



**MOUNT HOUSE
SCHOOL**

INSPIRING EVERY INDIVIDUAL

SCHOOL POLICIES

EXCLUSIONS

Review	Date	By
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Policy Statement

In order to meet the School's stated aims we require certain standards of student behaviour to be maintained. Mount House School's Behaviour Policy clearly sets out these standards and the corresponding expectations placed on students at the school. The disciplinary procedures in that policy identify the appropriate action which will be taken when a student's behaviour fails to meet the required standards on behaviour and discipline. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy.

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Directors of the School and remain under review by the Head. It is formally reviewed annually.

Principles

Mount House School, in keeping with its ethos, is committed to treating its students fairly and with the same respect and consideration as adult members of the School community. The School's expectations of behaviour are based on individual responsibility and mutual respect, to generate an environment where positive relationships student to student, and students to staff members, can flourish.

The School's Behaviour Policy provides a framework for a range of intervention strategies which minimise the need for fixed term exclusions (for a limited period of time) or permanent exclusions (see appendix). Within this framework, the system of ascending referrals of a student to Tutor, Head of Year, SLT and finally the Head can lead ultimately to the possibility of either fixed-term or permanent exclusion.

Exclusion will be used:

- Where the initial incident is considered so serious that no other sanction is deemed suitable e.g. assault, bullying, carrying anything that could be conceived to be a weapon or a drug related incident.
- Where all other sanctions have been tried and it is felt there is no other alternative route.

The decision to exclude a student for a fixed term (temporary) period will only be taken in response to breaches in the School's policy on behaviour and discipline, including persistent and disruptive behaviour leading to the matter being referred to the Head. Fixed term exclusions will also be used where, in the opinion of the Head, an individual incident requires a greater sanction than may be imposed by the Deputy Head. The length and type of these exclusions will be decided in relation to the incident. Temporary exclusions can range from one day to five days depending on the seriousness of the Student's action. Temporary exclusions for more than five days can also be issued, but are rare.

Decisions to permanently exclude a student will only be taken by the Head in response to serious breaches of the School's policy AND if the decision for the student to remain would seriously harm the education or welfare of another student or students. The parents/guardians can appeal against the exclusion.

Within this framework, the system of ascending referrals of a student to Tutor, Head of Year, SLT and finally the Head can lead ultimately to the possibility of either fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Procedure

Only the Head may take the decision to exclude a student, after consideration of all the evidence following a thorough investigation. Students may be asked to stay at home while an investigation is carried out.

A thorough investigation should where possible include the following:

- Asking the student to write a statement outlining their involvement in the incident as soon as practicable. The statement should be signed and dated.
- If a student is interviewed, making a written transcript recording each of the questions asked and responses given.
- Obtaining witness statements from other students and staff which should be signed and dated.
- Providing a supportive teacher to assist the student.
- Providing rest or water breaks.
- Consider all the evidence, taking account of the student's age, the school's policies, equal opportunities legislation, and taking into account the personal circumstances of the student.
- Recording all information relating to the incident and investigation.

In some cases, it may be necessary to refer incidents to Children's Services or the Police (e.g. criminal activity or child protection issues). In such cases, the School will be guided by the requirements of those agencies and which may require a student not to attend school. The School will continue to provide education in such circumstances and will review the authorised absence from school on a regular basis.

Notifying parents

When the decision to exclude a student has been made the parent will be notified immediately by telephone and this will be confirmed in writing by email within one school day, and by hard copy letter within three school days.

The written confirmation of the exclusion will include the following details:

- for a fixed term exclusion, the precise period of the exclusion.
- for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is a permanent exclusion and the date from which the exclusion takes effect.
- the reasons for the exclusion including any relevant previous history.
- the parent's right to make representations regarding the exclusion through the appeal procedure.
- the person in the School who the parent should contact if they wish to make representations as well as the date by which this should be done.
- the arrangements that will be put in place to ensure that the student is able to continue their education (it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that any work is completed and returned to the School).
- for fixed term exclusion the arrangements for reintegrating the student into the School will be provided including the date and time the student should return to the School

and this must also require the parent to attend an interview with the Head prior to reintegration.

Notifying Directors

The Head will inform the Chair of Directors prior to all permanent or fixed term exclusions which would result in a student being excluded for more than five school days in a term. This notification will include the following:

- the student's name
- the length of the exclusion
- the reason for the exclusion
- the student's age, year group, gender and ethnicity
- if the student has a Statement of Special Educational Needs

Appeals

Parents have the right to appeal against a permanent exclusion made by the Head. To do so, parents must lodge an appeal in writing with the Clerk to the Board of Directors no later than 10 school days after receipt of the School's letter stating the outcome.

Any appeal received after the latest date for lodging appeals will be rejected by the School. Where an appeal is received, the School will convene an appeals panel which will comprise of members as per the School's Complaints Policy. The persons selected will have had no direct involvement in the exclusion. One member will be independent of the management and running of the school. The other two members shall be Directors of the School. The panel will be supported by the Clerk.

An appeal panel will normally meet to consider the appeal no later than the 15th school day after the day on which the appeal is lodged. The panel may however, agree to adjourn the hearing if, after having regard to the particular circumstances, it considers it would not be appropriate for it to proceed to determine the outcome. This may arise from circumstances where further information is required or the parent requests a hearing after the 15th school day following the lodging of the appeal and the Head considers the request to be reasonable.

Prior to the hearing, both parties (the School and the parents) must provide to the Clerk all relevant evidence and documentation upon which they intend to rely at the hearing. The documentation will be provided to the panel and shared with both parties. New evidence may be presented at the hearing however the panel may, in the interests of fairness, adjourn the matter to allow proper consideration of such material.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friends. Legal representation for either party will not normally be appropriate.

The role of the appeal panel is to make a fresh decision on the exclusion. In coming to their decision, the panel will consider:

- whether, on the balance of probabilities, the student has done what is alleged; and
- whether exclusion is a proportionate response to the incident. In looking at this element, the panel will consider the actions taken by the School in relation to the student, the student's past history, how the School's policies have been implemented

as well as balancing the needs of the student against the needs of the school community as a whole.

The appeal panel may:

- uphold the decision to exclude; or
- direct immediate reinstatement with a specified date for return.

In cases where an appeal is heard, is lodged, or heard after a fixed term exclusion has expired and the student has returned to school, the appeal panel may:

- uphold the decision to impose a fixed term exclusion; or
- decide that fixed term exclusion was not a proportionate response in all the circumstances of the case and recommend that the student's record is amended to show this fact.

The appeal panel is independent, and the decision is binding on the parent and the School.

The appeal panel will inform all parties of the outcome by the end of the second working day after the hearing, outlining the reasons for the decision, giving clear information about the behaviour and offences.

Where the appeal panel recommends reinstatement, the panel must immediately inform the Head specifying the date by which the student must be readmitted. The student's record will be amended accordingly.

Exclusions: practical details

For the duration of a fixed-term exclusion, the student may no longer enter the School premises nor take part in any school organised activities. An exception may be made for a senior student during any public exam period but only under conditions of strict supervision.

For those permanently excluded, the student may not attend functions at the School or join the Alumni Association nor attend any of its activities until 10 years have passed since the date of the exclusion. Even then the Head may decide, in the interests of the School, that a longer, even unspecified, period is required.

All items of school owned equipment must be returned within one week of the permanent exclusion beginning – or within one week of the Appeal's panel confirming the exclusion.

The School will provide a suitable reference (which will specify that a permanent exclusion has been made) on request to a new educational establishment or prospective trainer/employer.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the School's annual review.

Reference to 'school days' throughout this policy should be taken to mean Monday to Friday during school term times. However, with the agreement of all parties, and in the interest of a speedy but well considered conclusion, the same timescale should also apply in holiday times

should an issue spill over beyond the end of a term. Thus, 'school days' becomes 'working days' (Monday through to Friday) in holiday time.)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

Behaviour Policy

Anti-Bullying policy

Complaints policy and procedures

Parent Contract (and information)

Appendix – Exclusions Temporary and Permanent (taken from School’s Behaviour Policy)

A Student can be excluded from school. At Mount House there is temporary exclusion and permanent exclusion. Only the Head or, in their absence, one of the Deputy Heads, can exclude a student. The length and type of the exclusion will be decided in relation to the incident.

Temporary exclusions can range from one to five days depending on the seriousness of the student’s action, as follows. A typical reason for a one-day exclusion might be a fight which developed out of a trivial disagreement.

- **One day** – Telephone to parents/guardians and explanation given. The parents/guardians are asked to come and pick up their son/ daughter and have a meeting with the Deputy/Head.
- **Three days** – A letter of exclusion is sent to parent/guardians giving details of reasons and requesting an interview before the Student is re-admitted. The Student is then put on daily report for one week.
- **Five days** – A letter of exclusion is sent to parent/guardians giving details of the reasons and requesting an interview before the Student is re-admitted. The Student is put on a contract and monitored using the daily report system.
- **Over 5 days** is rarely used but essentially this is a long term exclusion for a Student who needs time and space to consider their future with the prospect of final exclusion. The school and parents/guardians work closely during this period.

Permanent Exclusion. The Head may find it necessary to use their discretion to permanently exclude a student. The parents/guardians can appeal against the exclusion. Procedure to follow – as per the School’s Complaints Policy.

As with all decisions there is a right of appeal (see page 5 of Exclusions Policy)