership Team, and key therapeutic or support staff where appropriate. The primary objectives of this meeting are to:

- Communicate a Fresh Start: Explicitly reassure the pupil that they are a valued, respected member of the school community and that the suspension period has concluded.
- Review the Reintegration Strategy: Discuss and evaluate the restorative interventions or changes to daily routines required to support the pupil's emotional regulation and prevent further incidents.
- Address Root Causes: Collaborative review of any underlying triggers, unmet trauma needs, or environmental stress factors that contributed to the disciplinary boundary.

Phased Integration Plans

A highly structured, time-limited phased integration plan may be implemented if it is agreed by the school, parents, and commissioning Local Authority to best support the pupil's SEMH needs.

- Regulatory Guardrail: In strict alignment with Independent School Standards, part-time timetables or phased returns will never be used as a disciplinary sanction or long-term behavior management tool.
- Monitoring: Any phased integration must be for the minimum duration necessary, have clear review dates, be formally agreed upon in writing with the family, and be systematically tracked on Arbor.
- Parent Attendance: The school strongly encourages parents and carers to attend the reintegration meeting. However, if a parent cannot or chooses not to attend, the meeting will proceed with the pupil and an internal advocate (such as their key worker) to avoid delaying the child's access to education. The pupil will not be kept out of class due to a parent's inability to attend.

12. Links with other policies

To ensure a consistent, safe, and regulatory-compliant approach to student welfare, this policy must be read and implemented in conjunction with the following school documents:

- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy and Information Report
- Anti-Bullying Strategy
- Complaints Procedure

13. Monitoring and Reviewing

The Olive Academies Independent Schools Board (OAISB) will systematically monitor the implementation of this policy to ensure that suspensions and permanent exclusions are handled lawfully, fairly, and transparently.

- Termly Reporting: The Head of School will provide a comprehensive, anonymised data report to the OAISB once per term. This report will detail the total number of suspensions and permanent exclusions, their duration, and the root causes.
- Demographic Analysis: The OAISB will cross-reference suspension and exclusion data against pupil characteristics (including ethnicity, gender, care status, and specific SEMH/SEND profiles) to actively monitor equity, detect patterns, and eliminate potential systemic discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.
- Review of Interventions: The board will evaluate the effectiveness of the school's behavior and relationship strategy, assessing whether early therapeutic interventions and phased integration plans are effectively minimising the need for exclusionary sanctions.

Written Records of Sanctions

In strict compliance with Part 3 (Welfare, health and safety of pupils) of the Independent School Standards, the school will maintain a central, comprehensive written record of all disciplinary sanctions.

- Every suspension and permanent exclusion will be logged securely on the school's management info system (Arbor).
- Each entry will record the pupil's name, year group, specific nature of the incident, date, duration of the sanction, and details of the multi-agency notifications sent.
- These records, alongside copies of the panel findings from any Independent Panel Hearings, will be kept available on the school premises for inspection by the proprietor, the Head of School, and inspectors.

Policy Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Head of School and the Executive Headteacher to ensure operational effectiveness.

- Regulatory Alignment: The review will verify ongoing compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations, the Equality Act 2010, and relevant Department for Education (DfE) guidelines.
- Formal Ratification: Following the annual review, any proposed amendments must be submitted to the OAISB for approval and formal ratification. The next scheduled review date for this policy is March 2027.