

OLD VICARAGE SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS POLICY

This policy, which applies to the whole school, is available upon request (it can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) it may be obtained from the school office.

Document Details

Information Sharing Category	Public Domain
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Authorised by (if required)	Head of School and Proprietors
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Responsible Area	Proprietor and Senior Leadership Team

Amendments:

Date	Amendment

Availability: This policy applies to all activities undertaken by the school, inclusive of those outside of the normal school hours and away from the school site and is inclusive of all staff (teaching, support and agency staff), pupils on placement, contractors, the Proprietors, the Advisory Board and volunteers working in the school. All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy being required to state that they have read, understood and will abide by this policy and its procedural documents.

Monitoring and review:

- This document will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Head of School.
- This policy was last reviewed agreed by the Head of School in May 2023 and will next be reviewed no later than May 2024 or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Signed:

Matthew Adshead
Proprietor

Jenny Adshead
Proprietor

Kerry Wise
Head of School

Ultimate sanctions at Old Vicarage School are Fixed Term and Permanent Exclusions. Neither sanction is used lightly. Only the Head of School has the power to exclude a child from school. If the Head of School excludes a child, the parents are informed immediately, giving reasons for the exclusion. At the same time, the Head of School makes it clear to the parents that they can, if they wish, appeal against the decision to the Proprietors. The school informs the parents how to make any such appeal.

Serious Offences and Exclusions

Serious offences are those that may have a significant impact on the individual pupil or others in the school. Examples include:

- extreme or persistent bullying, racism or harassment;
- stealing;

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- extreme or persistent violence, actual or threatened, against a pupil or member of staff;
- sexual abuse, assault or activity;
- smoking, illegal drugs (possession and/or use) or alcohol (consumption or possession)
- significant vandalism;
- going out of bounds;
- persistent misbehavior when normal disciplinary measures have failed;
- carrying an offensive weapon.

Procedure to be followed

- Parents must be informed immediately by phone with a follow up letter.
- Parents must be notified of their right to appeal.
- Old Vicarage School will ensure that arrangements are in place for work to be sent home.
- Arrangements will be made for a return to school interview that includes the parents/carers.
- A re-integration support plan will be put in place.

All cases of exclusion will be treated in the strictest confidence on a need to know basis and are not to be discussed outside the school.

Responsibilities of the School

If the School commences an investigation which may lead to a fixed term temporary exclusion or to permanent exclusion the Head of School must inform the parent without delay. Before resorting to exclusion the School will normally try alternative solutions (for example, a restorative justice process - whereby the harm caused to the 'victim' can be redressed). This will ideally be done by telephone and the telephone call will be followed by a letter within one school day. The letter will include information about:

- the nature of the offence and the results of any investigation to date;
- that the sanction of a fixed term temporary exclusion or permanent exclusion may be imposed;
- the parents' right to state their case to the Head of School and if that is not satisfactory then to the Proprietors and whom they should contact to do this, including the latest date that the parent may give a written statement.
- the parents' right to see their child's school record and the Head of School must comply with such a request within 15 school days, although in exclusion cases compliance should be prompt.

Where reasonable adjustments to policies and practices have been made to accommodate a pupil's needs and to avoid the necessity for exclusion as far as possible, exclusion may be justified if there is a material and substantial reason for it. A specific incident affecting order and discipline in the school may be such a reason. The decision to exclude for a fixed term will be notified to the parent in writing with reasons. If the School determines that a child should be excluded for a fixed period, the Head of School will provide the parent in writing with information as to:

- the period of the Fixed Term Exclusion;
- the arrangements, such as setting work, to allow the child to continue their education during the Fixed Term Exclusion.

If the School decides (after completing the investigation or as a result of new evidence and further investigation) that it is necessary to extend a fixed period Temporary Exclusion or to convert it into a Permanent Exclusion, the Head of School will write again to the parent with the reasons for this decision. The decision to exclude a pupil permanently will only be taken as a last resort when a wide range of strategies for dealing with disciplinary offences has been employed to no avail or is an exceptional 'one-off' offence has been committed. Parental co-operation forms part of the contract between the school and all the parents at the school. The correspondence will be easily intelligible and in plain English.

Appeals

If parents or guardians wish to appeal the exclusion then they must do so in writing to the Proprietors, within one week of the letter notifying the parents or guardians of the exclusion. The Proprietors will establish an Appeal Panel to consider the appeal. The Appeal Panel will normally convene within three weeks of the receipt of the letter requesting the appeal. The parents or guardian may bring a representative to the meeting. All letters and documents relied on by the Head of School, shall be made available to the parents or guardian prior to the hearing. The parents or guardian or their representative may ask questions of the Head of School or may raise any relevant matter for the consideration of the Panel. The Panel may call for any further information it requires. No evidence or argument shall be presented to the Panel in the absence either of the parents or guardian or their representative, or in the absence of the Head of School. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Panel shall retire to consider what recommendation it may make. The Panel may recommend:

- The exclusion is confirmed
- The exclusion is rescinded
- The exclusion be rescinded and replaced with an alternative sanction.

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However, the final decision will always rest with the School Proprietors, who may or may not accept the recommendations of the panel. The recommendation shall be communicated to the parents or guardian and the Head of School. Every child has a right to confidentiality – it will be kept in the strictest confidence and only disclosed to those who need to know. We appreciate that such sensitive matters must be dealt with in confidence. If the School decides (after completing the investigation or as a result of new evidence and further investigation) that it is necessary to extend a fixed period temporary exclusion or to convert it into a permanent exclusion, the Head of School will write again to the parents with the reasons for this decision.

Old Vicarage School:

- requires all staff to use positive strategies for handling any unacceptable behaviour by helping children find solutions in ways that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development;
- acknowledges that such solutions might include, for example, acknowledgement of feelings, explanation as to what was not acceptable and supporting children to gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response;
- ensures that there are sufficient resources and activities available so that children are meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting for turns;
- supports each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence;
- avoids creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for unacceptable behaviour;
- explains the effect of unacceptable behaviour, making it clear to the child that it is the behaviour that is unacceptable, and not the person.

When children behave in unacceptable ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their actions and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately. We provide opportunities for children to learn how to interpret and cope with feelings, listening to them and offering the necessary support to enable them to verbalise their own frustrations, hurts and disappointments. We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's unacceptable behaviour. We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children. Corporal punishment, which is strictly forbidden at Old Vicarage School, is a criminal offence.

Legal Status:

- Prepared with regard to Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.
- Regulatory Requirements, Part 3, Paragraph 9 and Exclusion Element of Part 6 (24)(3) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Amended Regulations.

Relevant Documents:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Safeguarding Children - Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Management including Discipline and Sanctions Policy