



Merton Abbey Primary School Exclusion Policy October 2024

This policy will be reviewed and updated as and when necessary in relation to any changes in legislation.

Next review date: **October 2026**

Member of staff responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy: **Michael Bradley, Head Teacher**

Statement of principles

The behaviour at Merton Abbey is very good, but we want it to be excellent. We have a behaviour policy which includes a structure for sanctions and rewards. This exclusions policy should be read in conjunction with the behaviour policy, which sets out clear consequences for unwanted behaviours. Along with this, serious one-off incidents may lead to the child being excluded, either for a fixed period or permanently, depending on the seriousness of the incident.

Decision to suspend or exclude

A decision to exclude will be made if allowing the child to remain in school would seriously harm his/her welfare or that of others in the school. Serious behaviours include persistent disruptive behaviour, physical and verbal assaults, inappropriate use of social media or online technology, racism, abuse against any protected characteristic, threat or damage to property. Only the Headteacher or, in his absence, the deputy head teacher, may exclude a child.

A fixed period exclusion, now called a suspension, will be for the shortest time necessary and will usually be between 1 and 3 days (as evidence suggests that this is long enough to secure the benefits of exclusion). A decision to permanently exclude will only be taken as a last resort when other strategies have been tried without success, unless the nature of the incident is such as to justify this – for example where there is serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or member of staff. It is possible to extend a fixed period suspension into a permanent exclusion if further evidence that justifies this comes to light.

Before deciding to suspend or exclude a child, the Headteacher will ensure that:

- a thorough investigation has been carried out
- the child being considered for suspension or exclusion has been encouraged to give their version of events
- consideration is given to whether the incident may have been provoked, for example by bullying or by racial harassment

- a written record of actions taken and interviews with the child are kept - including any witness statements which should be signed and dated wherever possible.
- A suspension or exclusion is only made where the evidence shows that it is more likely than not that child was responsible for the incident.

Action following any suspension or exclusion

Once a decision has been made to suspend or exclude, the parents/carers of the child will be notified immediately - by phone if possible and followed up by letter. The appropriate standard letter will be used. Where possible the letter will be translated if the parents/carers' first language is not English.

The law allows head teachers to suspend a pupil for one or more fixed periods which, when added together, do not amount to more than forty-five school days in any one school year. Merton Abbey Primary will provide education to any of its pupils suspended for a fixed period of up to five days. This will normally be age-appropriate work to be completed at home. We expect the child's primary carer to cooperate with the school in ensuring that this work is completed. Merton Abbey will arrange for the work to be marked.

If a pupil is suspended for six or more days Merton Abbey Primary will arrange suitable full-time educational provision – for a minimum of 23.5 hours a week for the remaining period of the suspension.

When a fixed period suspension comes to an end, the Headteacher will arrange a reintegration interview with the parents/carers of the suspended child. The child will also attend the interview. This interview will discuss:

- the importance of the parents/carers working with the school to support their child improving their behaviour
- how behaviour issues can be addressed
- any circumstances that may be affecting the child's behaviour
- how best the child can be reintegrated, the measures to be put in place to prevent further misbehaviour
- whether the parents/carers need any help with managing their child's behaviour (e.g. parenting skills training)

This interview will be held on school premises within two weeks of the child returning to school at the end of their suspension and if possible on the day the child returns to school. The Headteacher will try and arrange it for a time that is convenient for the child's primary carer, but at least one of the child's parents/carers is expected to attend. The school will keep a record of any parent/carer's failure to attend a reintegration interview.

During the initial five days of a fixed period suspension or permanent exclusion, the parents/carers of the suspended/excluded child must ensure that he or she is not present in a public place during normal school hours without reasonable justification. This requirement applies whether or not the child is in the company of the parent/carer. If a parent/carer fails to comply with this requirement it is an offence.

The Headteacher and colleagues in the London Borough of Merton are able to offer a parenting contract if they consider that parents/carers could do more to improve the

behaviour of their child. If a parent/carer refuses to engage with Merton Abbey in improving their child's behaviour, the Headteacher will consider whether to apply for a parenting order from the court to compel the parents/carers to comply with certain requirements including attendance at parenting classes.

The Headteacher will notify the school's governing body and the London Borough of Merton of any permanent exclusions; fixed period suspension over five days; and suspension/exclusions which would result in a child missing public examinations.

If notified of a suspension or exclusion, the governing body must review any permanent exclusion or fixed period suspension which would result in a pupil being suspended for more than 15 school days in any one term or missing a public examination. This review will consider whether the child should be reinstated. This review is conducted by the governing body's Discipline Committee which is made up of three governors who have not been involved in the decision to exclude. The parents/carers of the suspended/excluded child will be notified of the result of the review in writing. The committee should set out the reasons for its decision in sufficient detail to enable all parties to understand why the decision was made. The letter notifying the parents/carers of the suspension/exclusion will also set out clearly the rights of parents/carers to appeal and make representations and how they can do this.

A decision to permanently exclude is very unlikely to be made at Merton Abbey Primary School. However, in the event that it is, the parents/carers of the excluded pupil will be provided with up to date guidance on the procedures. A parent/carer has a right to appeal to both the Governing body and an Independent Appeal Panel against a decision to permanently exclude. The parents/carers of the excluded child will be notified of the result of the Independent Appeal Panel.

Removing a permanently excluded pupil's name from the school register

The governing board must ensure that a pupil's name is removed from the register if 15 school days have passed since the parents and carers were notified of the governing board's decision to not reinstate the pupil and no application has been made for an independent review panel; or the parents and carers have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent review panel.

Where an application for an independent review panel has been made within 15 school days, the school must wait until the review has been determined or abandoned; and the governing board has completed any reconsideration recommended or directed by the panel before removing a pupil from the register.