SUSPENSIONS & EXCLUSIONS POLICY

Ely College | 2026–2027

Version	4
Applicable To	Ely College
Approved By	Academy Council – July 2026
Review Cycle	Annual
Next Review	July 2027
Statutory Reference	DfE Suspension & Permanent Exclusion Guidance (July 2026)
Related Policies	Behaviour Policy 2026–2027; SEND Policy; Equality Policy

1. Purpose & Scope

This policy sets out how Ely College manages suspensions and exclusions in line with statutory requirements. It applies to all students regardless of age. It supports the Behaviour Policy 2026–2027 and is underpinned by our College Values: Care, Character, Integrity, Responsibility and Service.

Our approach prioritises therapeutic, graduated responses. Internal suspension is the primary escalation tool before external suspension is considered. Permanent exclusion is only used as a last resort.

2. Types of Suspension & Exclusion

Type	What it means	Maximum duration
Internal Suspension	Student remains on site in a designated space under supervision. Not a statutory exclusion.	Up to 3 days (sliding scale)
External (Fixed-Term) Suspension	Student is excluded from the college premises for a fixed period. Must be notified in writing without delay.	Up to 45 college days per year
Lunchtime Suspension	Removal from premises for lunchtime only. Counts as half a college day.	Lunchtime period only
Permanent Exclusion	Student is not permitted to return. Only used as a last resort where all alternatives have been exhausted.	Permanent

3. Internal Suspension

Internal suspension is the college's primary in-school escalation response and must be agreed and signed off by the AP for Behaviour and Culture before it is enacted.

3.1 Triggers

- Persistent or escalating detrimental behaviour where classroom strategies have been exhausted
- Failure to attend an After College Detention
- Three or more outstanding lunch detentions at the end of any week
- Behaviour that requires removal from the mainstream environment where in-school resolution is achievable
- Bullying (including discriminatory bullying)
- Failure to comply with uniform correction expectations
- Refusal to hand in mobile phone following non- negotiable.

3.2 Sliding Scale

Duration	Typical trigger	Provision & support
1 Day	First serious escalation or persistent disruption	Structured reflection; curriculum work; Learning Mentor input.
2 Days	Repeat escalation or moderately serious behaviour	Reflection activities; Learning Mentor support sessions; readmission meeting required.
3 Days	Significant or repeated serious behaviour	Full reflection programme; updated support plan; readmission meeting required.

3.3 Conditions

- Students attend 8.45am–3.00pm in the designated suspension space
- Supervised at all times; work completed inline with lesson expectations
- All curriculum work and reflection activities must be completed
- Learning Mentor provides structured input during the placement
- A readmission meeting takes place before return to mainstream lessons where internal suspension is utilised for more than one day.
- Inappropriate behaviour during internal suspension may escalate to external suspension

Parents/carers are notified by telephone and by letter (As soon as possible) on the day an internal suspension is issued.

4. External (Fixed-Term) Suspension

External suspension is reserved for incidents where in-school resolution is not achievable, where behaviour poses a risk to the safety of others, or where the seriousness of the incident warrants an immediate external response. All external suspensions must be agreed and signed off by the AP for Behaviour and Culture.

Only the Principal may issue an external suspension, on disciplinary grounds only. The law does not permit extending a suspension or converting it into a permanent exclusion.

4.1 Grounds

- Physical violence, including premeditated or disproportionate assault
- Possession or use of a weapon
- Theft or vandalism
- Possession, supply or use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vapes or related paraphernalia

- Persistent and targeted bullying, including discriminatory bullying linked to protected characteristics
- Foul and abusive language directed at staff
- Misconduct of a sexual nature or supply/possession of pornographic material
- Behaviour that constitutes or could constitute a criminal offence
- Persistent misbehaviour where all internal interventions have been exhausted
- Computer hacking or misuse

This list is not exhaustive. Behaviour inside and outside college – including on social media – may result in suspension.

4.2 Sliding Scale

Stage	Typical duration	Led by	Typical interventions
Stage 1	1 day	Senior Tutor	External agencies, mentoring, reports, curriculum changes
Stage 2	2 days	Senior Tutor / AP for Behaviour	Behaviour Plan, alternative curriculum group, EIO involvement
Stage 3	3 days	AP for Behaviour / Senior Tutor	CAF referral, managed move consideration, targeted work placement
Serious Incident	AP discretion	AP for Behaviour and Culture	Full evidence review; sign-off by AP for Behaviour and Culture

4.3 Decision-Making Process

When considering a suspension the Principal will:

- Ensure a thorough investigation has been carried out (usually by a member of the Leadership Team)
- Consider all available evidence
- Allow and encourage the student to give their account
- Apply the civil standard of proof ('on the balance of probabilities')
- Keep a written record of actions taken, including signed witness statements
- Consider any protected characteristics or SEND needs that may be relevant

4.4 Notification

On the day of the decision, the Principal will notify parents/carers without delay by telephone and in writing. The written notification will include:

- Reason(s) for the suspension and the period
- Steps taken prior to suspension
- Return date and reintegration arrangements
- The right to make written representations to the Chair of the Academy Council
- The requirement that the student must not be in a public place during college hours (penalty: £60 fixed penalty notice)
- Signposting to SEND and legal advice (SENDIAS, Coram, ACE Education, IPSEA)
- Details of the work provision (Teams channel: 'Student Work Provision – Ely College')
- The right to request that any Academy Council reinstatement meeting be held via remote access (e.g. live video link), how to make this request, and to whom – this must be included in all

suspension and permanent exclusion notification letters (July 2026 statutory guidance, paragraph 83)

The Principal must also notify the Local Authority without delay (regardless of suspension length). This requirement is confirmed in the updated July 2026 statutory guidance (previously updated August 2024). The Academy Council is notified once a term for suspensions under 5 days, and without delay for suspensions over 5 days in a term, those involving a public examination, or permanent exclusions.

2026 DfE Update – Social Worker & VSH Notification (updated)
Where a student has a social worker, or is a looked-after child, the Principal must also notify the social worker and/or Virtual School Head (VSH) without delay following the suspension decision. The July 2026 guidance additionally requires that: where a looked-after child (LAC) is likely to be subject to suspension or permanent exclusion, the Designated Teacher must contact the VSH as soon as possible and consider an interim PEP review; for students with a social worker, the headteacher should inform the social worker, DSL and parents as early as possible before a suspension is made; and for previously looked-after children, the Designated Teacher should engage with parents and may seek VSH advice. Both the social worker and VSH must be informed when an Academy Council meeting is taking place and may attend or join remotely.

4.5 During Suspension

- Student must not be on college premises or in a public place during college hours
- Work is provided via Teams ('Student Work Provision – Ely College') and should be returned on reintegration
- Alternative online resources: BBC Bitesize, Oak National Academy, Seneca Learning, Tassomai, Bedrock Learning, Corbettmaths
- For suspensions of more than 5 college days, the Academy Council will arrange suitable full-time education from day 6

4.6 Reintegration

- A readmission meeting is strongly encouraged before the student returns; where parents/carers cannot attend, this cannot delay reintegration
- The student signs a conduct agreement on return
- The Learning Mentor conducts a reintegration check-in on the first day back
- The student may spend a period on report, in isolation or accessing alternative provision
- The home/school agreement is re-signed as part of the readmission process
- The reintegration strategy must be clearly communicated at a reintegration meeting before or at the start of the student's return. The strategy should: offer the student a fresh start; help them understand the effect of their behaviour on themselves and others; teach them how to meet high behavioural expectations; foster a renewed sense of belonging; and build engagement with learning. The strategy must be regularly reviewed and adapted in collaboration with the student, parents, and relevant parties (July 2026 statutory guidance, paragraphs 30–34).
- A part-time timetable must not be used to manage behaviour and must only be in place for the shortest time necessary, with a clear time limit and formal arrangements for regular review with the student and parents.

4a. Off-site Direction [NEW – July 2026 Statutory Guidance]

Off-site direction is a statutory power (section 29A Education Act 2002) by which the Academy Council (as governing board) may require a student to attend another educational setting temporarily to improve their behaviour. It is a preventative measure, not a sanction for past misconduct, and may only be used where in-school interventions or outreach have been unsuccessful or are deemed inappropriate. The Education (Educational Provision for Improving Behaviour) (Application to Academies and Pupil Referral Units and Minor Amendments) Regulations 2026 now apply these duties formally to academies.

Process requirements:

- Parents (or students aged 18+) and the local authority (where the student has an EHC plan) must be notified in writing no later than two school days before the direction takes effect, including: the address of the provision; the person to report to; the number of days; the reasons and objectives; and session times.
- The Academy Council must hold review meetings at appropriate intervals, inviting parents in writing at least six days before each review. Following each review, the Academy Council must notify parents in writing within six days of its decision on whether the direction should continue.
- Students on off-site direction are recorded in the attendance register using code D. Equality Act 2010 and Children and Families Act 2014 duties (including reasonable adjustments for SEND) continue to apply throughout.
- Prior to any off-site direction, the college must evidence that appropriate initial intervention has been carried out and that all relevant information (prior attainment, risk assessment, support strategies) has been shared with the receiving setting.

4b. Managed Moves [NEW – July 2026 Statutory Guidance]

A managed move is the permanent transfer of a student to another mainstream school. Managed moves must be voluntary, offered as part of a planned intervention, and agreed with all parties (including parents and the admission authority of the new school). They should only occur when it is in the student's best interests.

Key requirements:

- Trial admissions or trial managed moves are not permitted in law. If a temporary move is needed, off-site direction (section 4a) must be used instead.
- A student must not be permanently excluded because parents refuse to agree a managed move. It is unlawful to exclude for a non-disciplinary reason.
- Where a student has a social worker, the social worker and DSL must be notified as soon as a managed move is being contemplated. For looked-after children, the VSH must also be notified. Where the student has an EHC plan, the local authority must be involved and the plan may need to be amended.
- Parents who feel pressured into a managed move may use the college's formal complaints procedure. Ofsted will consider evidence of pressure into managed moves and may judge the school as inadequate on this basis.

4c. Separation of Students for Safeguarding Purposes [NEW – July 2026 Statutory Guidance]

In certain circumstances, the college may temporarily forbid a student from attending its premises for safeguarding reasons – for example, where an allegation of harm by one student against another requires physical separation. This is not an exclusion on disciplinary grounds and must be distinguished from a suspension or permanent exclusion.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must take a lead role in any such decision. The Academy Council must be notified without delay. The college must inform parents of the reason and must comply with the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and Keeping Children Safe in Education. This power should only be used in rare circumstances where separation cannot practicably be achieved while keeping one or more students on the premises. Where a student is kept away from premises under this power, the local authority must arrange education if the school or parents do not do so.

4d. Academy Council Data Scrutiny Duties [NEW – July 2026 Statutory Guidance]

The July 2026 statutory guidance places strengthened duties on governing boards (Academy Council) to routinely challenge and evaluate suspension and exclusion data. The Academy Council must:

- Carefully consider the levels and characteristics of students leaving the school through permanent exclusion, removal from the admission register, off-site direction, or any other form of student movement, and deploy maximum challenge to leadership to understand these movements.
- Review suspensions and permanent exclusions, those taken off roll, and those on the school admission register but attending education off-site, including any separation for safeguarding

purposes, considering both the cost implications and any patterns in the reasons or timing of such moves.

- Understand the characteristics of excluded students (including SEND status, protected characteristics, and year group) and ensure data is used to benchmark trends, identify root causes, and improve educational outcomes. The Academy Council should receive termly data reports covering all the key performance indicators set out in section 11 of this policy.

5. Cancelling a Suspension (2026 Guidance Update)

The Principal may cancel a suspension before it has been reviewed by the Academy Council. Where this occurs, parents/carers, the Academy Council, the Local Authority, and (where applicable) the social worker and VSH must all be notified without delay. Meetings to consider reinstatement may be held remotely if requested by parents/carers and where relevant criteria are met, though face-to-face meetings are always encouraged.

6. Permanent Exclusion

Permanent exclusion is used only as a last resort, in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the Behaviour Policy, where allowing the student to remain would seriously harm the education or welfare of others. Both conditions must be demonstrated.

Under normal circumstances a student will have been suspended on a fixed-term basis before a permanent exclusion is considered. The Principal will meet with parents/carers and the student before reaching a final decision.

6.1 Process

- Parents/carers informed by telephone on the day
- Local Authority notified without delay (to enable early intervention)
- Written letter issued within 24 hours
- Permanent Exclusion Report compiled and shared with parents/carers, Chair of Academy Council, LA and Academy Council
- Academy Council Disciplinary Hearing within 15 college days
- Academy Council decides to uphold or reinstate; parents/carers notified without delay and in writing– the July 2026 statutory guidance requires written notification without delay (paragraph 150)
- Parents/carers have 15 school days from the date on which written notice of the Academy Council's decision is given to parents to request an Independent Review Panel (IRP)

7. Academy Council Consideration

7.1 Automatic Consideration (within 15 college days)

- Permanent exclusion
- Fixed-term suspension that brings total days above 15 in a term
- Any suspension that would cause the student to miss a public examination or national curriculum test

7.2 Parent/Carer Request (within 50 college days)

Parents/carers may request the Academy Council considers a suspension when it takes total days above 5 in a term. The Council may consider written representations for shorter suspensions but cannot direct reinstatement and is not required to convene a meeting.

7.3 At the Meeting

The Academy Council will consider whether the decision was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair, applying the civil standard of proof. It will then either uphold the exclusion or direct reinstatement

(immediately or on a specified date). At least three Academy Councillors must be present, along with the Principal and parents/carers.

Meetings may be held remotely if requested by parents/carers and criteria are satisfied (introduced by the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) (Amendment and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2023, confirmed in July 2026 guidance). Face-to-face meetings are always encouraged.

8. Independent Review Panel (IRP)

Parents/carers may request an IRP to review the Academy Council's decision to uphold a permanent exclusion. The request must be made in writing to the Clerk to the Academy Council within 15 school days of the date on which written notice of the Academy Council's decision is given to parents (not the date of the hearing itself).

Aspect	Detail
Timing	Panel meets within 15 college days of receiving the request
Composition	3 or 5 independently trained members; independent clerk appointed
Evidence	All written evidence circulated at least 5 college days before the hearing
Outcomes	Uphold exclusion; quash and direct Academy Council to reconsider; recommend reconsideration
Financial consequence	If the Academy Council does not reinstate following a direction to reconsider, a £4,000 adjustment is made to the college budget (payable to the local authority)
Maladministration complaints	Contact the local authority or the Department for Education (not the EFA – updated July 2026)

The IRP's decision is binding on all parties. Parents/carers are entitled to request a SEND expert at the IRP.

9. Equality, SEND & Protected Characteristics

Suspension and exclusion decisions will be lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate. The college will not discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

- Reasonable adjustments will be made for students whose behaviour is related to a disability
- Where a disability may hinder participation in the process, the college will ensure the student can present their case fully
- Parents/carers who believe a suspension relates to SEN or disability discrimination may appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (disability) or a County Court (other discrimination)
- Incidents linked to protected characteristics are recorded on My Concern and the PRfE system and reviewed by the safeguarding team

Support Organisations
SENDIAS – councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk | Coram Child Law Advice – 0300 330 5485 (Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm) | ACE Education – 0300 0115 142 (Mon–Wed, 10am–1pm, term time) | IPSEA – www.ipsea.org.uk

10. Behaviour Outside College

The Principal may suspend or exclude a student for behaviour that occurs off-site, including on social media, where it has repercussions for the orderly running of the college, poses a threat to others, or adversely affects the college's reputation. The civil standard of proof applies.

11. Monitoring & Review

Suspension and exclusion data is reported termly to the Academy Council. This policy is reviewed annually and published on the college website. Key performance indicators include:

- Number of internal suspensions (duration and triggers)
- Number of external fixed-term suspensions and total days
- Number of permanent exclusions
- Suspension rates by protected characteristic, SEND status and year group
- Reintegration outcomes and re-suspension rates

Appendix A: Template Letter – External Suspension

[School letterhead: Ely College, Downham Road, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 2SH | t: 01353 667763 | e: office@elycollege.co.uk]

[Date]
[Parent/Carer Name]
[Address]

Dear [Parent/Carer Name],

[Student Name] – [Form]

I am writing to inform you of my decision to suspend [Student Name] for a fixed period of [X] day(s) from [date].

Reason(s) for suspension:

- [Insert reason]

Steps taken to avoid this suspension:

- [Insert steps taken]

This brings the total days suspended this academic year to [X].

Return to college:

[Student Name] should return to college on [date] at 9.00am, presenting at main reception. We would be grateful if you could accompany them so that you can both sign the conduct agreement.

During the suspension:

You are responsible for ensuring [Student Name] is not in a public place during college hours. Failure to comply may result in a £60 fixed penalty notice.

Work is available on Teams ('Student Work Provision – Ely College') and via: BBC Bitesize | Oak National Academy | Seneca Learning | Tassomai | Bedrock Learning | Corbettmaths.

Your right to make representations:

You have the right to make written representations to the Chair of the Academy Council. Please contact [contact name/email] who will outline your next steps.

SEND / disability discrimination:

If you believe this suspension relates to your child's SEN or a disability and that discrimination may have occurred, you have the right to appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (disability discrimination) or a County Court (other discrimination). Support is available from:

- SENDIAS: councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk
- Coram Child Law Advice: childlawadvice.org.uk | 0300 330 5485 (Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm)
- ACE Education: ace-ed.org.uk | 0300 0115 142 (Mon–Wed, 10am–1pm, term time)
- IPSEA: ipsea.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

Simon Warburton
Principal

Appendix B: Template Letter – Internal Suspension

[School letterhead]

[Date]
[Parent/Carer Name]
[Address]

Dear [Parent/Carer Name],

[Student Name] – [Form]

I am writing to inform you of my decision to internally suspend [Student Name] for a fixed period of [X] day(s) on [date(s)].

Reason(s):

- [Insert reason]

Steps taken to avoid this internal suspension:

- [Insert steps taken]

During the internal suspension [Student Name] will remain on site in our designated supervision space, with appropriate work and full supervision throughout the day. We ask that you speak with [Student Name] about the behaviour that led to this outcome so that it is not repeated. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Warburton
Principal

Appendix C: Suspension & Exclusion Quick Reference

Action	Internal Suspension	External Suspension
Decision maker	AP for Behaviour and Culture	Principal (signed off by AP for Behaviour)
Parent notification	Phone call + letter same day	Phone call + written letter without delay

Action	Internal Suspension	External Suspension
LA notification	Not required	Without delay (all suspensions) – confirmed July 2026 statutory guidance
Social worker / VSH	Not required	Without delay (where applicable)
Academy Council	Not required	Once a term (≤5 days); without delay (>5 days / perm exclusion / exam clash)
Work provision	Set in the designated space	Via Teams; from day 6 if >5 days, LA arranges full-time education
Reintegration meeting	Required before return	Strongly encouraged; cannot delay return if parents cannot attend