



# Discipline & Exclusions Policy

## Introduction

Dame Alice Harpur School seeks to reward and reinforce positive behaviour as its primary method of promoting school values. The school's Rewards and Sanctions Policy sets out in more detail our expectations with regards to standards of behaviour at Dame Alice Harpur School. The Rewards and Sanctions Policy identifies the measures we take to reward and reinforce positive behaviour and to identify, monitor and address behaviour which we consider to be unacceptable. It should be read in conjunction with this Discipline and Exclusions Policy.

The following Discipline and Exclusions Policy specifically deals with major or persistent disciplinary issues of the utmost seriousness. In some cases these sanctions will be evoked sequentially through an exhaustion of the measures outlined in the Reward and Sanctions Policy (for example dialogue with girls and with parents, pink cards, detentions, report cards and the withdrawal of privileges). However a single breach of school discipline of a major kind may justify permanent exclusion without any previous significant sanction having been invoked.

## Sanctions

The Governing Body make available to the Headmistress two major sanctions:

- Suspension from School (also known as fixed term temporary exclusion)
- Expulsion (also known as permanent exclusion).

Only the Headmistress, or, in her absence, the Deputy or Assistant Heads, may decide that a fixed term temporary exclusion is required. If the girl is of Junior School age, the Head of Junior School will liaise closely with the Headmistress or Deputy Head.

Before deciding to suspend a girl the Headmistress/Deputy/Head of Junior School/Assistant Head will:

- Ensure that an appropriate investigation has been conducted
- Ensure that all the relevant evidence has been considered
- Give the girl an opportunity to be heard
- Consult other relevant people if necessary



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## Corporal Punishment

It should be noted that, pursuant to section 131 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Corporal Punishment is strictly prohibited for all pupils in independent and maintained schools.

The prohibition includes the administration of corporal punishment to a pupil during any activity, whether or not within the school premises. The prohibition applies to all members of staff including all those acting in loco parentis, such as unpaid volunteer supervisors.

Any member of staff found to have used or attempted to use Corporal Punishment is likely to be subject to disciplinary action including the possibility of dismissal.

However, under subsection 548(5) of the Education Act 1996, teachers (not support staff) may use 'physical intervention' to avert 'an immediate danger of personal injury to, or an immediate danger to the property of, a person (including the child himself)'. Teachers' powers under section 4 of the 1997 Act to restrain pupils from engaging in certain activities remain.

## Parental Contract

All parents with a girl at Dame Alice Harpur School are contractually bound by the terms and conditions contained in the parental contract, which is available on the website. Section 13 of that contract confirms under what circumstances the Headmistress may temporarily or permanently exclude a pupil.

With regard to pupil behaviour this includes:

- (a) if there has been a serious breach or a series of significant breaches of the school's rules and regulations;
- (b) if allowing the pupil to remain in school will seriously harm the education or welfare of other pupils at the school or welfare of school staff;
- (c) if the pupil is, in the opinion of the Headmistress, failing to achieve a satisfactory standard of work.

For the sake of completeness, other contractual instances where suspension or exclusion is possible include:

- (d) if the parents fail to pay the fees by the due date and fail to rectify the default within two weeks of the date of any written request for payment;
- (e) if the behaviour of either or both parents is, in the opinion of the Headmistress, unreasonable and affecting or likely to affect adversely other pupils at the school or well-being of school staff; or
- (f) if either parent libels the school in a way which damages its public reputation.



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If a pupil is permanently excluded in accordance with paragraph (a) or (b) above, the Headmistress will be obliged to advise the parents of their right to appeal against this decision in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedure (a copy of which is available on the school website).

If a pupil is to be permanently excluded in accordance with paragraph (c) above, the parents will receive at least one term's notice of the intended exclusion.

There will be no refund of fees or charges for extras following exclusion and all unpaid fees or charges for the remainder of the term during which the pupil has been excluded must be paid. The deposit will not be returned or credited. However, in such circumstances fees in lieu of notice will not be payable and any prepaid fees will be refunded.

## **Fixed Term Temporary Exclusion (Suspension)**

If after the appropriate investigation has taken place and the school decides a fixed term temporary suspension is appropriate, the girl concerned will be withdrawn from her lessons and parents will be contacted and asked to collect their daughter. When they arrive, they will meet the Headmistress/Deputy/Head of Junior School/Assistant Head who will explain the circumstances leading to the fixed term exclusion. The duration of the exclusion will be communicated to the girl and her parents at this point.

Generally the duration will be dependent on the seriousness of the offence. The stage of the week/half term or term may also have a bearing on the duration. The girl will be asked to collect schoolbooks before she leaves and the expectation is that she will complete work at home throughout the period of the fixed term exclusion.

When the girl is to return to school following a fixed term exclusion, she and her parents will meet the Headmistress/Deputy/Head of Junior School/Assistant Head who will ensure that consideration is given to any relevant problems of the suspended girl and how they might be addressed in the interim. They will ensure that the girl understands what she needs to do to make her reintegration into the school community as positive as possible. She will be supported as required in this. The incident will be logged in the girl's file, and an ongoing record of girls for whom the most significant sanctions have been applied, including fixed term exclusion, will be kept by the Headmistress and Assistant Head (Pastoral).



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## Permanent Exclusion (Expulsion)

On the very rare occasions when a girl's behaviour is such that it is apparent that she is not benefiting from her Dame Alice education and may, in fact, be significantly jeopardising the education of others, the Headmistress may inform parents that she is unable to continue to offer the girl a place at the school in the future.

Some parents may prefer, after due consideration, to voluntarily withdraw their child rather than school imposing permanent exclusion. However, it must clearly be understood that the Headmistress reserves the right to insist on permanent exclusion.

Only the Headmistress can permanently exclude a child and before doing so the Headmistress will follow the same procedure as for temporary exclusion. In making decisions about exclusion the Headmistress will take into account any particular learning support needs, disabilities, gender and cultural differences that may be relevant to the case.

Unless the exclusion is owing to reason (b), where allowing the pupil to remain in school will seriously harm the education or welfare of other pupils at the school or welfare of school staff, at least a term's notice will usually be given of permanent exclusion. This is extremely rare and is a step which is only taken after extremely careful consideration and usually after extensive dialogue with parents.

## Appeal

A decision to exclude a girl permanently is not taken lightly and before it is reached the Headmistress will have given careful consideration to any representations by the parents. In the process, she will consult the Chairman (or in her absence the Deputy Chairman) of Governors.

If the decision is confirmed, the parents will be informed immediately and they may, if they wish, communicate with the Governors by letter. Any such letter should be addressed to The Clerk to the Governors at the school. If parents wish Governors to review the case, they should set out the nature of their complaint in writing, detailing the nature of their complaint and the reasons they see for review.

The Governors would then set up a Panel Hearing, following the third part of the Parental Complaints Procedure which is available from the school or on the school website.

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