



CASTLEMAN ACADEMY TRUST

POLICY :

Suspensions and Exclusions

Author: Chief Executive Officer
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Please note that this policy is one of the suite of CAT Policies for School Standards Boards to acknowledge.

(November 2024 - Small amendment to wording incorporated to para 10.3 on advice of solicitors)

CASTLEMAN ACADEMY TRUST

Suspensions and Exclusions Policy

Our policies refer to Senior Leaders. This can mean Executive Head Teacher, Head Teacher or Head of School.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Castleman Academy Trust's (CAT's) Exclusion Policy aims to set out the process that will be followed and the additional considerations around suspensions and exclusions that Trust schools 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 a school'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 school will always have regard to the Statutory Guidance on Suspensions and Exclusions (August 2024) 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 school's Behaviour Policy and the SEND policy of the Trust.

2. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

- 2.1 This policy applies to all members of 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 governing board 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 school community are expected to follow this policy. Roles, responsibilities and expectations of each section of the school community are set out in detail below.

The (Executive) Headteacher

- 4.1 All decisions to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil will be taken by the (Executive) Headteacher after considering all the circumstances. If the (Executive) Headteacher is unavailable due to exceptional circumstances, which would significantly delay the process, the matter will be referred to the CEO. Every decision made will be proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour with reference to the School's Behaviour Policy.

The School Governors

- 4.2 The School Standards Board 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 School Standards Board will be to decide whether to uphold the exclusion or suspension, or instead to reinstate the pupil to the school.

Parents

- 4.3 Parents will be informed without delay of any suspension or exclusion and there is an ability to make representations in regard to any suspension or exclusion decision. Details will be provided on the rights parents have with every letter that is sent from the (Executive) 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 Some schools may 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 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 governor review meeting. All statements will be signed and dated unless the (Executive) 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 (Executive) 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 (Executive) 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

so that further suspensions are not needed. 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 or practical perspective that might reduce the chance of repeat behaviours. Previous behaviour is not seen as an obstacle to future success.

6.2 The school may use various measures to support a pupil's successful reintegration, which may include:

- 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.

6.3 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.

7. CANCELLING A SUSPENSION OR EXCLUSION

7.1 A suspension or exclusion can be cancelled by the (Executive) 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 in that academic year would be over 45 days at the point of the decision to cancel the exclusion.

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

8. SUSPENSIONS BEFORE A PERMANENT EXCLUSION

In exceptional circumstances, pupils may receive a suspension prior to a permanent exclusion. For each decision, the (Executive) 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 further evidence has come to light or where the incident was serious and time is required to fully investigate the circumstances and consider alternatives.

9. WARNING AS GROUNDS FOR EXCLUSION

9.1 Where student behaviour continues to pose a significant risk to the well-being and safety of the school community, and being at risk of suspension or exclusion, the school reserves the right to issue a "warning" as a preliminary action that may subsequently lead to suspension or exclusion.

9.2 We are implementing a warning system as a potential precursor to suspension or exclusion. A warning will serve as a formal notice to the student and their parents/guardians about their unacceptable behaviour and the potential consequences should the behaviour persist or escalate.

9.3 A warning may be applied in situations where a student's conduct has significantly disrupted the learning environment, posed a threat to the safety of others, or repeatedly violates the school's code of conduct. The decision to issue a warning will be made by the Headteacher after a thorough investigation and consideration of relevant evidence.

9.4 The Warning Process

1. The Headteacher will document the unacceptable behaviour and notify the student and their parents/guardians in writing about the warning. The notification will include a clear description of the misconduct, the potential consequences of continued misconduct, and any specific requirements for improvement or remediation.

2. The warning will specify a reasonable timeframe within which the student is expected to demonstrate improvement in their behaviour or comply with the specified requirements.

3. During the warning period, the school will closely monitor the student's behaviour, provide necessary support or interventions, and document any relevant incidents.

4. School staff may be involved in assessing the student's progress and determining whether the warning has been effective in addressing the concerning behaviour.

9.5 Failure to Comply or Persistent Misconduct

The school may initiate suspension or exclusion procedures where a warning notice is in force and the child engages in conduct which breaches the Code of Conduct and/or Behaviour Policy.

The decision to suspend or exclude a student will follow this Trust Suspensions and Exclusions Policy and will consider factors such as the severity of the misconduct, the impact on the school community, the student's previous disciplinary record, and any mitigating circumstances.

9.6 Rights of Representation

Parents have the right to make representations about any suspensions or exclusions under this Suspensions and Exclusions Policy.

10. DIRECTING OFF-SITE AND MANAGED MOVES

- 10.1 Before taking any decision to permanently exclude a pupil, the (Executive) 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.
- 10.2 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.
- 10.3 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. 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.

11. INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANELS (IRPs)

- 11.1 The local authority arranges IRPs on the Trust's behalf, and requests for an IRP where a permanent exclusion decision has been upheld should be made to The Director of Governance Operations at Castleman Academy Trust within 15 school days.
- 11.2 Further details on the role and powers of IRPs can be found in Part Ten of the Statutory Guidance on Exclusions.

12. RECONSIDERATION BY THE SCHOOL STANDARDS BOARD

Where an IRP either recommends reconsideration or quashes the initial decision of the School Standards Board, the decision will be considered within 10 school days. This may involve a re-hearing with oral evidence given by the School and parents or may be a reconsideration with only the School Standards Board members and the Governance Officer (clerk) present.

13. REMOTE MEETINGS

- 13.1 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 able to make representations. A meeting may also take place remotely where there is an extraordinary event or unforeseen circumstance that means it is 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 infection disease.

- 13.2 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.

14. COMPLAINTS

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 (Executive) Headteacher in accordance with the Trust's Complaints Policy. If the concern relates to an exclusion, the statutory procedure set out in the exclusions statutory guidance will be followed.

15. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Trust does all it can to ensure that its policies do not discriminate against pupils or others, either directly or indirectly, in line with any Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics. This includes race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and sex.

APPENDIX 1

MONITORING CHECKLIST

The governors review data on suspensions and exclusions to ensure that the use of suspensions and exclusions is appropriate. The following may be monitored by the governors to ensure the processes and support for pupils are appropriate, but this may not be an exhaustive list. Individual circumstances may determine other information being considered.

- the interventions put in place for pupils at risk of suspension and permanent exclusion,
- the processes in place for determining and reviewing directions to alternative provision and that such placements are 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.