

The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust



Policy

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

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The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust



Our Mission

Outstanding Catholic education for all pupils. As a family of schools, we will enable our young people to develop spiritually, morally, intellectually and personally, putting their faith into action, through serving Christ in others, in the church and in the world around them.

This policy was approved by the Trust Board

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. M. P.', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Chair Trust Board

Date: 06/10/26

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1.0 Published	May 2022	Trust Policy	MHY(Headteacher SMM) SMT (Headteacher SJF) DBY (CEO) JJN (Head of Governance) AWN (Chair of Governors SJF) SSS (Scofield Sweeney Solicitors)
2.0 Review	July 2023	Trust Policy review to comply with changes in the DfE guidance, May 2023. Section B - Withdrawing Suspensions and Permanent Exclusion, pg. 9 Section K - Academy Council Considering Suspension or Permanent Exclusion Decisions, pg. 23 Section L - Requests for remote access meetings for Academy Council meetings or IRPs, pg. 28 Section N – Independent Review Panel (IRP), pg. 31 Addition of Annex A - Key principles when conducting meetings via the use of remote access	JJN (Head of Governance) DBY (CEO) Trust Board
3.0 Review	October 2026	Annual Review	JJN (Head of Governance), MHY (Headteacher SMM) SMT (Headteacher SJF), DBY (CEO). HTN (Primary Executive Headteacher).

Change review

Version	Date	Changes
3.0	October 2026	Complete review, policy changed to be in line with 2026 DfE guidance.

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Definitions

In this policy, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

BWCAT	The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust.
Trust, we and our	Covers all the schools within The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust and The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust Office.
Trust Board	The Directors of the Trust Board.
Academy Council	Governors elected or appointed to individual Academy Councils.
Governors	Governors appointed to the Academy Council of the individual academy.
CEO	The Chief Executive Officer for the Trust.
Executive Headteacher/Headteacher	Executive Headteacher/Headteacher responsible for individual academies.
Academy/schools	Refers to the Academies within BWCAT.
Pupil	Refers to any pupil on roll at any of the BWCAT schools.
Parents/Carers	Refers to any person who holds parental responsibility for the pupil
Child and Children	Refers to children and young people under the age of 18 years.
Staff	Means all employees, temporary, casual, agency and contracted staff working for the Trust, volunteers and consultants.
VSH	Virtual School Head (VSH), is the lead person within the Local Authority for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children.
LA	Local Authority
Suspension	Described in legislation as an exclusion for a fixed period
Permanent Exclusion	When a pupil is removed from the school permanently and taken off the school roll.
AP	Alternative Provision (AP) refers to suitable full-time education that is arranged for a pupil from the sixth school day (or earlier) of a suspension or from the sixth school day (or earlier) after the first day of a permanent exclusion.
Academic Year	A school's academic year beginning with the first day of school after 31 July and ending with the first day of school after the following 31 July.
IRP	Independent Review Panel

The term ***must*** refer to what Headteachers/Academy Councils/Trust Board/Local Authorities/Parents and others are required to do by law. The term ***should*** refers to recommendations for good practice.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust's (BWCAT) suspensions and exclusions policy aims to set out the process that will be followed and the additional considerations around suspensions and exclusions that the Trust will apply. Good behaviour and self-discipline lead to effective learning and help prepare children and young people for life beyond the school gate.
- 1.2 Where the Trust's approaches towards behaviour management have been exhausted, then suspensions and permanent exclusions will sometimes be necessary as a last resort. This is to ensure that other pupils and teaching staff are protected from disruption and can learn in safe, calm, and supportive environments.
- 1.3 The Trust will always have regard to the Statutory Guidance on Suspensions and Exclusions (May 2026) when making decisions on suspensions and exclusions and will follow the law, as set out in the relevant School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulation 2012 (as amended).
- 1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:
 - Anti-Bullying Policy
 - Behaviour Policy
 - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
 - SEND Policy

2. Application of this Policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all schools within the Trust community. Each school within the Trust will apply suspensions and exclusions in accordance with this policy and ensure that its contents are relayed to all staff, parents and pupils.

3. Types of Exclusion

Suspensions and permanent exclusions are different:

- 3.1 **Suspensions** (previously called fixed-term exclusions) are where a pupil is prevented from attending the school for a fixed period. At the end of the period, they are expected to return to school following a reintegration meeting. A pupil may receive a maximum 45 days of suspension in an academic year before being permanently excluded.
- 3.2 **Permanent exclusions** are where, subject to a decision of the Academy Council to reinstate the pupil to the school, the pupil is prevented from attending the school again. A decision to permanently exclude will only be taken in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others such as staff or pupils in the school.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the Trust community are expected to follow this policy. Roles, responsibilities and expectations of each section of the Trust community are set out in detail below.

The Headteacher

- 4.1 All decisions to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil will be taken by the Headteacher after considering all the circumstances. Every decision made will be proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour with reference to the School's behaviour policy.

The Governors

- 4.2 The Academy Council is responsible for forming committees to review exclusions and suspensions when it is required to do so, it is requested by parents, or it is, in its view, prudent to review an individual decision. In each case, the decision of the relevant committee formed by the Academy Council will be to decide whether to uphold the exclusion or suspension, or instead to reinstate the pupil to the school.

Parents/Carers

- 4.3 Parents/carers will be informed without delay of any suspension or exclusion and their right to make representations in regard to any suspension or exclusion decision in accordance with the DfE guidance. Details will be provided on the rights parents have with every letter that is sent from the Headteacher.

Pupils

- 4.4 All pupils of the schools in the Trust are expected to follow the expectations regarding their behaviour to ensure that all pupils can learn and participate in school life effectively. Where those expectations are breached, the behaviour policy will apply.

5. CCTV, Witness Evidence and Pupil Views

- 5.1 Schools in the Trust use Close Circuit Television (CCTV) within its premises. This is to provide a safe and secure environment for pupils, staff and visitors. If behavioural incidents are recorded on CCTV, the footage may be viewed as part of the investigation and the content considered before imposing a sanction. If CCTV is relied upon for a decision on a suspension or exclusion, then it will be shown in some format (redacted as necessary) at any Governor review meeting. Please see the Trust's CCTV policy and privacy notices for more information.
- 5.2 Where witness evidence is relied upon, whether that be from a pupil or a staff member, the statement(s) will be provided at any Governors review meeting. All statements will be signed and dated unless the Headteacher has good reason to protect the anonymity of the relevant witness. Reasons may include threats of reprisals.

- 5.3 Before taking a decision to suspend or exclude and where appropriate, the Headteacher will take the pupil's views into account, considering these in light of their age and understanding, and inform the pupil about how their views have been factored into any decision made. Where relevant, the pupil will be given support to express their view, including through advocates such as parents or, if the pupil has one, a social worker. The Headteacher will also take account of any contributing factors identified after an incident of misbehaviour has occurred.

6. Reintegration Strategy Meetings Following Suspension or Off-Site Direction

- 6.1 Where a pupil is suspended or is directed to be educated off-site, upon return to the school both the pupil and parents will be invited to a reintegration strategy meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to:
- offer the pupil a fresh start,
 - help them understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others,
 - teach them to how meet the high expectations of behaviour in line with the school culture,
 - foster a renewed sense of belonging within the school community; and
 - build engagement with learning.
- 6.2 To reduce the likelihood of further suspensions, school staff will work with the pupil to understand what led to the behaviour and to establish if any changes can be made or further support implemented from a pastoral of practical perspective that might reduce the chance of repeat behaviours. Previous behaviour is not seen as an obstacle to future success.
- 6.3 The school may use various measures to support a pupil's successful reintegration. The following are examples of measures which may be used:
- daily contact with a designated pastoral professional in-school;
 - use of a report card with personalised targets leading to personalised rewards;
 - ensuring the pupil receives academic support upon return to catch up on any lost progress;
 - planned pastoral interventions;
 - mentoring by a trusted adult or a local mentoring charity;
 - regular reviews with the pupil and parents to praise progress being made and raise and address any concerns at an early stage; and
 - informing the pupil, parents and staff of potential external support.
- 6.4 Whilst reintegration meetings are highly encouraged by the Trust, pupils will not be prevented from being admitted to the school or being put in mainstream classes because a meeting has not taken place. The school will arrange a non-negotiable time

for the meeting around the availability of school staff. Minutes of the reintegration meeting will be taken, which will include a list of attendees and absences will also be recorded.

7. Cancelling a Suspension or Exclusion

- 7.1 A suspension or exclusion can be cancelled by the Headteacher as long as the suspension or exclusion has not been considered by the Governors. In relation to an exclusion, it cannot be cancelled if the total time the pupil was excluded or suspended that academic year would be over 45 days at the point of the decision to cancel the exclusion.

Where a suspension or exclusion is cancelled, the relevant parties will be informed by the Headteacher in accordance with the Statutory Guidance on Suspensions and Exclusions.

8. Suspensions Before a Permanent Exclusion

- 8.1 In exceptional circumstances, pupils may receive a suspension prior to a permanent exclusion. For each decision, the Headteacher will send the relevant letter setting out the rights of parents. A suspension cannot be converted into a permanent exclusion and so any subsequent permanent exclusion would be a fresh decision due to commence immediately after the suspension had ended. Exceptional circumstances may include where, for example, further evidence has come to light, a further investigation has revealed that the behaviour is more serious than first thought or where the incident was serious and time is required to fully investigate the circumstances and consider alternatives.

9. Directing Off-Site and Managed Moves

- 9.1 Before taking any decision to permanently exclude a pupil, the Headteacher will consider whether a direction to attend alternative provision and/or a managed move as part of a planned intervention would be a reasonable alternative that should be considered.
- 9.2 In the case of directing a pupil off-site to alternative provision, the aim of any direction is for it to be used as a short-term measure as part of the school's behaviour management strategy to improve a pupil's behaviour where in-school interventions and/or outreach have been unsuccessful or are deemed inappropriate. While parental consent is not needed, discussions would take place with parents to feed in their views about the options. The requirements to any off-site directions will be followed.
- 9.3 For a managed move to take place there needs to be agreement between the School, the parents and the new school that a managed move should occur. Before a managed move is agreed to, the pupil will often attend the new school as part of a direction off-

site, but any managed move will need to comply with the new school's admissions procedures. We will share relevant information with the new school and check that they have an integration strategy. At the end of the off-site direction, the relevant parties (including the parents) will review how it has gone before a decision is taken about whether it becomes a permanent managed move. A managed move will only be agreed where it is in the pupil's best interests.

10. Independent Review Panels (IRPs)

The Trust arranges its own IRPs, and requests for an IRP where a permanent exclusion has been upheld should be made to Jemma Johnson, Trust Head of Governance j.johnson@bwcat.org within 15 school days from the date on which notice in writing of the Academy Councils decision is given to parents.

- 10.1 Further details on the role and powers of IRPs can be found in Part Ten of the DfE's Statutory Guidance on Exclusions and Suspensions.

11. Reconsideration by the Academy Council

- 11.1 Where an IRP either recommends reconsideration or quashes the initial decision of the Academy Council, the decision will be considered within 10 school days. This may involve a rehearing with oral evidence given by the School and parents or may be a reconsideration with only the Academy Council members and the clerk present.

12. Remote Meetings

- 12.1 Any Governor meeting and/or an IRP meeting may be conducted remotely where the parents request for it to be conducted remotely and the meeting can be fairly held remotely, with all participants having access and are able to make representations. A meeting may also take place remotely where there is an extraordinary event or unforeseen circumstance that means it's not reasonably practicable to hold the meeting in person. Such events can include, but are not limited to, floods, fire, and an outbreak of an infectious disease.
- 12.2 In addition, where a child's social worker or the virtual school head are due to attend a meeting, they may join an in-person meeting remotely as long as it can be fairly accessed, the technology is available, and everyone would be able to make representations.

13. Local Authority (LA) Attendance at Meetings

- 13.1 Parents have the option to request that a representative from the relevant Local Authority (LA) attends Governors' meetings arranged to review suspensions and exclusions. To ensure this process runs smoothly, parents should inform the Clerk in writing or by telephone if they wish the LA to be invited. Once such a request is

received, the LA will be sent the meeting documents, along with other relevant parties.

- 13.2 It is important to note that it is not typically expected for the LA to attend unless expressly invited by the parents. When present, the LA representative participates in the capacity of an observer and may only contribute to discussions or provide representations during the meeting with the Governors' consent. For example, the Governors might request the LA observer's input on compliance with legislation pertaining to suspensions and exclusions.
- 13.3 Ensuring that all participants, including LA representatives, stay within their defined roles helps maintain the integrity, legality, and fairness of the process.

14. Complaints

- 14.1 If parents have any concerns or complaints over the application or implementation of this policy or feel that they are being pressured into a managed move, they should raise their concerns with a staff member or the Headteacher in accordance with the Trust's complaints policy. If the concern relates to an exclusion or suspension decision, or matters relating to it, the statutory procedure set out in the Statutory Guidance on Exclusions and Suspensions will be followed.

15. Equality Impact

- 15.1 The school does all that it can to ensure that its policies do not discriminate against pupils or others, either directly or indirectly, in relation to any of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

16. Monitoring Arrangements

- 16.1 The Governors review data on suspensions and exclusions to ensure that the use of suspensions and exclusions is appropriate. The following are monitored by the Governors to ensure the processes and support for pupils are appropriate:
- The interventions put in place for pupils at risk of suspension and permanent exclusion.
 - The processes in place for determining and reviewing directions off-site and such placements being reviewed at sufficient intervals to assure that the education is achieving its objectives, and that pupils are benefiting from it.
 - The full-time educational provision for pupils of compulsory school age from the sixth consecutive school day of a suspension; in particular, checking the provision is suitable and quality assured to ensure that:

- Any previous placements have been evaluated, including support for any applicable SEND.
 - There is a process in place to monitor the pupil's attendance and behaviour at the provision.
 - The correct attendance code is being used.
 - The pupil's child protection file and any other information relevant to the pupil's safeguarding and welfare has been securely transferred to their new setting as early as possible.
- Whether there is any variation within the year on suspensions and permanent exclusions and the characteristics of pupils.
 - The cost implications of directing children to be educated off site in alternative provision and whether there are any patterns to the reasons or timing of moves.
 - Whether the school register and absence codes have been recorded correctly.
 - How the behaviour policy is applied and, specifically, its consistency.
 - The circumstances in which pupils receive repeat suspensions.
 - Whether personal education plans for looked after children have been reviewed on a termly basis

17. Separation of Pupils for Safeguarding Purposes

- 17.2 In certain circumstances, the school may temporarily forbid a pupil from attending its premises for safeguarding reasons – for example, following an allegation of harm by one pupil against another that makes it necessary to physically separate pupils. This is not an exclusion on disciplinary grounds and will not be recorded as one.

A separation for safeguarding purposes will be led by the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), using their professional judgement and supported by other agencies such as children's social care and the police as required. It will be used only in rare circumstances, where separating pupils is essential and cannot reasonably be achieved while keeping the pupil(s) on the school premises.

The school will inform parents of the reason the pupil has been temporarily forbidden from attending and will notify the Academy Council without delay. In deciding to separate a pupil, the school will have regard to its duties under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will act reasonably, rationally and in a procedurally fair manner.

Monitoring and Review of this Policy

The Trust shall be responsible for reviewing this policy from time to time to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

The 16 schools in our Trust:

St. Mary's Menston, a Catholic Voluntary Academy

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Otley, a Voluntary Academy

Ss Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Ilkley, a Voluntary Academy

St Mary's Horsforth Catholic Voluntary Academy

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Pudsey, a Voluntary Academy

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Harrogate, a Voluntary Academy

St Mary's Catholic Primary School Knaresborough, a Voluntary Academy

St. Stephen's Catholic Primary School and Nursery, a Voluntary Academy

Holy Name Catholic Voluntary Academy

St Roberts Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

St John Fisher Catholic High School Harrogate, a Voluntary Academy

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Tadcaster, a Voluntary Academy

Barkston Ash Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Barnoldswick, a Voluntary Academy

St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy



The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust

The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust is a charity and a company limited by Guarantee, registered in England and Wales.

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