



Cornerstone Academy Trust

Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy

Trust-wide policy for all parents and adults working for or on behalf of the Trust

Policy owner	Designated Trust Safeguarding Lead and Executive Headteacher
Approval body	Education Committee
Updated	October 2026
Review cycle	Annual, or earlier following a change in law or guidance
Next review	Autumn Term 2027 or earlier if legislation, statutory guidance or technology materially changes
Applies to	All schools and operations of Cornerstone Academy Trust

This policy outlines the handling of suspensions and permanent exclusions across the Cornerstone Academy Trust.

1. Purpose and status

Cornerstone Academy Trust is committed to safe, calm, supportive and inclusive learning environments in which all pupils can learn and thrive. High expectations, early intervention, effective behaviour management and appropriate pastoral, safeguarding and special educational needs support should reduce the need for suspension and permanent exclusion.

This policy sets out the Trust framework for disciplinary suspension, permanent exclusion and related pupil movement. Permanent exclusion is a last resort and may only be used where the statutory test is met.

The Trust will have regard to the Department for Education statutory guidance “Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement”, July 2026, and any subsequent replacement or amendment.

2. Legal and guidance framework

This policy is informed by the [Education Act 1996](#); [Education Act 2002](#); [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#); [Equality Act 2010](#); [Children and Families Act 2014](#); [School Discipline \(Pupil Exclusions and Reviews\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#), as amended; [Education \(Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#), as amended; and [Education \(Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour\) \(Application to Academies and Pupil Referral Units and Minor Amendments\) Regulations 2026](#).

It should be read alongside the Trust Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, SEND Policy and SEND Information Reports, Equality information and objectives, Accessibility Plans, Attendance Policy and Complaints Policy, together with current DfE guidance including [Behaviour in Schools](#), [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), [Working together to improve school attendance](#), [Mental health and behaviour in schools](#) and the [SEND Code of Practice](#).

3. Scope and terminology

This policy applies to pupils attending academies within Cornerstone Academy Trust.

“Suspension” means an exclusion for a fixed period. “Permanent exclusion” means an exclusion under which the pupil will cease to be a member of the school unless subsequently reinstated. Both are disciplinary exclusions. Non-disciplinary absence from premises, including safeguarding separation, is dealt with separately below.

“Headteacher” in this policy means the individual holding the statutory Headteacher which for the Cornerstone Academy Trust is the Executive Headteacher, or a person lawfully acting in that capacity.

4. Core principles

All decisions will be lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate and will take account of the individual circumstances. The Trust will consider pupil voice, safeguarding, SEND, disability, reasonable adjustments, pastoral needs and relevant support before and during decision-making.

The Trust will not use informal exclusion, off-rolling, pressure to accept a managed move or elective home education as a substitute for the statutory process. A part-time timetable will not be used to manage behaviour or as an alternative to suspension.

5. Authority to suspend or permanently exclude

Only the Headteacher may suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. The statutory power will not be informally delegated to another member of staff.

6. Suspension

A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods but must not be suspended for more than 45 school days in total in a single academic year.

Reaching 45 school days does not automatically result in permanent exclusion. Any decision to permanently exclude is a separate decision and must independently satisfy the statutory test.

7. Permanent exclusion

A decision to permanently exclude will only be taken in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school Behaviour Policy and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

Permanent exclusion will be used only as a last resort. The Trust will not operate a blanket “no exclusion” policy.

8. Decision-making

Before deciding to suspend or permanently exclude, the Headteacher will establish the facts on the balance of probabilities and consider relevant evidence, the pupil’s account, contributing circumstances, previous interventions, safeguarding matters, SEND, disability, reasonable adjustments, mental health or pastoral needs, social care involvement and whether an alternative intervention is appropriate.

Where an incident is also subject to police or criminal proceedings, the school will make its own decision on information lawfully available while taking appropriate advice and avoiding prejudice to external proceedings.

9. SEND, disability and equality

The Trust will comply with the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice. It will consider whether behaviour is connected with SEND or disability, whether appropriate provision is in place and whether reasonable adjustments are required.

The Trust will not discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil because of a protected characteristic and will monitor exclusion information for disproportionate patterns.

10. Pupil voice and evidence

The pupil will ordinarily be given a reasonable opportunity to provide an account before a decision is made, taking account of age, understanding and circumstances. Appropriate support may be provided by a parent, social worker, SENCO, advocate or trusted adult.

The Trust may consider relevant witness statements, CCTV and other lawful evidence. Evidence relied upon for governing board consideration will be made available as required, subject to safeguarding, data protection and confidentiality. Witness anonymity may be protected where justified, while preserving procedural fairness.

11. Notification following exclusion

Parents will be informed without delay of a suspension or permanent exclusion and will receive the information required by the statutory framework, including the reason, duration where applicable, representation and review rights, education arrangements and sources of advice.

The Headteacher will also notify the local authority without delay regardless of the length of suspension. Where the pupil has a social worker and/or is looked after, the social worker and/or Virtual School Head will also be notified without delay, as applicable. The Trustee board will be notified as required by the statutory framework.

12. Education during suspension and after permanent exclusion

The school will take reasonable steps to set and mark work during the initial period of suspension.

Where a pupil of compulsory school age is suspended for more than five school days, suitable full-time education will be arranged to begin no later than the sixth school day, in accordance with the applicable statutory requirements. Following permanent exclusion, the relevant local authority is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education from the sixth school day. Earlier provision will be considered where appropriate.

13. Reintegration

Following suspension, off-site direction or safeguarding separation, the school will plan appropriate reintegration. Support may include a designated adult, academic catch-up, pastoral or SEND intervention, reasonable adjustments, mentoring, external-agency involvement and review with the pupil and parents.

A pupil will not be prevented from returning because a parent has not attended a reintegration meeting. Any part-time timetable lawfully used for another reason will be for the shortest period necessary and directed towards return to full-time education.

14. Cancelling an exclusion

The Headteacher may cancel an exclusion only before the Trustee board has met to consider whether the pupil should be reinstated and subject to the statutory restrictions. The parent, Trustee board and local authority will be notified without delay, together with the social worker and Virtual School Head where applicable.

Parents will be offered an opportunity to meet the Headteacher to discuss the circumstances. Any days of suspension served before cancellation count towards the 45-school-day annual maximum.

15. Further disciplinary action following suspension

A suspension will not be converted into a permanent exclusion. If further evidence emerges, the Headteacher may make a fresh decision in accordance with the statutory framework. Any subsequent permanent exclusion must independently meet the statutory test.

16. Off-site direction

Where lawful, off-site direction may be used as a time-limited behaviour-management intervention intended to improve behaviour. It will not be used as punishment, informal exclusion or a device to test a managed move.

Before and during an off-site direction the school will comply with statutory notification and review requirements and will set clear placement objectives, location and start arrangements, anticipated duration, review arrangements, named contacts and safeguarding, attendance and transport arrangements. The pupil's views will be sought and parents will have appropriate opportunities to contribute.

The Trustee board will keep the direction under review in accordance with statutory requirements, including whether objectives are being met and whether the direction should continue, vary or end. Reintegration will be planned where the pupil returns.

17. Managed moves

A managed move is used to initiate a process leading to the permanent transfer of a pupil to another mainstream school as part of a behaviour-management process. It must be voluntary and in the pupil's best interests and must proceed through lawful admissions arrangements.

The Trust will not use an informal trial managed move. A temporary placement intended to improve behaviour will instead use the lawful off-site direction process where appropriate. A pupil will not be permanently excluded solely because the pupil or parent is unwilling to agree to a managed move. Parents will not be pressured to accept a managed move.

18. Separation for safeguarding purposes

Separation for safeguarding purposes is not a disciplinary suspension or permanent exclusion. It will be used only in rare circumstances where separating pupils is essential for safeguarding and it is not practicable to achieve that separation while allowing one or more of the pupils concerned to remain on the school premises.

Decisions will be made case by case, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy taking a lead role and external agencies involved where necessary. Parents will be informed of the reason and the Trustee board notified without delay. Appropriate education arrangements will be made, the arrangement will be kept under review and reintegration will be supported.

19. Informal exclusion and off-rolling

The Trust will not send a pupil home for disciplinary reasons without using the formal suspension process; ask parents to keep a pupil at home as an informal sanction; pressure a family into a managed move or elective home education; remove a pupil from the admission register otherwise than lawfully; or use a part-time timetable to manage behaviour.

20. Trustee board consideration of exclusions

The Board of Trustees will ensure that the governing-board functions relating to exclusion are properly exercised. A suitably constituted committee may exercise those functions where permitted.

The Trustee board must consider reinstatement following a permanent exclusion and where the pupil would, as a result of suspension, be suspended for more than 15 school days in a term. The statutory procedure also

contains specific requirements where an exclusion would result in the pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test, and for shorter suspensions where parents make representations. The Trust will apply the current statutory thresholds, rights and deadlines in force at the date of the exclusion.

Relevant parties will be invited and enabled to make representations where required. The committee will consider the evidence independently and decide whether the pupil should be reinstated, providing its decision and reasons in accordance with statutory requirements.

21. Independent Review Panels

Where the Trustee board decides not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil, the relevant person may request an Independent Review Panel. The request must normally be made within 15 school days of notice of the Trustee board decision.

The Trustee board decision letter will explain how and where to apply, the deadline, the right to request an SEN expert and other applicable rights. The Trust will arrange the IRP in accordance with its statutory duties. The IRP may uphold the decision, recommend reconsideration, or quash the decision and direct reconsideration where the statutory test for doing so is met.

22. Reconsideration following an IRP

Where an IRP recommends or directs reconsideration, the governing board will reconsider reinstatement conscientiously, with proper regard to the panel's findings, and within the applicable statutory period. Where the current framework requires reconsideration within 10 school days, that deadline will be observed.

23. Removal from the admission register

A permanently excluded pupil will not be removed from the admission register until the statutory conditions permitting removal are satisfied. Where an Independent Review Panel is requested within the prescribed period, removal will be managed in accordance with the applicable pupil registration legislation and statutory exclusion guidance.

Safeguarding and educational records will be transferred securely to the appropriate receiving setting or local authority as required.

24. Remote-access meetings

Trustee board consideration meetings and Independent Review Panels may use remote access where permitted by the statutory framework. Face-to-face meetings are encouraged and remote access will not be treated as the default.

Where remote access is used, the organiser will seek to ensure that participants can access the technology, hear and be heard, consider information and make representations fairly, with accessibility and reasonable adjustments addressed. A meeting will be adjourned or rearranged where technical failure makes fair participation impossible.

25. Complaints

Complaints about the administration or application of this policy may be considered under the Trust Complaints Policy where that procedure has jurisdiction. The complaints procedure does not replace or circumvent statutory governing board consideration, Independent Review Panel or other exclusion rights.

26. Monitoring and governance

The Trust will maintain appropriate records and the Board of Trustees will receive information enabling scrutiny of suspensions, permanent exclusions and pupil movement. Monitoring may include the number and duration of suspensions, repeat suspensions, permanent and cancelled exclusions, reasons, off-site directions, managed moves, safeguarding separations, reintegration, alternative provision, SEND and disability, Education Health and Care Plans, looked-after status, pupils with social workers, disadvantaged pupils, attendance, behaviour, interventions, reasonable adjustments and any disproportionate patterns.

For the Trust's multi-academy context, information may also be reviewed by academy/campus where this assists governance oversight. Data will be handled in accordance with data-protection requirements and will not be published in a way that identifies individual pupils.

27. Review of alternative provision

Where a pupil is placed in alternative provision, the Trust will maintain appropriate oversight of suitability, safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, academic engagement, SEND provision, agreed objectives, welfare, effectiveness and review or reintegration arrangements. Relevant safeguarding and educational information will be transferred appropriately.

28. Review and publication

The Board of Trustees will review this policy annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance or significant case law changes, or monitoring identifies a need for amendment. Current law and statutory guidance will be followed where they change before the scheduled review date.

The approved policy will be published in accordance with the Trust's publication arrangements.

Appendix 1: Governance quick-reference

Situation	Governance response	Key point
Permanent exclusion	Trustee board consideration required	Independent Review Panel rights arise if pupil is not reinstated.
Suspensions exceeding 15 school days in a term	Trustee board consideration required	Apply current statutory meeting deadline.
Exclusion affecting a public examination or national curriculum test	Apply the specific statutory consideration arrangements	Act promptly and follow current DfE requirements.
Other suspension where parents	Apply the statutory consideration	Record representations and

make representations	requirements for the relevant length	outcome.
Off-site direction	Trustee board oversight and statutory reviews	Review objectives, suitability and whether direction should continue.
Safeguarding separation	Notify Trustee board without delay	Non-disciplinary; use only in rare safeguarding circumstances.

Appendix 2: Principal national reference

Department for Education, Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement: statutory guidance, July 2026 (effective 26 July 2026).

GOV.UK publication page: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions>