

## Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy

### 1. Aims

The college aims to ensure that:

- a high standard of education is provided to students within a climate of good behaviour
  - students in college are safe and happy
  - the suspensions and permanent exclusions process is applied fairly and consistently
  - the suspensions and permanent exclusions process is understood by governors, staff, parents/carers and students
- when students make mistakes, they are able to learn from them and move towards being ready for the adult world

### 2. Introduction

This policy notes that while there exists statutory guidance in relation to schools, this statutory guidance does not apply to 16-19 academies, and therefore does not apply to the college. The College's protocols are contained within this policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant college policies including:

- Mindset for Learning
- Fitness to Study
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Acceptable use policy

### 3. The Decision to Suspend or Permanently exclude

Staff and Governors recognise that there may be times when the behaviour of one or more students does not meet College expectations and disrupts the learning and/or is a threat to the health and safety of staff and/other students. In this case, the Principal may decide to suspend or permanently exclude a student.

A decision to suspend or permanently exclude a student will only be taken:

- In cases where there has been a major breach of normal expectations of conduct. This includes
  - unacceptable conduct within the College
  - unacceptable conduct offsite
  - unacceptable conduct towards a member of the College or the College itself through social media or other virtual means
  - actions that bring the College into disrepute
- In cases where there has been persistent defiance of College authority or disruption of

teaching and learning

- If allowing the student to remain in the College would seriously harm the learning or welfare of the student or other members of the College
- Following a student's failure to meet targets set as part of the Mindset for Learning Policy or Fitness to Study Policy

A suspension or permanent exclusion may only be issued by the Principal, (or a member of the Senior Leadership Team in their absence) and will be used only as a last resort.

Reasons for suspension or permanent exclusion may include, but are not limited to;

- bullying
- harassment
- instances of actual or threatened violence or aggression
- use of abusive, derogatory, or threatening language
- damage to college property
- sexual harassment, abuse or assault
- inappropriate sexualised language
- bringing in an illegal or banned substances
- smoking or vaping anywhere within the college site
- theft
- lying
- plagiarism or cheating in an assessment
- carrying an offensive weapon or be in possession of dangerous articles such as fireworks
- persistent or serious breaches of college policies and procedures
- defiance or repeated failure to follow instructions from staff
- allowing a non member into college, breaching our security protocols
- opening the turnstile or other door for a student or other person
- conduct that brings the college into disrepute

The Principal will aim for the shortest possible period of suspension.

The college is responsible for

- ensuring that the student and the parent/carer understand the rationale for the decision to suspend
- identifying appropriate intervention that might support the student not to make the same mistake again
- ensuring that an appropriate member of staff facilitates the reintegration meeting.
- ensuring that the student and parent/carer has been notified about how to appeal the decision

Student is responsible for

- ensuring they do not enter the college site during the period of suspension
- seeking out and completing any missed work via email to their teachers
- attending the reintegration meeting as directed with a parent/carer or other appropriate adult
- attending any meetings for careers advice/engaging with other services if the student is permanently excluded

#### 4. Serious incidents leading to permanent exclusion

Before deciding to exclude a student permanently, the Principal may try a range of strategies

including suspension. Normally only when other strategies have been tried without success will the Principal consider permanent exclusion.

There are occasions when the severity of the offence will merit permanent exclusion, even when there has been no prior record of poor behaviour.

The Principal alone has the power to permanently exclude students for reasons mentioned (but not limited to) section 3 above. In considering permanently excluding a student, the Principal will:

- consider all the relevant facts and evidence
- allow the student to give their version of events, where practical.
- consider if the student has special educational needs (SEN) or is known to be part of another vulnerable group
- consider possible short term mitigating circumstances, such as bereavement or mental health factors.
- If a student is under 17, the college would seek to support the family to secure other provision.

The College will take care to ensure that a decision to suspend does not involve any kind of discrimination, as defined by the Equality Act 2010. We will not discriminate against students on the basis of protected characteristics, such as disability or race.

## 5. Definition of college days

For the purposes of suspensions, college day is defined as any day on which there is a college session. Therefore, INSET or staff training days do not count as a college day.

## 6. Notification of an suspension or permanent exclusion

### Informing the student

A student who has been suspended will have the reason for their suspension explained to them by a member of staff.

A student who is to be permanently excluded will have the reason explained to them by the Principal in a meeting to which their parent/carer will also be invited to attend

### Informing parents/carers

Parents/carers will be contacted by telephone to have the reason for suspension explained to them and to agree how the students should make their way home.

Notification will also be given in writing:

- via email to the parent/carer
- by hand to the student on leaving site
- by post

The notification will include

- The reason(s) for the suspension
- The length of the suspension and arrangements for the reintegration meeting
- details of any support that is being put in place for the student

### Permanent Exclusion

In the case of a permanent exclusion notification will be given by the Principal to the student and their parents/carers. Notification will include

- information about the appeals process
- details about arrangements that will be made to support the young person in securing alternative education provision, employment or access to other services they may require

## Informing the College Governing Council

The Principal will immediately notify the College Governing Council of:

- A permanent exclusion, including when a fixed-period suspension is made permanent
- Suspensions which would result in the student being suspended for more than 5 college days
- Suspensions which would result in the student missing a public examination. For all other suspensions, the Principal will notify the College Governing Council once a term.

### 7. Students returning from a period of suspension

Students returning from a period suspension must attend a reintegration meeting, accompanied by a parent/carer. This meeting will seek to establish practical ways in which further suspension can be avoided and behaviour modified to acceptable standards in partnership between pupil, parent/carer and college.

### 8. Procedure for appeal

The right to appeal applies only to decisions to permanently exclude

If a student or parent/carer wishes to appeal against the Principal's decision to permanently exclude, they must make their appeal in writing to the Chair of Governors within 15 college days of the decision being issued.

The appeal will be heard by an exclusions panel comprising either three Co-op Academies Trust governors or two Co-op Academies Trust governors plus one of the Trust's Regional Directors. The governors will not necessarily be drawn from the College. If a Regional Director sits on the panel this will not be the Regional Director for the Greater Manchester region. The Regional Director for Greater Manchester may attend the hearing and make representations on behalf of the Principal if they wish.

The exclusions panel will consider the reinstatement of an excluded student within 15 college days of receiving the written appeal. If the student is aged 18 or over, they may represent themselves.

Where an exclusion would result in a student missing a public examination, the exclusions panel will consider the reinstatement of the student before the date of the examination. If this is not practicable, the chair of the Co-op Academies Trust Board (or the vice-chair where the chair is unable to make this consideration) will consider the suspension or exclusion independently and decide whether or not to reinstate the student.

The exclusions panel can either:

- Decline to reinstate the student, or
- Direct the reinstatement of the student immediately, or on a particular date.

In reaching a decision the exclusions panel will consider whether the exclusion was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair. The panel will decide whether or not a fact is true 'on the balance of probabilities', which differs from the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'. Minutes will be taken of the meeting, and a record of evidence considered kept. The outcome will also be recorded on the student's educational record.

The exclusions panel will notify, in writing, the Principal and parents of its decision, along with reasons for its decision, without delay.

## Responsibility

Responsible Staff	Emma Soper
Policy administrator	Christine Butterfield.
Approving body	Governors
Review date	September 2023
<i>All policies are available to stakeholders either on the College website or upon request from the College Office.</i>	