

St Thomas More Catholic Primary school, Saffron Walden



SUSPENSIONS AND PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS

Policy No. STM-058

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Based on Department for Education Statutory Guidance (Effective 26 July 2026)

1. Policy Statement

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, we are committed to maintaining a calm, safe and supportive learning environment where all pupils can achieve their full potential. Suspension and permanent exclusion are recognised as important behaviour management sanctions that may be used when necessary to protect the education and welfare of pupils and staff.

The school will always seek to prevent exclusions through effective behaviour support, early intervention, reasonable adjustments, pastoral support and multi-agency working. Permanent exclusion will only be used as a last resort. This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion effective from 26 July 2026.

2. Legal Framework

This policy operates in accordance with:

- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Statutory Guidance (July 2026)

3. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils attending the school, including those:

- Of compulsory school age
- With SEND
- With Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Who are looked after or previously looked after
- Who have social workers

4. Principles

The school will ensure that all exclusion decisions are:

- Lawful
- Reasonable

- Fair
- Proportionate
- Non-discriminatory
- Made in accordance with safeguarding responsibilities

All decisions will be based on the civil standard of proof, that is, "on the balance of probabilities."

5. Preventing Exclusion

Before considering exclusion, the school will normally implement appropriate support strategies which may include:

- Behaviour support plans
- Restorative approaches
- Mentoring
- Pastoral support
- Early Help interventions
- SEND assessments and support
- Social care involvement
- Alternative provision outreach support
- Managed moves
- Off-site direction

Where a pupil is identified as being at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the school will seek to engage parents, relevant professionals and external agencies at the earliest opportunity to identify barriers to success and implement support strategies.

The school will consider whether additional support or reasonable adjustments are required for pupils with SEND or disabilities before exclusion is considered.

6. Authority to Suspend or Permanently Exclude

Only the Headteacher (or Acting Headteacher) may suspend or permanently exclude a pupil.

The Headteacher may:

- Suspend a pupil for one or more fixed periods.
- Suspend a pupil for a maximum of 45 school days in any academic year.

- Permanently exclude a pupil.

Behaviour which occurs outside school may also be grounds for exclusion where there is a clear connection to the school and/or impacts the welfare, safety or reputation of the school community.

Before deciding to suspend or permanently exclude, the Headteacher will consider:

- Whether the behaviour was provoked.
- Any safeguarding concerns.
- Whether the pupil has SEND.
- Whether the pupil is particularly vulnerable.
- Whether the pupil has a social worker.
- Whether the pupil is looked after or previously looked after.
- Whether alternative interventions have been explored.
- Whether reasonable adjustments have been implemented.

7. Grounds for Suspension or Permanent Exclusion

Examples of behaviour that may lead to exclusion include:

- Physical assault against a pupil
- Physical assault against an adult
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour
- Bullying
- Racist abuse
- Homophobic abuse
- Abuse related to disability
- Possession, use or threat of use of an offensive weapon
- Possession of prohibited items
- Persistent breaches of the behaviour policy

This list is not exhaustive. Each case will be considered individually.

8. Permanent Exclusion

Permanent exclusion will only be used:

- 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.

Permanent exclusion remains a sanction of last resort.

9. Equality and SEND

When considering exclusion, the school will:

- Comply with the Equality Act 2010.
- Avoid discrimination.
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.
- Consider the impact of SEND.
- Review support plans and interventions.
- Consult with the Local Authority regarding pupils with EHCPs where appropriate.

No pupil will be excluded because the school considers itself unable to meet their SEND needs.

10. Looked After Children and Children with Social Workers

Where a pupil has:

- A social worker;
- A Child in Need Plan;
- A Child Protection Plan;
- Looked After Child status;

the school will engage those professionals as early as possible before exclusion is considered. The Virtual School Head (where applicable) will be informed without delay of any exclusion.

11. Notification Procedures

The Headteacher will notify without delay:

Parents/Carers

Information provided will include:

- Reason for exclusion
- Length of suspension or confirmation of permanent exclusion
- Rights of representation

- Arrangements for education during exclusion
- Rights to request remote attendance at meetings

Governing Board

The Governing Board will be informed of all exclusions requiring statutory review.

Local Authority

The Local Authority will be informed of all exclusions regardless of length.

Social Workers and Virtual School Heads

Where relevant, these professionals will also be notified without delay.

12. Education During Exclusion

First Five Days

The school will:

- Set and mark suitable work.
- Provide access to learning resources.
- Maintain educational engagement where possible.

Day Six Onwards

For suspensions exceeding five consecutive school days:

- The Governing Board must arrange suitable full-time education from Day 6.

Following permanent exclusion:

- The Local Authority must arrange suitable education from Day 6.

13. Reintegration Following Suspension

Following a suspension, the school will normally hold a reintegration meeting with:

- The pupil
- Parents/carers
- Relevant staff

A reintegration plan may include:

- Pastoral support
- Academic catch-up
- Behaviour targets

- Mentoring
- Additional SEND support
- Daily pastoral check-ins;
- Report cards with personalised targets;
- Mentoring by a trusted adult;
- Academic catch-up support;
- Behaviour coaching;
- Restorative approaches;
- External agency involvement;
- Parent review meetings;
- SEND assessment or review;
- Attendance support plans.

The school will promote a positive fresh start and support future success.

14. Governing Board Responsibilities

The Governing Board will:

- Consider exclusions in accordance with statutory timescales.
- Review evidence impartially.
- Consider representations from all parties.
- Ensure exclusions are lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair.
- Monitor exclusion trends and vulnerable groups.

The Governing Board may:

- Reinstate a pupil.
- Decline reinstatement.
- Where a suspension or permanent exclusion may result in a pupil missing a National Curriculum assessment or public examination, the Governing Board will make reasonable efforts to meet before the examination date and consider whether arrangements may be made for the pupil to sit the examination where appropriate.

15. Independent Review Panels (IRPs)

Where the Governing Board declines to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil, parents may request an Independent Review Panel.

The school will:

- Cooperate fully with the review process.
- Provide relevant records and evidence.
- Facilitate attendance and participation.

16. Unlawful Exclusions and Off-Rolling

The school recognises that off-rolling is unlawful and will never remove a pupil from the school roll primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the pupil.

The school will not:

- Send pupils home without formally recording an exclusion.
- Pressure parents into elective home education.
- Use unofficial exclusions.
- Remove pupils from roll unlawfully.
- Use part-time timetables as a behaviour sanction.
- Send a pupil home informally to "cool off";
- Exclude a pupil because of SEND needs the school feels unable to meet;
- Exclude a pupil because of poor academic attainment;
- Require a pupil to meet conditions before returning from suspension;
- Pressure parents into Elective Home Education;
- Use part-time timetables as a behaviour sanction;
- Encourage managed moves that are not in the pupil's best interests.

Such practices may constitute unlawful exclusion or off-rolling and are prohibited.

17. Record Keeping

The school will maintain accurate records of:

- Suspensions
- Permanent exclusions

- Governing Board decisions
- Reintegration arrangements
- Alternative provision placements

Records will be retained in accordance with statutory requirements and data protection legislation.

18. Monitoring and Review

The Governing Board will monitor:

- Exclusion rates
- Repeat suspensions
- Vulnerable pupil groups
- SEND exclusion data
- Alternative provision placements
- Managed moves

Analysis will be used to ensure exclusions are lawful, proportionate and used only where necessary.

The Headteacher will present exclusion monitoring data to Governors at least annually, including:

- Suspension rates;
- Permanent exclusion rates;
- Repeat suspensions;
- Off-site direction placements;
- Managed moves;
- Attendance data;
- Analysis by year group, where applicable;
- Analysis by protected characteristic, where applicable;
- Analysis of SEND pupils;
- Analysis of pupils known to social care.

Governors will use this information to monitor equality of opportunity and identify any disproportionality.

The Chair of Governors will act as the Governor with strategic oversight of exclusions unless alternative arrangements are agreed by the Governing Board.

Related Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Equality Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy