



## POLICY

### Suspension & Permanent Exclusion (England)

#### Education Universal

Policy Author	Laura Dickie, Head of Policy Tonia Lewis, Education and Quality Improvement Lead
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Policy Approver	Jo Dunn, Compliance, Regulation and Quality Director
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Staff groups affected	All Education

#### Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the service's established governance and quality assurance systems. Responsibility for ensuring that the policy remains compliant with legislation and regulatory frameworks sits with the Proprietor Representative and Regional Lead.

A formal review of this policy will be undertaken no later than three years from the date of approval, or sooner if changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or operational requirements necessitate it.

The Head of Policy will support this process by identifying relevant changes in legislation, regulation, national standards and emerging best practice. The Head of Policy will also incorporate learning from inspections, audits and practice developments into future revisions whilst overseeing all proposed amendments to the universal content to ensure accuracy, consistency and compliance.

**Alison Lewis – Interim Head Teacher**

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## Terminology

Our aim is to use consistent terminology throughout this policy and all supporting documentation as follows:

Term	Definition
<b>'Establishment' or 'Site'</b>	A generic term referring to the school/college owned by CareTech.
<b>Learner</b>	Any child or young person under the age of 18, or young adult over 18 who receives education.
<b>Service Head</b>	The senior person with overall responsibility for the school/college.
<b>Tutor/Teacher</b>	Members of staff who have teaching responsibility for learners at the school/college.
<b>Parent/Carer</b>	Parent or person with parental responsibility.
<b>Regulatory Authority</b>	The independent regulatory body responsible for inspecting and regulating services (e.g., Ofsted, Estyn, Education Scotland).
<b>Social Worker</b>	The worker allocated to the individual learner; if none is allocated, the Duty Social Worker or Team Manager is responsible.
<b>Placing Authority</b>	The local authority/agency responsible for placing the learner or commissioning the service.
<b>Local Authority</b>	The local authority for the establishment's location.
<b>Staff</b>	All staff working at the location, including employed staff, students on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and proprietors.



## 1. Local School/College Profile

Cambian Oakwood School is an independent specialist day school providing education for children and young people aged 5–16 with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. The school operates within the Cambian Group. Oakwood School serves a small, highly specialised cohort of learners who typically present with complex SEMH needs, often alongside attachment difficulties, autism spectrum conditions, a history of trauma, and challenging behaviour. Many pupils have experienced significant disruption to their education, including placement breakdowns and negative prior experiences of schooling. Most learners are placed through Local Authorities, and the majority have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The school's ethos is shaped by Cambian's core values of Engage, Empower, Aspire, Achieve and Excel, with a clear moral purpose to help every learner reach their personal best, however that may be defined for them. Oakwood's vision is to raise confidence and self-esteem through inspiring, personalised learning experiences, enabling pupils to develop resilience, independence and ambition, and to make a positive contribution to their communities

Cambian Oakwood School provides a specialist, child-centred learning environment for pupils who have previously struggled to access education. Through high expectations, compassionate practice and a commitment to inclusion, the school supports learners to rebuild their confidence, re-engage with learning and progress academically, socially and emotionally at a pace that is right for them.

## 2. Purpose

This policy applies to Cambian Oakwood School and sets out the principles, expectations and strategies used to promote positive behaviour, emotional regulation and positive relationships for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

It provides a universal framework and outlines the expectations that apply to:

- Staff
- Senior leaders
- Learners
- Visitors and contractors (where relevant)

This policy enables Cambian Oakwood School to meet its statutory duties, uphold safeguarding responsibilities, comply with data protection requirements and maintain high-quality provision that supports pupils' behaviour, wellbeing and readiness to learn.

It also establishes the organisation's commitment to Positive Behaviour Support (PBS), ensuring that all behaviour approaches are proactive, relational, learner-centred and grounded in an understanding of individual need. PBS promotes



consistency, reduces restrictive practices, and supports learners to develop self-regulation, social communication and lifelong coping skills.

### 3. Scope

This is an organisational policy that applies across all sites, services and education functions.

It establishes the universal standards that every site must follow. Each site implements the policy in line with the correct national legislative framework and regulatory requirements, as summarised in **Appendices A–C**.

### 4. Local Adaptation Requirement

Sections marked **[Adapt Locally]** must be completed by each site to reflect local procedures or national equivalents, including (but not limited to):

- Safeguarding frameworks
- Inspection expectations
- Curriculum/quality frameworks
- Local authority reporting routes
- Data protection contacts
- Local governance arrangements

All local content must be:

- Accurate
- Up to date
- Fully aligned with the universal standards in this policy
- Consistent with the statutory expectations of the nation in which the site operates

Where no local equivalent exists, the universal content applies in full.

### 5. Legal and Regulatory Context

Every site operates under the statutory requirements, safeguarding duties and inspection arrangements of its home nation. Universal standards are applied consistently, while national variations are addressed in **Appendices A–C**.

Terminology:

- **England:** *Suspension* (temporary), *Permanent Exclusion* (permanent)

### 6. Reasons for Suspension/Exclusion

Suspension is a **last resort** and may only be considered when:

- There is significant damage to property



- Behaviour requires significant intervention and supportive strategies have been exhausted
- There is a serious breach of site behaviour policies
- Allowing the learner to remain on site would seriously harm the education or welfare of the learner or others
- Decisions must be proportionate and evidenced with clear rationale

## 7. Procedures for Suspending/Excluding a Learner

The **Headteacher/Principal** must:

- Carry out a full, fair investigation and ensure the learner has the opportunity to give their account
- Consider reasonable adjustments for learners with SEND
- Consider care-experienced status and safeguarding implications
- Consult relevant staff (but not anyone involved in the review/appeal process)
- Ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and national safeguarding frameworks
- Assess whether the incident was provoked or influenced by contextual factors
- Reach a decision on the balance of probabilities
- Inform the Regional Education Lead of any decision to suspend for awareness.

## 8. Notification and Appeals Process

### Immediate Notification

The site must:

- Contact parents/carers (or the learner if over 18) without delay by telephone
- Follow this with written confirmation within one school day

The written notification must include:

- Dates and duration of the suspension
- Reason(s)
- Rights to make representations and appeal
- Key contact details (Headteacher/Principal or Regional Lead)
- Return arrangements and work/learning provision

### Appeal Rights and Timescales

- Parents/carers have one week from the date of the letter to submit an appeal in writing
- Appeals will be heard by the Proprietor Representatives, normally within three weeks
- Parents/carers may bring a representative
- All papers relied upon by the school/college must be shared in advance

### Access to Records

Parents/carers may request the learner's record. The site must comply within 15 school days — but in suspension cases, sites should respond promptly.



### Confidentiality

Suspension cases are confidential and shared only with those who need to know in order to safeguard learners, ensure fairness or meet statutory duties.

## 9. When Suspension Is Not Appropriate

Suspension/Exclusion must **never** be used for:

- Minor issues such as incomplete homework
- Poor academic performance
- Lateness or truancy
- Pregnancy
- Situations where the learner is being punished for parental actions

## 10. Responsibilities Following a Decision

The **Headteacher** must:

- Notify the learner (and parents/carers, where appropriate)
- Inform relevant professionals (Regional Education Lead, Social Worker, Virtual School Head etc.)
- Ensure SLT communicates key details (type, duration, return arrangements, rights of appeal)
- Send formal written confirmation
- Notify the Local Authority (where required) and complete LA-specific documentation
- Report permanent affecting public examinations to the LA **within one working day**
- For care-experienced learners, notify the placing authority's social services **immediately**

## 11. Types of Suspension/Exclusion

### Permanent Exclusion

Used only for the most serious breaches and when allowing the learner to remain on site would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

### Suspension (England)

- Must not exceed 45 school days in a single academic year
- Should be as short as possible (typically 1–3 days)
- For any suspensions over 3 days, the Regional Education Lead must give approval
- Indefinite exclusions are unlawful

### Substance or Alcohol-Related Incidents

- Specialist advice must be sought
- Permanent exclusion considered only in the most serious cases



## 12. Alternatives to Suspension/Exclusion

Before considering exclusion, sites must explore appropriate alternatives, including:

- Pastoral Support Plans
- Restorative approaches
- Outreach or alternative provision
- Early Help/Early Intervention

## 13. Decision-Making Authority

Only the **Headteacher/Principal** or the most senior leader acting in their absence, may authorise exclusion/suspension. For Cambian Oakwood, this would be the Deputy Head Teacher or the Pastoral Lead in the Head Teacher's absence.

This decision is made in consultation with the Regional Education Lead and cannot be routinely delegated.

## 14. Education During Exclusion / Suspension

Learning must continue. Sites will:

- Provide physical or digital work
- Share resources via agreed platforms (e.g., Seesaw, secure portals, school websites)
- Expect completed work to be returned for assessment

## Equality Impact Statement

This policy has been developed to promote equality, safeguard individual's rights, and ensure fair and inclusive practice across all services. The potential impact of the policy on children, young people, young adults, families, and staff with protected characteristics has been considered in line with the Equality Act 2010.

No negative impacts have been identified. Staff must apply this policy with sensitivity to individual need and make reasonable adjustments to ensure equitable access, safety, wellbeing, and participation for every individual. Any emerging risks of differential impact should be reported and addressed through ongoing review and quality assurance.

## Appendices

Appendix A – Legal and Regulatory Framework in England



## Appendix A

Legislation, guidance and regulatory framework underpinning Suspension and Permanent Exclusion in England.

### Suspension and Permanent Exclusion: Statutory Guidance (DfE)

- **Means:** Statutory guidance on **suspension (temporary)** and **permanent exclusion** for schools/PRUs, setting definitions, thresholds, notifications, governing board/IRP processes and timescales.
- **Requires:** Headteacher/Principal uses lawful, proportionate processes; issues letters “without delay”; senior leaders meet national deadlines; complete records available for inspectors.
- **Our stance:** England sites follow this guidance in full and use organisation templates that mirror its content and timelines.
- **Implementation example:** Case file contains investigation notes, decision rationale, compliant letters, governing board/IRP minutes, and a reintegration plan.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

### Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

- **Means:** Statutory safeguarding guidance for schools and under 18s in colleges; exclusion decisions must align with safeguarding culture, DSL oversight and information-sharing duties.
- **Requires:** DSL review of risk/vulnerability; secure recording; timely referrals where thresholds are met; inspectors triangulate exclusion decisions with safeguarding evidence.
- **Our stance:** DSL/DSP reviews every proposed suspension/exclusion and signs the recorded risk considerations.
- **Implementation example:** Exclusion pack includes DSL risk note and any multi-agency contacts or referrals.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

### Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE)

- **Means:** Departmental guidance on applying Equality Act duties to school decisions, including **non-discrimination** and **reasonable adjustments** relevant to exclusions.
- **Requires:** Decisions explicitly consider protected characteristics and adjustments; inspectors expect written equality reasoning in the decision record.
- **Our stance:** Decision forms include an equality/adjustments checklist completed before confirmation of exclusion.
- **Implementation example:** File shows what adjustments were tried/considered and why exclusion remained proportionate.



- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>

#### SEND Code of Practice (0–25)

- **Means:** Statutory guidance on identifying/meeting SEND; requires proper consideration of needs, EHC plans and reasonable adjustments before exclusion.
- **Requires:** Evidence of graduated response and support planning; inspectors check consistency with SEND duties where excluded learners have SEND.
- **Our stance:** England sites evidence the support sequence and, where relevant, EHC links prior to exclusion.
- **Implementation example:** Pack contains SEN plan/EHC excerpts, reviews, and rationale for last-resort decision.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

#### Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISS)

- **Means:** Legal standards for independent schools, including **welfare, health and safety (Part 3)**, information (Part 6), complaints (Part 7) and leadership (Part 8) relevant to exclusions.
- **Requires:** Written behaviour/exclusion procedures, compliant communications and records, and leadership oversight evidenced for inspection.
- **Our stance:** Policy and evidence are mapped to the relevant ISS Parts for exclusions.
- **Implementation example:** ISS compliance matrix links each exclusion step to Parts 3/6/7/8 and to the site's evidence store.
- **Links:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283>

#### Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF)

- **Means:** National framework for inspecting education providers (incl. non-association independents and independent FE) covering behaviour, personal development, leadership and safeguarding culture.
- **Requires:** Evidence that exclusions are proportionate/rare, well-recorded, monitored for patterns/disproportionality, and followed by purposeful reintegration.
- **Our stance:** We present an exclusions dashboard, sampling packs and leadership evaluation aligned to EIF judgment areas.
- **Implementation example:** SLT termly report shows trends, equality breakdown and actions taken, ready for inspection.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework/education-inspection-framework-for-use-from-november-2025>