



EXCLUSION POLICY

This policy also applies to the EYFS

Updated	Review Date	Version
September 2023	September 2024	2023.02

Signed: Mr John Clarke (Chair of Board)

1. Introduction

At Abercorn School, we encourage the establishment of good relationships between staff and pupils and support for the School's values through a system of rewards and sanctions, which are designed to promote a calm, disciplined learning environment. Our system of rewards includes, but is not limited to:

- verbal praise and written praise for good work;
- house points and other awards for both effort and achievement (as recorded in pupil homework diaries);
- academic prizes for effort and achievement, which are celebrated widely, in the classroom, assemblies, uploaded onto the parent portal section of our School's website and at other opportunities;
- special mentions in assemblies for students exemplifying the school values;
- annual subject prizes;
- weekly certificates and stickers for immediate praise;
- posting examples of excellent work in art/design, sports, and drama and concert achievements on the School's website and social media accounts, so that the community can celebrate success; and
- reports to parents or guardians.

However, when poor behaviour is identified, sanctions are implemented in line with the School's Behaviour Policy. This may include the Head temporarily excluding a pupil, for a period of between 24 hours and one school week, for serious indiscipline; or less serious offences, where repeated sanctions have proved ineffective. Usually, the School will set work for the pupil to complete at home during their temporary exclusion. Parents or guardians may not appeal against temporary exclusions.

If the pupil's behaviour does not improve, and temporary exclusion is ineffective, the School may be required to permanently exclude the pupil, or to require him/her to be removed. The School may also permanently exclude the pupil for more serious indiscipline, as detailed below.

2. Permanent exclusion

A non-exhaustive list of the sorts of pupil behaviour that could merit permanent exclusion includes the following:

- physical assault against pupils or adults;
- behaviour which puts the safety of the pupil or others in jeopardy;
- verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against pupils or adults;
- serious or persistent bullying, including through social media and other forms of cyber-bullying;

- any form of abuse or unlawful discrimination, e.g. on grounds of age, race, religion/ belief, gender, disability, special education needs and disability and sexual orientation.
- sexual misconduct;
- drug and alcohol misuse including their possession, use or supply;
- wilful damage to property;
- theft or unauthorised possession of any property belonging to the School or any other pupil or member of staff;
- bringing illegal, inappropriate or dangerous items into school, such as drugs, weapons, firearms or pornographic material;
- persistent disruptive behaviour;
- misuse of the School's information technology systems including accessing material which is illegal or illicit, pornographic, subversive, abusive or offensive;
- persistent or serious breaches of the School's Behaviour Policy;
- use of online platforms, including social networking websites or other forms of social media, to publish any matter disparaging the School or any member of its staff or another pupil;
- other serious misconduct towards a member of the School community or which actually, or potentially, or indirectly brings the School into disrepute or damages its reputation (single or repeated episodes) on or off the School premises; and
- permanent exclusion may also be imposed by the School as a sanction for a series of minor misdemeanours.

3. Breaches of discipline outside the School grounds

The School takes the conduct of its pupils outside school grounds extremely seriously. A pupil's misbehaviour outside school can be damaging to the reputation of the pupil and the School, and the School may discipline pupils for misbehaviour outside school premises, to the extent that it is reasonable to do so. Where a serious incident is reported to the School of a pupil's poor behaviour outside the school grounds, the School will follow the investigation procedure (below). In any event, whether it is a serious or minor incident reported, the School will take an evidence-based approach and may talk to witnesses before identifying further action and any sanctions required for such behaviour.

This may apply in the following circumstances:

- misbehaviour when the pupil is:
 - taking part in any School-organised or School-related activity;
 - travelling to or from School;

- wearing School uniform; or
- in some other way identifiable as a pupil at the School, or
- misbehaviour at any time, whether or not the conditions above apply, that:
 - could have repercussions for the orderly running of the School;
 - poses a threat to another pupil or member of the public; or
 - could adversely affect the reputation of the School;
 - in all cases, the above misbehaviour would apply whether it took place in person, over the telephone, or online, including the use of social media

In all cases of misbehaviour, the teacher may only discipline the pupil when on School premises (or elsewhere when the pupil is under the supervision of the teacher).

4. Serious academic concerns

If, following appropriate support, sanctions and discussions with parents or guardians, a pupil's effort or standard of academic work is persistently poor, the Head will write to parents or guardians to inform them that, if no improvements are made, a term's notice will be given to withdraw their child. Following further appropriate support and sanctions, if the pupil's effort or standard of academic work continues to be poor, the Head will write to parents to give them one term's notice to withdraw the pupil.

5. Required removal

The School may require the removal of a pupil when there is a breakdown of the relationship between the School and the parents and/or pupil.

The main situations which may result in removal are:

- a breakdown of trust between the School and the parents. This may manifest itself in a number of ways, including:
 - parents not supporting the School's sanction structures;
 - vexatious behaviour, such as parents repeatedly bringing unsubstantiated claims;
 - abusive behaviour by parents to the School staff, pupils or other parents (including as a spectator at school fixtures).
- a breakdown of trust between the School and the pupil. This may manifest itself in a number of ways, including:
 - persistent misconduct such as unauthorised absence from School;
 - when a pupil has brought a malicious or unjustified allegation against a member of staff and where there are reasonable grounds that this may happen again in the future;

- other circumstances where the Head (after appropriate consultation) is satisfied that it is not in the best interests of the pupil, or of the School, that she remains at the School.

6. Investigation procedure

Investigation of a complaint or allegation about serious misconduct will normally be co-ordinated by a senior member of staff, and its outcome reported to the Head who is the only person who has authority to permanently exclude a pupil or require their removal. Parents will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable if a complaint or allegation under investigation is of a nature that could result in the pupil being excluded or required to leave.

A pupil may be interviewed informally by a member of staff to establish whether there are grounds for the reported complaint and/or a formal investigation. The School shall not be bound to inform the parents that an informal meeting is to take place but would usually arrange for a member of staff other than the member of staff conducting the interview to be present to support the pupil. A pupil who is waiting to be interviewed may be segregated.

Suspension

While an investigation takes place, a pupil may be suspended from the School and required to stay at home or with his or her parents, or other suitable adult. Alternatively, he or she may be placed under a segregated regime on School premises. When a pupil is suspended, teachers may set work during the pupil's period of absence.

Search

We may decide to search a pupil's space and belongings, and ask them to turn out the contents of pockets or a bag, if we consider there is reasonable cause to do so. Clothing will not be searched until it has been removed from the wearer and care will be taken to ensure reasonable privacy. We will not carry out an intimate search or force the removal of clothing.

Reports to the police

The School will report to the police any activity which it believes may amount to a criminal activity which takes place either within the school grounds or outside its grounds. Drugs, weapons and other items will be confiscated immediately and held for the police, if they are considered as potential evidence. If the School believes a pupil may have taken drugs then the School will seek immediate medical advice and may involve the police.

Sexual offences will be reported to the police immediately, following the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures, including cases where a pupil is reasonably suspected or alleged to have committed such an offence. The alleged victim's parents or guardians will usually also be informed immediately of the incident and told that the police have been informed.

7. Disciplinary meeting

Preparation

If the outcome of the investigation is that there is a case for the pupil and/or parent to answer, the Head will convene a meeting to consider the matter. The Chair of the Board will be informed of the investigation and that a disciplinary meeting is to be held but shall play no part in either of them. Where possible, documents that will be made available to the parents and the pupil before the meeting include, but are not limited to, a statement setting out the points of complaint, written statements and notes of the evidence supporting the complaint, the relevant School policies and procedures, and the investigation report.

Attendance

The pupil and his or her parents (if available) will be asked to attend the disciplinary meeting with the Head. The pupil may also be accompanied by a member of staff of his or her choice.

Proceedings

The process to be followed at the disciplinary meeting will be determined by the Head. The pupil and his or her parents will have an opportunity to provide their account of the circumstances surrounding the complaint. Unless the Head considers that further investigation is needed, he will make a decision. The Head will give his decisions, with reasons, as soon as reasonably practicable. If the Head decides that the pupil must leave the School, he may consult with a parent before deciding on the pupil's leaving status, i.e. permanent exclusion, required removal or withdrawal by parents.

8. Board of Directors' review

The School offers the right of appeal to the parents or guardians of any pupil permanently excluded or required to leave the School or pupils suspended for 11 days or more. Appeals will be dealt with by way of a Board review. The right of appeal does not extend to suspensions or temporary exclusions of 10 days or fewer.

Request for review

A pupil or his/her parents, upon notification of the Head's decision to exclude or require a pupil to leave, may make a written application for a Board review. The application must be received by the Bursar, who will act as Clerk to the Board within 72 hours of the decision being notified to a parent, or longer by agreement. In their application, the parents must state the grounds on which they are asking for a review and the outcome which they seek.

Review Panel

The review will be undertaken by a Panel, which will consist of at least two Board members. The Panel members will have no detailed previous knowledge of the case or of the pupil or parents. Parents will be notified in advance of the names of the Panel members.

Review meeting

The meeting will take place at the School premises, usually between 3 and 10 days after the parents' application has been received. A review meeting is an internal procedure and all those who are concerned in it are required to keep its proceedings confidential. Those present at the review meeting will normally be:

- Members of the Review Panel and the Bursar/Clerk to the Board or their deputy;
- The Head and any relevant member of staff whose presence the Head considers should attend in order to secure a fair outcome; and
- The pupil together with his or her parents and, if they wish, the parents may be accompanied by a friend or relation who is not legally qualified.

Conduct of review meeting

The meeting will be chaired by one member of the Review Panel and will be conducted in a suitable room and in an informal manner. The proceedings will not be tape-recorded. The Clerk will be asked to keep a minute of the main points which arise at the meeting and a copy of the minutes will be provided to the parents after the meeting (if requested). All those present will be entitled, should they wish, to write their own notes. The Chair of the Review Panel will ensure that all those present have a reasonable opportunity to ask questions and make appropriate comment. Everyone is expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners. The Chair may at his or her discretion adjourn or terminate the meeting. If the meeting is terminated without reaching a conclusion, the original decision will stand.

Decision

The Panel will consider the grounds for the review and shall decide whether to either:

- Uphold the decision of the Head and, if minded to do so, with agreement of the Head, discuss the pupil's leaving status (for example: permanent exclusion, required removal or withdrawal) with a view to reaching agreement ; or
- Recommend the decision of the Head be reviewed and, if minded to do so, recommend an alternative disciplinary sanction.

The decision of the Review Panel will be final. It will be notified, with reasons, to the parents by the Chair of the Review Panel by letter or telephone without undue delay following the review meeting.