RYDE SCHOOL
WITH UPPER CHINE

Exclusion and Serious Disciplinary Cases Policy & Procedure

Policy date:	September 2026	
Date of next review:	Summer Term 2026-27	
Owner(s):	Head Master	
Approval body:	Governors	
Intended audience:	Pupils, parents and staff	
ISI Regulatory Paragraph No:	32(3)(a)	
Location (tick as appropriate):	Website	✓
	Parent Portal	✓
	Staff Portal	✓
	Inspection folder	✓

The School must maintain good discipline and conduct in order for it to function effectively and for pupils to thrive.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Pupil Code of Conduct and the Complaints Policy. The Parent Contract and the policies listed are clear about what constitutes unacceptable conduct and the possible consequences of such conduct.

This policy is available on the School's website, the Parent Portal and also on request from the School office.

Most disciplinary and behavioural matters will be dealt with under the School's Behaviour Policy which is on the School's website and the Parent Portal. That policy sets out the standard of behaviour expected of pupils. It explains the rewards available to pupils for good behaviour, and it sets out the sanctions which may be imposed if behaviour is not to the expected standard.

However, when alleged behaviour is serious, i.e. it could potentially result in permanent exclusion, this Exclusion and Serious Disciplinary Cases Policy and Procedure will apply. Such cases will normally be dealt with by the Head Master and this policy sets out the procedure which should be followed. Whether or not an alleged offence is sufficiently serious to trigger this procedure is entirely at the Head Master's discretion.

It is the School's policy to ensure that any disciplinary matter is dealt with fairly; that steps are taken to establish the facts; and that pupils have the opportunity to respond fully to any allegations before any sanction is imposed. It is also the School's policy to ensure that this process is carried out in a way which does not discriminate against any party on the grounds of any protected characteristic. The Head Master may, at his discretion, vary or amend the following procedure to ensure that a fair disciplinary hearing takes place.

A pupil may be excluded permanently from the School where it is proved on the balance of probabilities that the pupil has committed a serious breach of the School Rules or a serious criminal offence. Permanent Exclusion is reserved for the most serious breaches.

Breaches of the School Rules which merit Exclusion:

A non-exhaustive list of the sorts of behaviour that could merit permanent exclusion (including behaviour or conduct outside of School) includes the following:

- physical assault against pupils or adults;
- behaviour which puts the safety of the pupil, or any other person, in jeopardy;
- verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against pupils or adults;
- bullying, including (cyber-bullying) in accordance with the School's Anti-Bullying Policy;
- committing a criminal offence;
- fighting;
- abuse on the grounds of race, religion/belief, disability, SENs (etc.) or any form of unlawful discrimination;
- sexual harassment or misconduct, including youth-produced sexual imagery;
- drug and alcohol misuse (including supply/possession/use);
- damage to property;

- vandalism or computer hacking;
- theft or unauthorised possession of any property belonging to the School, another pupil, or a member of staff;
- wilful damage to property;
- bringing illegal, inappropriate or dangerous items into School, such as drugs, weapons, firearms, pornographic material etc;
- misconduct which adversely affects or is likely to adversely affect the welfare of a member or members of the School community;
- misconduct which brings or is likely to bring the School into disrepute; and
- persistent disruptive behaviour or breaches of the School's Behaviour Policy or Code of Conduct.

Special Educational Needs

In applying sanctions, especially those with serious consequences, we undertake to take reasonable steps to avoid placing pupils with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) or a particular vulnerability at a particular disadvantage compared to other pupils, in accordance with the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Where there is misbehaviour by a pupil with SEND, the School will consider whether a pupil's SEND has contributed to the misbehaviour and if so, whether it is appropriate and lawful to sanction the pupil, and the appropriate sanction to be applied. It does not follow that every incident of misbehaviour will be connected to a pupil's SEND.

Contextual Safeguarding

The School will consider whether any misbehaviour gives cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm. Where this may be the case, school staff will follow the School's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and consider if pastoral support, an early help intervention or a referral to children's social care is appropriate.

The School will also consider whether any disruptive behaviour might be the result of unmet educational needs, or any other needs, and will discuss concerns with the pupil's parents accordingly.

Guiding Principles

Whilst the precise procedure to be followed in a given situation will depend on the circumstances of the case, the Head Master shall act with procedural fairness in all such cases. The following key principles are followed:

- A fair and reasonable investigation will take place. No decision will be made until sufficient information has been gathered.
- Parents will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable if a complaint or allegation under investigation is of a nature that could result in the pupil being excluded.
- Pupils will be informed of the allegations and the supporting evidence and must be given a reasonable opportunity to exculpate themselves.

- Any findings of fact will be made on the basis of whether it is more likely than not to have (or have not) occurred, i.e. the balance of probabilities.
- The sanction should be proportionate and an appeal should be offered.

Confidentiality

The School's aim is to deal with disciplinary matters sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved. All pupils and their parents must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with an investigation or disciplinary matter.

Pupils, parents and anyone accompanying them (including witnesses), must not make electronic recordings of any meetings (or hearings) conducted under this policy.

To preserve the confidentiality of all School pupils, the names of any pupils whose evidence is relied upon in disciplinary proceedings will not normally be disclosed, unless the Head Master considers such disclosure to be necessary or appropriate in the circumstances.

Investigation

The purpose of an investigation is to establish a fair and balanced view of the facts relating to any disciplinary allegations. A pupil against whom allegations have been made will normally be informed of the allegations at an appropriate point in the investigation process, unless providing this information would prevent a fair investigation.

The extent of the investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from pupils or reviewing relevant documents. The Head Master will appoint a member of staff to lead the investigation. This will usually be a member of the Senior Leadership Group.

Pupils must cooperate fully and promptly in any investigation. This will include informing the investigating staff member of the names of any relevant witnesses and attending investigative interviews if required.

The investigating staff member's role is to investigate and report on the facts. Once the investigation is concluded, the investigating staff member will then submit a report to the Head Master in writing setting out their findings. The Head Master will not be involved in the investigation and no decision will be taken by the Head Master until a disciplinary hearing has been held.

Suspension

The School has the right to temporarily suspend from school a pupil against whom allegations have been made, while the investigation or disciplinary procedure is underway. Such suspension will be for as short a period as possible and is not a disciplinary sanction. It does not imply that any decision has been made. It is purely for the

purpose of carrying out a proper investigation and for ensuring a fair disciplinary procedure can take place. Alternatively, the pupil may be placed under a segregated regime if they remain on school premises.

Notification to parents

A senior staff member will, when appropriate, contact the parents of the pupil involved to inform them of the allegations and to explain the investigation process.

Pastoral Support

During the process, a senior member of staff will keep the pupil and their parents informed, as appropriate. Pupils involved in a serious incident will receive appropriate pastoral support from the School.

The School will provide appropriate pastoral support to all pupils affected by a serious disciplinary issue, including the pupil who is subject to this disciplinary process. Support will be available from the School's Pastoral Team. Where appropriate, external support and advice will be signposted. An example of where this may be appropriate is where a disciplinary issue arises from misuse of drugs or alcohol.

After the investigation

If, once the investigation is complete and the Head Master has received the investigation report, he considers that there is no case to answer, no further steps will be necessary. The Head Master will confirm this to the parents in writing.

If, however, the Head Master considers that there is a case to answer, a disciplinary hearing will be arranged as soon as reasonably practicable. The Head Master will inform the parents of the date, time and place of the disciplinary hearing and will provide them with a copy of the investigation findings, together with any statements or any other relevant written evidence. Pupils and parents will be given reasonable notice of any hearing.

If pupils or their parents wish to produce their own evidence, including documents or witness statements, they should provide copies to the Head Master as soon as possible before the hearing.

If a pupil or their parent cannot attend the hearing, they should inform the School immediately and an alternative time will be arranged. A hearing will not normally be rearranged more than once. Parties must make every effort to attend the hearing, and failure to attend without good reason may result in a decision being taken in a party's absence based on the available evidence.

The disciplinary hearing

The disciplinary hearing will be conducted by the Head Master. A member of administrative support staff will be present to take notes. Parents may be present to accompany the pupil if they wish. The investigating staff member may be asked by the Head Master to attend the hearing to answer any questions relating to the investigation.

Pupils who have provided evidence in the investigation will not usually be required to attend the disciplinary hearing. Their evidence will be submitted by way of a written statement. Attendance of parties at the hearing is at the Head Master's discretion.

The disciplinary hearing is not a legal hearing. The role of the Head Master is to establish the facts in order to determine what disciplinary sanction, if any, is appropriate. The parties will not therefore be permitted to bring legal representatives to the hearing. At the start of the hearing, the Head Master will explain to the parties that his role is to try to establish an accurate picture of what took place so that he can decide what sanction, if any, is appropriate in the case.

The pupil and/or their parent(s) will have the opportunity to respond to the investigation findings and present any evidence of their own. They will be given the opportunity to respond to any information provided by a witness. However, parties will not be permitted to cross-examine witnesses.

Parents for whom English is not their first language may be permitted to bring an interpreter. In such cases, permission should be requested from the Head Master in advance.

The Head Master may adjourn the disciplinary hearing if he considers there is a need to carry out any further investigations such as re-interviewing witnesses in the light of any new matters raised. Parties will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before the hearing is reconvened.

When all evidence has been heard, and questioning has been completed, the Head Master will withdraw to consider his decision. The Head Master may decide to deliver a decision in person after an adjournment, or alternatively, may inform the parents of his decision in writing after the hearing, in which case the written decision will be provided as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The Head Master will confirm:
a. the Head Master's decision in relation to the allegations;
b. the sanction to be applied and when it takes effect;
c. the reasons for the decision; and
d. in the case of exclusion, the right of appeal (including to whom, when and how an appeal should be made).

In the event that the Head Master is unable to conduct the disciplinary hearing due to absence or if he considers it inappropriate that he should conduct the hearing, the Head Master can, in his absolute discretion, substitute another senior member of staff to conduct the hearing and the substitute shall take the place of the Head Master for the purposes of this procedure.

Disciplinary sanctions

Where the Head Master decides that the disciplinary allegations are upheld, the Head Master may impose a disciplinary sanction including a period of suspension or permanent exclusion.

Permanent exclusion will normally take place in the following cases:
a. a single offence which is very serious in nature; or
b. a repeated offence following a written warning by the Head Master or another senior member of staff that a further offence may result in permanent exclusion.

The Head Master retains absolute discretion as to whether or not the permanent exclusion of a pupil is appropriate.

Appeals against exclusion/required removal

The School will always offer the right of appeal to any pupil excluded or required to be removed from the School. Any appeal against exclusion will be dealt with under Stage 3 of the School's Complaints Policy, and should be made in writing to the Head Master within five working days of the pupil's exclusion / required removal. The outcome of the appeal process is final and there shall be no further right to appeal.

If a decision is taken by the parents to withdraw the pupil, the parents will waive any right to an appeal.

For the purposes of this policy “working days” refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time, excluding bank holidays, holiday periods and half term.

Recording and monitoring

Where the sanction imposed is exclusion, required removal or suspension, the written report on the investigation will be placed on the pupil’s file.

Details of the exclusion, required removal or suspension will be recorded on the School’s Sanctions Record.