Suspension and Exclusion Policy

Date reviewed	September 2026
Reviewed by	Headteacher
Approved by	Proprietor
Planned review date	September 2027 (or earlier if guidance changes)

Purpose and status of this policy

Eden Springs Girls Secondary is committed to maintaining a safe, orderly, inclusive environment in which pupils can learn and staff can work safely. Suspension or permanent exclusion is a serious decision and will be considered only after a fair, proportionate and properly documented process.

This policy must be read with the school's Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, SEND/Inclusion Policy, Attendance Policy, Complaints Policy, Online Safety Policy and parent contract.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE 2026), in force from 1 September 2026, applies to schools and colleges and informs the safeguarding requirements in this policy. The Department for Education's statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion, updated in July 2026, applies specifically to local-authority-maintained schools, academies/free schools and pupil referral units. The school must confirm its legal status before adoption. If it is an independent school, its published contractual arrangements and the Independent School Standards apply, and the statutory maintained-school review/appeal process must not be represented as applying automatically.

Key principles

- The welfare and best interests of the pupil and the safety of the school community will be central to every decision.
- Suspension or exclusion will not be imposed automatically for a particular behaviour or simply because a pupil has previously been suspended.
- Decisions will be lawful, reasonable, proportionate, non-discriminatory and based on the evidence available.
- The school will consider the pupil's age, understanding, individual circumstances, disability, SEND, mental health, safeguarding history, care status and any relevant vulnerability.
- The school will consider whether behaviour may be connected to bullying, sexual harassment, sexual violence, discrimination, exploitation, abuse, unmet special educational needs or other safeguarding concerns.
- The school will consider appropriate support, adjustments and alternatives to suspension or exclusion where these can safely address the concern.
- Suspension or exclusion will never be used to encourage a parent to withdraw a pupil, avoid the school's duties, or remove a pupil informally from the roll.
- The school will keep accurate records of serious sanctions, decisions, reasons, communications and safeguarding actions.

Who may make the decision

Only the Headteacher (or the person lawfully authorised to act as Headteacher in their absence) may make the decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. The Proprietor is responsible

for oversight and for ensuring that the policy is implemented fairly and that the school's legal obligations are met.

No member of staff may arrange an informal or unofficial suspension, ask a parent to keep a pupil at home as a disciplinary measure, or remove a pupil from the register outside the lawful process.

Grounds for suspension or permanent exclusion

A decision may be considered where there has been a serious breach of the Behaviour Policy, or where the pupil's continued attendance would pose a serious risk to the education or welfare of the pupil or others. Examples may include:

- serious or repeated physical aggression, violence or credible threats of violence;
- serious verbal abuse, harassment, discriminatory abuse, bullying or harmful online behaviour;
- sexual harassment, sexual violence or other serious sexual misconduct;
- serious damage to property, theft or other serious misconduct;
- possession, supply or use of prohibited items or substances;
- persistent and serious breaches of behaviour expectations despite appropriate support and interventions; or
- other serious conduct that has a clear and evidenced impact on safety, welfare or the school's ability to provide education.

This list is illustrative, not exhaustive. The seriousness of an incident and the appropriate response must be assessed individually. A single incident does not automatically require permanent exclusion.

Unauthorised absence, non-payment of school fees, a parent/carer's conduct, disability or SEND must not be treated as an automatic ground for disciplinary suspension or exclusion. These matters must be dealt with under the relevant attendance, contractual, accessibility, complaints or staff-safety procedures, as applicable.

Safeguarding considerations before a decision

The Headteacher must consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy DSL where an incident may involve abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, discriminatory abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence, online harm or another safeguarding concern.

- The school must act promptly on safeguarding concerns and must not delay a necessary referral while an internal behaviour investigation is underway.
- The pupil who has been harmed, the pupil alleged to have caused harm, and other affected pupils must be considered separately and fairly. The school must not assume that exclusion of one pupil alone resolves the safeguarding risk.
- The school will consider whether children's social care, the police, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the local authority or another safeguarding partner should be contacted.
- Where an allegation concerns a member of staff or another adult, the school will follow KCSIE 2026 and its procedures for allegations/low-level concerns, including referral to the LADO where required.
- Information will be shared on a lawful, necessary and proportionate basis with those who need it to safeguard children. Data protection is not a barrier to necessary safeguarding information sharing.

- Where there is an immediate risk of harm, the school will take urgent protective action and contact emergency services where necessary.

Investigation and fair decision-making

Except where urgent action is needed to protect pupils or staff, the Headteacher will gather sufficient information before deciding on a suspension or permanent exclusion. The process will be fair and proportionate to the circumstances.

- Establish the facts through an appropriate investigation, considering relevant evidence and any conflicting accounts.
- Give the pupil an age-appropriate opportunity to explain their account, unless this is not possible or appropriate for a recorded reason.
- Consider witness statements, available records and relevant digital evidence, handling sensitive material securely.
- Consider whether bullying, harassment, discrimination, provocation, coercion, exploitation, unmet needs or other contextual factors contributed to the incident.
- Consider the Behaviour Policy, previous interventions, reasonable adjustments, SEND information and any relevant risk assessment.
- Consult the DSL where safeguarding may be involved and seek other professional advice where appropriate.
- Reach a decision on the balance of probabilities, taking account of the evidence and the seriousness of the potential sanction.
- Record the decision, reasons, evidence considered, safeguarding actions, alternatives considered and planned follow-up.

The school may take immediate interim steps to keep people safe while the facts are established. Any such steps must be proportionate, time-limited, properly recorded and must not be presented as an informal suspension.

Suspension

A suspension is a temporary removal from school for a specified period. The length will be proportionate to the circumstances and consistent with the school's legal status and applicable requirements. A suspension must have a clear start and end date, and the school will explain when and how the pupil is expected to return.

The school will notify parents/carers as soon as practicable and in writing, giving the reason, period, arrangements during the suspension, work/education arrangements where applicable, and the process for making representations or raising a concern. The school will explain the pupil's expected return arrangements.

Where the statutory DfE suspension and exclusion guidance applies, the Headteacher and school must follow its requirements on maximum periods, notifications, representations, governing-board consideration, education provision and review. The statutory limit of 45 school days in an academic year is relevant to schools within that framework; it should not be applied to a different legal category without checking the applicable rules.

The school will make suitable arrangements for education and safeguarding during the suspension, consistent with the applicable legal framework. Staff should remain alert to risks arising from isolation, online harm, exploitation, self-neglect or loss of routine.

Permanent exclusion

Permanent exclusion will be considered only where the Headteacher concludes, after a fair investigation and consideration of the individual circumstances, that the pupil's continued attendance is incompatible with the safety or welfare of the school community or that another serious and lawful basis exists under the school's applicable framework.

The school will not impose permanent exclusion automatically because a pupil has previously been suspended, or because of one category of offence. Exceptional one-off incidents may be sufficiently serious to justify permanent exclusion, but the decision must still be individually assessed, evidence-based and proportionate.

Parents/carers will receive written notice setting out the decision, reasons, effective date, next steps, complaint/review route and any applicable statutory rights. The school will provide relevant information about the pupil's education and safeguarding arrangements, subject to lawful restrictions on disclosure.

Before removing a pupil from the school's register, the school will confirm that the applicable legal and registration requirements have been met. The school will not use permanent exclusion to avoid duties relating to SEND, safeguarding, attendance or the provision of education.

Notification, review and complaints

The school will notify parents/carers promptly and provide a clear written record of the decision and available routes to make representations or complain.

A complaint or review request will be handled by a person/body with appropriate authority who has not been improperly involved in the original decision.

Safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL/deputy or appropriate external agency; they must not wait for the outcome of a behaviour complaint.

Pupils with SEND, disabilities or other vulnerabilities

Before deciding on suspension or permanent exclusion, the school will consider whether the pupil has a disability or special educational need and whether reasonable adjustments, additional support, a revised risk assessment or a different intervention may be appropriate.

The school will consider the Equality Act 2010 and relevant SEND duties, including whether the behaviour may be connected to the pupil's needs or disability. The school will not discriminate unlawfully or penalise a pupil for behaviour that should reasonably be addressed through appropriate adjustments or support.

Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan, is looked after, has a social worker, or is otherwise vulnerable, the school will consider appropriate consultation with the local authority and relevant professionals.

Behaviour outside school

The school may respond to behaviour outside the premises or school hours where there is a sufficient connection to the school, such as behaviour on a school trip, online conduct affecting the school community, or conduct that poses a risk to pupils or staff. Any sanction must be lawful, proportionate, evidence-based and consistent with the Behaviour Policy.

The school will consider the safeguarding implications of online behaviour, including threats, bullying, harassment, image-based abuse, exploitation and other harmful conduct. Relevant concerns will be referred to the DSL and, where appropriate, external agencies.

Reintegration and support

Before a pupil returns following suspension, the school will plan appropriate reintegration arrangements. These may include:

- a return meeting with the pupil and parents/carers;
- a clear explanation of expectations and support available;
- a pastoral or behaviour support plan, behaviour card or regular check-ins where appropriate;
- communication with relevant staff and, where necessary, safeguarding or external professionals;
- reasonable adjustments and support for SEND, disability or other identified needs; and
- a review date to assess progress and whether the plan is effective.

Reintegration should support a safe return to education and reduce the likelihood of further incidents. It must not create unnecessary barriers to the pupil returning.

Recording and monitoring

The school will maintain secure records of suspensions, permanent exclusions, serious sanctions, the evidence considered, the reasons for decisions, parent/carer communications, representations, safeguarding referrals and reintegration arrangements.

Records will be accurate, proportionate and retained in accordance with the school's data-protection and retention arrangements. Safeguarding records must be handled under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and shared only where necessary and lawful.

The Proprietor and Headteacher will review exclusion data periodically to identify patterns, disproportionate impact, repeat incidents, possible discrimination, and opportunities for prevention or additional support.

Responsibilities

- Proprietor: approve and oversee the policy; ensure compliance with the school's legal framework and review arrangements.
- Headteacher: make suspension/permanent exclusion decisions; ensure fair process, written notification, accurate records and appropriate follow-up.
- DSL/deputy DSL: advise on safeguarding concerns, referrals, risk management and safe information sharing.
- Staff: report behaviour and safeguarding concerns promptly, provide factual information, and follow the Behaviour and Safeguarding Policies.
- Parents/carers and pupils: engage with school communications and follow the relevant behaviour and return-to-school arrangements.

Related legislation and guidance

This policy should be read with the current versions of:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (in force from 1 September 2026).
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, where applicable.
- Equality Act 2010 and applicable SEND legislation and guidance.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and relevant local safeguarding partnership procedures.
- Restrictive Interventions, including the Use of Reasonable Force, in Schools (effective from 1 April 2026), where relevant.

- The school's Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Safeguarding, SEND/Inclusion, Attendance, Online Safety and Complaints Policies.