



St Mary's CE Primary

Suspensions and Exclusions Policy

"Live, Love and Learn together in the Light of the Life of Christ"

Rooted in Ephesians 5:8–11, 13–14

1. Introduction

St Mary's CE Primary School is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, inclusive and **actively anti-racist** environment rooted in our Christian vision. We recognise that nationally, suspensions and exclusions can disproportionately affect pupils from Black and minoritised ethnic backgrounds, pupils with SEND, and pupils facing structural disadvantage.

At St Mary's, suspension or permanent exclusion is used **only as a last resort**, once all appropriate preventative, relational and restorative strategies have been exhausted, or when a serious incident requires an immediate response to protect the safety and welfare of the school community.

This policy aligns with the Department for Education statutory guidance Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (effective from 26 July 2026). and the following legislation:

- Education Act 2002 (as amended by the Education Act 2011)
- School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended), including subsequent amendments relating to educational provision and off-site direction

2. Decision-Making Authority

Only the **Headteacher** may authorise a suspension or permanent exclusion. In the Headteacher's absence, this responsibility may be delegated to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

All decisions will be made through an **anti-racist, bias-aware lens**, ensuring that no pupil is disadvantaged due to race, ethnicity, culture, language, SEND, or socio-economic background.

3. Principles

St Mary's will always ensure that:

- Decisions are **lawful, reasonable, fair and free from bias**.
- The **civil standard of proof** ("on the balance of probabilities") is applied.

- The pupil's **context, identity, lived experience, SEND profile and safeguarding history** are considered.
- Staff reflect on and challenge any **unconscious bias** that may influence decision-making.
- Parents/carers are informed **promptly, respectfully and accessibly**, with interpreters provided where needed.
- The child is supported to **reintegrate successfully**, with a focus on restoring relationships and reducing future risk.
- Exclusion is **never used informally, unofficially or as a substitute for support**.
- Data on suspensions and exclusions is monitored for **racial disproportionality** and acted upon.

St Mary's does not use informal or unofficial exclusions under any circumstances. These practices are unlawful and undermine our commitment to fairness and transparency. Staff are expected to apply a consistent, relational and anti-racist approach to behaviour, recognising that identity, lived experience, SEND and contextual factors may influence how behaviour is expressed and interpreted. Pupils may be supported by an advocate during discussions or investigations to ensure their voice is heard clearly and safely.

4. Anti-Racist Approach to Suspensions and Exclusions

St Mary's is committed to an explicitly anti-racist approach to behaviour, suspension and exclusion. We recognise the national evidence that pupils from Black and minoritised ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately affected by suspensions and exclusions, and we take proactive steps to ensure that no pupil is disadvantaged because of race, ethnicity, culture or language. All decisions are reviewed through a bias-aware, equity-focused lens, and staff are expected to reflect on and challenge any assumptions that may influence judgement. Behaviour and exclusion data is routinely analysed for patterns relating to ethnicity, SEND, gender and vulnerability. Where disproportionality is identified, leaders take immediate action to understand the causes and address them. This approach aligns with Brent's Anti-Racist Framework and our Christian vision of dignity, justice and belonging for every child.

5. Preventative Duties and Graduated Response

St Mary's prioritises prevention, early intervention and relational practice to reduce the need for suspension or exclusion. Leaders ensure that pupils receive timely, appropriate and equitable support before any consideration of exclusion. Staff use a graduated response, recognising that behaviour may reflect unmet need, safeguarding concerns, SEND, trauma, identity-based stress or contextual factors. Support may include reasonable adjustments, pastoral intervention, targeted mentoring, therapeutic input, curriculum adaptation, family support or referrals to external agencies. Exclusion will never be used as a response to unmet need, lack of assessment or insufficient provision. Decisions will always consider whether earlier intervention could have prevented escalation.

6. Grounds for Suspension

A suspension may be issued for:

- A **serious breach** of the Behaviour Policy
- Persistent breaches where previous interventions have not led to improvement
- Behaviour that **seriously harms the education or welfare** of the pupil or others

Suspensions may be:

- **Fixed-term (suspension)**
- **Lunchtime suspensions** (counted as half a day)
- **Internal suspensions** where appropriate and proportionate

When determining the length of a suspension, the Headteacher will consider:

- The severity of the incident
- The pupil's previous behaviour record
- Any **racial, cultural or SEND factors** relevant to the incident
- Whether earlier intervention could have prevented escalation

When considering a suspension, leaders will always review whether preventative strategies, reasonable adjustments or earlier interventions could have prevented escalation. Decisions will be reviewed through an anti-racist and bias-aware lens, ensuring that no pupil is disproportionately affected because of race, ethnicity, culture, language, SEND or socioeconomic background. Any suspension must be proportionate, evidence-based and accompanied by clear plans for reintegration and support.

7. Grounds for Permanent Exclusion

A permanent exclusion will only be considered when:

- There has been a **serious breach** or **persistent breaches** of the Behaviour Policy **and**
- Allowing the pupil to remain in school would **seriously harm the education or welfare** of the pupil or others

Permanent exclusion may also be considered for:

- Serious violence or threats of violence
- Sexual misconduct
- Possession, supply or use of prohibited items
- Significant or repeated discriminatory behaviour
- Deliberate damage to property or arson
- Persistent disruptive behaviour that undermines safety or learning

Before considering permanent exclusion, leaders will review whether:

- There is evidence of **racial bias or disproportionality**
- The pupil's needs have been appropriately assessed
- Reasonable adjustments have been made

- Early help, pastoral or therapeutic support has been exhausted

Before considering permanent exclusion, leaders will review whether all reasonable adjustments, assessments, interventions and support pathways have been exhausted, including early help, pastoral support, therapeutic input and multi-agency involvement. Leaders will also review behaviour and exclusion data to ensure that the decision does not reflect racial or SEND-related disproportionality. Permanent exclusion will only be used when it is the only proportionate response to ensure the safety and welfare of the school community.

8. Investigations

Before making a decision, the Headteacher will:

- Conduct a **fair, thorough and unbiased investigation**
- Ensure the pupil's **voice is heard**, with culturally sensitive support where needed
- Review relevant **SEND, safeguarding, pastoral and contextual information**
- Consult staff involved in the incident
- Consider whether **reasonable adjustments**, trauma-informed approaches or early help interventions are required
- Ensure that any decision is **proportionate and equitable**

Pupils will be offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a trusted adult or advocate during the investigation process. Investigations will consider contextual safeguarding factors, including community influences, peer dynamics, identity-based bullying, discrimination or trauma. Staff involved in investigations are expected to reflect on potential bias and ensure that questioning is culturally sensitive, developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed.

9. Off-Site Direction (DfE 2023)

In line with DfE statutory guidance (2023), the Headteacher may direct a pupil off-site for a time-limited period to improve behaviour. This will only occur where it is in the pupil's best interests, with clear objectives, regular review, parental engagement and safeguarding oversight. In implementing an off-site direction, the school will ensure that appropriate written notification is provided, information is shared with the receiving setting, the pupil's views are considered, and parents/carers are involved throughout the process. Off-site direction will never be used as an informal exclusion.

10. Managed Moves

A managed move may be considered as part of a supportive, planned intervention to give a pupil a fresh start. Managed moves must be voluntary, agreed by all parties, time-limited, reviewed regularly and supported by a clear plan. They will never be used as an alternative to permanent exclusion without full consultation.

11. Informing Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will be notified **without delay**, ideally by phone and always in writing. Communication will be:

- Respectful
- Accessible
- Culturally sensitive
- Supported by translation or interpretation where required

Written notification will include:

- The reason(s) for the suspension/exclusion
- The length of the suspension (if applicable)
- The right to make representations to the Governing Board
- Arrangements for education during the suspension
- The date and time of the reintegration meeting

Communication with parents/carers will be culturally sensitive and accessible, recognising that families may have differing experiences of education, authority or exclusion. Where appropriate, the school will work with community partners, interpreters or advocates to ensure that parents/carers fully understand the decision, their rights and the next steps. Parents/carers will be offered the opportunity to share contextual information, including cultural, SEND or safeguarding factors, that may be relevant to the incident.

12. Education During Suspension

- For suspensions of **up to 5 school days**, school will provide meaningful work for the pupil to complete at home.
- From **day 6**, the Local Authority (for permanent exclusions) or the school (for suspensions over 5 days) will arrange full-time education.
- Provision will be **equitable, accessible and culturally appropriate**.

13. Reintegration Meetings

Following a suspension, a reintegration meeting will be held with:

- The pupil
- Parents/carers
- A senior leader

The purpose is to:

- Review the incident
- Restore relationships
- Agree expectations and support
- Put in place a **Reintegration Plan**
- Identify any **racial, cultural or SEND factors** that may have contributed
- Ensure the pupil feels **safe, valued and welcomed back**

14. Governing Board Responsibilities

The Governing Board will:

- Review permanent exclusions
- Review suspensions where required by law
- Consider parental representations
- Ensure decisions are **fair, consistent, anti-racist and compliant** with statutory guidance
- Monitor patterns of exclusion for **disproportionality** and hold leaders to account

15. Equality, Anti-Racism and SEND Considerations

St Mary's will ensure that:

- Pupils are not discriminated against on the basis of **race, ethnicity, culture, language, SEND, gender or socio-economic status**
- Reasonable adjustments are made
- Behaviour is understood within the context of **need, identity and lived experience**
- Exclusion is not used for unmet SEND needs or lack of provision
- Data is analysed for **racial disparities**, and actions are taken to address them

16. Recording and Monitoring

All suspensions and exclusions will be:

- Recorded on the school MIS
- Reported to the Local Authority
- Reported termly to Governors
- Monitored for patterns relating to **SEND, ethnicity, gender, vulnerability and disproportionality**
- Reviewed to ensure decisions remain **equitable and bias-aware**

17. Safeguarding

Where necessary to safeguard pupils, the school may temporarily separate a pupil from others. This is not a disciplinary suspension and will only be used where lawful, proportionate and in accordance with safeguarding, equality and human rights duties.

Where a pupil at risk of exclusion is known to social care, the DSL will:

- Inform the allocated social worker
- Consider whether the behaviour indicates **unmet need, harm or contextual safeguarding concerns**
- Ensure safeguarding considerations inform decision-making
- Ensure that exclusion does not increase vulnerability or risk

The school recognises that children with a social worker face greater risk of exclusion. Decisions will always consider the child's wider context, multi-agency involvement and the potential impact on safety and stability.

Approved by Governing Body:

Date: September 2026

Review cycle: Annual (sooner if guidance changes)

Next review due: September 2027