



Westbourne
House School

CHICHESTER

EXCLUSION POLICY

This is the policy of Westbourne House School, which incorporates the Prep School, Pre-Prep, Early Years Foundation Stage as well as provision for boarding

Policy Statement

Westbourne House School can reassure parents that serious disciplinary situations requiring suspension or expulsion arise only rarely. Nonetheless, it is wise and helpful for all parties to know that clear guidelines are in place in case the unexpected and the atypical do happen.

This Policy contains guidelines, which may be adapted as necessary, explaining the circumstances under which a pupil may be expelled from Westbourne House School, required to leave permanently, or suspended for misconduct or other reasons. The Policy does not cover cases when a pupil has to leave because of ill-health, non-payment of fees, or withdrawal by his or her parents.

The Behaviour and Discipline Policy (see separate document) of the School sets out clearly what our expectations are of the children at Westbourne House.

It is our policy to promote high standards of behaviour from all pupils at all times.

Terminology:

- *'Parent'* includes one or both of the parents, a legal guardian or education guardian.
- *'Withdrawal'* takes place when a parent voluntarily withdraws a pupil. This may happen on the initiative of the parents or the Headmaster. It is always a decision of the parents and is a consensual act. A withdrawal may not therefore lead to a Governors' review but may lead to a complaint under the Complaints Policy.
- *'Required Removal'* means that a pupil has been required to leave, but without the stigma of expulsion. It is therefore a decision taken by the Headmaster and is contrary to the parents' wishes. Parents therefore have a right to make a complaint under the *Complaints Policy*. Required removal can be applied if:
 - after consultation with the parents (and the pupil, if appropriate), the Headmaster considers that the conduct of a parent is unreasonable;
 - or by reason of the pupil's conduct, attitude or progress, they are unwilling or unable to benefit sufficiently from the educational opportunities and/or the community life offered by the School.

- *'Suspension' (Rustication)* means that a pupil is debarred from attending School for a specific period (never more than a week) but who will be welcomed back into the community at the conclusion of that period.
- *'Permanent Exclusion'* means that a pupil must permanently leave the School if it is proved on the balance of probabilities that they have committed a very grave breach of discipline or a serious criminal offence. Permanent exclusion is reserved for the most serious cases and normally means that the Headmaster might find it hard to recommend a pupil to another school, although he will do everything possible to assist the parents and the child. Should a parent or parents wish to make a complaint, they are entitled to make a complaint under the Complaints Policy. (See 'Appeals' paragraph below).

Aims

As outlined in the Behaviour and Discipline policy, it is a primary aim of the School that every member of the community feels valued and respected. The School has a Code of Conduct that reinforces this message amongst the pupils and this is backed up by a system of rewards and sanctions.

Practice and Procedure

All pupils will discuss the Code of Conduct and our Westbourne Way in class. They will also be made aware of the system of rewards and sanctions. Issues such as antisocial behaviour, bullying and e-safety are also discussed during 'Learning 4 Life'.

The School aims to resolve any issues pupils may have through open communication with parents. Form teachers, personal tutors (in Y7&Y8) and Heads of Year and the Head of Boarding are all available to parents and pupils should concerns be raised about behaviour of any kind. Escalating sanctions aim to deter pupils from behaving in a similar way again. Support is also given so that pupils have a proper understanding of the impact of their behaviour.

If the three levels of notes have been used, alongside detentions and meetings between parents, the Head of Year and the Deputy Head, it may be that the Head summons parents to further discuss behavioural issues.

In cases of extreme and persistent poor behaviour, suspension and expulsion may be considered as appropriate courses of action. Only the Head has the power to exclude a pupil from School. Examples of such behaviour include:

- Drug abuse (including supply, possession and use of)
- Alcohol abuse
- Smoking (including e-cigarettes and vaping)
- Theft
- Bullying (including e-bullying)

- Physical assault/threatening behaviour/fighting
- Sexual harassment
- Inappropriate and/or sexual misconduct
- Racist abuse
- Cheating in external exams
- Damage to property
- Persistent disruptive behaviour
- Swearing, verbal abuse or any malicious accusations against staff
- Parental or pupil behaviour, in the Head's reasonable opinion, leads the Head to believe that removal of the pupil from the School is in the best interests of the School or the pupil
- Bringing the School into disrepute
- Truancy

NB: the above list is not an exhaustive list and there may be other situations where the Head makes the judgement that exclusion is an appropriate sanction

If the Head excludes a pupil, he informs the parents immediately, giving reasons. At the same time, the Head makes it clear to the parents that they can, if they wish, appeal against the decision to the Governing body. The Head also informs the Governing body about any fixed-term and/or permanent exclusions.

Investigation Procedure in the Event of Potentially Serious Misconduct:

Ethos:

An investigation and any subsequent meeting will be conducted fairly and in a manner which is appropriate.

Investigation:

Investigation of a complaint or rumour concerning alleged serious misconduct will normally be co-ordinated by the Deputy Head, and its outcome will be reported to the Headmaster. The person who investigates an allegation of serious misconduct will not take the final decisions on the outcome, but their advice will naturally be sought.

Search:

On the authority of the Headmaster only, in unusual circumstances, the appropriate School staff may be asked to search a pupil's space and belongings, and ask the pupil to turn out the contents of pockets or a bag, if it is considered there is reasonable cause to do so. Two members of staff will be present for such a search. (See also the Search & Confiscation Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy.)

Interview:

If a pupil is to be interviewed formally about a complaint, arrangements might be made for the pupil to be accompanied by a member of staff.

This would not normally be the case if, for instance, a member of staff or the Deputy Head were collecting evidence relating to a possible misdemeanour(s).

Suspension:

If the Headmaster feels, after a full investigation has taken place, that it is appropriate, a pupil may be suspended and debarred from attending School for a short period of time (normally a minimum of 2 days and a maximum of a week). This might be the punishment itself or it might be the action taken by the Headmaster whilst a complaint is being fully investigated. Before suspension, the Headmaster will meet with the parent(s), explain the circumstances, and inform the parent(s) about when the pupil may return to School. **There may be no parental request for review of a suspension.**

DISCIPLINARY MEETING (where the outcome may be removal or expulsion)

Preparation:

The Chair of Governors will be informed of an investigation of a matter of potentially very serious misconduct. A short cooling-off period may take place if the Headmaster considers that this course would be helpful.

Documents available at the disciplinary meeting with the Headmaster will include:

- Written statements and notes of the evidence supporting the complaint, and any relevant correspondence.
- The investigation report.
- The pupil's School file and conduct record.
- The relevant School policies and procedures.

Attendance:

The pupil and his or her parents (if available) will be asked to attend the disciplinary meeting with the Headmaster at which the Deputy Head or a senior member of staff will explain the circumstances of the complaint and the outcome of his or her investigation. The pupil may also be accompanied by a member of staff. The pupil and his or her parents will have an opportunity to state their side of the case. Members of staff will be on hand to join the meeting if needed, and their statements will be disclosed but, in most cases, the anonymity of other pupils will be preserved.

Proceedings:

There are normally three distinct stages of a disciplinary meeting:

The Complaint:

The Headmaster will consider the complaint/s and the evidence, including statements made by and/or on behalf of the pupil. Unless the Headmaster considers that further investigation is needed, he or she will decide whether the complaint has been sufficiently proved.

The standard of proof shall be the civil standard, i.e. the balance of probabilities. Appropriate reliance may be placed on hearsay evidence.

The Headmaster will not normally refer to the pupil’s disciplinary record at this stage.

The Sanction:

If the complaint or allegation has been satisfactorily demonstrated, the Headmaster will outline the range of disciplinary sanctions which he considers are available. He will take into account any further statements which the pupil and or others present on his behalf may wish to make. The pupil’s disciplinary record will then be taken into account. At that stage, or at some later time within 48 hours, the Headmaster will provide his decision, with reasons.

Leaving status:

If the Headmaster decides that a pupil must leave the School, he will discuss the matter with the parent(s) before deciding on the pupil’s leaving status (see below).

Delayed Effect:

A decision to expel or remove a pupil shall take effect 72 hours after the decision was first communicated to a parent. Until then, the pupil shall remain suspended. If within 72 hours the parents have made a written application for a Governors’ Review, the pupil shall remain suspended until the Review has taken place.

Leaving Status

If a pupil is expelled or required to leave, his or her leaving status will be ‘expelled’ or ‘removed’.

Appeals

As stated in our Behaviour and Discipline Policy, parents who do not agree with the Head’s decision can appeal, in writing, to the Chair of Governors within five working days, stating the grounds on which they are asking for a review and the outcome that they seek. Unless any new information has come to light, appeals against exclusions will be conducted in accordance with our Complaints Policy (Stage 3 – Panel Hearing).

Monitoring and review

The School will review and monitor the effectiveness and compliance of this policy (and appendices – if appropriate). This policy will be kept up-to-date and amended to take account of legislative and regulatory changes.

Last Review Date	Next Review Date	Reviewer(s)
October 2024	September 2025	Headmaster Deputy Head