

Suspension and Exclusion Policy

This Policy applies to the whole school and is published to staff, pupils and parents

Author: Deputy Head (JA)

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Longridge Towers School is a 3 - 19 school. Whilst understanding that in legal terms, in Scotland a young person is deemed an adult at 16, and in England an adult at 18, the following policy aides the School in the managing of appropriate behaviour and its duties in safeguarding all members of the School community. Therefore, for the purpose of clarity, the term pupil in this context encompasses those who are registered to attend classes regardless of age and legal status as an adult. We expect all pupils to abide by our school rules and policies, irrespective of their age.

Introduction

At Longridge ("the School") our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. The School aims to encourage pupils to adopt the highest standards of behaviour, principles and moral standards and to respect the ethos of the school. We encourage the establishment of good teacher/pupil relationships and support for the School's values through a system of rewards and sanctions which are designed to promote a calm, disciplined learning environment. Our system of rewards includes:

- verbal praise and written praise for good work;
- merits for positive moral and social behaviour;
- academic merits for both effort and achievement, which are celebrated in the classroom and by house;
- annual subject and year group prizes;
- posting examples of excellent work in art/design, sports, and drama and concert achievements on the School's web site, so that the community can celebrate success
- reports to parents

The School's Behaviour Policy contains full details of the School's reward system.

Sanctions

When misbehaviour is identified, sanctions are implemented in line with the School's Behaviour Policy. The vast majority of disciplinary offences committed by pupils at the School can be adequately dealt with using the Behaviour Policy, which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

In the event that a pupil's behaviour is sufficiently serious or persistent, it may be necessary to exclude a pupil from the School. That exclusion may be temporary (i.e. suspension) or permanent (i.e. expulsion).

Suspension (Fixed Term Exclusion)

The Head may suspend a pupil, for a period of between 24 hours and one week in accordance with this policy.

In some circumstances, fixed term exclusion may take place 'internally', i.e. the pupil would still attend school, but would be isolated from their peers and be set appropriate work to complete. Such a sanction may be imposed if senior pastoral staff, in consultation with parents, consider this to be a more appropriate course of action in a given situation.

If suspension proves ineffective, or the misbehaviour is serious, the School may be required to exclude the pupil, or to require him/ her to be withdrawn in accordance with this policy.

A non-exhaustive list of the sort of behaviour that could merit a fixed term exclusion includes the following:

- verbal abuse
- physical abuse
- damage to property
- cheating
- other serious misbehaviour as detailed in the Behaviour Policy

Permanent Exclusion

A non-exhaustive list of the sorts of pupil behaviour that could merit permanent exclusion includes the following:

- physical assault against pupils or staff;
- behaviour which puts the safety of the pupil, or any other person, in jeopardy;
- verbal abuse/ threatening behaviour;
- fighting;
- serious or persistent bullying (including cyber-bullying), in accordance with the School's Anti-Bullying Policy;
- any form of abuse or unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, religion/ belief, disability, special education needs, sexual orientation (etc.);
- sexual harassment or misconduct, including sexting;
- tobacco, drug and alcohol abuse;
- wilful damage to property;
- vandalism or computer hacking;
- theft or unauthorised possession of any property belonging to the School, another pupil, or a member of staff;
- bringing illegal, inappropriate, or dangerous items into school, such as: drugs, weapons, firearms, or pornographic material;
- persistent disruptive behaviour or serious breaches of the School's Rules; or
- other serious misconduct (on or off the School premises) which actually, or potentially, or indirectly, brings the School into disrepute or damages its reputation.

A permanent exclusion may also be imposed by the School as a sanction for a series of accumulated misdemeanours.

Breaches of discipline outside of the school grounds

The School takes the conduct of its pupils outside of school grounds extremely seriously. A pupil's misbehaviour outside of school can be damaging to the reputation of both the pupil and the School, and the School may discipline pupils for misbehaviour outside of school premises, in accordance with the provisions of its Behaviour Management Policy, to the extent that it is reasonable to do so. Where a serious incident is reported to the School of a pupil's poor behaviour outside of the school grounds, the School will follow the investigation procedure set out in this policy. In any event, whether the misbehaviour is a serious or minor incident, the School will take an evidence-based approach and may talk to witnesses before identifying further action and any sanctions required for such behaviour.

This may apply in the following circumstances:

Misbehaviour is when the pupil is:

- taking part in any activity organised by the School, or related to the School;

- travelling to and from school;
- wearing school uniform; or
- in some other way identifiable as a pupil of the School.

Misbehaviour at any time, whether or not the conditions above apply, is:

- behaviour having repercussions for the orderly running of the School;
- posing a threat to another pupil or member of the public; or
- adversely affecting the reputation of the School.

In all cases, the above misbehaviour would apply whether it took place in person, over the telephone or online (including on social media).

In all cases, the member of staff may only discipline the pupil when on school property (or elsewhere, where the pupil is under the supervision of that member of staff).

Required Removal

The School may require the removal of a pupil when, in the opinion of the Head, there has been a breakdown of the relationship between the pupil and/or parent(s) and the School. This may arise through:

A breakdown of trust between the School and the parent(s). This may manifest itself in a number of ways, including:

- parent(s) not supporting the School in behaviour management;
- vexatious behaviour, such as parents repeatedly bringing unsubstantiated claims;
- abusive or unreasonable behaviour by parents to the School's staff, pupils or other parents (for example as a spectator at school fixtures);

A breakdown of trust between the School and the pupil. This may manifest itself in a number of ways, including:

- persistent misconduct such as unauthorised absence from school;
- when a pupil has brought a malicious or unjustified allegation against a member of staff and where there are reasonable grounds that this may happen again in the future;

Other circumstances where the Head (after appropriate consultation) is satisfied that it is not in the best interests of the pupil, or of the School, that the child remains at the School.

Investigatory Procedures

All misbehaviour or disciplinary incidents will be dealt with by the School, as soon as it is possible to do so.

In the event of an incident of serious misbehaviour, an investigation may be carried out to establish the facts. An investigation of a complaint or allegation about serious misbehaviour will normally be coordinated by the Deputy Head or an appropriate member of senior staff. Parents will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable if a complaint or allegation under investigation is of a nature that could result in the pupil being excluded.

In these circumstances, the pupil will always be given the opportunity to give their account of events and to put forward any mitigating factors. The pupils and staff involved may also be asked to prepare written statements as soon as possible after the incident has taken place. As part of the investigation the pupil may also be interviewed informally by a member of staff to establish whether there are grounds for the reported complaint and/or a formal investigation. The School is not required to inform the parents that an informal meeting is to take place but will arrange for a member of staff to be present to support the pupil. A pupil who is waiting to be interviewed may be segregated and the School may confiscate a pupil's mobile phone or other personal belongings (as appropriate) for such a period as it is deemed necessary.

The findings of the investigation are presented to the Head for consultation and consideration.

Suspension (pending an investigation)

While an investigation into a pupil's conduct is carried out, a pupil may be suspended from school and may be required to stay at home, or with his education guardian. Alternatively, the pupil may be placed under a segregated regime on school premises. When a pupil is suspended, teachers will set work to be completed by the pupil during their period of absence.

Search

The School reserves the right to search pupils and their possessions. More information regarding the School's approach to searches and confiscation can be found in the School's Behaviour Management Policy.

Reports to the Police (and others)

The School will usually report to the Police any activity which it reasonably suspects may amount to criminal activity which takes place either within the School grounds or outside of its grounds. Possessions or items including (but not limited to) drugs, weapons or phones may be confiscated immediately and held for the Police as potential evidence.

If the School reasonably suspects a pupil may have taken drugs, then the School will seek immediate medical advice and may involve the Police, where necessary.

Sexual offences will generally be reported to the Police immediately, including in cases where a pupil is suspected or alleged to have committed such an offence. The alleged victim's parents will usually also be informed immediately of the incident and told that the Police have been informed. The School will also apply the terms of its Safeguarding Policy to ensure there is sufficient support in place for the pupils involved.

Other agencies may also be notified where necessary and appropriate to the facts of the case.

Disciplinary Meeting

A formal disciplinary meeting is necessary where the investigation has identified a case for the pupil to answer for which expulsion is a possible outcome, and/ or the pupil has been suspended pending the outcome of the disciplinary process.

Preparation for the meeting

The Head will convene a meeting to consider the matter and will invite the pupil and his/her parents to attend the meeting.

The Chair of Governors will also be informed of the investigation and that a disciplinary meeting is to be held but shall not take part in either of them. Prior to the meeting, certain documents will be made available to pupils and parents, wherever possible. These documents may include, but are not limited to:

- a statement setting out the points of complaint;
- written witness statements;
- notes of the evidence in support of the complaint;

- the relevant school policies and procedures; and
- the investigation report.

Any such documents may be redacted, or a summary provided for reasons of confidentiality and/or data protection. Any written submission provided by, or on behalf of the pupil must arrive at the Head's office no later than the working day before the disciplinary meeting.

The pupil should be in attendance throughout the disciplinary meeting and may be accompanied to the meeting by a friend or a member of staff. The pupil's parents may similarly be accompanied, should they wish. Legal representation is not appropriate and is not permitted. The Head should be informed of all attendees at least 24 hours before the disciplinary meeting.

Proceedings

The process to be followed at the disciplinary meeting shall be determined by the Head who will also determine which other staff can be in attendance. The meeting will be conducted in a manner appropriate to the age, understanding and maturity of the pupil/s involved, taking into account any additional needs of the pupil/s in all circumstances.

Notes will be taken by the School, normally by an administrator or other independent staff member, during the disciplinary meeting and a copy of the notes may be provided to the parents.

The pupil will have an opportunity to provide their account of the circumstances surrounding the incident and both the pupil and his/her parents will be able to ask questions. The pupil/parents will also be able to address the Head on the issue of sanctions.

If the Head considers that further investigation is needed, the disciplinary meeting may be adjourned, and the reason for this adjournment will be explained to the pupil. If an adjournment is not necessary, the Head will make a decision after the meeting. The Head will give a written decision about the incident and the appropriate sanction, together with reasons for those decisions, as soon as reasonably practicable.

If the Head considers that exclusion may be the appropriate sanction, the pupil's previous disciplinary history may be considered, and/or any other favourable or unfavourable conduct known to the School when reaching a decision in respect of the pupil.

Leaving Status

If the Head decides that a pupil should leave the School, the pupil's parents will be consulted to determine the appropriate leaving status for that pupil (i.e., permanent exclusion, required removal or voluntary withdrawal by the parents). If the decision is made by the parents to withdraw the pupil, there will be no right to appeal.

Pupils who have permanently left the School, irrespective of leaving status, are not permitted to re-enter School premises without prior consent from the School.

Pupils who have permanently left the School may not be permitted to sit public examinations at the School, irrespective of the timing of the offence(s). The School may make arrangements for the transfer of any course and project work to either the leaving pupil, the parents or to another school.

Appeal Hearing

The School offers the right of appeal to parents or guardians of any pupil that has been permanently excluded, or is otherwise required to leave the School other than where the pupil is withdrawn by the parents. Appeals will be dealt with by way of a Governors' review hearing. The right to appeal does not extend to suspensions (whether pending an investigation or as a sanction).

Pending such appeal, the pupil shall remain suspended from the School.

Request for review

Upon notification of the Head's decision to exclude or require a pupil to leave the School, a pupil or his/her parents, may make a written application for a Governor's review hearing. The application must be received by the Clerk to the Governors within 72 hours of the decision being notified to the parents and must clearly set out the grounds on which they are asking for a review and the outcome that they seek.

Review Hearing

The review will be undertaken by at least two governors and a third person that is independent of the School. They will have no detailed prior knowledge of the case, or of the pupil or parents. Parents will be notified in advance of the names of the members making up the review hearing.

The meeting will take place at the School premises unless notified otherwise, normally between 3 and 10 days after a request for appeal has been received, during term time. A review meeting is an internal procedure and all those involved, or who are concerned in the procedure, are required to keep its proceedings confidential. Those present at the hearing will usually be:

- members of the review hearing and the Clerk to the Governors;
- the Head and any relevant members of staff whose presence the Head considers to be necessary to secure a fair outcome for the pupil; and
- the pupil together with his/her parents and, if they wish, the parents may be accompanied by a friend or relation who is not legally qualified.

Conduct of the review hearing

The review hearing will be chaired by one member. As with the disciplinary meeting, the hearing will be conducted in a manner appropriate to the age, understanding and maturity of the pupil involved, taking into account any additional needs of the pupil in all circumstances.

The Clerk to the Governors will be asked to take minutes of the hearing, and a copy of the minutes may be provided to the parents after the meeting.

The Chair of the review hearing will ensure that all those present have the opportunity to ask questions and make appropriate comment.

The Chair may at his/her discretion adjourn or terminate the hearing. If the hearing is terminated without a conclusion being reached, the original decision of the disciplinary meeting will stand.

Decision

The Governors' review will consider the grounds for the review and shall decide whether to either:

- uphold the decision of the Head and, if minded to do so, with agreement of the Head, discuss the pupil's leaving status (i.e. permanent exclusion, required removal, or withdrawal) with a view to reaching an agreement; or
- recommend the decision of the Head to be reviewed and, if minded to do so, require the Head to review the decision including recommending an alternative sanction.

The decision will be notified, together with the reasons for the decision, to the parents by the Chair of the review hearing in writing within 3 working days of the review meeting.

Confidentiality

All those participating in the application of this policy including parents and pupils are required to keep all statements, correspondence, notes and documents confidential except where legally required to disclose them.