



EXCLUSION POLICY

Date of Policy	February 2021 (D. Neville)
Reviewed	September 2022 (D. Neville)
Reviewed	September 2023
Next Review Due	September 2024

The Tower School is operated by Options Autism and is owned by Acorn Care and Education Ltd, a subsidiary company of Outcomes First Group (proprietary body). The Chairperson of the proprietary body is Richard Power (COO).

The Tower School has its own dedicated management team, under the leadership of Lauren Gibbs.

Oversight of school management is provided by the Regional Director for Options Autism, responsible to the Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer.

Key decisions are referred to the Outcomes First Group's Board of Directors,

In addition, the group extends its robust governance through local governing committees, a national education performance board and an independent Safeguarding and Quality Committee with three independent members.

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1) What legislation does this policy relate to?

The principal legislation to which this policy relates is:

- The Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011;
- The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006; and
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007.
- SEND Code of Practice 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- DfE's latest guidance 'Exclusion from maintained school, academies and pupil referral units in England' which was effective from 1st September 2017

2) Who is this policy for?

- a) The Headteacher
- b) Chair of Governors/Regional Director
- c) The local authorities (LA) that place children in the care of The Tower School
- d) Parents & Families

This policy reflects the DFE Guidance for Exclusions (June 2012, plus all updates including Feb 2015).

What follows covers:

- a) The main features of our ethos and policy towards the exclusion of pupils and
- b) The procedures we follow in case this course of action becomes necessary

3) Our Ethos and Rationale

- a) We are a school which caters for children who have a primary diagnosis of autism. We accept that many of our pupils present behaviours that challenge. We accept our coping capacity and skills in management has to be sufficient to cope with the majority of problem behaviours we encounter.
- b) We have many skills and resources which enable us to manage and support pupils who exhibit periods of provocation and difficult behaviours.
- c) The notion of acceptance, effective management and positive intervention are central to our philosophy. We accept that young people with autism will often present challenges.
- d) We have always taken the stance that the pupils we accept remain with us. Their acceptance is not conditional upon 'good behaviour'. Their behaviours are part of the presenting problems which have caused their referral. We work with these behaviours in a restorative manner.
- e) We take a different approach than mainstream schools when working with pupils. We are not intimidated by behaviour that may challenge us. Pupils are not allowed to turn away from the consequences of their actions nor from their growth towards personal responsibility by getting themselves excluded.
- f) We work with these behaviours wherever possible and to the extremes of our professional tolerance. This is the nature of our educational resilience as experienced practitioners. It is part of our professional obligation in working with young people with Autism.
- g) Exclusion, therefore, is very rarely used in our school and should always be considered as a last resort.

4) Where Does Tolerance End?

There is no easy answer to this question. Each situation must be assessed on its own circumstances; each pupil's individual reactions and needs must be taken fully into account. We will not adopt 'standard procedures' for all pupils in these situations. We do not generalise from the particular where our pupils are concerned. Where we have concerns about the behaviour, or risk of exclusion of a pupil we will consider that additional support or alternative placement may be required. This will involve assessing the suitability of our provision against a child's Special Educational Need (SEN). We will consider requesting an annual review or interim/emergency review. There are circumstances, however, in which the only decision left to us (and sometimes the best course of action in the situation we face) is to decide to exclude the pupil. This policy now details some of the situations which may lead to exclusion.

5) Possible Criteria for Considering Exclusion (Permanent and Fixed Term)

- a) A pupil who threatens the personal safety of other children. Attacking other children cannot be tolerated. Neither can any form of sexual abuse or drug abuse.
- b) A pupil who is constantly creating serious dangers for themselves and/or for others (is constantly devising, organising and implementing dangerous, destructive and/or antisocial behaviours).
- c) The child with a persistent and active compulsion towards arson.
- d) A pupil who is a genuine threat to staff.
- e) A pupil who engages in persistent and serious criminal activity.
- f) Behaviour of a pupil outside school can be considered grounds for an exclusion.
- g) A pupil who is unable to benefit from our educational approach. Not all pupils can be expected to respond to our form of intervention. If our approach is, for whatever reason, seen to be inappropriate (or producing an adverse reaction) we advise the LA accordingly.
- h) A pupil who becomes seriously disaffected. We expect our children to know, accept and support our values and standards. If a child totally rejects the school, the other pupils and the staff, we do not persist with his placement.

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

- In response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's 'Positive Behaviour and Discipline Policy'.
- Where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in school.

These criteria are not the only factors which can contribute to decisions about exclusion. There may be deeper clinical and psychological considerations; periodic errors may occur in selection and assessment; there may be insuperable pressures from the family and home contact; unexpected deteriorations in a child's psychological condition can occur; and so on. Again, the important thing is to make careful and informed decisions which are in the best interest of the child, the school community and other pupils. These collective interests cannot always be reconciled, of course. We are well aware of this and we accept the fact that on some occasions the collective good will have to prevail over individual considerations.

6) Procedures for Exclusion (Permanent and Fixed Term)

- a) There must be full consultation and full investigation of any precipitating circumstances. This process will include senior staff, together with any other staff member involved and any other child involved.
- b) Our usual recording procedures must be followed. The proper documenting of the event, decisions and action are essential.
- c) Precipitous action should be avoided whenever possible. Exclusions should follow proper consultation and communication with parents, the LA and any other referring or supportive agencies.
- d) Whenever possible agreement should be reached in consultation with these people, about the exclusion decision. LAs can only provide alternative arrangements (and/or secure alternative school placements) if they are given adequate notice of exclusion proceedings.
- e) Pupils will be provided with sufficient school work for the duration of any fixed term exclusion up to a maximum of five days. For cases of permanent exclusion, work will be provided for the first five days following the decision to permanently exclude.
- f) A written follow up should be sent to all parties. If an exclusion is permanent, it may be helpful to other agencies for us to liaise with them regarding choice of placement etc. If the exclusion is fixed term it is essential that appropriate levelled school work is sent home for the young person to complete during the exclusion period.
- g) Further meetings for consultation, planning and decision making may need to be arranged.
- h) The school-based decision about exclusion will ultimately rest with the Headteacher in consultation with other senior staff. The opinions of other members of staff involved with the child (i.e. teachers and teaching assistants) must be considered.
- i) In cases of alleged sexual/physical/drug abuse the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will make the initial assessment and then communicate with appropriate outside agencies.
- j) Sometimes exclusion has, unavoidably, to be arranged urgently. Even then proper arrangements must be made. Parents and LAs, and social workers, if applicable, must be informed and appropriate travel provision made.
- k) A planned reintegration meeting should take place during or immediately following any fixed term exclusion. This will involve teaching staff, a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the young person, parents/carers and any other agency representative deemed appropriate. It is understood that due to geographical location, parents may not always be able to attend these meetings. Meetings can be virtual in these circumstances.

7) Conclusion

We expect to use the above procedures infrequently. It is, however, a response which we reserve the right to use in certain circumstances. It will always be used in a constructive

spirit with careful attention paid to striking a balance between the needs of the pupil concerned, their family, the school, our staff and our remaining pupils.