

Hill House School Policy

Exclusion of Individuals in our Care

Hill House School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all students fulfil their potential.

Purpose

This policy deals with the exclusion of individuals in our care at Hill House as a DfE register school.

It affects all staff.

Make sure that you are familiar with the detail and what is expected of you under the policy.

The purpose of the policy is:

- To ensure that Hill House (as part of the Cambian Group) complies with all the relevant current legislation and other National Standards which govern this area of our work.
- To have in place Exclusion policies and procedures relating to Exclusion and Appeals against Exclusion which meet the tenets of natural justice.
- To provide the Head of service with a mechanism that allows them to take appropriate steps to deal with individuals in our care whose needs cannot be met at a particular time and whose continued presence would be detrimental to the safety or welfare of themselves or others.

Policy

This policy only applies to individuals in our care who are resident in establishments which are registered with the DfE as residential schools.

A decision to exclude an individual is a serious one. Individuals in our care shall only be excluded in extreme circumstances and, generally, only where all available strategies have proved unsuccessful.

Only a Head of Service (or in the absence of the Principal, the Vice Principal) has the authority to exclude an individual in our care.

Individuals in our care shall only be excluded on either a permanent basis, or for a fixed term not exceeding 45 days in any one school year, in accordance with the guidelines and statutory requirements laid down by the DfE.

An Appeals Procedure shall be in place to enable the placing authority to appeal against a permanent exclusion.

There shall be no right of appeal against fixed term exclusions.

The Head of service must consult and liaise with the Director of Operations and involve parents and the placing authority at any time when circumstances arise in relation to any individual in our care which could eventually lead to an exclusion and at all stages before a decision to exclude an individual in our care, either for a fixed term or permanently, is made. This will avoid short notice developments and allow as much time as possible for pre-planning by all concerned.

Within the 48 hours following any exclusion the Head of Service shall provide confirmation of and full information (including a record of the actions taken by staff) regarding the exclusion, in writing, to the parents, placing authorities and the Director of Operations.

Informal or unofficial exclusions are illegal regardless of whether they are done with the agreement of carers. However, there may be occasions where specific and unusual circumstances suggest that rather than using a fixed-term exclusion, an individual in our care returns home with the agreement of the Head of Service, the parents and the LA for a cooling-off period e.g. where such a measure would prevent an occurrence that would lead to a fixed- term exclusion.

The Head of Service must provide a date and time when the individual in our care should return to the school. In the case of a permanent exclusion, the date it takes effect.

The Head of Service must arrange a reintegration interview with parents during or following the expiry of any fixed term exclusion. If possible the interview should be held on the day the individual in our care returns to school. Where it is appropriate the individual in our care should normally attend all or part of the interview. The purpose of the reintegration interview is to assist the reintegration of the Individual and promote the improvement of his or her behaviour. It provides an opportunity to discuss how behaviour problems can be addressed, what measures can be put in place to support his/her continued education. It is good practice to combine the notice relating to a reintegration interview with the notice of informing the parent of the exclusion.

In the case of a student aged 18 or over the legislation allows them to appear on their own behalf.

Procedures

The Head of service should note that this policy has been adopted by the Group on the basis that all establishments will carry out comprehensive pre-placement and initial placement assessments on every Individual to ensure that his or her needs can be met satisfactorily before a placement is finally confirmed. Accordingly, it is anticipated that the authority to exclude an individual in our care will be used only in exceptional circumstances (usually where the issue which has arisen could not reasonably, and or by proper prior assessment, have been previously foreseen).

In establishments catering for individuals with complex learning difficulties who are placed in the establishment in question for 52 weeks a year, exclusion should only be considered and take place where:

The degree or frequency of the individual in our care's severe challenging behaviours increases to such a significant extent beyond those apparent and in the contemplation of the parties at the time of his/her admission, and poses an unacceptable risk to the individual in our care, other individuals in our care or staff.

The individual in our care's medical or psychiatric condition becomes such that he/she requires specialist medical or psychiatric treatment of a kind that the establishment concerned is not equipped and/or qualified to provide.

Fixed Term Exclusion

In the event of the fixed term exclusion of an individual in our care with complex learning difficulties (placed at the establishment for 52 weeks a year) the following procedures should be observed:

- The parents and Authority will be notified by telephone at least seven days before such exclusion takes place, and the exclusion to be confirmed in writing not later than 48 hours after the telephoned notification.
- Following any such notice the establishment and the Authority will consult together in partnership to determine how the Individual's new needs should best be met.
- At the start of any period of exclusion the individual in our care will be returned to the care of the Authority/parent(s)/guardian(s) as appropriate until either agreement is reached between the establishment and the Authority for the Individual's return to the establishment or the expiry of the fixed period of the exclusion, whichever is earlier. The cost of any transport shall not be the responsibility of the establishment.
- The fees will continue to be paid at the full rate and accommodation will continue to be held available for the individual in our care at the establishment until the individual in our care returns to the establishment or is permanently excluded or the placement contract is otherwise terminated.

In the event of a fixed term exclusion of an individual in our care with Asperger Syndrome/Autism (placed at the establishment during term time only) the following procedures should be observed:

- The parents and Authority will be notified by telephone at least 24 hours before such an exclusion takes place except in the case of emergency when such telephone notification will be given at the earliest time practicable and in each case confirmed in writing not later than 48 hours after the telephoned notification.
- The individual in our care will be returned to the care of the Authority/ parent(s) / guardian(s) as appropriate until either agreement is reached between the establishment and the Authority for the individual in our care's return to the establishment or the expiry of the fixed period of the exclusion, whichever is earlier. The arrangements and cost of any transport shall not be the responsibility of the establishment. However, where the Principal makes arrangements for returning the individual in our care home, she/he may decide that the cost will be borne by the establishment.
- Fees will continue to be paid at the full rate and accommodation will continue to be held available for the individual in our care at the establishment until the individual in our care returns to the establishment or is permanently excluded or the agreement is otherwise terminated.

Permanent Exclusion

Written notice of any permanent exclusion of the individual in our care will be given to the Authority and the individuals in our care parent(s)/guardian(s) and will include details of the Appeals Procedure which the Authority will then be entitled to exercise in accordance with the terms of such procedure. Details of the Appeals Procedure are set out in the Policy section above.

The Head of service shall note that, where exclusion is permanent, the placing authority ceases to be responsible for the payment of fees as from the date of the decision to permanently exclude. The Fees Invoicing Department of the Group shall therefore be informed without delay of that date in order that the necessary amendments can be made to fee invoice procedures.

Parents and placing authorities should be informed of The Behaviour Support Policy and this policy on Exclusion when individuals in our care are admitted.

Where exclusions take place, a summary document shall be produced by the Head of Service giving details of the circumstances leading up to the exclusion. This should be forwarded to those parties referred to at para 2.7 above.

Excluded individuals in our care shall only be handed over to a responsible and known adult.

If the parent does not comply with the request of the Head of Service to receive the individual in our care at home, the school must have due regard for the individual's safety in deciding what action to take. If efforts to resolve the issue with the parents are unsuccessful the Head of Service should seek advice from Social Services and consider whether to contact the Education Welfare Service.

All exclusion cases should be treated in the strictest confidence. Only those who need to know the details of exclusion should be informed of them.

Where appropriate, individuals in our care on fixed term exclusions shall be given work to be done at home and returned to the schools/centre for marking.

Individual fixed term exclusions should be for the shortest time necessary.

Every effort should be made to avoid exclusions which result in an individual missing a Public examination.

In operating the procedures in this policy, the Head of Service should take note of the general guidance issued by the DfE in the updated 2017 document "Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England A guide for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion".

The guidance is designed to ensure fairness and openness in the handling of exclusions and whilst it is not strictly binding on independent schools it is the Group's policy to have regard to it in managing exclusions.

Exclusion Appeal Procedures

General Principles

Natural justice and the intention that independent establishments catering wholly or mainly for individuals in our care with SEN shall operate procedures similar to those required of maintained schools require that an Appeals Procedure against the permanent exclusion of an individual in our care shall be in place.

There shall not be an Appeals Procedure in relation to fixed term exclusions, only in relation to permanent exclusions.

The appeal shall be entered on behalf of the individual in our care and in his/her best interests and will, in effect, be an appeal for his/her reinstatement.

The appeal shall be entered by the placing authority (as the party with whom the establishment has a contract) which shall undertake such prior consultations with parents/guardians as it thinks fit.

Notwithstanding the above, Cambian Group retains the right of final decision which shall be binding on all parties.

Appeals Procedure

If and when the decision to permanently exclude has been made the placing authority (referred to below as 'the authority') and the parents/guardians will be informed in writing of the right to appeal and told of the procedure for doing so by letter in the form attached.

The appeal by the authority must:

- be in writing;
- be sent to the Head of the establishment within one calendar month of the date of the notification letter under 4.1;
- specify in reasonable detail the grounds upon which the appeal is based.

When a written appeal, in correct order, has been received, it shall be passed by the Head of Service to the Director of Operations for action. The Head of Service shall be responsible for ensuring that the appeal is in correct order and will liaise with the authority as necessary, in writing, with a view to establishing as clearly as possible the issues to be considered by the Appeals Committee.

The Chief Operating Officer/Director of Operations shall, within two weeks of receiving the appeal, convene a meeting of an Appeals Committee consisting of two nominees of the Board (either or both of whom may be members of the Board and one of whom will chair the meeting) and an independent person of suitable stature. The nominees of the Board shall not be members of staff of the establishment concerned.

The Chief Operating Officer/Director of Operation shall inform the authority of the proposed meeting and of its right to be present together with (at the authority's discretion) the individuals in our care parents/guardians and/or their representatives, and/or to make representations, in writing, to the Appeals Committee (the names of the members of which will have been provided by the Director of Operations prior to the hearing).

Within five working days after the date of the meeting of the Appeals Committee its decision shall be notified, in writing, by the Chief Operating Officer/Director of Operations to the authority and the Head of the establishment.

There will be no further right of appeal against the decision of the Appeals Committee.

During the period from the date of the decision to permanently exclude until the final determination of any appeal:

- the individual in our care shall remain excluded and must not be deleted from either the attendance register or the attendance register until the appeal process has been completed;
- no fees will be payable.

General

Details of the Appeals Procedure shall be available within every establishment.

Details of the Appeals Procedure shall be available on request to parents, local authorities or authorised agencies, but shall only be required to be sent to those concerned as noted above.

This Appeals Procedure will only be followed when the appeal is against the decision to make a permanent exclusion and will be an appeal for reinstatement. If the authority or parent or other person wishes to complain about the manner in which the exclusion was affected or the failure of the establishment to fulfil its duty of care (as opposed to the fact of the exclusion itself) the official Complaints Procedure should be followed.

Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Principal.

Principal of Hill House;
Kate Landells
Hill House School, Boldre, Lymington, Hants. SO41 8NE
Tel: 01590 672147
Email: kate.landells@cambiagroup.com

November 2021

Review Date: November 2022