Exclusions Policy

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Introduction

Gloverspiece School is committed to ensuring that exclusion decisions are fair, proportionate and properly considered.

Parents/carers will be informed in writing of the reasons for any exclusion and of their right to make representations in accordance with the school's complaints procedure and/or the terms of the parent contract.

In the case of a permanent exclusion, the school will provide parents/carers with an opportunity to make representations to the Proprietor or an appropriately constituted independent panel, in accordance with the school's published procedures.

Nothing in this policy limits a parent/carer's statutory rights under the Equality Act 2010 or other applicable legislation.

Special Educational Needs and Disability

The school recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will ensure that decisions relating to suspension or permanent exclusion take appropriate account of a pupil's special educational needs and/or disability.
A pupil will not be excluded because of their disability or because the school is unable to meet their special educational needs.

Before deciding to exclude a pupil, the school will consider, where relevant:

- The pupil's SEN, disability and individual needs;
- The pupil's individual behaviour support plan, risk assessment and other relevant support plans;
- Reasonable adjustments that have been made or should reasonably be made;
- Strategies and interventions already implemented;
- Whether additional support or specialist advice is required;
- Safeguarding considerations; and whether exclusion is a proportionate response in the circumstances.

The school will consider whether further assessment, intervention, reasonable adjustments or amendments to the pupil's support arrangements are required before or alongside any exclusion decision.

Where a pupil has an EHCP, the School will also consider the provision and outcomes specified within the plan and, where appropriate, liaise with the relevant local authority and other professionals.

Informal or unofficial exclusion

The school will not use informal or unofficial exclusion as a means of managing behaviour. A pupil will not be sent home, asked to remain at home, or prevented from attending school as a disciplinary measure unless this is part of a formally authorised exclusion or another lawful and appropriately recorded arrangement.

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because of a safeguarding, medical or other exceptional circumstance, the school will ensure that the arrangement is appropriately authorised, recorded and reviewed and is not used as a substitute for the formal exclusion process.

Possible grounds for exclusion

Exclusion may be considered where there has been:

- A serious breach of the school's behaviour expectations or other school policy;
- Serious or persistent behaviour that places the pupil, other pupils, staff or other members of the school community at risk of harm;
- Serious violence, threatened violence or significant aggression;
- Serious bullying, harassment or discriminatory behaviour;
- Possession of prohibited or illegal items or substances;
- Serious damage to property;
- Behaviour which presents a significant safeguarding risk; or
- Persistent or cumulative behaviour where appropriate support, intervention and reasonable adjustments have been implemented and exclusion is considered a proportionate response.

The school will not exclude a pupil solely because of a disagreement or breakdown in the relationship between the school and the pupil's parents/carers. Concerns about parent/carer conduct will be managed through the school's complaints and/or parent conduct procedures as appropriate.

Fixed Term Exclusion

A fixed term exclusion should be for the shortest time necessary to secure benefits without adverse educational consequences.

Persistent or Cumulative Problems

Exclusion for a period of time from half a day to five days for persistent or cumulative problems would be imposed only when the school had already offered and implemented a range of support and management strategies, as outlined in our behaviour policy. These could include:

- Mentoring (additional support from the class teacher or a TA)
- Discussion with the pupil
- Target setting
- Checking on any possible provocation
- Counselling, pastoral support, behavioural psychology sessions
- Individual behaviour plans

Single Incident

A suspension may be used in response to a serious breach of school rules and policies or a disciplinary offence. In such cases the Head teacher will investigate the incident thoroughly and consider all evidence to support the allegation, taking account of the school's policies.

The pupil will be encouraged to give their version of events, and the Head teacher will check whether the incident may have been provoked, for example by bullying or racial harassment. The Head teacher will consult with any relevant members of staff, including the support worker for that pupil and any witnesses. All accounts of the incident will be recorded according to school protocol.

A suspension will normally be for the shortest reasonable period necessary in the circumstances and will be proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour. The school will consider the educational and pastoral impact of the suspension when determining its length.

Permanent Exclusion

A permanent exclusion is a very serious decision, as with a fixed term exclusion, it will follow a range of strategies and be seen as a last resort, or it will be in response to a very serious breach of school rules and policies or a disciplinary offence such as:

- Serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff
- Possession or use of an illegal drug on school premises
- Carrying an offensive weapon
- Persistent bullying
- Persistent racial harassment
- Serious and irreparable breakdown in the school/ parent relationship, including failure to utilise the school's complaints policy resulting in the school being unable to resolve concerns fairly and satisfactorily; consistent failure to follow the school/ parent agreement; reputational damage caused to the school via public platforms including social media; harassment or intimidation of staff or other school users.

The Decision to Exclude

If the Head teacher decides to exclude a pupil she will:

- Ask the pupil to give their version of events
- Ensure that there is sufficient recorded evidence to support the decision
- Contact the parents, explain the decision and ask that the child be collected
- Inform the parents confirming the reasons for the exclusion, whether it is a permanent or fixed term exclusion
- In cases of more than a day's exclusion that appropriate work is set and that arrangements are in place for it to be marked
- The head teacher's decision is final and, as an independent school, there is no right to appeal.

Before making an exclusion decision, the Headteacher will make reasonable enquiries to establish the facts of the incident. The pupil will be given an appropriate opportunity to provide their account, taking account of their communication, cognitive and emotional needs.

The investigation will consider relevant evidence, including staff and witness accounts, available records, CCTV where applicable, relevant behaviour/support plans and any other information considered material to the decision.

Where appropriate, the school will consider whether the pupil's behaviour was influenced by bullying, harassment, discrimination, provocation, unmet SEN, communication difficulties, sensory or emotional regulation needs or other relevant factors.

Education during suspension needs strengthening

For longer periods of suspension, the school will consider how education can best be maintained and whether additional liaison with parents/carers, professionals or the relevant local authority is required. The school will also consider appropriate arrangements for the pupil's reintegration and any additional support required on return.

Behaviour Outside School

The school may take disciplinary action in relation to behaviour outside school where the behaviour has a sufficiently close connection to the school, its pupils or staff, or where it has a direct and significant impact on the orderly operation of the school or the safety and wellbeing of members of the school community.

The school will consider the circumstances and evidence before deciding whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

Marking Attendance Registers following Exclusion

The school will record attendance and periods of suspension/exclusion accurately and in accordance with the attendance requirements and recording arrangements applicable to the school.

Monitoring and review

The school will maintain an accurate record of suspensions and permanent exclusions.
Exclusion data will be reviewed periodically by the Headteacher/SLT to identify patterns, trends and potential disproportionality, including consideration of SEN, disability and other relevant characteristics.
The school will use this information to evaluate the effectiveness of its behaviour approaches and to identify whether changes to behaviour support, staff practice, individual support plans or wider school development are required.