

## **Witham Prospect School**

### **Exclusions (permanent) and Suspensions Policy**

#### **Relevant Legislation and Guidance**

- Suspensions and permanent exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units including pupil movement.....(latest version) – DFE
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 – UK Gov.
- The Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015 – UK Gov.
- Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards April 2015 – DFE.
- Social Care Common Inspection Framework SCCIF: children’s homes (latest version) – OFSTED.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, statutory guidance for schools and colleges (latest version) – DFE.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, a guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children (latest version) – HM Government.
- Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP): Policy and Procedures – live manual.

#### **Applies to:**

All staff, residential and school based, volunteers and visitors.

#### **Related Documents:**

- Behaviour Policy
- Admissions Policy

#### **Availability:**

This document is made available to parents/carers and visitors via the school website or upon request from the school office.

#### **Monitoring and review:**

This policy will be monitored and refined on a continuous basis and reviewed bi-annually by either the Directors, Headteacher, Registered Manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Changes in legislation, regulatory requirement or best practice guidelines will trigger earlier review.

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|-----------|---------------------|--------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
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### Rationale and ethos

Witham Prospect School's primary aim and ethos is to support the development and growth of children and young people entrusted to us. Children and young people placed at Witham Prospect School will have severe learning difficulties and complex care needs. They are also likely to have some behaviours of concern, including physically aggressive behaviours towards other people and behaviours that put themselves at risk of harm. Due to the significant impact that these behaviours of concern have on their home, educational and other residential settings, a placement at Witham Prospect School has been sought. It is our belief that with a pro-active and positive approach, we will encourage children and young people to develop the skills and strategies required to reduce their reliance on using inappropriate behaviour to communicate a need or want.

### Background Guidance (non-related)

"For the vast majority of pupils, suspensions and permanent exclusions may not be necessary, as other strategies can manage behaviour. However, if 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". (DFE guidance, suspensions and permanent exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units)

### Premise

At Witham Prospect School it is envisaged that the implementation of a permanent exclusion is highly unlikely due to the thoroughness of our initial placement assessment. However, where one is implemented, it will only be considered as a last resort, whereby allowing a child/young person to remain in school would seriously place themselves and others at risk and having thoroughly explored every potential solution to the behaviour of concern, a managed and planned transition would occur due to their needs no longer coinciding with our provision.

**Suspension**

Where a young person displays behaviour(s) of concern that are of such significant concern as to place themselves and others at risk then the school may consider a fixed term suspension. Here the suspension period may run for one or more fixed periods, yet up to a maximum of 45 days within the academic year.

Where such suspensions are becoming a regular occurrence for a young person, the headteacher, in conjunction with other senior leaders and the executive directors will consider whether suspension alone is an effective sanction for the young person and whether additional strategies need to be explored and put in place to address behaviour(s) of concern. Such strategies may involve or combine the following:

- A multi-disciplinary team meeting.
- A functional behavioural assessment.
- Therapeutic input from SALT and/or OT.
- Therapeutic input from CAMHS.
- A change of class.
- A change in curriculum design.

**Process**

After extended consideration and when the decision has been taken by the headteacher to suspend a young person for a fixed period the following individuals need to be notified:

- Parents/carers (in writing).
- The proprietors/executive directors.
- The “home” local authority (in writing).
- The young person’s social worker (in writing).
- The young person’s SEND casework officer (in writing).
- Virtual Schools (in writing).

During the duration of the suspension the headteacher will ensure, where appropriate and dependent upon the young person’s cognitive level of development, that work will be made available to the young person. This may be either “paper-based” work or on-line work. However, it is envisaged that for many of our young people at Witham Prospect School their barrier(s) to learning will make such an arrangement difficult to implement and may well cause emotional distress to the young person.

It is important to note that the school will have exhausted all avenues to avoid suspension through discussion, dialogue and meetings with the parents/carers, social worker, SEND casework officer and by holding their own pre-suspension MDT meetings and strategic planning meetings to manage any behaviours of concern. With this aim any suspension should not come as a “surprise” to parents/carers or any other professionals.

**Informing parents/carers**

As professional due diligence, and courtesy, once the headteacher has decided to suspend a young person they will immediately notify the parents/carers and detail the following:

- The expected suspension time period.
- The reason for the suspension.
- The parents/carers right of appeal and how to make representations about the suspension to the executive directors.

**Right of appeal, suspension**

Parents/carers may appeal a young person's suspension by contacting the executive directors via email or by phone and request a meeting to discuss the suspension. This request should occur within 24 hours of the young person's suspension.

**Continuing education**

Where a young person has been suspended for more than 5 days then it is anticipated that the local authority and the school will work together to plan for the continuing education of the young person.

**Welfare checks**

Where a young person has been suspended the headteacher, (or directed member of staff) will contact the parents/carers to perform health and welfare checks upon the young person. For a young person who lives less than 30 minutes away then this will be an "in person" visit. Where a young person lives more than 30 minutes from Witham Prospect School then the headteacher, (or directed member of staff) will contact the parents/carers via phone and discuss the young person's welfare. The headteacher, (or directed member of staff) reserves the right to seek a visual confirmation of the young person's welfare.

Where there are concerns raised regarding a young person's welfare, then these are to be raised directly with the headteacher, who as a DSL will immediately follow safeguarding protocols and procedures. Where the headteacher is unavailable then the deputy DSL is to be informed.

**Off-rolling**

At Witham Prospect School any exclusion of a pupil, even for short periods, must be formally recorded. It would also be unlawful to exclude a pupil simply because they have SEN or a disability that the school feels it is unable to meet. Any unlawful suspensions that are carried out and lead to the deletion of a pupil's name from the register, is known as 'off-rolling'. An informal or unofficial exclusion, such as sending a pupil home 'to cool off', is unlawful when it does not follow the formal school exclusion process and regardless of whether it occurs with the agreement of parents. Witham Prospect School whole heartily rejects the use of "off-rolling".

**Reintegration after a suspension**

Where a young person has had a period of time away from Witham Prospect School, due to suspension, then their return to education and re-integration needs to be carefully planned. A planned reintegration strategy meeting will be held where the reintegration strategy will be clearly communicated to all parties. This will be seen as a “fresh” start for the young person. The following individuals and professionals will be invited to attend the meeting:

- Member of the executive directors.
- Headteacher.
- Parents/carers.
- Social worker.
- Local authority/SEND casework officer.
- Virtual schools.
- Young person, if appropriate.
- Independent advocate.

**Permanent exclusion**

Although not anticipated sadly there may be a placement breakdown, which will result in a permanent exclusion – effectively a termination of placement. If this occurs the process for “end of placement” will be followed:

- *Documented evidence to support that Witham Prospect School cannot meet need.*
- *Documented evidence to support that the young person is putting themselves and others at serious risk.*
- *Documented evidence that there have been a number of strategic planning meetings and multi-disciplinary meetings to address the young person’s behaviour(s) of concern. Such meetings will include all professionals (where available), parents/carers, social worker, placing authority, virtual schools, casework officer, member(s) of the executive directors, headteacher and school staff.*
- *A clear plan for transition to another provision and one that gives clear timelines.*
- *Only used as a last resort after thorough and careful consideration by all parties.*