

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

Academic 2026-2027



Version and Date		Action/Notes	Date to be Reviewed
4.0	08.07.2025	Approved by the Trust Board	1 Year – July 2026
5.0	30.06.2026	Approved by the Trust Board	1 Year – June 2027

1. Trust Aims and Philosophy

Connect Education Trust is committed to a culture of high expectations where every pupil can thrive in a safe, caring, and inclusive environment. While we empower our Headteachers to use suspension and permanent exclusion as essential tools for maintaining the safety and integrity of our school communities, these measures are regarded as a last resort.

The Trust's strategic imperative is to ensure that no pupil is marginalized by the exclusion process. Our core aims are to:

- Ensure the exclusion process is applied with absolute legal rigour, fairness, and consistency.
- Provide a transparent framework that enables governors, staff, parents, and pupils to navigate the process.
- Guarantee the safety and well-being of all pupils within our academies.
- **Prevent pupils from becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training):** This is a critical social mobility and safeguarding mission. The Trust views the prevention of NEET status as a primary objective when designing interventions and reintegration strategies.
- Ensure all disciplinary actions are conducted in strict accordance with the prevailing statutory framework.

2. Prohibiting 'Off-Rolling' and Unlawful Practice

The Trust maintains a zero-tolerance policy toward 'off-rolling'. Following the Ofsted definition, off-rolling is the practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the school rather than the pupil. The following practices are strictly prohibited across all Connect Education Trust academies:

Formal Procedure Omission It is unlawful to send pupils home to 'cool off' or to direct them off-site without following statutory procedures or formally recording the event.

Exclusion Based on SEND Pupils must not be excluded because the school feels unable to support their Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). Such actions may constitute discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

Academic Performance Exclusion must never be used as a response to poor academic attainment or ability.

Conditional Reinstatement A pupil's return to school cannot be made conditional on unmet requirements, such as the parent's failure to attend a reintegration meeting.

Undue Influence Staff must not exert pressure on parents to remove their child from the school roll or to opt for Elective Home Education (EHE) to avoid formal exclusion.

3. Statutory Framework and Legislation

This policy is anchored in the principles of administrative law. Any decision to exclude must be **lawful, reasonable, fair, and proportionate**. It complies with the DfE statutory guidance *Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (July 2026)*.

The legal foundations include:

- Section 51a of the Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011.
- The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012.
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Parental responsibility for excluded pupils).
- **The Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) (Application to Academies and Pupil Referral Units and Minor Amendments) Regulations 2026:** Note that as of July 2026, procedural requirements for "Off-site Direction" apply to Academy Trusts with the same statutory force as maintained schools.

- **The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024:** All registrations and removals must utilize the mandatory codes, specifically **Code D** (Dual Registered) for off-site direction and **Code B** or **Code E** for alternative provision or absence during exclusion.
- The Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

4. Key Definitions

- **Suspension:** The temporary removal of a pupil from the school for a fixed period (not to exceed 45 days per academic year).
- **Permanent Exclusion:** The permanent removal of a pupil from the school roll on disciplinary grounds.
- **Off-site Direction:** A statutory requirement for a pupil to attend another educational setting temporarily to improve their behaviour.
- **Parent:** Any person with parental responsibility or care of the child (including Local Authorities for LAC).
- **Managed Move:** A voluntary, permanent transfer to another mainstream school agreed upon by all parties.

5. The Headteacher's Power to Exclude

Only the Headteacher or Acting Headteacher has the authority to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil.

6. Criteria for Exclusion

A decision to exclude is taken only:

1. In response to serious or persistent breaches of the behaviour policy; **and**
2. If allowing the pupil to remain would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

6.1 The Investigation and Standards of Proof

Before deciding to exclude, the Headteacher must:

- Apply the civil standard of proof: the '**balance of probabilities**'.
- **Check the 45-day Limit:** The Headteacher must verify any suspensions the pupil received at *previous* schools within the same academic year to ensure the 45-school-day legal limit is not breached.
- **Factor in Pupil Views:** The Headteacher must allow the pupil to give their version of events and **must** inform the pupil how their views were factored into the final decision.
- **Assess Vulnerability:** Consider the pupil's age, SEND status, and whether they are a Looked-After Child (LAC) or have an assigned Social Worker.

7. Mandatory Notification Requirements

The Headteacher must notify relevant parties "without delay."

7.1 Notification to Parents

Initial notification should be in person or by telephone, followed immediately by written notice.

- **Public Place Duty:** Parents must be notified by the **end of the afternoon session on the first day** of the exclusion regarding their duty to ensure the child is not in a public place.
- **Right to Representation:** Written notice must include the reasons, length of exclusion, and the right to make representations to the Local Governing Body (LGB), including the right to request a remote access meeting.

7.2 Local Authority (LA) Notification

The Headteacher must notify the LA of **all** suspensions and permanent exclusions without delay, regardless of length. If a pupil lives outside the LA where the school is located, the "**home authority**" must also be notified immediately.

7.3 Social Workers and Virtual School Heads (VSH)

The Social Worker and/or VSH must be notified of **all** exclusions without delay to ensure safeguarding and welfare needs are integrated into the response.

7.4 Trust Leadership

The Headteacher must notify the Trust CEO and the LGB of any permanent exclusion, any exclusion exceeding 5 days in a term, or any exclusion affecting a public exam or National Curriculum test.

8. Cancelled Exclusions

The Headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion that has already begun, provided the LGB has not yet met to consider reinstatement.

- **Notifications:** The Headteacher must notify parents, the LGB, the LA, and any social worker/VSH without delay, providing the reason for the cancellation.
- **Meeting Offer:** Parents must be offered a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the cancellation.
- **Reinstatement:** The pupil must be allowed back into school immediately.

9. Non-Disciplinary Measure: Separation for Safeguarding Purposes

In exceptional circumstances, a pupil may be temporarily forbidden from attending the premises as a non-disciplinary safety measure (e.g., following a report of child-on-child abuse).

- **Practicability Test:** This measure must only be used when separation **cannot practicably be achieved on-site**.
- **DSL Involvement:** The decision must be made in conjunction with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and involve a formal risk and needs assessment.
- **Educational Duty:** If the school or parent does not arrange education, the LA must do so under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996. The LGB must be notified without delay.

10. Preventative Measures: Off-Site Direction and Managed Moves

10.1 Off-Site Direction

From July 2026, Academies must follow specific notice and review cycles:

- **Notice:** Parents must receive written notice **2 school days** before the placement begins.
- **Review:** Parents/LAs can request a review every **10 weeks**. The LGB must provide a written invitation to review meetings at least **6 days** in advance.
- **Evidence:** The original school must evidence that appropriate initial interventions were exhausted before direction.

10.2 Managed Moves

Moves must be voluntary and agreed upon by all parties. Before a move is initiated, the original school must provide evidence of multi-agency support or statutory assessments. A pupil must not be excluded because a parent refused a managed move.

11. Education Provision and Online Pathways

- **First 5 Days:** The Headteacher must ensure work is set and marked, utilizing **Google Classroom and Oak Academy**. Reasonable adjustments must be made for pupils with SEND.
- **6th-Day Duty:** The LGB must arrange full-time education for suspensions over 5 days. For permanent exclusions, the LA (home authority) must provide education from the 6th day.

12. Governance: The Local Governing Body (LGB) Role

The Pupil Exclusion Committee of the LGB scrutinizes the Headteacher's decision-making.



12.1 Reinstatement Meeting Timelines

Length of Exclusion	Timeline for Meeting
Permanent Exclusion	Within 15 school days
Total > 15 days in a term	Within 15 school days
Total 6-15 days in a term	Within 50 school days (if parents request)
Missing a public exam	Before the exam date (where practicable)

12.2 Remote Access Meetings

Parents may request meetings via remote access. The LGB may **refuse** this request if a risk assessment suggests a remote format would compromise safeguarding or the ability of participants to take part effectively. Meetings must be "fair and transparent" (all parties can see and hear).

12.3 'Maximum Challenge'

The LGB must scrutinize data regarding pupil movement, safeguarding separations, and trends by protected characteristics (race, SEND, gender) to ensure exclusions are used as a last resort.

13. Independent Review Panels (IRP)

If the LGB declines to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil, parents may apply for an IRP within 15 school days.

- **Evidence:** The school **cannot** introduce new reasons for the exclusion that were not present at the time of the initial decision.
- **SEN Expert:** Parents have a right to an SEN expert to provide impartial advice on how SEN may have been relevant to the exclusion.
- **Financial Payment:** If the panel quashes the decision and directs reconsideration, but the LGB does not reinstate, a **£4,000 Payment** must be made by the Academy Trust to the Local Authority.

14. Returning from Suspension: Reintegration Strategy

Every returning pupil is entitled to a 'fresh start'.

- **Reintegration Meeting:** A meeting must be held before or upon return. A pupil **cannot** be denied entry to the classroom solely because a parent failed to attend.
- **Part-Time Timetables:** These must not be used as a long-term behaviour management tool. They must have a clear end date and a plan to return to full-time education.

15. Monitoring and Trust-Wide Data Analysis

The Trust will conduct annual analysis of exclusion data across all academies to identify patterns and ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010. This includes monitoring the timing of exclusions and disparities among groups with protected characteristics.

16. Links with Other Trust Policies

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- **Trust Behaviour Policy**
- **Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy**