



FIRST STEPS TOGETHER
FOR EVERY JOURNEY

Exclusion Policy

Revision History			
Date	Version	Change	Author
June 2024	1	Policy Written	M Bonilla
June 2025	2	Policy review	D Ledger
July 2026	3	Policy review with updates on off rolling, safeguarding separation and offsite direction. Update on the responsibility of the Headteacher	T.Ahmed

Policy Statement

First Steps Together is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where all pupils can learn and thrive. Exclusion is used only as a last resort, in line with statutory guidance, and only when all appropriate interventions and support strategies have been exhausted or when a serious incident requires immediate action to ensure safety. The school recognises that exclusion can have a significant impact on a child's wellbeing, education, and future outcomes. Decisions are made with great care, fairness, and proportionality.

Aims

- Ensure exclusions are lawful, reasonable, and fair.
- Protect the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff.
- Reduce the need for exclusion through early intervention and support.
- Ensure pupils with SEND, safeguarding vulnerabilities, or unmet needs are not disadvantaged.
- Maintain transparent processes for decision-making, communication, and review.
- Work in partnership with families and external agencies.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Fixed-term suspensions
- Permanent exclusions
- Lunchtime exclusions
- Managed moves (voluntary and agreed)
- Reintegration processes following exclusion
- Offsite direction or separation for safeguarding purposes

Principles

- Exclusion is a protective measure, not a punitive one.
- Every decision considers the pupil's age, needs, SEND profile, trauma history, and context.
- Reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with SEND.
- The school explores all alternatives before exclusion.
- Parents/carers are engaged early and meaningfully.
- Exclusion is never used for:
 - Minor breaches of behaviour
 - Additional needs or disabilities
 - Lack of academic progress
 - Failure to meet unmet needs

A note on off-rolling

Off rolling is a form of gaming and occurs where a school decides, in the interests of the school and not the pupil to:

- Remove a pupil from the school admission register without a formal permanent exclusion
- Encourages a parent/carer to remove their child from the school
- Retain a pupil on the school admission register but not allow them to attend the school normally without a formal permanent exclusion or suspension

- Send a pupil home without formally recording a suspension regardless of whether it occurs with the agreement of parents/carers
- Place a pupil on a part time timetable for behavioural reasons.

Accordingly, we will not suspend or permanently exclude a pupil unlawfully by telling or forcing them to leave, encouraging their parent(s)/carer(s) to remove them from the school, or not allowing them to attend school without following the statutory procedure contained in the [School Discipline \(Pupil Exclusions and Reviews\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#), or formally recording the event.

Any suspension or exclusion will be made on disciplinary grounds, and will not be made:

- Because a pupil has special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) that the school feels unable to support, or
- Due to a pupil's poor academic performance, or
- Because the pupil hasn't met a specific condition, such as attending a reintegration meeting

If any pupil is suspended or permanently excluded on the above grounds, this will also be considered as 'off-rolling'.

Legislation

This policy is based on statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE): [Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement](#).

It is based on the following legislation, which outlines schools' powers to suspend and permanently exclude pupils:

- Section 51a of the [Education Act 2002](#), as amended by the [Education Act 2011](#)
- [The School Discipline \(Pupil Exclusions and Reviews\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

In addition, the policy is based on:

- Part 7, chapter 2 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), which sets out parental responsibility for excluded pupils
- Section 579 of the [Education Act 1996](#), which defines 'school day'

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](#).

- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- The [Inspection information for state-funded schools](#), which defines 'off-rolling'

Academies, including free schools, if applicable, add/amend: This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association, and with statutory regulations applying to academies in relation to exclusions and off-site direction.

Definitions

Suspension – when a pupil is removed from the school for a fixed period. This was previously referred to as a fixed-term exclusion'.

Permanent exclusion – when a pupil is removed from the school permanently and taken off the school admission register.

Off-site direction – when a school requires a pupil to attend another education setting temporarily, to improve their behaviour. At First Steps Together another First Steps together school will be considered where this is agreed by the Chair of the Proprietor body.

Parent/carer – any person who has parental responsibility and any person who has care of the child.

Managed move – when a pupil is transferred to another school permanently. All parties, including parents/carers and the admission authority for the new school, should consent before a managed move occurs. Managed moves cannot be used on a trial basis.

Cancelled exclusion – an exclusion that has been cancelled before the Proprietary Board has met to consider whether the pupil should be reinstated.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

Only the headteacher, or acting headteacher, can suspend or permanently exclude a pupil from school on disciplinary grounds. This must be done in consultation with the executive headteacher. The headteacher will only use permanent exclusion as a last resort and after having ensured all support has been provided to the pupil, through consultation with the Local Authority SEND team and First Steps Together inclusion and pastoral teams.

A decision to suspend a pupil will be taken only:

- In accordance with the school's relational behaviour policy and ACTIVE values
- To provide a clear signal of what is unacceptable behaviour
- To show a pupil that their current behaviour is putting them at risk of permanent exclusion

Where suspensions have become a regular occurrence, the headteacher will consider whether suspensions alone are an effective sanction and whether additional strategies need to be put in place to address behaviour issues.

A decision to permanently exclude a pupil will be taken only:

- In response to serious or persistent breaches of the school's relational behaviour policy, **and**
- If allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or of others such as staff or pupils in the school

Before deciding whether to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, the headteacher in conjunction with the Executive headteacher will:

- Consider all the relevant facts and evidence on the balance of probabilities, including whether the incident(s) leading to the exclusion was/were provoked
- Allow the pupil to give their version of events considering these in light of their age and understanding, unless it would not be appropriate to do so
- Consider special educational needs (SEN)
- Consider whether the pupil is especially vulnerable (e.g. the pupil has a social worker, or is a looked-after child (LAC) or a previously looked-after child)
- Consider whether all alternative solutions have been explored, such as:
 - For suspensions: time in RESET or other consequences provided for in the relational behaviour policy
 - For exclusions: off-site direction (for temporary placements)

When considering off-site direction, the school complies with the Education Regulations 2026, and has regard to the arranging alternative provision.

Before directing a pupil off-site or agreeing a managed move, the school will:

- Ensure the pupil's views are sought and considered
- Be able to evidence that appropriate interventions have already been implemented
- Share relevant information with the receiving setting and the local authority (LA), including attainment data, risk assessments and support strategies

The headteacher will consider the views of the pupil, in light of their age and understanding, before deciding to suspend or permanently exclude, unless it would not be appropriate to do so.

Pupils who need support to express their views will be allowed to have their views expressed through an advocate, such as a parent/carers or social worker.

The headteacher will not reach their decision until they have heard from the pupil, and will inform the pupil of how their views were taken into account when making the decision.

Where there are concerns about the behaviour, or risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, of a pupil, the school will, in partnership with others, including, the LA, consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required. This will involve assessing the suitability of provision for the pupil's SEN's.

The school will contact the LA 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 the pupil.

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 to the school, it is likely that complex and difficult decisions will need to be made. These decisions will be made alongside the school's safeguarding duties and its duty to provide an education.

Deciding whether to temporarily remove a pupil from the school site for safeguarding reasons

In exceptional circumstances, the headteacher may decide to temporarily prevent a pupil from attending the school site for safeguarding reasons. This is not an exclusion on disciplinary grounds.

This measure will only be used when:

- It is necessary to separate pupils to ensure safety, and
 - There is no reasonable alternative that would allow all pupils to remain on site
- Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, led by the Headteacher and in conjunction with the Executive headteacher and designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and informed by multi-agency working where appropriate (e.g children's social care or the police).

Where this measure is used, the school will:

- Inform parents/carers without delay, including the reasons for the decision
- Notify the governing board without delay
- Provide work for the pupil to complete at home, or work with the LA to ensure suitable education is arranged
- Support the pupil's reintegration, as soon as it is safe to do so

Informing parents/carers

If a pupil is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the headteacher will inform the parents/carers as early as possible, in order to work together to consider what factors may be affecting the pupil's behaviour, and what further support can be put in place to improve the behaviour.

If the headteacher decides to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, the parents/carers will be informed, in person or by telephone, of the period of the suspension (or permanent exclusion) and the reason(s) for it, without delay.

The parents/carers/pupil will also be provided with the following information in writing, without delay:

- The reason(s) for the suspension or permanent exclusion
- The length of the suspension or permanent exclusion
- Information about the parents'/carers'/pupil's right to make representations about the suspension to the governing body and, where the pupil is attending alongside parents/carers, how they may be involved in this
- How any representations should be made
- That parents/carers/the pupil have the right to request that the meetings be held remotely, and how and to whom they should make this request

If the pupil is of compulsory school age, the headteacher will also notify parents/carers without delay and by the end of the afternoon session on the first day their child is suspended, that:

- For the first 5 school days of the suspension (or until the start date of any alternative provision or the end of the suspension, where this is earlier), the parents/carers are legally required to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without a good reason. This will include specifying on which days this duty applies
- Parents/carers may be given a fixed penalty notice or prosecuted if they fail to do this

If alternative provision is being arranged to improve behaviour, the written notification will include:

- The start date for any provision of full-time education that has been arranged
- The address at which the provision will take place
- The name of the person the pupil should report to on arrival
- The duration of the placement
- The reasons for, and objectives of, the placement
- The start and finish times of any such provision
- Where 2 sessions per day are provided:
 - What time the morning sessions starts
 - What time the afternoon session ends
 - What time the break between them starts and ends
- Where a single session per day is provided:
 - What time the session starts and ends

If the headteacher does not have all the information about the alternative provision arrangements by the end of the afternoon session on the first day of the suspension or permanent exclusion, they can provide the information at a later date, without delay and no later than 48 hours before the provision is due to start.

The only exception to this is where alternative provision is to be provided before the sixth day of a suspension, in which case the school reserves the right to provide the information with less than 48 hours' notice, with parents'/carers' consent.

If the headteacher cancels the suspension, they will notify the parents/carers/pupil without delay, and provide a reason for the cancellation.

Informing the Governing board

The headteacher will, without delay, notify the governing body of:

- Any suspension that would result in the pupil being suspended for a total of more than 5 school days in a term
- Any suspension or that would result in the pupil missing a National Curriculum test or public exam
- Any suspension or that has been cancelled, including the reason for the cancellation

Informing the local authority (LA)

The headteacher will notify the LA of all suspensions and decisions to permanently exclude without delay, regardless of the length of a suspension.

The notification will include:

- o The reason(s) for the suspension or permanent exclusion
- o The length of a suspension or decision to permanently exclude

Informing the pupil's social worker and/or virtual school head (VSH)

If a:

- **Pupil with a social worker** is at risk of suspension the headteacher will inform **the social worker** as early as possible
- **Pupil who is a looked-after child (LAC)** is at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion the headteacher will inform **the VSH** as early as possible

This is so they can work together to consider what factors may be affecting the pupil's behaviour, and what further support can be put in place to improve the behaviour.

Where a looked-after child is at risk of suspension the school will consider:

- How effectively the current personal education plan (PEP) is being implemented, and
- Whether an interim review of the PEP needs to take place
- How the school is using Pupil Premium Plus

If the headteacher decides to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil with a social worker/a pupil who is looked after, they will inform the pupil's social worker/the VSH, as appropriate, without delay, that:

- They have decided to suspend the pupil
- The reason(s) for the decision
- The length of the suspension
- The suspension or permanent exclusion affects the pupil's ability to sit a National Curriculum test or public exam (where relevant)
- They have decided to cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion and why

Cancelling suspensions or permanent exclusions

The headteacher may cancel a suspension or permanent exclusion that has already begun.

Where there is a cancellation:

- The parents/carers, Governors and LA will be notified without delay
- Where relevant, any social worker and VSH will be notified without delay
- The notification must provide the reason for the cancellation
- The pupil will be allowed back in school without delay

Reintegration

A reintegration meeting is held following every suspension. This includes:

- Review of the incident
- Reflection and restorative conversation
- Updated risk assessment or support plan
- Adjustments to provision if needed
- Clear expectations and next steps
- Emotional support for the pupil

The focus is on relate, repute, and repair

Providing education during the first 5 days of a suspension

If the pupil is not attending alternative (AP) provision, the headteacher will take steps to ensure that achievable and accessible work is set and marked for the pupil. Online pathways such as (Google Classroom/online tutoring/outreach team) may be used for this.

Governing Body

- Reviews suspensions where required.
- Ensures the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Holds leaders to account for suspension patterns and equity.

Staff

- Implement behaviour and support strategies consistently.
- Record incidents accurately.
- Contribute to risk assessments and support plans.

Parents/Carers

- Work in partnership with the school.
- Attend meetings and reintegration reviews.

Preventing Exclusion

The school prioritises early intervention, including:

- Pastoral support
- Restorative approaches
- Trauma-informed practice
- Behaviour support plans
- Risk assessments
- Reasonable adjustments for SEND
- Multi-agency involvement
- Alternative timetables (time-limited and reviewed)
- Safe spaces and regulation strategies
- Mentoring or key-adult support

For pupils with SEND, the school ensures:

- Needs are assessed
- Provision is reviewed
- External advice is sought where appropriate
- Exclusion is not used as a response to unmet need

Monitoring and Review

SLT and governors monitor:

- Patterns of exclusion
- SEND and safeguarding trends
- Equality and disproportionality
- Effectiveness of interventions
- Reintegration outcomes

The policy is reviewed annually or sooner if guidance changes.

Commitment to Inclusion

First Steps Together is committed to:

- Reducing exclusions
- Supporting pupils with complex needs
- Strengthening relationships and belonging
- Ensuring every child has the opportunity to succeed

Links to other policies

- SEND Policy
- Relational behaviour policy