



Vita et Pax  
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Vita et Pax Preparatory School

*Established 1936*

# Exclusions Policy

Policy Originator	Head Teacher
Approved by	Governing Body
Date Approved	1 March 2026
Status	Statutory
Review Period	Annually (next: March 2027)

## 1. Introduction

Exclusion is a serious sanction and is used only when necessary to maintain the safety, welfare and good order of the school. Vita et Pax Preparatory School is committed to being inclusive and will always consider alternatives to exclusion wherever possible. Permanent exclusion is an absolute last resort.

This policy applies to all pupils from Nursery (Little Vitas) to Year 6, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Although independent schools are not legally bound by all maintained school exclusion regulations, this policy follows the principles set out in:

- The Independent School Standards Regulations (ISSRs) 2014, Part 3.
- DfE guidance: Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England (2023) — applied as best practice.
- The Education Act 2002.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025.
- The school's Behaviour & Discipline Policy.

## 2. Aims

- Use exclusion only as a last resort, after all other strategies have been considered.
- Ensure fair, transparent and proportionate procedures for all types of exclusion.
- Protect the rights of the excluded pupil and their parents/carers.
- Ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils and staff.
- Meet the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

- Provide appropriate support during and after any period of exclusion.

### 3. Authority to Exclude

Only the Head Teacher (or, in their absence, the Acting Head Teacher) has the authority to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. This power is not delegated to any other member of staff. The Head Teacher may exclude a pupil for one or more fixed periods (suspension) or permanently.

### 4. Types of Exclusion

#### 4.1 Internal Exclusion

A pupil is removed from their usual class and works in a supervised alternative space within school for a defined period. The pupil remains on the school premises and continues their learning. Internal exclusion is not a formal exclusion and is not recorded as such, but it is logged in the school's behaviour records. Parents are informed on the day.

#### 4.2 Suspension (Fixed-Term Exclusion)

The pupil is required to leave the school premises for a specified number of days. A suspension may be for one or more fixed periods of up to 45 school days in any one academic year. During any suspension:

- Work is set for the pupil to complete at home, equivalent to the education they would receive in school.
- The school remains in contact with the family to provide pastoral support.
- A reintegration meeting is held before the pupil returns (see Section 9).

#### 4.3 Permanent Exclusion

Permanent exclusion is the most serious sanction available. It means the pupil is removed from the school roll and may not return. Permanent exclusion is used only where:

- There has been a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of the school's Behaviour & Discipline Policy; and
- Allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of other pupils or staff.

A single, sufficiently serious offence may justify permanent exclusion even for a first-time incident — for example, serious actual or threatened violence, sexual abuse or assault, supplying illegal drugs, or carrying an offensive weapon.

### 5. Grounds for Exclusion

Exclusion may be considered for, but is not limited to, the following:

- Physical assault against a pupil or adult.
- Verbal abuse, threats or intimidation of a pupil or adult.
- Persistent disruptive behaviour that has not responded to other interventions.
- Bullying (including cyberbullying) of a serious or persistent nature.
- Sexual misconduct, sexual violence or sexual harassment.

- Drug or alcohol-related incidents.
- Damage to property.
- Theft.
- Possession of a prohibited or offensive item.
- Behaviour that puts the health and safety of others at serious risk.
- Any other serious or criminal behaviour.

## 6. Decision-Making Process

Before excluding a pupil, the Head Teacher will:

1. Investigate thoroughly — establish the facts of the incident, interviewing witnesses and gathering evidence. The pupil is given an opportunity to give their account.
2. Consider the context — including the pupil's age, any SEND, any safeguarding concerns, the pupil's behaviour record, whether provocation was involved, and any mitigating circumstances.
3. Consider alternatives — including managed moves, restorative justice, behaviour support plans, or referral to external agencies.
4. Apply the balance of probabilities — the standard of proof is 'on the balance of probabilities' (i.e., it is more likely than not that the pupil did what is alleged).
5. Ensure lawfulness and proportionality — the decision must be lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate. The Head Teacher considers duties under the Equality Act 2010, including not discriminating on the basis of any protected characteristic.
6. Consult with the DSL — where the incident may involve a safeguarding concern (including peer-on-peer abuse), the DSL is consulted before a decision is made.

## 7. Notification to Parents

When a decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil is made, the Head Teacher will immediately notify the parents, ideally by telephone, followed by a formal letter. The letter will include:

- The reason(s) for the exclusion.
- The type and duration of the exclusion.
- The pupil's right to make representations to the proprietorial body.
- Details of the review process (for permanent exclusion — see Section 8).
- The date and time of any reintegration meeting (for suspensions).
- Information about the school's duty to provide work during the exclusion.
- Contact details for further information or support.

For permanent exclusions, parents are informed of their right to request a review by an independent review panel. For suspensions exceeding 5 school days, parents are informed of their right to make representations to the proprietorial body.

## 8. Review Process

### 8.1 Representations to the Proprietorial Body

Parents may make written representations to the Chair of the Proprietorial Body regarding any exclusion. For suspensions of 5 days or fewer, the proprietorial body will consider representations but is not required to convene a meeting. For suspensions exceeding 5 days or permanent exclusions, the proprietorial body will convene a meeting within 15 school days to consider the case.

## 8.2 Independent Review Panel (Permanent Exclusion)

For permanent exclusions, parents have the right to request an independent review of the decision. While independent schools are not legally required to provide an independent review panel under maintained school regulations, Vita et Pax follows best practice by offering a review process. The review panel will consider:

- Whether the exclusion decision was procedurally fair.
- Whether the decision was proportionate to the behaviour.
- Whether the Head Teacher considered all relevant factors, including any SEND.
- Whether the school's published behaviour and exclusion policies were followed.
- Any representations made by the parents and the pupil.

The review panel may uphold the exclusion, recommend that the proprietorial body reconsiders the decision, or (where it finds the decision was flawed) direct that the proprietorial body reconsiders.

## 9. Reintegration After Suspension

Following any suspension, a reintegration meeting is held before the pupil returns to school. The meeting is attended by the pupil, their parents, the Head Teacher (or a senior leader) and, where relevant, the class teacher and SENCo. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Welcome the pupil back and re-establish positive relationships.
- Discuss the behaviour that led to the suspension and its impact.
- Agree clear expectations and any additional support needed.
- Put in place a behaviour support plan or pastoral support programme if appropriate.
- Set review dates to monitor progress.

## 10. Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The school is particularly mindful of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 when considering the exclusion of a pupil with SEND. Before excluding a pupil with SEND, the Head Teacher will:

- Consider whether the behaviour is linked to the pupil's SEND.
- Review whether reasonable adjustments have been made to the behaviour policy.
- Consult with the SENCo, parents and any external professionals involved.
- Consider whether an alternative intervention (such as a managed move, additional support or a revised IEP/EHCP) would be more appropriate.
- Ensure that the decision to exclude is not discriminatory.

## 11. Exclusion of Pupils in the EYFS

The school recognises that exclusion of very young children (Nursery and Reception) is exceptionally rare and raises particular safeguarding and welfare considerations. Before excluding an EYFS pupil, the Head Teacher will exhaust all other strategies, work closely with parents and, where appropriate, seek advice from early years specialists and children's social care. The child's age, developmental stage and any unmet needs are given particular weight.

## 12. Safeguarding Considerations

Where a pupil is excluded for behaviour that may constitute a safeguarding concern (including child-on-child abuse, sexual violence, or criminal behaviour), the DSL will ensure appropriate referrals are made to children's social care, the police and/or the local authority, regardless of the exclusion. The school will also consider the needs of any victims and provide appropriate support.

## 13. Managed Moves

As an alternative to permanent exclusion, the Head Teacher may propose a managed move to another school. A managed move is a voluntary agreement between the school, the parents and the receiving school. It is not a formal exclusion and the pupil's name is not removed from the roll until the move is confirmed as successful. Managed moves are never used to circumvent the exclusion process.

## 14. Recording and Reporting

All exclusions (internal, suspension and permanent) are recorded in the school's exclusion log, which includes:

- The pupil's name, year group and any relevant SEND information.
- The type and duration of the exclusion.
- The reason for the exclusion.
- Whether alternatives to exclusion were considered.
- A copy of the notification letter to parents.
- The outcome of any review or representation.

Exclusion data is reviewed termly by the Head Teacher and the proprietorial body to identify patterns, monitor proportionality (including by ethnicity, gender, SEND and disadvantage) and ensure the policy is applied consistently and fairly.

## 15. Related Policies

- Behaviour & Discipline Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality & Accessibility Plan
- Complaints Policy

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Date: 1 March 2026