Staples Road Primary School

EXCLUSIONS AND SUSPENSIONS POLICY

STRIVE, RESPECT, SUCCEED



"When the adults change, everything changes"

Paul Dix 2017 | Essex Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP) Framework

"Connection before correction — creating a safe, inclusive environment through relational practice"

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1. Aims and Ethos (Trauma-Informed Alignment)

At Staples Road Primary School, we are committed to following all statutory suspension and exclusion procedures to ensure that every child receives a high-quality education in a safe, caring, and nurturing environment. This policy fully integrates statutory DfE guidance with our school's core **Behaviour and Relationships Policy 2026**, operating through a child-centred, trauma-informed lens aligned with the **Essex Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP) Framework** and Paul Dix's relational principles (“When the adults change, everything changes”).

Our school understands that all behaviour is a communication of unmet needs or a defensive stress response. In line with our Behaviour Policy, we explicitly distinguish between:

- **Misbehaviour:** When a child was capable of acting differently but chose not to, requiring clear boundaries and restorative learning.
- **Stress Behaviour:** When a child's capacity to act differently is limited by a high stress load, requiring co-regulation, safety, and supportive intervention.

We embrace an equitable approach where **‘connection before correction’** guides every interaction. Suspension and permanent exclusion are viewed not as routine sanctions or threats, but as exceptional, statutory measures of last resort when all alternative preventative strategies have been exhausted, or where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education, safety, or welfare of the pupil or others in the school community.

Staples Road Primary School aims to:

- **Ensure statutory fairness:** Make sure that the suspensions and exclusions process is applied fairly, transparently, consistently, and without unlawful discrimination.
- **Maintain community safety:** Balance the individual needs of the child with the fundamental right of all pupils and staff to feel safe, respected, and supported.

- **Provide clarity for all stakeholders:** Help governors, staff, parents/carers, and pupils understand every stage of the suspension and exclusion process.
- **Eliminate unlawful exclusions:** Ensure no pupil is removed from the school roll unlawfully (e.g. through 'off-rolling', informal suspensions, or encouraging parents to remove pupils without statutory due process).

> **KEY REQUIREMENT: STATUTORY PROHIBITION OF INFORMAL EXCLUSIONS**
> Staples Road Primary School will never tell or force a pupil to leave, encourage parents/carers to remove their child, or prevent attendance without following the formal statutory procedure set out in the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012 and statutory DfE guidance. Any exclusion or suspension must be made strictly on disciplinary grounds and formally recorded.

2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) issued in 2026: *Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement*. It is grounded in the following legislation:

- **The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012**
- **The Education Act 2002**, as amended by the Education Act 2011
- **The Equality Act 2010** (specifically duties regarding disability discrimination and reasonable adjustments)
- **The Children and Families Act 2014** and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 0 to 25 years
- **The School Information (England) Regulations 2008**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)** (statutory safeguarding duties)

3. Definitions

To ensure consistency and legal clarity across the school community, the following terms are defined in accordance with statutory guidance and school policy:

- **Suspension (Fixed-Term Exclusion):** A temporary removal of a pupil from the school on disciplinary grounds for a set number of school days (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year). The pupil remains on the school roll and education is provided.
- **Permanent Exclusion:** The permanent removal of a pupil from the school on disciplinary grounds, resulting in the pupil being taken off the school admission register following due process.
- **Internal Exclusion:** A child-centred, school-based intervention where a pupil is temporarily required to work away from their peers in a designated quiet space within school to ensure safety, calm, and reflection (in line with Section 12 of the Behaviour Policy). This is not a statutory suspension.
- **Off-Site Direction:** When the Local Governing Committee or school requires a pupil to attend another educational setting temporarily to improve their behaviour, in accordance with statutory arrangements.
- **Managed Move:** A voluntary, permanent transfer of a pupil to another school arranged with full agreement of all parties, including parents/carers and the receiving school's admission authority. Managed moves cannot be used on a trial basis.
- **Cancelled Exclusion:** A suspension or permanent exclusion that is cancelled by the Headteacher before the Local Governing Committee has met to consider reinstatement.
- **Parent/Carer:** Any person who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of the child under family law.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Headteacher

Only the Headteacher (or acting Headteacher) of Staples Road Primary School has the legal authority to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil on disciplinary grounds. The decision can relate to pupil behaviour inside or outside of school.

Decision Criteria for Suspensions

A decision to suspend a pupil will be taken only in accordance with our Behaviour and Relationships Policy, to provide a clear signal of unacceptable conduct, or to demonstrate that current behaviour puts the pupil at risk of permanent exclusion. Where suspensions become regular, the Headteacher will review whether alternative intervention strategies are required.

Decision Criteria for Permanent Exclusions

A decision to permanently exclude a pupil will be taken only:

- **In response to serious or persistent breaches** of the school's Behaviour and Relationships Policy; AND
- **Where allowing the pupil to remain in school** would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or of others (pupils or staff) in the school.

Statutory Considerations Before Deciding

Before reaching a decision to suspend or permanently exclude, the Headteacher will rigorously:

- **Evaluate facts on the balance of probabilities:** Consider all relevant evidence, including whether the incident was provoked.
- **Ensure pupil voice:** Allow the pupil to give their version of events, taking into account their age, understanding, and any communication needs.
- **Check SEN and disability needs:** Consider whether the pupil has Special Educational Needs (SEN) or a disability, ensuring reasonable adjustments were made and exploring whether stress behaviour was triggered by unaddressed needs.
- **Assess vulnerability:** Identify whether the pupil is vulnerable (e.g. has a social worker, is a Looked-After Child [LAC], or previously looked-after).
- **Explore alternative solutions:** Examine restorative consequences, internal exclusion, mentoring, off-site direction, or a managed move before deciding on permanent exclusion.

Safeguarding and Temporary Site Removal

In exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher may temporarily prevent a pupil from attending the school site for safeguarding reasons. This is a protective safeguarding action, not a disciplinary exclusion.

Statutory Written Notification Without Delay

When a suspension or permanent exclusion is decided, the Headteacher will notify parents/carers immediately by telephone or in person, followed without delay by written notification detailing:

- **Reason and duration:** The exact reasons for the suspension/exclusion and its length (or permanent status).
- **Right to make representations:** Information on how parents/carers may make representations to the Local Governing Committee.
- **Alternative provision details:** Arrangements for setting and marking work (Days 1–5) and full-time education provision from Day 6 onwards.

Cancelling Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

The Headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion that has not yet been reviewed by the governing board. Upon cancellation, parents, the governing board, LA, social worker, and VSH will be notified without delay, and the pupil will return to school immediately.

4.2 The Local Governing Committee

Responsibilities regarding suspensions and permanent exclusions are delegated to an Exclusions Committee consisting of at least 3 governors of Staples Road Primary School.

The Local Governing Committee has a statutory duty to:

- **Consider representations:** Review parent/carer representations regarding suspensions and permanent exclusions.
- **Hold reinstatement meetings:** Meet within statutory timeframes to consider the reinstatement of suspended or permanently excluded pupils (see Section 6).
- **Arrange alternative provision:** Ensure suitable full-time education is provided from the 6th school day of any suspension.
- **Monitor exclusions data:** Regularly analyze suspension and exclusion trends across pupil groups (SEN, disadvantage, ethnicity) to ensure equity and hold school leaders to account.

4.3 The Local Authority (LA)

For permanent exclusions, Essex Local Authority is legally responsible for arranging suitable full-time alternative education to begin no later than the 6th school day after the exclusion takes effect. For looked-after children or pupils with a social worker, the LA and school work together to provide alternative education from Day 1.

4.4 Social Workers and Virtual School Heads (VSH)

Where a pupil facing suspension or exclusion has an assigned social worker or is a Looked-After Child (represented by the Virtual School Head - VSH), the Headteacher will notify the social worker and/or VSH without delay. Both officers will be invited to all governing board meetings to offer advice on the child's background, welfare, and safeguarding context.

5. Trauma-Informed Prevention and Early Support Strategies

In line with Section 13 and Appendix A of our Behaviour and Relationships Policy, Staples Road Primary School actively implements multi-tiered preventative support to avoid suspensions whenever possible:

- **Relational Routines & Co-Regulation:** Staff regulate their own emotions and co-regulate with pupils, prioritizing connection before correction and using calm, predictable adult behaviour.
- **SEND and Trauma Differentiation:** Recognizing stress behaviour in children with additional needs, adapting learning environments, and holding early SEN support reviews or EHCP emergency reviews.
- **Restorative Consequences:** Utilizing logical, restorative consequences (e.g. reflection circles, buddy classes, repairing property) rather than punitive isolation (see Appendix 2).
- **Multi-Agency & Pastoral Support:** Engaging Essex Educational Psychology Service, mental health lead support, pastoral interventions, and Early Help pathways prior to escalation.

6. Considering the Reinstatement of a Pupil

The Local Governing Committee (Exclusions Committee) will consider and decide on the reinstatement of a suspended or permanently excluded pupil within the following statutory timeframes:

Exclusion / Suspension Category	Statutory Requirement	Governing Committee Action
Permanent Exclusion OR Suspension > 15 days in a term OR missing a public exam/test	Must hold reinstatement meeting within 15 school days of notice	Must decide whether to reinstate pupil or uphold exclusion
Suspension > 5 days up to 15 days in a single term	Must hold meeting within 50 school days IF parents make representations	Must decide whether to reinstate pupil if meeting requested
Suspension of 5 days or fewer in a single term	Must consider parent representations	Cannot direct reinstatement and not required to hold formal meeting

Decision Options and Legal Duties

The Local Governing Committee can either: **(1) Decline to reinstate the pupil**, or **(2) Direct the reinstatement of the pupil** immediately or on a specified date. In reaching its decision, the committee will evaluate whether the Headteacher's decision was lawful, reasonable, and procedurally fair, applying the legal standard of **balance of probabilities**.

7. Independent Review Panel (IRP)

If the Local Governing Committee upholds a permanent exclusion, parents/carers have the statutory right to apply for an Independent Review Panel (IRP). The application must be submitted within **15 school days** of receiving written notice of the committee's decision.

The IRP will consist of 3 or 5 members representing three categories: (1) A lay chair, (2) Current or recent school governors, and (3) Headteachers or individuals who have been headteachers within the last 5 years. Parents may also request an independent SEN Expert to advise the panel.

Following its review, the IRP can:

- **Uphold** the governing committee's decision.
- **Recommend** that the governing committee reconsiders reinstatement.
- **Quash the decision** and direct the governing committee to reconsider reinstatement (where the decision was flawed on judicial review principles).

> **KEY REQUIREMENT: EQUALITY ACT 2010 CLAIMS**
> If parents/carers believe a permanent exclusion occurred as a result of unlawful disability discrimination, they may lodge a claim with the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) within 6 months of the alleged incident.

8. School Admission and Attendance Registers

A permanently excluded pupil's name will not be removed from the Staples Road Primary School admission register until either: (a) The independent review process is completed or the 15-school-day application

window closes without an application, or (b) Parents confirm in writing that they do not intend to apply for an IRP.

9. Reintegration and Returning to School

Following any suspension or internal exclusion, Staples Road Primary School delivers a structured reintegration process to ensure a successful return to the classroom:

- **Reintegration Strategy Meeting:** Held with parents/carers, pupil, class teacher, and SLT prior to or on the day of return.
- **Restorative Dialogue:** Conducting structured restorative conversations to repair relationships and set clear support targets.
- **Pastoral Support Plan (PSP):** Implementing individualized support plans, co-regulation strategies, or buddy arrangements to ensure ongoing safety and success.

10. Remote Access to Meetings

Governing committee reinstatement meetings and IRP hearings may be conducted via remote video access if requested by parents/carers, provided all participants have access to suitable technology to ensure fair and full participation.

11. Monitoring Arrangements and Policy Links

This policy is reviewed annually by the Local Governing Committee of Staples Road Primary School. It should be read directly alongside our related school policies:

- **Behaviour and Relationships Policy 2026**
- **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy**
- **Equality and Diversity Policy**
- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**

Appendix 1: Independent Review Panel Training Requirements

In accordance with statutory guidance, all panel members and clerks appointed to an Independent Review Panel must have received formal training within the last 2 years covering: statutory exclusion legislation, duties under the Equality Act 2010, judicial review principles, SEN requirements, and procedural fairness.

Appendix 2: Staples Road Restorative Consequences & Escalation Matrix

Dovetailing directly with Appendix B of the Staples Road Behaviour and Relationships Policy, our school uses restorative consequences and logical outcomes focused on repairing harm and promoting self-regulation:

Behaviour Classification	Incident Example	Restorative Consequence / Outcome
Minor Disruption (Misbehaviour)	Disrespectful language to a peer	Facilitated Restorative Circle to hear impact and agreed act of kindness.
Low-Level Routine (Stress/Routine)	Running or talking in corridors	Go back and walk again calmly with adult support.
Property Impact (Misbehaviour)	Damaging school property	Supervised time helping site manager clean/repair area.
Social Exclusion (Misbehaviour)	Excluding others from play	Design an inclusive playground game with staff member.
Playground Aggression (Misbehaviour)	Purposely hurting a peer in football	Miss football for remainder of day; restorative check-in.
Environmental Disruption	Throwing food in lunch hall	Help clear lunch hall next day and discuss environmental respect.
Learning Disruption	Persistent disruption in class	Complete work in 'buddy class' followed by restorative conversation.
High-Level Disruption (SLT Involved)	Physical aggression / Safety threat	Internal Exclusion away from peers; SLT parent meeting; suspension consideration if persistent.