



The Dartmoor Federation comprises:

- Boasley Cross Primary School
- Bridestowe Primary School
- Exbourne Church of England Primary School
- Highampton Community Primary School
- Lydford Primary School
- Northlew & Ashbury Parochial Church of England Primary
- Okehampton College



Lydford
Primary



Okehampton
College

EXCLUSION OF PUPILS POLICY

This policy was adopted by the Dartmoor Federation Governing Body on
27 February 2014

and reviewed by the Safeguarding & Behaviour Group on
29 September 2017

The Dartmoor Federation has the highest concern for the safety and wellbeing of the whole school community, and we work hard to ensure that our ethos and environment supports student learning and success. Exclusion is a sanction used only as a last resort, and we aim to reduce the need for the use of it as far as is possible. This policy outlines the school's use of exclusions and is supported by our **Federation Behaviour Policy** available on the School website.

1. Power to exclude

The Headteacher* is the only member of staff within the school who can exclude a pupil, either permanently or for a fixed-term. In the absence of the Headteacher, the deputy head or acting Headteacher can make this decision.

The governing body can review the Headteacher's decision and consider appeals from parents of excluded pupils. They may direct the reinstatement of an excluded pupil, or uphold an exclusion after a review, but they cannot exclude a pupil themselves. For more information on the governing body's role in exclusions, see section 5.

* 'In The Dartmoor Federation, for the purpose of this policy only, "Headteacher" shall include Executive Principal, Headteacher of Okehampton College and Executive Headteacher (Primary).'

2. Reasons for exclusion

There are two main reasons for exclusion: a serious breach, or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy, or a situation where it is feared that the safety and wellbeing, or education, of other students is at risk. In line with the school's behaviour policy, the following actions constitute unacceptable behaviour and may result in permanent or fixed-term exclusions:

- verbal abuse to staff, pupils and others
- physical abuse to/attack on staff, pupils or others
- indecent behaviour
- damage to property
- supplying or misuse of illegal drugs or other substances
- theft
- serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff
- sexual abuse or assault
- carrying an offensive weapon
- arson
- unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported, and for which school sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the pupil's behaviour.

NB: The Dartmoor Federation will not exclude pupils because of their academic attainment or ability.

3. Types of exclusion

3.2 Permanent exclusion

Permanent exclusion is an extremely serious sanction, and a step taken by the school only as an absolute last resort. In most cases, permanent exclusion will be used only after various alternative strategies have been tried to improve behaviour but have been unsuccessful. There are, however, some situations in which permanent exclusion on the first offence is the only option. These include:

- serious, actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff
- sexual abuse or assault
- supplying an illegal drug
- carrying an offensive weapon
- arson

It may be necessary for the school to involve the police if the offence warrants it. All permanent exclusions will be reviewed by the governing body to ensure that

they are justified and fair. The Headteacher can withdraw an exclusion that has not yet been reviewed by the governing body.

3.3 Fixed-term exclusion

The length of a fixed-term exclusion will be set out by the school at the start of the exclusion period. A pupil may be excluded for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year) or permanently. A fixed period exclusion does not have to be for a continuous period.

A fixed-term exclusion may result from a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy. It may be a first offence or persistent disruptive behaviour that requires a tougher sanction than detention, but does not warrant permanent exclusion.

A fixed-term exclusion can be changed into a permanent exclusion by the Headteacher if the circumstances warrant it. In this case, parents or carers will be notified in writing with an explanation of why the change has occurred. During fixed-term exclusions and permanent exclusions, daytime supervision of the child is the responsibility of their parent or guardian.

An excluded pupil has no automatic right to take a public examination or National Curriculum tests on the school's premises. The governing body can decide whether or not to allow the pupil to sit the tests, and this will depend on the seriousness of the reason for exclusion.

4. Making the decision to exclude

Exclusion of any sort, for any period of time, is taken very seriously by the school, and the decision to exclude is not taken lightly. Various alternative strategies to manage behaviour will be tried before exclusion, as this sanction is only used as a last resort unless there is an immediate threat to safety within the school.

If it is decided that exclusion is necessary, the parents or carers of the pupil will be notified, and the circumstances surrounding the exclusion will be formally recorded.

4.2 Alternative behaviour management strategies

Please see our Behaviour Policy for further information on management strategies.

Internal exclusion

If a pupil needs to be removed from a lesson that is in progress, or a social situation, for disruptive behaviour or to calm down, it may be necessary to place that pupil elsewhere in the school. This may occur over break times and will be used in circumstances where it is not necessary to remove the pupil from the school site, but separation is needed. They will be placed in a Ready to Learn

classroom, Mill Meadow or somewhere where appropriate support and supervision can be provided.

Mediation

If there is a conflict between two or more pupils, a member of staff will sit down with those involved and attempt to mediate the situation through discussion. This strategy may also be used if there is a conflict between a teacher and a pupil.

Restorative justice

This strategy is dependent on the cooperation of all parties involved in an incident or situation, and will usually be used where one person has done something to upset or harm another. It can be helpful for the offender to redress the harm that they have done and hopefully learn from their mistakes. It can also provide closure for those who have been harmed.

Managed move

It may be in the best interest of a pupil to have a chance of a fresh start by moving to another school. This will only occur in consent with parents, the LA, the head teacher, and the school's governing body. The new school will be asked by the Headteacher to accept the pupil.

Parents will not be put under any pressure to agree to a managed move, especially in fear of a permanent exclusion, and the school will do everything it can to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible.

4.3 Looked-after children and young people

Dartmoor Federation understands that looked-after children and young people may be more susceptible to having behavioural problems due to additional problems they may face at home. We work in conjunction with all relevant childcare authorities to support looked-after children and try every possible means of keeping them in school. Before any decision to exclude is made, the school will:

- consult the LA about alternative options to support a looked-after pupil
- consult the LA about what alternative provision will be available if the pupil is excluded
- involve the child's social worker as early as possible to help the school avoid exclusion
- work with the foster carer to improve the pupil's behaviour.

4.4 Pupils with special educational needs or a disability (SEND)

Pupils with SEND

Our school's full SEND provision is outlined in our **special educational needs policy**. We work hard to accommodate students who have behavioural difficulties or difficulties with elements of social interaction as part of their SEN. The school

will try every practical alternative to exclusion, but there may be some cases where it cannot be avoided.

If a permanent exclusion is made, the Headteacher will use the time between the initial decision and the governing body's review to see whether a change of circumstances might enable the school to withdraw the exclusion. It may be the case that more support is needed for the pupil, or that it is in the child's best interest that their statement be changed to name a different school, in which case the school will work with the LA and the child's parents or carers to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Pupils with a disability

If a pupil with a disability is under consideration for exclusion, the Headteacher will ensure that all other possible outcomes have been tried. To justify excluding a pupil with a disability for a reason related to their disability, there must be material and substantial reason. The erosion of order and discipline in the school may be material and substantial justification, but only if reasonable adjustments have been made for the pupil's disability. You can find more information on reasonable adjustments in our **school accessibility plan**.

4.5 Ethnicity

Dartmoor Federation does not discriminate against any person and our school ethos is one of inclusion, equality, and diversity. If any person feels that they have been discriminated against due to their ethnicity they may make a formal complaint to the school following the process outlined in our **school complaints procedure**.

4.6 Investigating the circumstances

Disruptive behaviour or actions that may warrant discipline will always be investigated before the decision to exclude is made, unless there is a threat to the safety of pupils or others at the school.

When establishing the facts in relation to an exclusion decision the Headteacher must apply the civil standard of proof, ie 'on the balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that a fact is true, rather than the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

Before the decision to exclude is made, the Headteacher will:

- ensure that the school has made a thorough investigation
- consider all the evidence available when looking to support the allegations
- encourage the pupil to give his or her version of events
- take into account the school's behaviour policy and equal opportunities policy, and relevant equalities legislation

- find out whether the behaviour may have been provoked, for example in the case of racial or sexual harassment, or bullying
- consult other people as necessary (but not anyone on the governing body or management committee who may later have a role in reviewing the decision)
- keep a written record of discussions, interviews and actions, and retain copies of written records made by other members of staff, ensuring that witness statements are dated and signed if possible.

4.7 Confidentiality

The school will deal with all cases of exclusion and the surrounding circumstances confidentially. Information will be shared only with those who need to know it, and a breach of this may result in disciplinary action.

4.8 Recording and notifying the decision to exclude

All exclusions will be formally recorded and the Headteacher will contact the parents or carers of the pupil immediately once the decision has been made to exclude, specifying why this action has been taken and the length of time that it will last. If the pupil is over 18, they will be notified directly. The decision will be confirmed in writing. The Headteacher will notify the governing body and LA within one day of the decision to exclude being made.

5. Reviewing an exclusion

The governing body will review fixed-term exclusions of any length on request by parents who feel that the sanction is unjustified. They will automatically review all cases of permanent exclusion, as well as any fixed-term exclusions that would lead to a pupil being excluded for more than 15 days of a school term or missing a public exam. The review panel will look at the evidence and the records leading up to the exclusion and decide whether the Headteacher has made a fair decision and if exclusion is the appropriate sanction.

The members of the governing body who are on the review panel will have the appropriate training to fulfil the role, and notes will be taken of any review proceedings.

Parents who want to appeal an exclusion can contact the governing body in writing to The Clerk to Governors c/o Okehampton College, Mill Road Okehampton Devon EX20 1PW or by emailing the Chair of Governors, chair@okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk. Parents will be invited to a review meeting and are entitled to bring a friend or legal representative with them. Parents will be asked to provide the governing body with any written statements or evidence that they might have relating to the exclusion prior to the review meeting so that these can be circulated amongst the review panel. There will be

an opportunity during the review meeting for parents to ask questions of the other parties.

The pupil concerned is encouraged to attend if they are able to fully understand the proceedings. Dartmoor Federation believes that pupils should be encouraged to take part in the review process and feel that they are listened to. This will hopefully increase the chance of a positive behaviour pattern emerging in the future.

5.2 Notification of the review decision

Parents will be notified of the outcome of the review meeting in writing. This letter will also outline how parents can request a review by the independent panel at the LA's expense if they are unhappy with the outcome of the governing body's review. The outcome will be one of the following:

- **Unlawful exclusion**

If the review panel has found that the exclusion has been made unlawfully, it will not stand. The governing body will not investigate further. Parents who have a complaint about an unlawful exclusion should follow the procedures set out in the **school's complaints policy** to report it.

- **Upholding the exclusion**

If the review panel finds that the exclusion is fair and just, they will uphold the decision to exclude. In this case, a letter will be sent to the parent or carer of the child outlining:

- the decision
- the reason for the decision
- the parent's right to appeal to an independent appeal panel
- the name and contact details of the person to whom to send a notice of appeal
- the date by which a notice of appeal should be given
- that the notice of appeal must set out the grounds for appeal
- that the notice of appeal should set out any grounds for alleging disability discrimination if this is the case.

- **Reinstating the pupil**

If the review panel decides that it is appropriate to reinstate the pupil immediately or by a given date, support will be given to ensure that the pupil is easily reintegrated into the school. *This will include a reintegration interview with the Headteacher and parent or carer on school grounds, during which a pastoral support plan will be drawn up.*

A copy of the letter detailing the outcome will be put in the student's academic records along with any relevant papers. The governing body may also decide to arrange for an educational provision offsite to improve the child's behaviour, such as an anger management course.

6. During an exclusion

Although the school has made the decision to exclude a pupil, we maintain responsibility for the education of that child and will do everything that we can to minimise the disruption to their education.

For the first five days of any type of exclusion, the school will set and mark work that the child should complete at home under parental supervision.

From the sixth day onwards, if the exclusion is fixed-term, the school will arrange for alternative full-time educational provision. If the exclusion is permanent, the LA will arrange for this provision having assessed the child's needs. Alternative provision might be arranged at:

- another school in the area
- a shared joint facility
- a pupil referral unit
- a private provider
- a local FE college.

If the child has a statement of special educational needs, the alternative provision will meet those needs.

Further information, including the full formal exclusion process, can be found in the statutory guidance on exclusion from school at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Signed by

_____ **Chair of Governors** **Date:** 29 September 2017

_____ **Executive Principal** **Date:** 29 September 2017

_____ **Headteacher of Okehampton College** **Date:** 29 September 2017

_____ **Executive Headteacher (Primary)** **Date:** 29 September 2017