



Suspension, Required Removal and Expulsion Policy

Policy owner: Head of School

Approved by: Directors

Applies to: Whole school, including EYFS, Junior School, Senior School, boarding, day pupils, full boarders, flexi boarders, school activities, educational visits, off-site activities and school-related conduct

Reviewed: June 2026

Next review due: June 2027

Purpose

St John's School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the school's framework for suspension, required removal and expulsion.

The school expects pupils to behave in a way that supports the safety, welfare, learning and wellbeing of others and reflects the values of the school community.

Suspension, required removal and expulsion are serious measures. They will only be used where the Head of School considers that they are necessary, proportionate and in the interests of the pupil, other pupils, staff or the wider school community.

This policy applies across the whole school, including EYFS, Junior School, Senior School and boarding.

Detailed investigation templates, hearing procedures, review forms and internal record keeping arrangements are held separately and are not included in this policy.

Legal and guidance framework

This policy has been prepared with regard to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools
- Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- Behaviour in schools guidance

- Searching, screening and confiscation guidance for schools
- Use of reasonable force guidance
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018

This policy should be read alongside the school's Parent Contract, Behaviour Management Policy, Praise, Rewards and Sanctions Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Child-on-Child Abuse procedures, Low-Level Concerns Policy, Drugs, Alcohol, Smoking, Vaping and Harmful Substances Policy, Searching Pupils and Their Possessions Policy, Online Safety Policy, SEND and Inclusion Policy, Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination Policy, Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy, Missing Pupil Policy, Boarding policies, Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities Policy, Data Protection Policy and Records Retention Schedule.

Scope

This policy applies to all pupils.

It applies to behaviour and circumstances:

- On school premises
- In boarding
- During the school day
- Before or after school where the pupil is under school responsibility
- During clubs, activities, fixtures or events
- During educational visits and off-site activities
- During school-arranged transport
- Online or through electronic communication
- Away from school where the conduct affects the welfare of pupils, staff, the school community or the reputation of the school

This policy also applies where the conduct of parents, carers or educational guardians makes the pupil's continued place at the school untenable under the Parent Contract.

Definitions

Suspension means temporary removal from normal school attendance, boarding or school activities for a defined period.

Internal suspension means temporary removal from normal lessons, activities or boarding routines while the pupil remains supervised by the school.

External suspension means temporary removal from school attendance or boarding for a defined period.

Investigatory suspension means temporary removal while a serious matter is investigated or while risk is assessed. It is not a disciplinary finding.

Required removal means that parents are required to withdraw a pupil from the school because the Head of School considers that the pupil's conduct, progress, attendance,

behaviour, needs, parental conduct or other circumstances mean that continued attendance is no longer appropriate.

Expulsion means permanent removal from the school following serious misconduct or a grave breach of school discipline.

Review means a review by Directors of a decision to require removal or expel a pupil, where requested in accordance with this policy.

Principles

The school will:

- Act fairly and proportionately
- Consider safeguarding and welfare
- Consider the interests of the pupil and the wider school community
- Take account of age, maturity, vulnerability and individual circumstances
- Consider SEND, disability, neurodivergence, medical needs and mental health where relevant
- Make reasonable adjustments where required
- Investigate serious concerns before reaching a final decision
- Give the pupil a fair opportunity to respond
- Involve parents, carers or educational guardians appropriately
- Keep appropriate records
- Provide reasons for decisions
- Offer a review route for required removal and expulsion

The school will not use suspension, required removal or expulsion in a discriminatory way.

Grounds for suspension, required removal or expulsion

The following may lead to suspension, required removal or expulsion:

- Serious or persistent breach of school rules
- Physical assault
- Threatening behaviour
- Verbal abuse
- Bullying
- Cyberbullying
- Child-on-child abuse
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Sexual misconduct
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or discriminatory behaviour
- Harassment
- Possession, use or supply of drugs, alcohol, vapes, tobacco or harmful substances
- Possession or use of a weapon or dangerous item
- Theft
- Serious dishonesty
- Damage to property

- Vandalism
- Computer misuse or hacking
- Serious online misconduct
- Misuse of images, recordings or technology
- Behaviour that places others at risk
- Persistent disruptive behaviour
- Behaviour that undermines the safety, welfare or learning of others
- Conduct that brings the school into disrepute
- Serious breach of boarding rules
- Absconding or serious missing pupil incident linked to misconduct
- Serious breach during an educational visit or off-site activity
- Failure to comply with a reasonable instruction in a serious situation
- Parental behaviour that adversely affects the school community or relationship of trust with the school

This list is not exhaustive.

Suspension

The Head of School may suspend a pupil where this is necessary and proportionate.

Suspension may be used:

- As a disciplinary sanction
- While a serious incident is investigated
- Where the pupil's presence may affect an investigation
- Where there is a risk to the pupil or others
- Where time is needed to assess safeguarding, welfare, behaviour or operational risk
- Where boarding arrangements require temporary restriction or removal

Suspension will normally be for the shortest period reasonably necessary.

Parents, carers or educational guardians will be informed of the reason for suspension and the expected arrangements.

Where a boarder is suspended, the school will consider safe travel, guardianship, supervision, visa or travel implications, welfare and communication with parents or educational guardians.

A suspension may be extended where necessary, for example because an investigation is ongoing, external agencies are involved or further risk assessment is required.

Suspension is not always a disciplinary finding. Where a pupil is suspended for investigation or risk assessment, the school will make this clear.

Internal suspension

Internal suspension may be used where the pupil can remain safely on site under supervision.

The pupil may be separated from normal lessons, activities, boarding routines or social times.

Internal suspension arrangements will be proportionate and supervised.

The school will consider the pupil's welfare, learning, safeguarding needs and any SEND, disability, medical or mental health needs.

External suspension

External suspension means that the pupil is required to remain away from school for a defined period.

The school will consider whether work or learning materials can reasonably be provided during the suspension.

Parents, carers or educational guardians are responsible for ensuring that the pupil is supervised safely during any external suspension.

For boarders, external suspension must be planned carefully with parents or educational guardians so that safe care, travel and supervision arrangements are in place.

Initial response to serious incidents

Where a serious incident is alleged or suspected, staff must report the matter promptly to the Head of School or nominated senior leader.

The school will take immediate steps where needed to:

- Make pupils and staff safe
- Separate pupils where necessary
- Provide first aid or medical support
- Preserve relevant evidence
- Record initial accounts
- Inform the DSL where there is a safeguarding concern
- Inform parents, carers or educational guardians where appropriate
- Consider whether the police, children's social care or another external agency should be contacted
- Consider whether suspension or other temporary measures are needed

Where the concern involves the conduct of an adult working with children, staff must follow the Managing Allegations procedures and seek LADO advice where required.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm, staff must act without delay.

Investigation

The Head of School will decide how the matter should be investigated.

An investigator may be appointed where appropriate.

The investigation should be fair, proportionate and appropriate to the seriousness of the matter.

The investigation may include:

- Speaking to the pupil
- Speaking to other pupils
- Speaking to staff
- Taking written statements
- Reviewing records
- Reviewing CCTV where available and lawful
- Reviewing online material where appropriate
- Reviewing searches or confiscation records
- Considering safeguarding, pastoral, medical, SEND or behaviour information
- Seeking advice from external agencies where appropriate

Pupils will be given a fair opportunity to explain what happened.

Pupils may be accompanied or supported by an appropriate adult during formal meetings where this is needed because of age, vulnerability, SEND, language, emotional state or the seriousness of the matter.

The school will avoid unnecessary delay, but will take the time needed to investigate properly.

Safeguarding

Serious behaviour may indicate a safeguarding or welfare concern.

Staff must consider whether the incident may involve:

- Abuse or neglect
- Child-on-child abuse
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Sexual harassment or sexual violence
- Bullying
- Online harm
- Child criminal exploitation
- Child sexual exploitation
- County lines
- Substance misuse
- Self-harm
- Mental health concern
- Radicalisation
- Domestic abuse
- Coercion or intimidation

Where there is any safeguarding concern, staff must follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Safeguarding, child protection and welfare concerns will be recorded on CPOMS.

Behaviour, sanctions, communication and administrative records may be recorded on iSAMS.

Police and external agencies

The school may contact the police where criminal behaviour is suspected or where there is a risk of serious harm.

The school may contact children's social care where a pupil may be at risk of significant harm or where safeguarding thresholds may be met.

The school may seek advice from the LADO only where the concern involves the conduct of an adult working with children or where allegations management procedures may apply.

Where police or children's social care are involved, the school will consider whether and how to continue its internal process.

The school may need to pause, adjust or sequence its investigation to avoid prejudicing external processes or placing pupils at risk.

The school may still take safeguarding, welfare or disciplinary action where it is necessary and reasonable to do so.

Searching and confiscation

Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil has a prohibited, harmful or unauthorised item, the school may act in accordance with the Searching Pupils and Their Possessions Policy.

Items linked to drugs, alcohol, smoking, vaping or harmful substances will be managed in accordance with the Drugs, Alcohol, Smoking, Vaping and Harmful Substances Policy.

Weapons, illegal substances, harmful images or other serious items may be referred to the police or external agencies where appropriate.

SEND, disability and reasonable adjustments

Before deciding whether to suspend, require removal or expel a pupil, the school will consider whether SEND, disability, neurodivergence, medical needs or mental health needs are relevant.

The school will consider:

- Whether the pupil's needs contributed to the behaviour
- Whether reasonable adjustments were in place
- Whether further reasonable adjustments should be considered

- Whether staff had relevant information
- Whether the pupil understood the rule or instruction
- Whether the pupil could regulate or control the behaviour
- Whether the sanction would place the pupil at substantial disadvantage because of disability
- Whether the decision remains proportionate

The school will not treat a disabled pupil less favourably because of disability.

The school may still suspend, require removal or expel a pupil where this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, including protecting the safety, welfare, learning or rights of others.

St John's may support pupils with SEND, neurodivergence, disabilities, medical needs or additional needs where needs can be met through reasonable adjustments and ordinary provision.

St John's School is not a Section 41 school and is not approved as an independent special school or specialist SEND provision. St John's School does not receive local authority funding to deliver the special educational provision specified in Education, Health and Care Plans. The school does not have the legal status, specialist staffing, specialist facilities, therapeutic provision, resourcing structure or local authority funding arrangements required to deliver EHCP provision. For these reasons, St John's School is not able to admit pupils with an EHCP.

Decision-making meeting

Where required removal or expulsion may be considered, the Head of School will normally invite parents, carers or educational guardians to a meeting.

The pupil may also attend where appropriate, taking account of age, understanding, welfare, safeguarding and the nature of the matter.

The meeting may take place in person or remotely.

The school will provide sufficient information about the concern to allow parents and the pupil to respond, subject to safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection.

Parents may be accompanied by a friend or relative. Legal representation is not normally appropriate because the process is an internal school procedure.

The meeting will usually consider:

- The allegation or concern
- The investigation findings
- The pupil's response
- Parent views
- Relevant records
- Safeguarding or welfare issues
- SEND, disability, medical or mental health factors

- Mitigating and aggravating factors
- Impact on others
- Possible outcomes
- A record of the meeting will be made.
- Standard of proof

The school will make decisions on the balance of probabilities.

This means that the Head of School will decide whether it is more likely than not that the relevant conduct or circumstances occurred.

The school does not need to apply the criminal standard of proof.

Where police or external agencies are involved, the school may take advice about timing, evidence and safeguarding before reaching a decision.

Factors considered before a decision

Before deciding whether to suspend, require removal or expel a pupil, the Head of School will consider relevant factors, which may include:

- The seriousness of the behaviour
- Whether the conduct is admitted or proved on the balance of probabilities
- The pupil's age and maturity
- The pupil's disciplinary record
- The pupil's pastoral and safeguarding context
- SEND, disability, medical or mental health factors
- Whether reasonable adjustments are relevant
- Whether the pupil was provoked, bullied, coerced or exploited
- Whether other pupils were involved
- The impact on victims or affected pupils
- The safety and welfare of the school community
- Whether trust and confidence have broken down
- Whether a lesser sanction would be sufficient
- Consistency with previous cases, while recognising that each case is individual
- The proportionality of the proposed outcome

The Head of School may consult senior colleagues, the DSL, SENDCo, Head of Boarding, relevant pastoral staff or Directors before reaching a decision.

Outcomes

Possible outcomes include:

- No further action
- Pastoral support
- Restorative action
- Behaviour targets or support plan
- Warning

- Internal sanction
- Internal suspension
- External suspension
- Required removal
- Expulsion
- Referral to external agencies
- Other action under relevant policies

The decision will be confirmed in writing to parents, carers or educational guardians.

The written outcome will normally include:

- The decision
- The reasons for the decision
- Any period of suspension where applicable
- Any conditions for return where applicable
- Any support or reintegration arrangements where applicable
- The date on which the decision takes effect
- Review rights where required removal or expulsion has been decided

Required removal

The Head of School may require parents to remove a pupil where continued attendance is no longer appropriate.

Required removal may be used where:

- The pupil's conduct is incompatible with continued attendance
- The pupil is not benefiting from the school's educational provision
- The school cannot meet the pupil's needs within its mainstream provision
- The relationship between parents and the school has broken down
- Parent conduct has undermined trust and confidence
- The pupil's attendance, engagement or cooperation has broken down
- The pupil's continued attendance would adversely affect the school community

Required removal may be disciplinary or non-disciplinary depending on the circumstances.

Where required removal relates to SEND, disability, medical needs or wellbeing, the school will consider reasonable adjustments, support and relevant professional information before reaching a decision.

Expulsion

Expulsion is reserved for the most serious cases.

Expulsion may be appropriate where:

- There has been a grave breach of school discipline
- The pupil has seriously harmed or placed others at risk
- The pupil has committed serious misconduct

- The pupil's behaviour is incompatible with the safety or welfare of the school community
- Trust and confidence have broken down irreparably
- A lesser sanction would not be sufficient

The decision to expel will be made by the Head of School.

The Head of School will consult an appropriate Director before confirming expulsion.

Voluntary withdrawal

In some circumstances, parents may be offered the opportunity to withdraw the pupil voluntarily.

Voluntary withdrawal must not be used to avoid proper safeguarding action, referral to external agencies or accurate record keeping.

Any agreed wording about the pupil's departure must be fair, accurate and not misleading.

Supporting transition and next steps

Where a pupil leaves following required removal, expulsion or voluntary withdrawal, the school will consider appropriate support for transition.

This may include:

- Reasonable communication with parents
- Transfer of safeguarding information where required
- Transfer of educational records
- Reference requests
- Support with examination arrangements where appropriate
- Liaison with local authority or external agencies where required
- Fair and accurate information for the next setting
- References and school records must be truthful, fair and not misleading.
- Review of required removal or expulsion

Parents may request a review of a decision to require removal or expel a pupil.

The request must be made in writing to the President, Vice President or nominated Director within seven calendar days of the written decision.

The request should set out:

- The decision being challenged
- The grounds for review
- The outcome sought
- Any supporting information

A review will not normally suspend the effect of the decision unless the school agrees otherwise.

Review panel

The review will be considered by a panel appointed by the Directors.

The panel will normally include at least two Directors who have not had detailed prior involvement in the decision.

The school may include an independent panel member where appropriate.

The review panel will consider whether:

- The process was fair
- The decision was reasonable
- The sanction was proportionate
- Relevant information was considered
- Irrelevant information was disregarded
- Safeguarding, SEND, disability and equality matters were considered where relevant

The review is not a full rehearing unless the panel considers that fairness requires this.

Review meeting

A review meeting may take place in person or remotely.

Those attending may include:

- Panel members
- The Head of School
- Relevant staff
- Parents, carers or educational guardians
- The pupil where appropriate
- A friend or relative supporting the parents
- A clerk or note-taker

Legal representation is not normally appropriate.

The panel will manage the meeting fairly and proportionately.

Confidentiality, safeguarding and data protection will be respected.

Review decision

The panel may:

- Uphold the decision
- Recommend reconsideration
- Recommend a different outcome

- Make recommendations about process, support or communication

The panel's decision will be confirmed in writing with reasons.

The decision of the review panel is final within the school's internal procedures.

Confidentiality

Suspension, required removal and expulsion matters will be handled confidentially.

Information will be shared only with those who need to know.

The school will balance confidentiality with safeguarding, legal, regulatory, inspection and record keeping duties.

Parents, pupils and staff involved in a process are expected to respect confidentiality.

Records

The school will keep appropriate records of suspension, required removal and expulsion matters.

Records may include:

- Incident reports
- Investigation notes
- Pupil accounts
- Witness accounts
- Parent communication
- Meeting records
- Decision letters
- Review requests
- Review outcomes
- Safeguarding records
- SEND or reasonable adjustment considerations
- External agency communication

Safeguarding, child protection and welfare concerns will be recorded on CPOMS.

Behaviour, sanctions, attendance, communication and administrative records may be recorded on iSAMS.

Records will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Records Retention Schedule.

Monitoring and review

The Head of School has overall responsibility for this policy.

The DSL, SENDCo, Head of EYFS, Head of Boarding, senior leaders, pastoral staff and relevant operational staff will support implementation and review.

The Directors will maintain appropriate oversight of serious disciplinary decisions, required removal, expulsion, safeguarding, welfare and equality matters.

The school will monitor suspension, required removal and expulsion decisions to identify patterns, concerns or lessons learned.

Monitoring may include consideration of:

- Age and year group
- Boarding status
- SEND, disability, neurodivergence or additional needs
- Safeguarding or welfare concerns
- Protected characteristics
- Type of behaviour
- Use of suspension
- Required removal
- Expulsion
- Review outcomes
- Consistency of decision making

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner following a significant incident, legal change, guidance change, inspection finding, complaint, review outcome or change in school provision.