

GUIDANCE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF EXCLUSIONS

LGB Date of Ratification	8 January 2018
Review Interval	Yearly
Date of Last Review	11 January 2016
Owner & Attached Governor	Sophie Mcfarlane & Debbie Coleman



GUIDANCE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF EXCLUSIONS

North Oxfordshire Academy seeks to create a caring and safe environment, conducive to learning. We aim to promote good behaviour and discipline. Exclusion should be a measure of last resort.

KEY REQUIREMENTS

North Oxfordshire Academy will

- Ensure that exclusion really is a measure of last resort
- Set out clear and consistent expectations in respect of behaviour
- Ensure those involved are dealt with fairly
- Involve parents at an early stage in issues of behaviour and discipline which may lead to exclusion
- Seek to follow this procedure and take advice from central office if, at any stage, there seems to be reason for not doing so.

The aim of North Oxfordshire's Exclusion Policy is that parents and students involved in exclusions go through the process and, after it is over, feel that the decisions themselves and the way in which the decisions were made were the best possible in the difficult circumstances. Although this may be unachievable in even a minority of cases, holding this as the aim will help us to focus our attention on making the process as positive as possible for all those involved.

The North Oxfordshire/ULT Exclusion Policy has been written with regard to the Secretary of State's guidance on exclusions but, nevertheless, differs in a number of ways. The reasons for the differences are to:

- Anchor the responsibility for all exclusion decisions clearly with the Principal but also to
- provide him/her with considerable support and protection in coming to that decision.
- Ensure parents are involved in the process as early as possible.
- Reduce the level of confrontation and legalistic process which can quickly escalate out of proportion in what is a very stressful time for all concerned but particularly for parents.

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1 Avoiding Exclusions

- 1.1 North Oxfordshire Academy will put into action strategies and procedures which help keep the number of exclusions to a minimum. We will aim that as far as possible the student should remain within the mainstream life of the academy, even though some learning may take place away from mainstream classes.
- 1.2 Where students fail to respond positively and at risk of formal exclusion the academy will create an intensive learning support programme, working together with parents wherever possible and at an early stage. External agencies should be involved as appropriate.
- 1.3 We will take particular care to support students who are at risk and whose conduct may be a symptom of a disability or set of circumstances outside their control. Students at risk may include:
 - (a) those with significant special educational needs
 - (b) children in the care of local authorities
 - (c) travellers
 - (d) young carers
 - (e) those from families under considerable stress
 - (f) pregnant school girls and teenage mothers.
- 1.4 Excluded students will continue to be supported in their learning by for example, the provision of online material and/or support, the use of phone calls and/or home visits or arrangements whereby the student is permitted to access the school under supervision for specific purposes, this will include 'day 6 provision'.
- 1.5 At the point at which the student returns to the Academy following a fixed period exclusion, the Academy will devise a programme to support the re-integration of the student into the curriculum.

2 Involving Parents

- 2.1 Parents must be closely involved at an early stage in issues of discipline and behaviour which relate to their child. It should be rare for a student to be excluded and for that action to come as a surprise to parents.
- 2.2 Exclusion of any sort is serious. Parents, therefore, have a right to expect the Principal to be personally involved in the process. The Principal will also ensure that wherever possible issues relating to exclusions will be dealt with face to face with parents.

3 The Behaviour Committee

- 3.1 The membership of the Behaviour Committee is the responsibility of the LGB.
- 3.2 The stronger and more active the role of the Behaviour Committee throughout the exclusion process, the less likely it will be that decisions will be challenged through the Appeals Panel. The Principal and Chair of the LGB should invest time and energy in making this part of the process as thorough, fair and helpful to parents as possible.
- 3.3 The committee should normally consist of at least 3 members who are members of the LGB. It is recommended that the Chair of the LGB is a member of the Behaviour Committee. The LGB may co-opt members to the Behaviour Committee who are not members of the LGB.
- 3.4 All exclusions require difficult judgements to be made taking into account and coming to an understanding of what are almost invariably unique circumstances. The main responsibility of the Behaviour Committee is to support the Principal in dealing with these difficult decisions. The Principal may also seek advice from central office when coming to her decision.
- 3.5 The committee must be able to be convened at short notice.
- 3.6 In coming to a decision in relation to a permanent exclusion, the Principal will consult fully with members of the Behaviour Committee. The mechanism for the consultation is not prescribed and so may be tailored to meet the needs of the situation, although wherever possible it is recommended that the Behaviour Committee meets. Where there is a need for swift action, it may be that the consultation process is carried out by a joint telephone conference.
- 3.7 In reaching what are difficult decisions, an important test for the Principal is whether the Behaviour Committee comes to the same decision or not. If the Behaviour Committee is opposed to the decision, the Principal will consider very carefully before persisting with the previously proposed course of action. It is very much more likely that the decision is the right one and that it can withstand challenge if there is unanimity of view between the Principal and the Behaviour Committee.
- 3.8 The Principal will meet personally with parents before coming to a final decision. The Principal may choose to invite one or more members of the Behaviour Committee to that meeting.

4 The Independent Appeals Panel

- 4.1 The LGB is responsible for appointments to the Panel but may need help from the academy in identifying potential members. The academy will endeavour to arrange a register of approved panel members for Independent Appeals Panels.
- 4.2 The Academy may also decide to work with neighbouring schools to develop a pool of panel members. The need for a head teacher on the panel lends itself to a reciprocal arrangement with local colleagues.
- 4.3 The Academy will take steps to ensure that members of the panel are well briefed. We will make it clear to members that the ULT exclusions policy is not the same as that for maintained schools.

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5 Recording and Record Keeping

- 5.1 All significant behaviour events will be recorded, signed and dated. Records should be brief, precise, accurate and relevant. Any contemporaneous witness evidence should be in writing, signed and dated. As records can be called in evidence they must have the integrity to bear rigorous external scrutiny. Records should be archived for 10 years.
- 5.2 The Academy will have reliable systems to capture all correspondence (including emails and records of phone calls and meetings) with all academy staff. Parents have a right of access to student records and academies should have those records in a format whereby they can be easily retrieved and prepared for parents.

6 The decision to exclude

- 6.1 Unless in exceptional circumstances, the decision to exclude will follow an investigation and/or a hearing to establish the facts of the case. Where the decision to exclude is made prior to an investigation, the investigation and/or hearing will follow as soon as is practicable afterwards. Exclusions should not normally be made in the heat of the moment, unless in an emergency or for a very brief period of time.
- 6.2 As part of the investigation, witness statements should be taken where possible and appropriate, usually in writing but orally if necessary, and signed as authoritative. Whilst it is advisable for two members of staff to be present whilst statements are taken this may be intimidating to vulnerable students and therefore the senior member of staff in charge of the process should make the judgement about how the circumstances are to be managed. Consideration should be given as to whether parents should be present particularly for a student aged 16 or under.
- 6.3 Parents should be informed at once of any exclusion, preferably by telephone call and an immediate preliminary meeting. Experience shows that the more parents are involved in the decision at as early a stage as possible, the more they will come to accept and understand it.

7 Returning, admission or re-admissions following an exclusion

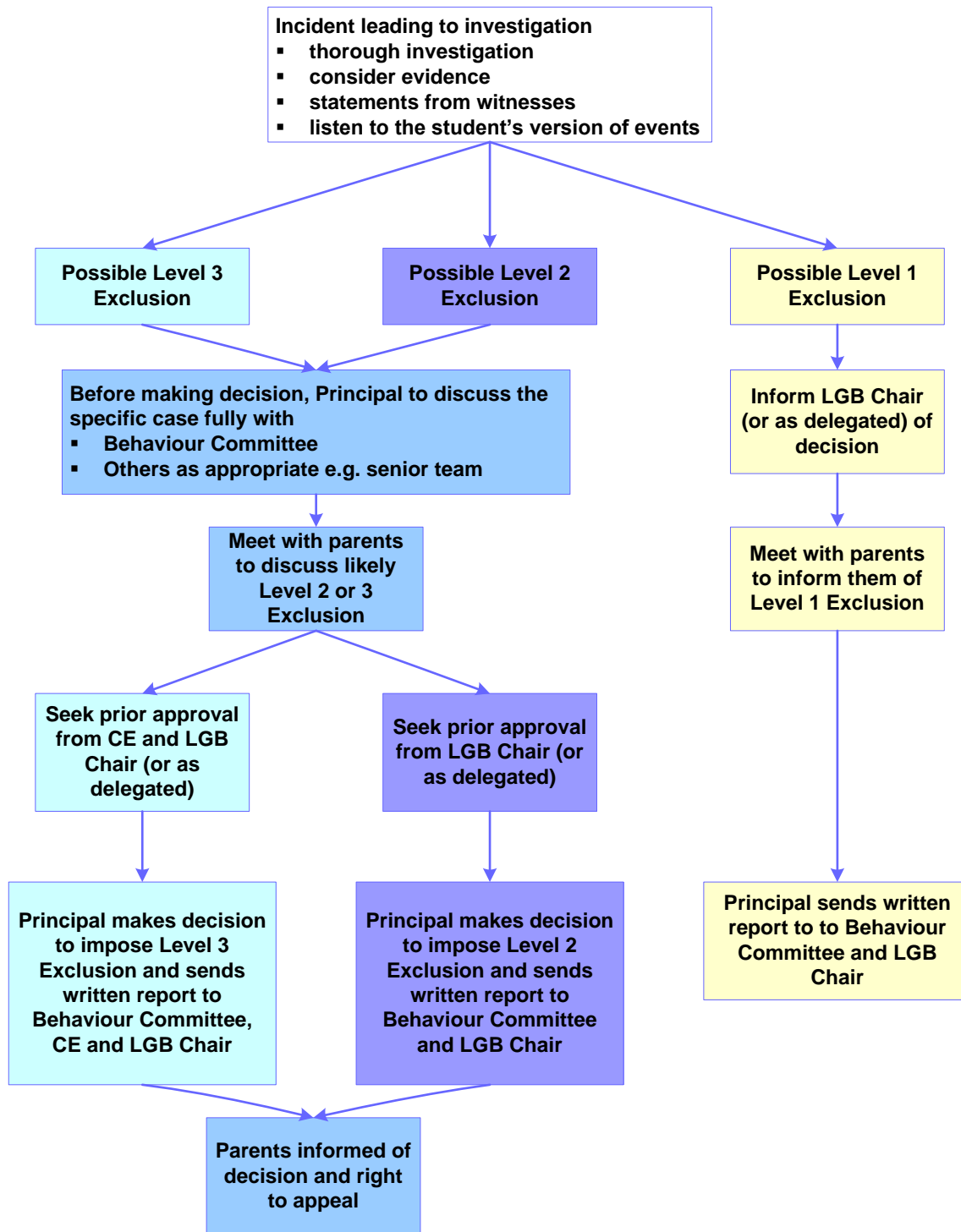
- 7.1 The Academy will develop a policy of reintegration meetings with parents and the student for all excluded students who return or are admitted/re-admitted to the academy. At the meeting an individual student plan should be decided and a nominated member of staff identified to take personal responsibility for the student's reintegration.
- 7.2 Preparation for the student's re-entry or entry to the academy should include planning involving parents and the student and, for example,
 - (a) agreement on a contract for student, parents and the academy;
 - (b) consideration of the safety and educational needs of existing students and adults;
 - (c) the regular and frequent review of student progress and achievement;
 - (d) the development of an Intensive Learning and Behaviour Support Plan with clear targets if needed;
 - (e) a programme of co-ordinated support;

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- (f) appropriate information to be provided to all staff setting out clear guidelines and goals.
- 7.3 Students who receive more than a 1 day fixed term exclusion or a second fixed term exclusion will be required to meet with a member of the governing body to discuss the incident and support that is required.
- 8 Analysis of exclusions and behaviour
- 8.1 The Principal will report on issues to do with behaviour and exclusions to the LGB on a termly basis. It is recommended that such reports include:
- (a) an analysis of all exclusions and the incident database;
 - (b) systematic tracking of students by, for example, gender, ethnicity, etc;
 - (c) a report as to how behaviour policies are being implemented.
- 8.2 It is recommended that Principals report more frequently to the Behaviour Committee so that this committee is closely involved in understanding how the academy is doing in terms of behaviour and exclusions.



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Behaviour Committee:

- Members of the LGB but may include others
- Recommend LGB Chair is a member
- Principal may not be member
- No limit on size but must have at least 3

Independent Appeals Panel:

- 3 people (set out in detail as in Secretary of State's Guidance)
- Chaired by lay member; may have legal training
- 2 other independent members – one with governance experience; the other with Headship experience

