



DISCIPLINE AND EXCLUSION POLICY

1. Context

- 1.1 Prior Park Preparatory School has a duty of care to its pupils, and parents (or guardians) have a duty to ensure the attendance and good behaviour of their son/daughter. Pupils are expected to respond positively to the principles and rules of the school.
- 1.2 Discipline procedures at PPPS are based on the expectation that the vast majority of our pupils behave well most of the time. Standards of expected behaviour are discussed and clarified with pupils.
- 1.3 In sustaining acceptable behaviour it is important that there is parental support for the school's policies.
- 1.4 Our aim is to help pupils understand right from wrong, be considerate of others and thus be ready to take their place as responsible pupils at their next school.
- 1.5 Serious offences, even on the first occasion, may lead to suspension or expulsion, but the HM (or in his absence the Acting Head) has the prerogative of imposing this. Serious offences include:
 - Bullying.
 - The use of violence.
 - Vandalism.
 - Serious hacking/misuse of computer systems (including downloading pornography).
 - Serious theft or persistent theft.

This list is illustrative rather than inclusive. Breaches of the law, dangerous or reckless behaviour, and persistent flouting of school standards, including academic standards, would also warrant major sanctions.

2. Expectations of Pupils

- 2.1 Pupils are expected to behave in a responsible and socially acceptable fashion, treating others as they would wish to be treated.
- 2.2 The pleasant atmosphere that exists at the school is due to good manners, our respect for other people's property and a willingness to learn. Pupils have a right to be treated as respected individuals, but also a responsibility to abide by the basic rules of the school.

3. **Investigation**

3.1 Awareness by staff of offences is likely to arise in a variety of ways. A teacher upon hearing of an offence or encountering an issue must act in accordance with school policy. They should consider guidance given in, for example, the 'Prior Way', Counter-Bullying Policy and the Child Protection Policy. Teachers will need to inform the Deputy Headmaster. Any investigation (beyond preliminary discussion) must be conducted in accordance with a plan agreed by the Deputy Headmaster and probably conducted by him/her. The investigation of a serious offence should not be conducted by a member of staff who was witness to the alleged breach. Once a decision is made to launch an inquiry/investigation a plan must be defined:

- Decide the critical issues, and what inquiries could be reasonably made to resolve them.
- Inform parents of the situation.
- Keep accurate written records of each stage of the investigation, including date, time, who was present, what was said, and where it took place.
- When taking notes of an interview, read these notes back to the person being interviewed at the end to confirm their accuracy.
- Add any written statements (by a pupil or person interviewed) to your documentation, completing an Incident Form as a cover sheet.
- Be careful and even-handed in consideration of all available evidence.
- Consider having another adult present during any discussion or interview.
- Consider the age and vulnerability of the pupil/pupils being interviewed. Also consider the record of the pupil, his/her circumstances, peer pressure, frequency and severity of the behaviour and likelihood of recurrence.
- Written records should be collated and filed in the School files, with full copies to the DHM.
- Any punishment/sanctions must be proportional to the offence committed (and consistent with the burden of probability) - sanctions are defined in the Code of Conduct.

4. **Suspension and Expulsion**

4.1 In the event of serious misbehaviour, matters are referred to the Deputy Headmaster/Headmaster. Serious breaches of discipline can result in suspension or expulsion.

4.2 Suspension is applied for serious breaches of school rules and expectations. Only the Headmaster (or in his absence the Acting Head) may suspend a pupil. This may occur in two forms:

- a. Fixed-term sanction - a pupil is excluded from the school for a defined period as a warning of the need to re-assess his/her behaviour. This is recorded on a pupil's disciplinary record.
- b. Removal of a pupil pending an investigation of a rumour or complaint concerning him/her. This is a neutral (not disciplinary) measure to allow an unimpeded investigation, and may also be taken for the good of the pupil by separating him/her from immediate school pressures.

The HM will make any such decision in consultation with senior staff. The Headmaster will explain the matter to parents. There is no right to formal review of decisions to suspend, but parents may ask the Headmaster to reconsider.

4.3 Expulsion (proper) - in the case of serious offences the Headmaster may require a pupil to leave the school. Before making this decision the Headmaster will have consulted the Chairman of Governors. Parents must be made aware that they can seek a Governors' Review.

4.4. **Permanent Withdrawal**

- a. Withdrawal of a pupil - for a breach of discipline which did not justify expulsion, but makes it impossible for the pupil to remain, the Headmaster may request parents to withdraw a pupil. A consultation with parents will take place, to discuss leaving status and to provide help in finding a fresh start. If parents accede to this request, there will be no fees in lieu of notice. The fees/extras up to and including the end of the present term remain payable (without remission for unexpired weeks).
- b. Required removal - following consultation, the Headmaster is satisfied a pupil must leave, but parents refuse to withdraw the pupil. The Headmaster is entitled to suspend (or to continue suspension) and to inform parents that consideration will now be given to formally requiring the pupil's removal. The Headmaster will set the timescale (e.g. 3 days) for his decision.

The Headmaster will inform parents that if he comes to the conclusion that the child must be removed, the parents will be entitled to a review by Governors. However, they must realise that, if the decision is upheld, leaving status may be affected (and there may be financial consequences). When requiring removal the Headmaster should state:

- The facts found.
- Reasons for the decision.
- The pupil's leaving status.
- The financial position.

If parents request a Governors' review they should be sent an application form and a copy of the review procedure without delay. Following receipt of a completed application from parents, the review should take place within 7 days, and preferably sooner.