



Exclusion Policy

Statutory policy for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion

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Applies to	All Trust schools, all Trust staff, Trust Board, Local School Committees, independent review panel members, independent review panel clerks, and individuals appointed as SEN experts.

Version	Date	Reason
1.0	January 2020	To establish a trust wide policy
1.1	March 2021	To review and ensure legal compliance
1.2	March 2022	To review and include the term 'suspension' within the definition of 'exclusion'
2.0	September 2022	To adopt Browne Jacobson's approved policy.
2.1	September 2023	To include updates to DfE guidance
2.2	September 2024	To include technical updates to reflect the School Attendance (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and annual review.
2.3	September 2025	To include Initio Learning Trust's procedures for direction off-site and managed moves and annual review
2.4	July 2026	To reflect the DfE changes to statutory guidance

In this policy:

‘The Trust’ means Initio Learning Trust.

‘School’ means a school (academy) in Initio Learning Trust.

‘Trustee’ means a Trustee of the Trust and member of the Board of Trustees, which is the legal governing board of the Trust; a Trustee is also a Director of the Trust.

‘Local School Committee’ and ‘LSC’ means a local school committee that is a committee of the Board.

‘Governing board’ means any panel / board made up of LSC members or trustees.

‘Headteacher’ can mean the head of school or executive headteacher of the school.

‘CEO’ means the chief executive officer of the Trust (or an executive officer to whom they have delegated specific authority to act on their behalf).

‘Parent’ for the purposes of the Education Acts is broadly drawn. In addition to the child's birth parents, references to parents in this guidance include any person who has parental responsibility (which includes the local authority where it has a care order in respect of the child) and any person (for example, a foster carer) with whom the child lives. Where practicable, all those with parental responsibility should be involved in the exclusions process.

‘Academic year’ means a school's academic year beginning with the first day of school after 31 July and ending with the first day of school after the following 31 July.

The term ‘must’ refers to what head teachers/local school committees/academy trusts/local authorities and parents are required to do by law.

The term ‘should’ refers to recommendations for good practice.

Contents

1	Introduction.	4
2	Application of policy.	4
3	Types of exclusion.	4
4	Roles and responsibilities.	4
5	CCTV, witness evidence and pupil views.	6
6	Reintegration strategy meetings following suspension or off-site direction.	6
7	Cancelling a suspension or exclusion.	7
8	Suspensions before a permanent exclusion.	7
9	Directing off-site and managed moves.	7
10	Independent review panels (IRPs).	7
11	Reconsideration by the local school committee.	8
12	Remote Meetings.	8
13	Complaints.	8
14	Equality impact.	8
15	Monitoring arrangements.	8

1 Introduction

1.1 Initio Learning Trust's exclusion policy aims to set out the process that will be followed and the additional considerations around suspensions and exclusions that our schools will apply. Good behaviour and self-discipline lead to effective learning and help prepare children and young people for life beyond the school gate.

1.2 Where the Trust's approaches towards behaviour management have been exhausted, then suspensions and permanent exclusions will sometimes be necessary as a last resort. This is to ensure that other pupils and teaching staff are protected from disruption and can learn in safe, calm, and supportive environments.

1.3 The Trust will always have regard to the Statutory Guidance on Suspensions and Exclusions when making decisions on suspensions and exclusions and will follow the law, as set out in the relevant School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulation 2012 (as amended); the Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011; the Education and Inspections Act 2006; the Education Act 1996 and the Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended by the Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 and as modified and amended by the Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) (Application to Academies and Pupil Referral Units and Minor Amendments) Regulations 2026.

1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the behaviour policy and the SEND policy for the school.

2 Application of policy

2.1 This policy applies to all members of the Trust community. Each school within the Trust will apply suspensions and exclusions in accordance with this policy and ensure that its contents are relayed to all staff, parents and pupils.

3 Types of exclusion

Suspensions and permanent exclusions are different (*the term 'exclude' throughout this document means suspend and permanently exclude unless clearly stated otherwise*):

3.1 Suspensions (previously called fixed-term exclusions) are where a pupil is prevented from attending the school for a fixed period. At the end of the period, they are expected to return to school following a reintegration meeting. A pupil may receive a maximum of 45 days of suspension in an academic year. A suspension does not need to have to be for a continuous period; suspending a pupil for a short period of time, such as half a day, is permissible but the formal suspension process must still be followed. The law does not allow for a suspension to be extended or converted into a permanent exclusion.

3.2 Permanent exclusions are where, subject to a decision of the local school committee to reinstate the pupil to the school, the pupil is prevented from attending the school again. A decision to permanently exclude will only be taken in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy, **and** where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others, such as staff or pupils, in the school.

3.3 Telling or forcing a pupil to leave school, or not allowing them to attend school for disciplinary reasons, is a suspension (if temporary) or permanent exclusion (if permanent). Whenever a pupil is made to leave school, or forbidden from attending school, on disciplinary grounds, this must be done in accordance with the School

Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012 and with regard to relevant parts of Department for Education guidance and must be formally recorded.

4 Roles and responsibilities

All members of the Trust community are expected to follow this policy. Roles, responsibilities and expectations of each section of the Trust community are set out in detail below.

4.1 The Headteacher

All decisions to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil will be taken by the headteacher after considering all the circumstances and apply the civil standard of proof i.e. 'on the balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that a fact is true, rather the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'. Every decision made will be made in line with the principles of administrative law i.e. that it is lawful, reasonable, fair and that it is proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour with reference to the Trust's behaviour policy and the school's behaviour guidance. The headteacher will take the pupil's views into account, taking into consideration their age and understanding, before deciding to exclude. The headteacher will ensure that reasonable steps are taken for work to be set and marked for the first five days where the pupil will not be attending alternative provision. The headteacher will also ensure that parents and, if relevant, the pupil's social worker and / or virtual school head are informed without delay and in line with the relevant guidance.

The headteacher should also adopt a reliable method for monitoring the maximum 45 days permitted in a school year out of school due to an exclusion, including suspension received from other schools as well as ensuring a formal process for arranging, at short notice, suitable full-time alternative education for pupils receiving suspensions over five school days.

4.1.1 Safeguarding

The school has a statutory duty to make arrangements for safeguarding and to promote the welfare of their pupils and are required to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education and must have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education. Furthermore, schools have a statutory duty to cooperate with safeguarding partners.

If there is an ongoing safeguarding investigation (whether that includes a criminal investigation or not) that may result in the permanent exclusion of a pupil or if a pupil has been reinstated following a governing board review, it is likely that there will be complex and difficult decisions that need to be made. It is important that these decisions are made alongside a school's duty to safeguard and support children and their duty to provide an education.

The headteacher need not postpone taking a decision on a suspension and permanent exclusion solely because a police investigation is underway and/or any criminal proceedings may be brought. In such circumstances, the headteacher will need to take a decision on the evidence available to them at the time. In all cases, schools should follow general safeguarding principles as found in KCSiE. Where the evidence is limited by a police investigation or criminal proceedings, the headteacher should consider any additional steps they may need to take to ensure that the decision to suspend or permanently exclude is fair. The final decision on whether to suspend or permanently exclude is for the headteacher to make

4.2 Separation of pupils for safeguarding purposes

In certain circumstances, a school can temporarily forbid a pupil from attending its premises, for example, due to an allegation of harm by one pupil against another which might require physically separating a pupil from one or other pupils. In this scenario, the local authority must arrange education for the pupil if the school itself or the pupil's parent does not do so. This is not an exclusion on disciplinary grounds.

The school should inform parents of the reason why the pupil has been temporarily forbidden from attending its premises and in conjunction with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). The LSC should also be notified without delay and ensure this is used for rare circumstances and only when separating pupils is essential and cannot practicably be done in a way that lets one or more pupils remain on school premises.

It is important to note that in physically separating a pupil from one or more other pupils schools must specifically consider their duties under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010 and the Keeping children safe in education guidance. The public law principles of acting reasonably, rationally and in a procedurally fair manner must also be followed. Schools have a pivotal role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Safeguarding partners have a shared and equal duty to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Working Together to Safeguard Children is very clear that all schools (including those in multi-academy trusts) in the local area should be fully engaged, involved, and included in safeguarding arrangements. Ultimately, any decisions, including to temporarily forbid a pupil from attending its premises for safeguarding reasons, are for the school to make on a case-by-case basis, with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) taking a lead role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the police as required.

KCSIE provides schools with robust information on managing reports of child-on-child sexual violence and harassment, sets out the legal duties placed on schools and also provides advice on a whole school approach to preventing sexual violence and sexual harassment: "When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis." As always when concerned about the welfare of a child, the best interests of the child should come first. In all cases, schools should follow general safeguarding principles as set out in KCSIE.

4.2 The LSC

The LSC for the school is responsible for forming committees to review exclusions and suspensions when it is required to do so, it is requested by parents, or it is, in its view, prudent to review an individual decision. In each case, the scheme of delegation will be followed to ensure an appropriate committee is assembled in line with timelines published in the statutory guidance. The decision of the relevant committee will be to decide whether to uphold the exclusion or suspension, or instead to reinstate the pupil to the school.

4.3 Parents

Parents will be informed without delay of any suspension or exclusion, the reasons for the suspension or exclusion and that there is an ability to make representations in regard to any suspension or exclusion decision. Details will be provided on the rights parents have with every letter that is sent from the headteacher.

4.4 Pupils

All pupils of the schools in the Trust are expected to follow the expectations regarding their behaviour to ensure that all pupils can learn and participate in school life effectively. Where those expectations are breached, the behaviour policy will apply. These expectations are found in the school's behaviour guidance and will be explicitly taught through the trust's behaviour curriculum

5 CCTV, witness evidence and pupil views

5.1 The Trust uses Close Circuit Television (CCTV) within some of its premises. This is to provide a safe and secure environment for pupils, staff and visitors. If behavioural incidents are recorded on CCTV, the footage may be viewed as part of the investigation and the content considered before imposing a sanction. If CCTV is relied upon for a decision on a suspension or exclusion, then it will be shown in some format (redacted as necessary) at any LSC review meeting. Please see the Trust's CCTV policy and privacy notices for more information.

5.2 Where witness evidence is relied upon, whether that be from a pupil or a staff member, the statement(s) will be provided at any governing board meeting. All statements will be signed and dated unless the headteacher has good reason to protect the anonymity of the relevant witness. Reasons may include threats of reprisals.

5.3 Before taking a decision to suspend or exclude and where appropriate, the headteacher will take the pupil's views into account, considering these in light of their age and understanding, and inform the pupil about how their views have been factored into any decision made. Where relevant, the pupil will be given support to express their view, including through advocates such as parents or, if the pupil has one, a social worker. The headteacher will also take account of any contributing factors identified after an incident of misbehaviour has occurred.

6 Reintegration strategy meetings following suspension, off-site direction, cancelled permanent exclusion or separation for safeguarding purposes

6.1 Where a pupil is suspended or is directed to be educated off-site, upon return to the school both the pupil and parents will be invited to a reintegration strategy meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Support the pupil to reintegrate successfully into school life and full-time education following a suspension, off-site direction, cancelled permanent exclusion or separation for safeguarding purposes.
- offer the pupil a fresh start;
- help them understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others;
- teach them to how meet the high expectations of behaviour in line with the school culture;
- foster a renewed sense of belonging within the school community; and
- build engagement with learning,

so that further periods away from school are not needed.

School staff will work with the pupil to understand what led to the behaviour and to establish if any changes can be made or further support implemented from a pastoral or practical perspective that might reduce the chance of repeat behaviours. Previous behaviour is not seen as an obstacle to future success.

6.2 The school uses various measures to support a pupil's successful reintegration which may include:

- regular contact with a designated staff member in school;
- use of a report card with personalised targets leading to personalised rewards;
- ensuring the pupil receives academic support upon return to catch up on any lost progress;
- planned pastoral interventions;
- mentoring by a trusted adult or a local mentoring charity;
- the use of a pastoral support plan
- regular reviews with the pupil and parents to praise progress being made and raise and address any concerns at an early stage; and
- informing the pupil, parents and staff of potential external support

Any strategies or provisions put in place should be regularly reviewed and adapted, where necessary, in collaboration with the pupil, parents and other relevant parties.

6.3 Whilst reintegration meetings are highly encouraged, pupils will not be prevented from being admitted to the school or being put in mainstream classes because a meeting has not taken place.

7 Cancelling a suspension or exclusion

7.1 The headteacher can cancel any suspension or exclusion that has already begun (or one that has not yet begun), but this can only happen when the governing board has not yet met to consider whether the pupil should be reinstated. A permanent exclusion cannot be cancelled if the pupil has already been excluded for more than 45 school days in a school year or if they will have been so by the time the cancellation takes effect.

7.2 Where an exclusion is cancelled the headteacher must notify the parents, the governing board, the LA and the pupil's social worker and VSH as applicable, without delay. The notification must also provide the reason for the cancellation. The governing board's duty to consider reinstatement ceases, and there is no requirement to hold a meeting to consider reinstatement.

7.3 In this instance, parents (or the excluded pupil if they are 18 years or older) should be offered the opportunity to meet the headteacher to discuss the circumstances that led to the exclusion being cancelled, which should be arranged without delay.

7.4 The pupil must be allowed back into the school from which they were excluded without delay and any days spent out of school as a result of any exclusion, prior to the cancellation will count towards the maximum of 45 school days permitted in any school year.

8 Suspensions before a permanent exclusion

8.1 A suspension **cannot** be converted into a permanent exclusion and so any subsequent permanent exclusion would be a fresh decision due to commence immediately after the suspension had ended. Exceptional circumstances may include where further evidence has come to light, or where the incident was serious and time is required to fully investigate the circumstances and consider alternatives.

9 Directing off-site and managed moves

9.1 Before taking any decision to permanently exclude a pupil, the headteacher will consider whether an off-site direction or a managed move as part of a planned intervention would be a reasonable alternative that should be considered.

9.2 In the case of directing a pupil off-site to alternative provision, including another mainstream school, the aim of any direction is for it to be used as a short-term measure as part of the school's behaviour management strategy to improve a pupil's behaviour where in-school interventions and/or outreach have been unsuccessful or are deemed inappropriate. While parental consent is not needed, discussions would normally take place with parents to feed in their views about the options.

9.3 Depending on the individual needs and circumstances of the pupil, off-site direction into alternative provision, including other mainstream settings, can be full-time or a combination of part-time support in alternative provision and continued mainstream education. A proposed maximum period of time should be discussed and agreed upon as part of the planning phase for an off-site direction. As part of planning, alternative options should be considered once the time limit has been reached, including a managed move on a permanent basis (if a pupil is placed in a mainstream school) upon review of the time limited placement.

9.4 The governing board and the school must comply with the Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) (Application to Academies and Pupil Referral Units and Minor Amendments) Regulations 2026 and must have regard to the. Arranging Alternative Provision: A Guide for Local Authorities and Schools.

9.5 All schools follow Initio Learning Trust's procedures when using direction off-site which conforms to that which is set out in the DfE guidance 'Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement; Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, July, 2026.

9.6 A managed move is used to initiate a process which leads to a permanent transfer of a pupil to another school.

9.7 For a managed move to take place there needs to be agreement between the School, the parents and the new school that a managed move should occur. As such, a managed move is voluntary and offered as part of a planned intervention. The Trust also recommends that the school gains the agreement of the relevant person in the Local Authority such as the Inclusion Lead for the locality.

9.8 The law does not allow for trail admissions or a trail managed move. If a temporary move need to occur to improve a pupil's behaviour, off-site direction should be used,

9.9 Where a pupil has an EHC plan, the school must contact the local authority prior to the managed move. The local authority will be responsible for amending the EHCP.

9.10 Trust schools will share all relevant information with the new school, including evidence that appropriate initial intervention has been carried out, including, where relevant, multi-agency support or statutory assessments.

9.11 The school will work closely with the local authority, the family, the pupil and the new school to ensure a thorough plan is in place to offer the pupil the greatest chance of success at the new school; this can include a period of direction off-site. All schools follow Initio Learning Trust's procedures when using managed moves.

10 Independent review panels (IRPs)

10.1 The Trust arranges its own IRPs, and requests for an IRP where a permanent exclusion has been upheld by the disciplinary review committee should be made to the named person on the decision letter within 15 school days.

10.2 Further details on the role and powers of IRPs can be found in Part Nine of the Statutory Guidance on Exclusions and Suspensions.

11 Reconsideration by the LSC

11.1 Where an IRP directs or recommends that the disciplinary committee reconsider whether a pupil should be reinstated, the disciplinary committee must reconvene to do so within ten school days of being given notice of the panel's decision. This may involve a rehearing with oral evidence given by the School and parents or may be a reconsideration with only the committee members and the clerk present.

12 Remote Meetings

12.1 All meetings will be face to face, however, any disciplinary committee meeting and/or an IRP meeting may be conducted remotely where the parents request for it to be conducted remotely and the meeting can be fairly held remotely, with all participants having access and are able to make representations. This should not be a default option. A meeting may also take place remotely where there is an extraordinary event or unforeseen circumstance that means it is not reasonably practicable to hold the meeting in person. Such events can include, but are not limited to, floods, fire, and an outbreak of an infectious disease. Due regard will be given to the statutory guidance when conducting meetings remotely.

12.2 In addition, where a child's social worker or the virtual school head are due to attend a meeting, they may join an in-person meeting remotely as long as it can be fairly accessed, the technology is available, and all relevant persons would be able to make representations.

12.3 If there are technological or internet network issues, during a meeting held via the use of remote access which compromises the ability for participants to be seen or heard or prevents the meeting from being held fairly and transparently and it is not reasonably practicable to resolve, a face to face meeting must be arranged by the governing board or arranging authority, despite the parent's request. This should be done without delay.

12.4 Where a governing board or an arranging authority has safeguarding concerns in agreeing to a parent's request for a remote meeting as a result of any risk assessment they have undertaken, they can, in such circumstances, refuse to hold a meeting through the use of remote access if, as a result of the safeguarding concern, a remote meeting will not fully enable the participants to take part or cannot be held fairly and transparently. The meeting should be held face to face instead.

13 Complaints

If parents have any concerns or complaints over the application or implementation of this policy or feels that they are being pressured into a managed move or to electively home educate their child, they should raise their concerns with a staff member or the headteacher in accordance with the Trust's complaints policy. If the concern relates to an exclusion, the statutory procedure set out in the Statutory Guidance on Exclusions and Suspensions will be followed.

14 Equality impact

14.1 The Trust does all it can to ensure that its policies do not discriminate against pupils or others, either directly or indirectly, in line with any Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics. This includes age, disability,

gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation

14.2 Schools and governing boards will have due regard to the longstanding national trends which show that particular groups of children are more likely to be excluded from school. It is important that the school works with outside agencies to understand what lies behind local trends.

14.3 Schools must make reasonable adjustments for pupils who have disabilities, including those with special educational needs. This includes any support in relation to behaviour management that they may need because of their SEN.

14.4 Schools will engage proactively with parents in supporting the behaviour of pupils with additional needs. Where relevant, the school, in partnership with others, will consider what additional support or alternative placement may be needed. This will involve the suitability of provision for a pupil's SEN or disability.

14.5 Where a pupil has an EHC plan, schools will contact the local authority about any behavioural concerns at an early stage and consider requesting an early annual review prior to making the decision to suspend or permanently exclude. For those with SEN but without an EHC plan, the school should review, with external specialists as appropriate, whether the current support arrangements are appropriate and what changes may be required. This may provide a point for schools to request an EHC assessment or a review of the pupil's current package of support.

14.6 Where a pupil has a social worker, headteachers should balance the importance of education being a protective factor with the need to ensure a calm and safe environment for all pupils and staff. Where a pupil has a social worker and they are at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the headteacher should inform the social worker, the DSL and the pupil's parents to involve them all as early as possible in relevant conversations, including any potential off-site direction or managed moves. .

14.7 Where a looked-after child is likely to be subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion, the Designated Teacher should contact the local authority's VSH as soon as possible. The DT should seek the advice of the VSH and consider what additional assessment and support need to be put in place to help the school address the factors affecting the child's behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion. This should include how the school is using Pupil Premium Plus, and consideration should be given to how effectively the current Personal Education Plan (PEP) is being implemented and whether an interim PEP review needs to be called. Where relevant, the school should also engage with a child's social worker, foster carers, or children's home workers. This also applies to those pupils who are previously looked-after.

15 Monitoring arrangements

15.1 The LSC and trustees review and routinely challenge and evaluate the data relating to suspensions and exclusions and pupil movement to ensure that the use of suspensions and exclusions is appropriate. The following are monitored by the LSC to ensure the processes and support for pupils are appropriate:

- the levels and characteristics of pupils leaving the school
- effectiveness and consistency in implementing the school's behaviour policy
- the school register and absence codes
- instances where pupils receive repeat suspensions
- interventions in place to support pupils at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion
- any variations in the rolling average of permanent exclusions to understand why this is happening, and to ensure they are only used when necessary

- timing of moves and permanent exclusions, and whether there are any patterns, including any indications which may highlight where policies or support are not working
- understanding the characteristics of excluded pupils, and why this is taking place
- whether the placements of pupils directed off-site or the separate arrangements made to keep pupils apart for safeguarding purposes are reviewed at sufficient intervals to assure that the education is achieving its objectives and that pupils are benefiting from it
- understanding and making use of performance data in the following areas to hold school leaders to account and to make informed decisions:
 - pupil numbers, attendance, and exclusions
 - attainment and progress
 - curriculum planning and class sizes
 - financial management and governance
 - quality assurance
 - safeguarding and well-being
 - the school community, including staff, pupils, parents, and the governing board
- building an evidence base from the most recent and accessible data to identify successes and root causes of problems
- using data to benchmark and analyse trends to improve educational and financial outcomes.
- the full-time educational provision for pupils of compulsory school age from the sixth consecutive school day of a suspension, in particular checking the provision is suitable and quality-assured to ensure that:
 - any previous placements have been evaluated, including support for any applicable SEND;
 - the pupil's child protection file and any other information relevant to the pupil's safeguarding and welfare has been securely transferred to their new setting as early as possible;
- whether Personal Education Plans for looked after children have been reviewed on a termly basis.