Liberty Academy Trust

Exclusions Policy

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Written By	Director of Safeguarding
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1. Introduction

1.1. Liberty Academy Trust Exclusion policy aims to set out the process that will be followed and the additional considerations around suspensions and permanent exclusions that all LAT schools will apply.

1.2. Where the 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. Behaviours of concern, can be an indication of unmet needs and this is particularly true for the pupils in our schools. Where a school has concerns about a pupil's behaviour, it should try to identify whether there are any causal factors and intervene early with all possible stakeholders in order to reduce the need for a subsequent exclusion. In this situation, schools should work with the Local Authority and social care and health professionals to support the pupil and prevent behaviours which may lead to suspension or exclusion.

1.4. The School will always have regard to the Statutory Guidance on Suspensions and Exclusions (July 2026) 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).

1.5. This policy should be read in conjunction with the LAT Behaviour policy and the LAT SEND policy.

1.6. This policy is supported by a range of operational procedures and guidance documents used by schools within the Trust. These include the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Decision Making Record (Appendix 1) and the Pre-Exclusion Assessment Process (PEAP) (Appendix 2). These documents support consistent decision-making and early intervention but do not replace the statutory guidance on suspensions and exclusions or the professional judgement required in individual cases.

2. Application of policy

2.1. This policy applies to all members of the School and Trust community. Each School in 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:

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 before being permanently excluded.

3.2. Permanent exclusions are where, subject to a decision of the governing board 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.

4. Exclusion decision making principles

4.1 A decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil will only be taken after careful consideration of all relevant circumstances and the available evidence.

4.2 Decisions will be made on the civil standard of proof, namely whether, on the balance of probabilities, it is more likely than not that the alleged behaviour occurred.

4.3 Before making a decision, the Principal will consider any relevant contributing factors, including safeguarding concerns, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), social, emotional and mental health needs, looked after status and any other vulnerabilities.

4.4 The pupil's views will be sought wherever appropriate and considered in light of their age, understanding and individual needs.

4.5 Permanent exclusion will only be used where:

- 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.

4.6 Before a decision to permanently exclude is made, consideration will be given to whether additional support, intervention, alternative provision or a managed move may be appropriate.

4.7 The Trust has developed supporting operational tools to promote consistency and support robust decision-making. These include the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Decision Making Record (Appendix 1) and the Pre-Exclusion Assessment Process (PEAP) (Appendix 2). The use of these tools should inform decision-making but does not create additional statutory requirements beyond those set out in relevant legislation and statutory guidance.

5. Roles and responsibilities

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

5.1. The principal

All decisions to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil will be taken by the principal after considering all the circumstances. Every decision made will be proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour with reference to the behaviour policy. Principals must liaise with either the Director of Education or Director of Safeguarding on the day, when considering suspension/exclusion.

5.2. The Trustees

The Trust board 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 decision of the relevant committee formed by the Trust board will be to decide whether to uphold the exclusion or suspension, or instead to reinstate the pupil to the school.

5.3. Parents

Parents will be informed without delay of any suspension or exclusion and 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 Principal. Parents are expected to support the behaviour policy of the school and where suspensions are applied work with the school to support their child to learn from the experience.

5.4. Pupils

All pupils of the school 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.

6. CCTV, witness evidence and pupil views

6.1. The School uses closed circuit Television (CCTV) within 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 by the leadership team as part of the investigation and the content considered before imposing a sanction. Please see the CCTV policy and privacy notices for more information.

6.2. Where witness evidence is relied upon, whether that be from a pupil or a staff member, statement(s) will be gathered. All statements will be signed and dated unless the Principal has good reason to protect the anonymity of the relevant witness. Reasons may include threats of reprisals.

6.3. Before taking a decision to suspend or exclude and where appropriate, the Principal 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 principal will also take account of any contributing factors identified after an incident of misbehaviour has occurred.

7. Reintegration strategy meetings following suspension or off-site direction

7.1. 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:

- 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 suspensions 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. This meeting should take account of the pupil's level of understanding of why they were suspended/excluded and the degree of control the pupil has to manage their anxiety. Previous behaviour is not seen as an obstacle to future success.

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

- daily contact with a designated pastoral professional 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 learning;
- planned pastoral interventions;
- mentoring by a trusted adult or a local mentoring charity;
- 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.

7.3. Whilst reintegration meetings are highly encouraged by the School and Trust, pupils will not be prevented from attending school, post-suspension, because a meeting has not taken place.

8. Cancelling a suspension or exclusion

8.1. A suspension or exclusion can be cancelled by the Principal as long as the suspension or exclusion has not been considered by the trustees. In relation to an exclusion, it cannot be cancelled if the total time the pupil was excluded or suspended that academic year would be over 45 days at the point of the decision to cancel the exclusion.

8.2. Where a suspension or exclusion is cancelled, the relevant parties will be informed by the Principal in accordance with the statutory guidance on suspensions and exclusions.

9. Suspensions before a permanent exclusion

9.1. In exceptional circumstances, pupils may receive a suspension prior to a permanent exclusion. For each decision the Principal will send the relevant letter setting out the rights of parents. 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 for example, further evidence has come to light, a further investigation has revealed that the behaviour is more serious than first thought or where the incident was serious and time is required to fully investigate the circumstances and consider alternatives.

10. Directing off-site and managed moves

10.1. Before taking any decision to permanently exclude a pupil, the Principal will consider whether additional support, a direction to attend alternative provision, a managed move or another planned intervention would be a reasonable alternative. The Trust recognises that, due to the specialist needs of its pupils, such alternatives may not always be available or appropriate and each case will be considered individually.

10.2. In the case of directing a pupil off site to alternative provision, 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 will take place with parents to feed in their views about the options. The requirements in relation to any off-site direction will be followed.

10.3. For a managed move to take place, there must be agreement between the school, parents, the receiving school and any other relevant agencies, as appropriate. Before a managed move is agreed, a pupil may attend the proposed setting through a period of off-site direction where this is considered suitable and lawful. At the end of this period, the placement will be reviewed with all relevant parties before a final decision is made.

10.4. The Trust recognises that, as a specialist provider for pupils with SEND and/or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), managed moves may not always

be a suitable or available alternative to permanent exclusion. In such circumstances, decisions will be made in collaboration with parents, the Local Authority and other relevant professionals, taking account of the pupil's identified needs, the suitability of available provision and the pupil's best interests.

10.5. Any managed move will only be agreed where the receiving setting is able to meet the pupil's identified needs and where the move is considered to be in the pupil's best interests.

11. Independent review panels (IRPs)

11.1. The Trust arranges its own IRPs. Requests for an IRP where a permanent exclusion has been upheld should be made to Chris Rossiter, Director of Governance and Compliance, within 15 school days.

11.2. Further details on the role and powers of IRPs can be found in Part Ten of the Statutory Guidance on Exclusions and Suspension.

12. Reconsideration by the Governance Committee

Where an IRP either recommends reconsideration or quashes the initial decision of the governance committee, the decision will be considered within 10 school days. This may involve a rehearing with oral evidence given by the School and parents or may be a reconsideration with only the Trustees/governance committee members and the clerk present.

13. Remote Meetings

13.1. Any governor/Trustee and/or an IRP meeting may be conducted remotely where the parents request it be conducted remotely and the meeting can be fairly held remotely, with all participants having access and are able to make representations. 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.

13.2. 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 everyone would be able to make representations.

14. 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, they should raise their concerns with a staff member or the principal 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.

15. Equality impact

The School 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; these include race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and sex.

16. Monitoring arrangements

The local committee and trustees review data on suspensions and exclusions to ensure that the use of suspensions and exclusions is appropriate. The following are monitored by the local committee and trustees to ensure the processes and support for pupils are appropriate:

- the interventions put in place for pupils at risk of suspension and permanent exclusion;
- the processes in place for determining and reviewing directions to alternative provision and such placements being reviewed at sufficient intervals to assure that the education is achieving its objectives and that pupils are benefitting from it;
- 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;
    - there is a process in place to monitor the pupil's attendance and behaviour at the provision;
    - the correct attendance code is being used;
    - 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 there is any variation within the year on suspensions and permanent exclusions and the characteristics of pupils;
- the cost implications of directing children to be educated off-site in alternative provision and whether there are any patterns to the reasons or timing of moves;
- whether the school register and absence codes have been recorded correctly
- how the behaviour policy is applied and specifically its consistency;
- the circumstances in which pupils receive repeat suspensions;
- whether Personal Education Plans for looked after children have been reviewed on a termly basis.

Appendix 1
Suspension/Permanent Exclusion Decision Making Record

This record outlines the decision making and influencing factors leading to a pupil receiving a sanction that falls into Liberty Exclusions Policy. This document must be signed off by the Principal with input from appropriate members of their team and in consultation with the Director of safeguarding or the Director of Education. Directorate members. All of our pupils have SEND and an EHCP. All decisions to exclude (or not) will be taken with pupils' SEND needs, known behaviours and social care needs in mind.

Pupil Name:	**Pupil URN:**	**How does this information affect your decision making?**
Date:	**CPOMs reference:**	
Step 1: The incident / series of incidents	Describe:	
Step 2: Investigation (must include a detailed chronology of events before the incident)	Conducted by: Checked by: Outcome:	
Step 3: Consultation	Who has been consulted in this process and what did they say?	
Step 4: Reasonable adjustments (EA 2010)	Describe and explain impact of reasonable adjustments to date:	
Other contextual information		
Step 5: Deciding whether to suspend or permanently exclude	Based on the detail in the grey boxes above, do the facts of the matter support a decision to exclude the pupil? - Are there underlying factors that led to the incident/series of incidents? - Is this incident one in a series of similar incidents? What makes this situation different? - Does the incident threaten other school members' safety and/or ability to work and learn in school? - Is there an alternative to exclusion that has not already been attempted in support of the pupils' needs? - Does the issue meet the following definition: "'on the balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that the student in question carried out a serious breach or persistent breaches of the School's Behaviour Policy"?	

Step 6: Exclusion type (only complete if decision is to implement any type of exclusion)	*The decision to exclude a student permanently should only be taken:* *• in response to a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of the school's behaviour policy; and* *• where allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the school.* Based on the information in steps 1-4, does this incident meet the criteria in italics above? Yes/No If Yes, a panel must be formed. Reasoning:
Step 7: Outcome	If the decision is not to exclude, follow steps to successfully reintegrate the pupil into their structure and routine. Adjustments must be made to the pupils' provision (including PBS plan, provision assessment etc). The pupil and their family/carers must be consulted beforehand. If the decision is to exclude, then the Principal must follow the steps described in the Exclusion Policy and refer to the Government's guidance if in doubt. The Principal or their delegate must liaise with the local authority when excluding from school for any duration to ensure that the pupils' wider needs are accommodated. In all cases, the pupil's next steps (reintegration, transition) must be fully supported by the school team and in collaboration with suitable stakeholders. Decision: Not to exclude / internal / suspension / permanent Signed (Principal): Signed (LGB Chair):

Appendix 2
The Pre-Exclusion Assessment Process (PEAP)

Date PEAP Opened by School: **Name of School:**

Name of Child		**Year Group**	
Date of Entry to the Academy		**Date 1st Issue Recorded**	

Ethnic Group			**EAL**	Y	N
LAC/CIC	Y	N	**Pupil Premium**	Y	N

Details of Suspensions:

Date	Duration	Reason

Details of External Support Involved: (to include details of LA-based Inclusion Panels where applicable)

Name	Agency	Date Last Involved	Reason / Outcome	Still Involved?	Date of Next Visit

School-Based support, Interventions and Strategies:

Date	Duration	Reason	Impact

Details of documentation to support child's individual needs:

Documentation	**Date of 1st document**	**Date of 2nd document**	**Date of 3rd document**
Support Plan			
Risk Assessment			
Individual Behaviour Management plan (IBMP)			
Individual Timetabling arrangements (if appropriate)			
Meetings with parents/carers, specifically to discuss child's behaviour and next steps			

Further information:

Voice of the Child:

Suggested questions are given below but Safeguarding Lead/Key worker should not be restricted by them, nor is this list complete; it is important that in accordance with the guidance from the DfE, we obtain as much information as the pupil is willing to share. Questions should be tempered as needed.

1) **What do you like about school?**
2) **What do you dislike about school?**
3) **Are you happy when you are here?**
4) **Can you describe a time when you have not been happy here and what happened?**

5) **How do the teachers/staff try to help you?**
6) **Is there anything the teachers/staff could do better to help you?**
7) **What support do you feel you need?**
8) **Can you remember the last time you were suspended from school? When was it? Can you remember how many days you were at home?**
9) **When you were at home, what work did you have to do? When did this work get marked?**
10) **Can you remember a time when you have been suspended for more than a week?**
11) **When was this? Did you have lessons in a different place or did a teacher come out to teach you?**
12) **Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?**

Voice of the Child Date and responses:

Voice of the Parents/Carers: *(please record details of any relevant parental liaison including communication with regards to exclusions and reintegration)*

Voice of the Parent Date and responses:

PEAP Review Date and Recommendations (SLT or LAT Executive review):

Additional pages for use in Permanent Exclusion:

Principal Evidence of Self-Evaluation:

Questions	YES / NO	Supporting Commentary as Evidence of Actions Taken
Have I investigated specific incidents with all parties in a sensitive and fair way?		
Have I considered factors that could have contributed to the pupil's behaviour (e.g. SEND or bereavement) and have I taken these factors sufficiently into account?		
Is exclusion the most appropriate and reasonable sanction, and consistent with the academy's behaviour policy?		
Are all the exclusion reasons clearly recorded, including the impact on others? Are they robust?		
Is relevant evidence properly recorded / retained / documented? (E.g. summaries of interviews, past behaviour and support given)		
Have I spoken to the parents to ensure they fully understand the type / scale of the incident?		

This document MUST be completed and handed in to the Assistant Director for Children's Services and Safeguarding at least 7 working days prior to the IRP.

Summary Recommendations (to be completed by Reviewing officer)

Evaluation of Actions Undertaken by the Academy	**YES**	**NO**
The Academy has extensive evidence of a range of support put in place to meet the needs of the pupil for a period longer than a term		
There is evidence of involvement from multiple agencies for a period longer than a term		
There is evidence that the needs of the pupil and the involvement of the parents / carers have been central to all decisions made		
The Academy has met all statutory guidance, without exception		
The pupil's actions have breached the behaviour policy of the Academy and continue to pose a serious threat to the education of pupils or the safety and well-being of staff / pupils / themselves		

<u>I am satisfied</u> that the evidence provided, justifies the case being put forward to the LGB, in order to approve a permanent exclusion for the child named: _____ In Year _____

<u>I am not satisfied</u> that the evidence provided, justifies the case being put forward to the LGB, in order to approve a permanent exclusion for the child named: _____ In Year_____

Signed: **Position:**

On completion of the pre-exclusion assessment, all documentation must be sent to the Director of Safeguarding for sign-off or information and follow-up.

Dates documents sent: