

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
Version	V1
Date Published	September 2026
Authorised by (if required)	Head of School and Proprietors
Review / Update Date	September 2027
Responsible Area	Proprietor and Senior Leadership Team

Amendments:

Date	Amendment
September 2026	Full compliance review and update, including alignment with current Behaviour Management and Safeguarding policies.

Availability: This policy applies to all pupils at Old Vicarage School, including pupils in the EYFS, and to conduct occurring during School activities, educational visits, fixtures, extra-curricular activities and other circumstances falling within the lawful scope of the School's Behaviour Management Including Discipline, Sanctions and Rewards Policy. Staff involved in disciplinary decisions must understand and implement this policy.

Monitoring and review:

- This document will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Head of School.
- This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Head of School and Proprietors in September 2026 and will be reviewed annually, or earlier if significant changes to systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements, statutory guidance, inspection findings or best practice guidelines so require.

Signed:

Matthew Adshead
Proprietor

Jenny Adshead
Proprietor

Kerry Wise
Head of School

Ultimate disciplinary sanctions at Old Vicarage School are Suspension and Permanent Exclusion / Expulsion. A suspension is a temporary exclusion from School for a specified period. Permanent exclusion / expulsion brings the pupil's attendance at the School to an end in accordance with this policy and the Parent Contract. Neither sanction is used lightly. Only the Head of School may impose a suspension or permanent exclusion / expulsion, acting in accordance with this policy, the Behaviour Management Including Discipline, Sanctions and Rewards Policy, the Parent Contract, safeguarding requirements and the School's duties under the Equality Act 2010. Parents will be informed of the decision and reasons in writing and of the applicable review/appeal procedure set out below.

Old Vicarage School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

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, discriminatory abuse or harassment;
- stealing;
- extreme or persistent violence, actual or threatened, against a pupil or member of staff;
- sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour or other serious sexual misconduct, recognising that every such concern will first receive an appropriate safeguarding response under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- possession, supply or use of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes/vapes or other prohibited substances;
- significant vandalism;
- serious or repeated unauthorised departure from School boundaries or another location where the conduct creates a significant safety, safeguarding or disciplinary concern;
- persistent misbehaviour when normal disciplinary measures and appropriate support have failed;
- possession, use or threatened use of a knife, weapon or other prohibited item capable of causing serious harm.

Safeguarding and individual circumstances

Where alleged misconduct may also constitute a safeguarding concern, child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, exploitation or a criminal offence, safeguarding will take priority. The DSL or Deputy DSL will be involved without delay and the School will consider whether children's social care and/or the police should be contacted. Disciplinary action may proceed alongside safeguarding action where appropriate, but will never replace it or prejudice an external investigation.

Before deciding on suspension or permanent exclusion, the Head of School will consider whether the behaviour may indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental health difficulty, SEND, disability or another safeguarding or welfare need; whether reasonable adjustments have been made where required; and whether additional support, assessment or intervention is appropriate. So far as is appropriate to the pupil's age, understanding and the circumstances, the pupil will be given a reasonable opportunity to explain what happened and express their views before a disciplinary decision is made.

Procedure to be followed

- Parents will normally be informed promptly by telephone and the decision confirmed in writing. Where the matter raises a safeguarding concern, the timing and content of parental communication will be determined in consultation with the DSL and, where relevant, children's social care or the police.
- Parents will be notified of their right to request a review/appeal and how to do so.
- During a suspension the School will make reasonable arrangements for the pupil to continue their education, including the provision and marking of suitable work where practicable, taking account of the length of suspension, the pupil's age and individual needs.
- Following a suspension, the School will normally arrange an age-appropriate reintegration meeting involving the pupil and parents/carers.
- Where appropriate, a written reintegration/support plan will address expectations, educational continuity, pastoral support, safeguarding considerations, SEND or disability needs and any reasonable adjustments.

Information about suspensions and permanent exclusions will be handled confidentially and shared only where lawful, necessary and proportionate. Nothing in this policy prevents or restricts information being shared with children's social care, the police, the local authority, a receiving school, safeguarding partners or another body where required or permitted by law or necessary to safeguard a child.

Responsibilities of the School

If the School commences an investigation which may lead to suspension or permanent exclusion / expulsion, the Head of School will normally inform the parent without delay, subject to any safeguarding restriction on parental communication. Before imposing suspension or permanent exclusion the School will normally consider whether appropriate support, intervention or alternative sanctions could safely and reasonably address the behaviour. This does not prevent immediate suspension or permanent exclusion where the seriousness of a single incident justifies that response. Restorative approaches will be used only where safe, appropriate and voluntary and will never replace necessary safeguarding action. The initial communication will normally be by telephone and 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 suspension or permanent exclusion / expulsion may be imposed;
- the parents' right to state their case to the Head of School before a final decision, where practicable, and their right to request a review/appeal of a decision in accordance with this policy;
- the arrangements for providing documents reasonably necessary to understand and review the decision, subject to lawful redaction, safeguarding considerations, legal privilege and the data-protection rights of other children or third parties. Requests for other personal information will be dealt with in accordance with the School's data-protection procedures and applicable data-protection law.

Old Vicarage School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

The School will not discriminate unlawfully in deciding whether to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Before making a decision the Head of School will consider whether the behaviour may be connected with disability, SEND, a safeguarding concern or another unmet need; whether reasonable adjustments have been made where required; whether additional support or assessment is appropriate; and whether the proposed sanction is proportionate in the individual circumstances. No pupil will be suspended or permanently excluded because of a protected characteristic or through the application of a policy or practice which unlawfully discriminates. Decisions will be monitored for patterns or disproportionate impact. The decision to suspend a pupil will be notified to the parent in writing with reasons. If the School determines that a child should be suspended, the Head of School will provide the parent in writing with information as to:

- the period of the suspension;
- the arrangements for the pupil to continue their education during the suspension, including suitable work where practicable.

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 suspension or to convert it into a permanent exclusion / expulsion, the Head of School will write again to the parent with the reasons for this decision. Permanent exclusion / expulsion will be considered only where the Head of School concludes, on the information reasonably available, that the pupil's conduct is sufficiently serious to justify the ultimate sanction. This may arise from a serious or persistent breach of the Behaviour Management Policy where appropriate support and sanctions have not succeeded, or from an exceptionally serious single incident. The Head of School will consider the pupil's account, relevant evidence, safeguarding information, age and maturity, SEND/disability, reasonable adjustments, previous support and sanctions, risk to others and all other relevant individual circumstances. The disciplinary decision will be reached fairly and on the balance of probabilities, while recognising that safeguarding agencies or the police may apply different tests. The reasons for the decision and the material factors considered will be recorded in writing. Parental co-operation forms part of the contract between the School and all parents. Correspondence will be easily intelligible and in plain English.

Suspension safeguards and reintegration

The School will not use informal or unofficial exclusion. A pupil will not be sent home, required to remain away from School, placed on a reduced timetable for disciplinary reasons, or pressured to leave the School as an alternative to following the applicable suspension or permanent-exclusion procedure. Any temporary absence imposed for disciplinary reasons will be treated and recorded as a formal suspension under this policy.

Where a pupil is alleged to have harmed another child, temporary safeguarding arrangements may be required while enquiries are ongoing. Such arrangements will be based on an individual risk and needs assessment and will not be presented as a finding of guilt. Suspension will not be imposed merely as an automatic holding measure because an allegation has been made; where suspension is used, there must be a proper behavioural and/or safety basis for it under this policy.

Repeated or escalating suspensions will prompt a review of whether additional safeguarding, pastoral, SEND, disability, educational or external-agency support is required. Repeated suspension will not be used as a substitute for identifying and addressing underlying need.

Appeals

If parents or guardians wish to appeal a suspension or permanent exclusion / expulsion, they should do so in writing to the Proprietors within seven calendar days of the written decision, stating the grounds on which review is sought. The Proprietors may extend this period where fairness reasonably requires. The Proprietors will establish a Review Panel comprising persons who have not made the original exclusion decision and who are able to consider the matter fairly and without material conflict of interest. At least one member should, wherever reasonably practicable, be independent of the day-to-day management of the School. The Review Panel will normally convene within three weeks of receipt of the request. Parents or guardians will receive reasonable notice of the hearing and may be accompanied or represented. The School will provide the documents reasonably necessary to understand and review the decision, subject to lawful redaction, safeguarding considerations, legal privilege and the data-protection rights of other children or third parties. Parents or their representative may ask questions of the Head of School and raise relevant matters for the Panel. The Panel may call for further information. Neither party will communicate substantively with the Panel privately about the merits of the case. Any material submitted to the Panel will normally be shared with both parties, subject to lawful safeguarding or confidentiality restrictions. The Panel may proceed where a party, having received reasonable notice, chooses not to attend. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Panel will retire to consider what recommendation it may make. The Panel may recommend:

- The original decision is upheld;
- The original decision is withdrawn; or
- The original decision is replaced with a lesser sanction or other appropriate outcome.

The Proprietors will consider the Panel's recommendation conscientiously. If they decide not to accept it, they will record the reasons for doing so. The final outcome and reasons will be communicated to the parents or guardian and the Head of School

in writing as soon as reasonably practicable. Every child has a right to confidentiality. Information will be kept securely and disclosed only to those who need to know or where disclosure is otherwise lawful, necessary or required for safeguarding.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

In the EYFS, all disciplinary decisions will be developmentally appropriate and consistent with the current EYFS statutory framework and the School's Behaviour Management Including Discipline, Sanctions and Rewards Policy. Positive behaviour support, co-regulation and early intervention will be used. Any consideration of suspension or permanent exclusion / expulsion of a child in the EYFS will receive particularly careful review of safeguarding, developmental, SEND/disability and reasonable-adjustment factors. Corporal punishment is prohibited.

Record Keeping and Proprietor Oversight

Every suspension and permanent exclusion / expulsion will be entered in the School's central record of sanctions imposed for serious misbehaviour. The record will include the pupil, date, nature of the serious misbehaviour, sanction, duration where applicable, reasons, relevant safeguarding/SEND/equality considerations, parental communication, review outcome and relevant follow-up.

The Head of School and Proprietors will monitor the record for repeated incidents, consistency, effectiveness and any disproportionate impact on particular groups. The Proprietors will receive periodic anonymised information sufficient to monitor frequency, reasons, safeguarding implications and patterns, and will satisfy themselves that this policy is implemented effectively and consistently.

Following permanent exclusion / expulsion, the pupil's admission-register entry will be dealt with strictly in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Where the pupil's name is deleted from the admission register, the School will make the required return to the local authority and record the applicable statutory ground for deletion. Safeguarding and children-missing-education procedures will also be followed where relevant.

Legal Status:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage for group and school-based providers, in force from 1 September 2026, where applicable.
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended, including Part 3 paragraph 9 (behaviour policy, sanctions and record of sanctions for serious misbehaviour), paragraph 7 (safeguarding) and Part 8 (quality of leadership and management), as relevant. Equality Act 2010. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. DfE Independent School Standards: Guidance for Independent Schools (April 2026).
- Old Vicarage School is an independent school. The DfE statutory guidance Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement does not govern the School's contractual suspension and permanent-exclusion procedure. The School nevertheless takes account of relevant good-practice principles where appropriate, while applying the Independent School Standards, safeguarding requirements, equality law, pupil-registration requirements, this policy and the Parent Contract.

Relevant Documents:

- Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Management Including Discipline, Sanctions and Rewards Policy
- SEND Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Physical Intervention Policy - Restrictive Interventions (Including the Use of Reasonable Force)
- Parent Contract