

Exclusion of Students Policy

This policy deals with the policy and practice, which informs the School's use of exclusion. It is underpinned by the shared commitment of all members of the school community to achieve two important aims:

1. The first is to ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community, and to maintain an appropriate education environment in which all can learn and succeed;
2. The second is to realise the aim of reducing the need to use exclusion as a sanction.

Introduction

The decision to exclude a student will be taken in the following circumstances:

- (a) In response to a serious breach of the school's Behaviour Policy
- (b) If allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of other persons or the student him/herself in the school.

Exclusion is an extreme sanction and is only administered by the Headteacher. Exclusion, whether for a fixed term or permanent may be used for any of the following, all of which constitute examples of unacceptable conduct, and are infringements of the school's Behaviour Policy:

- Verbal abuse to staff and others (Sustained or serious)
- Verbal abuse to students (Sustained or serious)
- Physical abuse to/attack on staff
- Physical abuse to/attack on students
- Indecent behaviour
- Damage to property
- Misuse of illegal drugs
- Misuse of other substances
- Theft
- Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff
- Sexual abuse or assault
- Supplying an illegal drug
- Carrying an offensive weapon
- Arson
- Unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported and for which school sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the student's behaviour.

This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other situations where the Headteacher makes the judgement that exclusion is an appropriate sanction. At times the Headteacher will decide not to use the extreme sanction of an exclusion but will decide that a Pastoral Support Plan should be drawn up to try avoid the sanction of an exclusion in the future. This might be accompanied by an internal exclusion.

Exclusion procedure

- Most exclusions are of a fixed term nature and are of short duration (usually between one and three days). The DfE regulations allow the Headteacher to exclude a student for one or more fixed periods not exceeding 45 school days in any one school year.
- Following exclusion, parents are contacted immediately where possible. A letter will be sent, either with the child or by post, giving details of the exclusion and the date the exclusion ends.

- A return to school meeting will be held following the expiry of the fixed term exclusion and this will involve a member of the Senior Management Team and other staff where appropriate. During this meeting a Pastoral Support Plan will be drawn up, which will include a review date.
- During the course of a fixed term exclusion where the student is to be at home, parents are advised that the student is not allowed on the school premises, and that daytime supervision is their responsibility as parents/guardians.
- Records relating to exclusions will be stored confidentially.

Permanent Exclusion

The decision to exclude a student permanently is a serious one. To date, Demeter House School has never permanently excluded a student.

However, there are two main types of situation in which permanent exclusion may be considered:

1. The first is a final, formal step in a process for dealing with disciplinary offences following the use of a wide range of other strategies, which have been used without success. It is an acknowledgement that all available strategies have been exhausted and is used as a last resort. This would include persistent and defiant misbehaviour including bullying (which would include racist or homophobic bullying), refusal to follow instructions (which may have constituted a health and safety risk), repeatedly endangering themselves or others or repeated possession and/or use of an illegal drug on school premises.
2. The second is where there are exceptional circumstances and it is not appropriate to implement other strategies and where it could be appropriate to permanently exclude a student for a first or 'one off' offence. These might include:
 - Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff
 - Sexual abuse or assault
 - Supplying an illegal drug
 - Carrying an Offensive Weapon (Offensive weapons are defined in the Prevention of Crime Act 1993 as "any article made or adapted for causing injury to the person; or intended by the person having it with him for such use by him".
 - Arson
 - Behaviour which poses a significant risk to the child's own safety.

The school will involve the police for any relevant offences. These instances are not exhaustive but indicate the severity of such offences and the fact that such behaviour seriously affects the discipline and well being of the school.

General factors the school considers before making a decision to exclude:

Exclusion will be imposed instantly where there is an immediate threat to the safety of others in the school or the student concerned, or the student is causing significant damage to school property.

Before deciding whether to exclude a student either permanently or for a fixed period the Headteacher will:

Consider all the evidence available to support the allegations taking into account the Behaviour Policy, Equal Opportunity and Race Equality Policies

Allow the student to give her/his version of events

Explore the wider context, taking into consideration how much the incident may have been provoked (for example by bullying or by racial or sexual harassment).

If the Headteacher is satisfied that on the balance of probabilities the student did what he/she is alleged to have done, then exclusion will be the outcome.