

EDSTART SCHOOLS

Suspension, Permanent Exclusion and Placement Withdrawal Policy

INCLUSION, ATTENDANCE & BEHAVIOUR

Policy owner	EdStart Specialist Education Ltd
Applies to	EdStart Schools – All Sites
Category	Inclusion, attendance & behaviour
Approval and validity	September 2026 to September 2027
Review trigger	Annual review, or earlier following statutory, regulatory or operational change

Status: This 2026 version supersedes all previous versions.

September 2026 best practice note — Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance

EdStart's sites operate as independent schools under the Independent School Standards Regulations 2014. The Department for Education's revised Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance, in force from 26 July 2026, applies in law to maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units — it does not apply to EdStart as a matter of law. EdStart nonetheless chooses to adopt the following provisions from that guidance as best practice, because they reflect current, well-evidenced thinking on the safe and fair use of suspension and exclusion:

- Off-site direction is used only with the written notice, defined objectives, agreed timings and named contact arrangements set out in the July 2026 guidance, even though EdStart is not legally required to follow the maintained-sector framework.
- Trial managed moves and trial admissions are not used. Any managed move takes place only where it is clearly in the pupil's best interests and follows fair, transparent admissions practice.
- Where a pupil needs to be removed from a lesson or area for safeguarding reasons rather than as a disciplinary sanction, this is recorded and managed through the 'separation of pupils' safeguarding approach described in the guidance, rather than as an informal or undocumented removal.
- For pupils with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan or unmet SEND needs, leaders consider — and record their consideration of — whether unmet need, disability-related behaviour or a failure of

reasonable adjustment contributed to the incident before any suspension or exclusion decision is made, consistent with the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

Applicability should be confirmed per site: each Headteacher should record in the site annex whether their individual EdStart site holds maintained, academy or alternative-provision-academy status, in which case the July 2026 guidance may apply as a matter of law rather than as best practice alone.

Policy Number 01

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1. INTRODUCTION

EdStart is committed to being a fully accessible and inclusive organisation, welcoming and respecting the diversity of its student, staff, community and visitors to the school.

This policy is strengthened by the commitment of all at EdStart to ensure the safety and well-being of the whole school community and to maintain an appropriate educational environment in which all can learn and achieve in conjunction with our Behaviour, Safeguarding and SEN policies.

We have an overall aim of reducing the need to use Suspension as a sanction.

The decision to suspend a student will be taken by the Headteacher in the following circumstances:

- In response to a serious breach of the School's Behaviour Policy
- If allowing the student to remain in School would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the School.

Suspension is an extreme sanction and is only used by the Headteacher (or, in the absence of the Headteacher, the Deputy Head Teacher). It is also good practice that the SENCO and Designated Safeguarding Lead are consulted regarding the use of Suspensions.

Suspension will be used when there is an immediate threat to the safety of others in the School or the student concerned. Before deciding whether to suspend a student either permanently or for a fixed period the Headteacher will ensure appropriate investigations have been carried out, considering all the evidence available.

Suspension, whether fixed term or permanent may be used for any of the following, all of which constitute examples of unacceptable conduct, and are infringements of the School's Behaviour Policy:

- Verbal abuse to Staff and others
- Verbal abuse to student
- Physical abuse to/attack on Staff
- Physical abuse to/attack on student
- Indecent behaviour
- Damage to property
- Misuse of illegal drugs or other substances including supplying
- Theft
- Serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil or a member of staff
- Sexual abuse or assault
- Carrying an offensive weapon
- Arson
- Unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported and for which School sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the student's behaviour. This is not an exhaustive list

and there may be other situations where the Headteacher makes the judgment that Suspension is an appropriate sanction.

2. SUSPENSION PROCEDURE

Most Suspensions are of a fixed term nature and are of short duration, usually between one and five days, depending on the nature of the incident.

- Following an Suspension, parents/carers are contacted immediately
- A letter will be sent by post giving details of the Suspension and the date the Suspension ends
- Parents/carers have a right to make representations to the Governing Body and the Coram Children's Legal Centre as directed in the letter
- A 'return to School' meeting will be held following the expiry of the fixed term Suspension and this will involve the student, parent/carer, and the Centre Manager. When a meeting cannot be held in person, a telephone conversation will take place with the parent/carer, before the student returns to school
- It is school practice to monitor behaviour and work of the student very closely for the period following Suspension
- If the fixed term Suspension is greater than five days or an accumulation of Suspensions exceed five days, a Pastoral Support Plan may be drawn up, this needs to be agreed with the School, student, parents/carers and any agencies involved
- During the course of a fixed term Suspension where the student is to be at home, parents/carers are advised that the student is not allowed on the school premises, and that daytime supervision is their responsibility, as parents/carers

3. PLACEMENT WITHDRAWAL

The decision to withdraw a student's place at EdStart is a very serious one.

The first is a final, formal step in a concerted process for dealing with disciplinary issues following the use of a wide range of other strategies, which have been used without success. It is an acknowledgement that all available strategies have been exhausted and is used as a last resort. This would include persistent and defiant misbehaviour e.g. repeated bullying (which could include racist or homophobic bullying) or repeated possession and or use of an illegal drug on school premises.

The second is where there are exceptional circumstances, and it is not appropriate to implement other strategies. For a 'one off' offence. These might include:

- Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff
- Sexual abuse or assault
- Supplying an illegal drug
- Carrying an offensive weapon*
- Arson.

The School will consider police involvement for any of the above offences.

- Offensive weapons are defined in the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 as "any article made or adapted for causing injury to the person; or intended by the person having it with him for such use by him." These instances are not exhaustive but indicate the severity of such offences and the fact that such behaviour seriously affects the discipline and wellbeing of the School.

4. PLACEMENT SUPPORT

In reaching a decision, the Headteacher will always look at each case on its own merits. The Head Teacher will seek as appropriate the advice and guidance of the Governing Body, in the first instance the Chair of Governors and relevant departments of the local authority.

The parent/ carer has a right to be involved in this process and can refer to our complaints procedure if they feel this process has not been fair or transparent.

In considering whether placement withdrawal is the most appropriate sanction, the Headteacher will consider the gravity of the incident, or series of incidents, and whether it constitutes a serious breach of the School's Behaviour Policy and the effect that the student remaining in the School would have on the education and welfare of other students and staff.