



Exclusion Policy

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1. Policy Statement of Aims

1.1 ReFocus is committed to providing high-quality education within a safe, structured, and supportive environment. We recognise that many of our learners have experienced challenges in mainstream education, and our approach prioritises relationships, consistency, and therapeutic support.

1.2 While our ethos is to use restorative practice and alternative strategies wherever possible, there may be occasions when suspension or permanent exclusion is necessary to protect the wellbeing of students and staff, or to uphold a safe and productive learning environment.

1.3 We aim to:

Apply decisions on suspension or exclusion fairly, lawfully, and consistently.

- Safeguard the rights of students, parents/carers, and staff.
- Ensure that decisions are transparent and informed by natural justice and proportionality.
- Work to minimise the risk of students becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).
- Maintain our commitment to inclusion while recognising that in rare cases, suspension/exclusion is an appropriate last resort.

1.4 ReFocus will never engage in unlawful “off-rolling” practices, nor will we exclude on the basis of SEND, academic ability, or unmet conditions such as reintegration meeting attendance.

2. Legislative and Statutory Framework

2.1 This policy is informed by and compliant with:

- DfE Statutory Guidance on Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions (August 2024)
- Education Act 2002 (as amended by the Education Act 2011)
- School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Part 7, Chapter 2)
- Education Act 1996 (s.579)
- Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) Regulations 2007 (as amended 2014)
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014

2.2 As an independent school, ReFocus follows these statutory duties but is not bound by local authority governance structures. Oversight rests with the school’s Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Board of Proprietors/Trustees, in line with Independent School Standards.

3. Definitions

- Suspension – temporary removal from school for a fixed period.
- Permanent Exclusion – permanent removal from the school roll.
- Off-site Direction – transfer to another setting with full parental consent and agreement of the receiving provider.
- Parent/Carer – any individual with parental responsibility or day-to-day care of the student.

4. The Decision to Suspend or Exclude

4.1 Only the Headteacher (or Acting Headteacher) may suspend or permanently exclude a student. This decision will be:

- In response to serious or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy.
- Taken where allowing the student to remain would seriously harm the education, welfare, or safety of others.

4.2 Before reaching a decision, the Headteacher will:

- Consider all relevant evidence.
- Provide the student with an opportunity to give their account.
- Take into account SEND, safeguarding needs, and wider contextual factors.
- Ensure the decision is reasonable, proportionate, and procedurally fair.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Headteacher

- Decides on suspension or exclusion.
- Notifies parents/carers immediately (by phone and in writing).
- Provides clear reasons and length of suspension (or confirmation of permanent exclusion).
- Ensures suitable work is set for the student.
- Liaises with safeguarding partners if relevant (social worker, Virtual School Head for looked-after children).

5.2 Proprietor/Governors

- Receives termly data on suspensions and exclusions.
- Reviews patterns, safeguarding implications, and adherence to Equality Act duties.
- May convene a panel to hear appeals, ensuring impartiality and fairness.

6. Rights of Parents and Students

Parents/carers (and students aged 18 or over) will be informed of their right to:

- Make representations to the school's leadership or proprietors.
- Request an independent review panel, convened by the proprietors, if permanent exclusion is applied.
- Request that an SEN expert is present during any review if they believe additional needs are relevant.

7. Provision of Education

7.1 ReFocus will take reasonable steps to ensure that students suspended for up to 5 days are provided with appropriate work to complete at home.

7.2 For exclusions longer than 5 school days, arrangements will be made for suitable alternative full-time provision, which may include:

- ReFocus on-site provision in an alternative room.
- Partnership work with another provider.
- Supervised remote learning

8. Reintegration

Following a suspension, a reintegration meeting will be arranged with the student, parent/carer, and a senior member of staff. The purpose is to:

- Support the student's return positively.
- Reinforce expectations and responsibilities.
- Put in place additional support, including therapeutic interventions, SEND adjustments, or behaviour contracts.

9. Monitoring and Review

- The Deputy Headteacher monitors exclusion data for patterns, including protected characteristics.
- The SLT reviews whether interventions are effective and proportionate.

- Data and trends are reported termly to the Proprietors/Governors.
- This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with statutory guidance

10. Linked Policies

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour policy
- Child on Child Abuse Policy
- Online safety and Acceptable use Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy