Suspensions Policy

This policy is written to comply with the regulations, advice and guidance contained in the following documents

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Suspension and permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement 2024
- Springfields Academy Positive Behaviour Management Policy

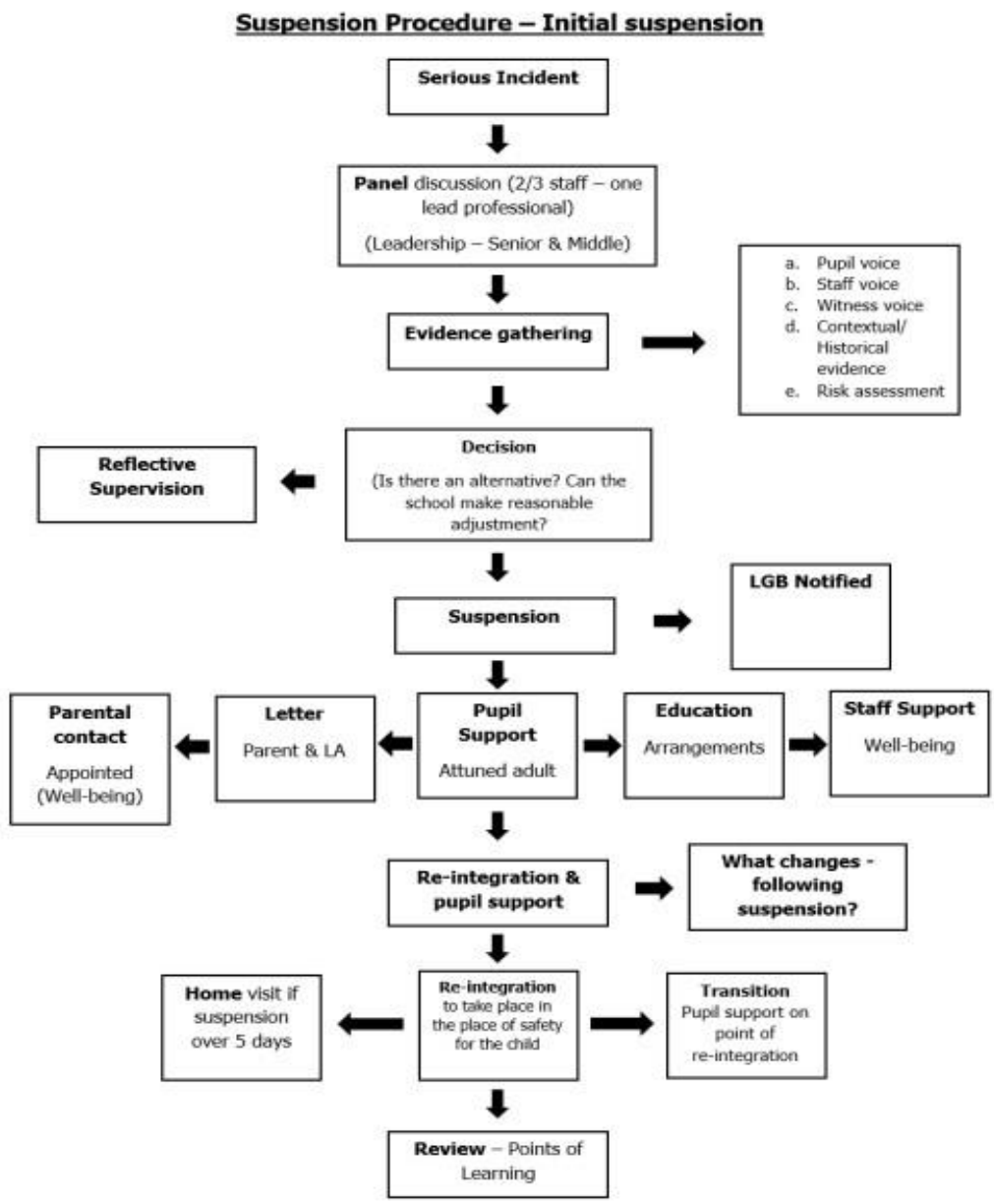
Rationale

It is the Academy's intention to explore all other routes before suspension is explored. Suspension is only ever used when there is no other viable alternative.

A pupil may be suspended for a fixed term when all other reasonable steps have been taken and it is judged that allowing a child to remain in school would be seriously detrimental to the welfare of others and the pupil concerned.

In the case of a decision to suspend a pupil, the Academy will inform the child's parents immediately. It will explain:

- Why the pupil is to be suspended
- The steps that have been taken to try to avoid the suspension
- Arrangements to allow the pupil to continue education during the suspension period



The Academy views the suspension of any pupil as a serious matter. The Academy will endeavour to act in a way that is fair, proportionate and with a view to the best interests of the pupil concerned, other pupils, members of staff and the Academy.

The Academy is motivated by a belief that Academy's should be inclusive communities in which everyone is equally valued. We strive to meet the unique needs of every individual; Springfields is a place where young people come to learn, and the Academy accepts the difficulty in that process for young people diagnosed with autism. The Academy aims to be a forgiving, restorative and understanding institution.

However, to ensure that all can learn, the Academy also has high expectations of the behaviour of pupils and must protect the safety, dignity and interests of everyone who works at our Academy, including the pupil themselves.

Springfields has a solution focused culture. However, suspension from the Academy is the most serious response in the hierarchy of sanctions – it is intended as a signal that the Academy cannot (temporarily) accommodate the behaviour(s) in question and keep the individual suspended, his or her peers, or staff safe within our resources at that time.

Investigations leading to suspension

The Academy will make every effort to be fair in making decisions regarding suspensions. The pupil's voice is important as are the voices of other pupils and staff. A risk assessment must be completed prior to any suspension and checked by the Head teacher / Deputy Head. The Academy has a clear protocol that they follow to ensure that all other avenues are explored before the use of a fixed term suspension is sanctioned.

The Head teacher (and / or other members of the leadership team (Panel decision)) will review the evidence, decide whether suspension is necessary, and be effective. When there is contradictory or uncertain evidence, the Head teacher must decide 'on the balance of probability'.

Suspensions

The Academy will sometimes suspend a pupil for a fixed number of days (to be determined by the Head teacher (and /or other members of the leadership team) based on :

- The seriousness of the incident.
- The context around the pupil, including previous concerns.
- Other relevant circumstances relating to safety of others.

The Academy may suspend a pupil while an investigation takes place (if the pupil's presence at Academy would be detrimental to the investigation or if the incident being investigated is very serious) under these circumstances, the length of the suspension will not necessarily be known at first. Similarly, if additional information becomes available after the length of the suspension has been decided, the Head teacher may extend the suspension.

The Academy recognises that suspensions of up to five consecutive days and those over five days require different arrangements.

Where suspension is of five or fewer days the Academy will expect parents to assume responsibility for a suspended child during Academy hours. Where suspension is of six or more days the Academy will assume responsibility for ensuring the child receives an appropriate education from the sixth day. Arrangements will be made on a personalised basis which may be affected by safeguarding concerns or an investigation by other agencies e.g. police.

Placement breakdown

When the school feels they cannot meet the presenting needs of the child, parents/carers are notified, and a change of placement is requested. This process is in line with the statutory guidance for suspensions (suspensions and permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and PRU's in England including pupil movement, 2024, page 23/24 paragraph 54/57). Which states;

'Where a school has concerns about the behaviour, or risk of suspension and permanent exclusion, of a pupil with SEN, a disability or an EHC plan it should, in partnership with others (including where relevant, the local authority), consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required. This should involve assessing the suitability of provision for a pupil's SEN or disability. 57. Where a pupil has an EHC plan, schools should contact the local authority about any behavioural concerns at an early stage and consider requesting an early annual review prior to making the decision to suspend or permanently exclude. For those with SEN but without an EHC plan, the school should review, with external specialists as appropriate, whether the current support arrangements are appropriate and what changes may be required. This may provide a point for schools to request an EHC assessment or a review of the pupil's current package of support.
However, this may not be in the bests interests of the child as a child may wait for over 12 months to secure a new educational placement. As a result the Academy will consider one or more of the following option:'

1. Permanent exclusion

A decision to exclude a pupil permanently should only be taken:

- In response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and,
- Where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

2. Working with the LA

Enter a SLA with the LA stating that the child will remain on role at Springfields until a new suitable placement is found. The local authority is responsible for the pupil's educational provision. In response all funding is ceased (kept by the LA) and the Academy will consider accepting an additional child on the waiting list as a direct replacement.

3. Work with one alternative provider

Enter into a SLA with one provider, who designs and deliver a 'full-time education' for the identified child and be responsible for all educational outcomes.

Who makes the decision to suspend?

The decision to suspend a child from Academy is taken by the Head teacher (if the total number of days lost to suspension is over 15 days in the term, then the local governing body will be advised). In the absence of the Head teacher, a member of the leadership team may take the decision, which is then confirmed by the Head teacher as soon as possible. The Head teacher will listen to the advice of other senior members of staff, including the SENCO and safeguarding lead officer.

The decision to suspend is generally taken without consultation with the family of the pupil. However, parents are informed as soon as possible. The impact on the family will be considered.

How is the length of the suspension determined?

The first principle is that the suspension should be as short as possible given the circumstances. In coming to a decision, the Academy will consider the following:

How effective is the suspension likely to be?

- Will suspension enable the pupil to process any change in their behaviours?
- Therefore, any suspension should be for a day only, only extending when there are extenuating circumstances involved other agencies/investigations.

How serious was the incident e.g.

- Was the pupil's behaviour criminally threatening to staff- i.e. likely to result in serious injury?
- Did one pupil seek out and deliberately assault another. (Evidence required that an assault was planned and premeditated.)
- The degree of harm that has resulted relating to both the above
- Previous incidents involving the pupil. E.g. is this is now a pattern of repeating behaviours that are not being modified by the Academy's interventions or support.

What effect will the suspension have on the feelings of other people? – It is important to consider how safe others may feel, to ensure that their confidence in the Academy to protect them remains robust. Are there child protection or related issues that make suspension to the family home unsafe for the child?

How will the suspension affect preparation for public examination (pupils are expected to attend Academy to sit public examinations if they are held during the course of suspension)

How is the suspension communicated to parents or carers?

In almost all cases, parents are informed by telephone and arrangements made for the pupil to be collected from Academy. The Academy may keep the pupil (in isolation) until the end of the Academy day.

A formal letter setting out the reasons for the suspension, the duration of the suspension, the return date and parents' rights to appeal is normally sent the same day by first class post.

Why suspensions can sometimes be extended.

Sometimes the Academy will set an initial suspension period, and this may then be extended.

This happens because:

- The full events surrounding the situation need further investigation or further information comes to light
- The Academy is waiting for other agencies (e.g. the police) to make further enquiries
- A multi-agency planning meeting needs to be arranged

The Headteacher may cancel a suspension that has not been reviewed by the governing board. This practice is sometimes known as withdrawing/rescinding a suspension or permanent exclusion. If this occurs, parents, the governing board and the local authority should be notified, and if relevant, the social worker and VSH.

When the headteachers suspend or permanently exclude a pupil they must, without delay, notify parents. Legislative changes mean that if a pupil has a social worker, or if a pupil is looked-after, the headteacher must now, also without delay after their decision, notify the social worker and/or VSH, as applicable.

Reintegration interviews

Pupils returning from suspension may have a formal meeting with the behaviour and culture lead or a member of the team representative before they return to lessons. This may occur in school, the local community or the pupil's home. Parents are expected to attend – it is vital that they have a chance to discuss the incident(s) and help the pupil decide how to avoid further suspensions.

At this meeting, the Academy will outline the steps to:

- Reconcile those involved.
- Change the pupils provision (therapeutic, education or outreach).
- Provide any additional available support (possibly through other agencies)
- Monitor regularly
- Keep parents informed

The pupil's Teacher/Tutor will be present/informed, as they will play a key role in supporting and monitoring change as a result of the suspension.

Setting and Marking Work

The Academy is responsible for setting and marking work during first five days of a suspension. The Academy will make work available for collection by a person other than the excluded pupil at the Academy office or send it through the post. This work will normally be available within half a day of the start of the suspension.

Signature of Head teacher: Date: September 2025