



**Friends' School Lisburn**

## **Procedure for the suspension and expulsion of pupils**

### **Suspension**

A pupil can be suspended only by the Principal. The suspension process is internal to the school and it is the responsibility of the Principal and the Chair of the Board of Governors to ensure it operates in a fair manner. Pupils can be suspended either for one-off incidents which constitute a severe breach of school regulations (see Appendix 1) or as a result of persistent infringements of the School Behaviour Code.

#### **1 One-off incidents**

- 1.1 Where a situation arises in a school because of unacceptable behaviour of a pupil or pupils the Principal may, after consultation with the Chair of the Board of Governors, suspend the pupil immediately for a period of not more than five school days.
- 1.2 Records of the circumstances of suspension and reasons for action must be kept by the Principal.
- 1.3 In no circumstances should a child be removed from the school premises in the course of the school day except into the care of his/her parents(s).

#### **2 Persistent infringements of the School Behaviour Code**

- 2.1 When situations are developing which indicate that a pupil may have to be suspended, the Principal should invite the parent(s) into school to discuss the problem and seek their support for the efforts the school is making to resolve the difficulty.
- 2.2 In situations where preventative strategies and other planned sanctions have failed to produce the desired behaviour, the Principal may, after consultation with the Chair of the Board of Governors, suspend a pupil from the end of a school day for a period of not more than five days.

#### **3 Procedure**

- 3.1 The Principal must immediately consult with the Chair of the Board of Governors about the proposed suspension, and subsequently submit a written report.
- 3.2 Parent(s) must be invited to attend a meeting in school to discuss the suspension with the Principal.
- 3.3 A letter must be given to parents informing them:
  - i) of the reason for suspension;
  - ii) of the period of suspension;
  - iii) of arrangements for the provision of school work for the pupil;
  - iv) that the pupil will be regarded as being in their care from the end of the school day until such time as the period of suspension expires.

If a meeting takes place, a letter must be given directly to the parents. Where it is not possible to arrange a meeting, parents should be informed by telephone, and a letter should either be emailed to their registered email address, or posted to them by first class mail on the same day.

- 3.4 The Principal must not extend a period of suspension except without first consulting the Chair of the Board of Governors and must, in every such case, give written notification of the reasons for the extension and the period of extension to the parent of the pupil and to the Board. The maximum period of suspension from school is 45 days in any one school year.
- 3.5 School will have regard to the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SENDO) in carrying out suspension and expulsion procedures and will not discriminate against a disabled pupil by suspending or expelling him or her for a reason relating to his or her disability.
- 3.6 If a pupil is at risk of missing a public examination as a result of suspension, the school must make arrangements for the pupil to sit the examination.
- 3.7 In the event of a suspension, the school continues to have responsibility for the education of the pupil and should therefore ensure that appropriate work is made available during the period of the suspension. The parent(s) should be made aware that it is their responsibility to collect and return the work to the school for marking.

#### **4 Expulsion**

- 4.1 The Board of Governors recognises that in coping with children with serious behavioural problems there is a variety of sanctions, strategies and options available to schools. Prior to considering a case for expulsion, the Governors will want to be satisfied that all options have been exhausted.

#### **5 Procedures to be applied for expulsion**

- 5.1 The Board of Governors is the expelling authority and the decision to expel rests solely with the Suspension and Expulsion Sub-Committee of the Board, which has delegated authority.
- 5.2 A refusal on the part of the pupil's parents to take part in such procedures shall not prevent a pupil from being expelled.
- 5.3 A pupil shall not be expelled without serving a period of suspension.
- 5.4 Where there have been ongoing breaches of the school's Discipline policy, the Principal will maintain a record of all correspondence between home and school and of any meetings held to discuss the issues.
- 5.5 A decision to expel a pupil shall only be considered after a Consultation Meeting about his/her possible expulsion has taken place between the Principal, the parent of the pupil, the pupil (if appropriate), the Chairman of the Board of Governors and a representative from the Education Authority. The Consultation Meeting shall include discussions about the future provision of suitable education for the pupil concerned. Minutes of this meeting and the outcome of it will be retained.
- 5.6 A meeting of the Suspension and Expulsion Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors shall be convened within 10 working days of the consultation meeting at which a proposal was made to expel a pupil. The Suspension and Expulsion Sub-Committee shall consider all documentary

evidence presented by the Principal and other interested parties and shall give due consideration to the safety and welfare of the other pupils and staff in the school.

- 5.7 The parents may be given the opportunity to make representation to the Suspension and Expulsion Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors in relation to the pupil and the circumstances surrounding the possible expulsion.
- 5.8 At the conclusion of deliberations, the Sub-Committee shall reach a decision and notify the parents in writing of the decision. This notification will include details of the parents' right to appeal the decision to expel the pupil to an independent Expulsion of Pupils' Appeal Tribunal in accordance with the Schools (Expulsion of Pupils) (Appeals Tribunals) Regulation (NI) 1994 (as amended), of the relevant time limits for lodging an appeal and of where the appeal may be lodged. The Principal will also send a letter, providing these details. Where an appeal is allowed and direction is given that the pupil be re-admitted to the school the Board of Governors shall comply with any such direction.
- 5.9 If a pupil is at risk of missing a public examination as a result of being expelled, then alternative arrangements must be made to ensure that the pupil can sit the examination in an appropriate location.
- 5.10 The Education Authority has a responsibility to ensure the future provision of suitable education for a pupil who has been expelled. Discussion will take place with the appropriate authority to seek to ensure that this takes place.

## Appendix 1: Reasons for suspension

Suspension from school will be considered in the circumstances outlined below. This list is not exhaustive and there may be other circumstances in which suspension is deemed to be appropriate.

1. **Persistent infringements of school rules**, including repeated refusal to follow instructions, failure to respond to sanctions, and non-cooperation with sanctions.
2. **Persistent or severe bullying of another pupil**, including physical or verbal bullying, the use of offensive or sexually explicit language and threatening behaviour.
3. **Physical attack on another pupil**, or causing injury to another pupil, even when this is done unintentionally as a result of careless or reckless behaviour.
4. **Disruptive behaviour**, including persistent or one-off incidents which affect learning and teaching and occupy teacher time. This includes poor behaviour in the pupil's own class as well as disrupting other classes.
5. **Significant, wilful damage or misuse of school property**, or of items belonging to staff or other pupils.
6. **Stealing** from school, pupils or staff while in uniform, or at any event organised by school.
7. **Severe breaches of the school's e-safety policy**, including misuse of social media and the internet. and online behaviour which seeks to harass or humiliate others, or undermine the reputation of the school.
8. **Smoking or using e-cigarettes** (second offence) in school, while in uniform, or during events or trips organised by school.
9. **Alcohol abuse**: possessing, drinking or selling alcohol on school premises, while in school uniform, or during events or trips organised by school.
10. **Substance abuse**: possessing, using or dealing in illegal drugs or solvents on school premises, while in school uniform, or during events or trips organised by school.
11. **Verbal abuse of staff**, including use of offensive, threatening or sexually explicit language.
12. **Physical attack on staff**

Revised October 2024