

EXCLUSION POLICY



Our Mission Statement – the reason our College exists

“Learning & Growing in the Light of the Gospel”

With Christ at the centre of our learning, we:

- *Help young people to achieve their greatest potential*
- *Guide their intellectual growth, nurture their God-given talents, and inspire them to live in service to others*
- *Aim to develop honest, confident, responsible and compassionate members of society, based on the educational values of Blessed Antonio Rosmini*

Our Vision Statement – the long-term change resulting from our work

‘Begin Here, Go Anywhere’

Ratcliffe’s unique educational offering based on our College motto, “Legis Plenitudo Charitas”, Love is the fulfilment of the Law, provides a perfect context within which young people may acquire the emotional knowledge and interpersonal skills necessary to live happy and purposeful lives. The College’s inclusive Catholic ethos is complemented by the outstanding quality of our College community through which our Mission, “Learning and Growing in the Light of the Gospel”, serves to nurture resilience and develop maturity. Young people leave Ratcliffe with a strong sense of who they are and their purpose in the world, equipped socially, emotionally, morally and spiritually to go forth and make a difference to the communities in which they live and work.

EXCLUSION POLICY

This policy has been written for all three sections of the School

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Review Date: August 2025	Next Review: September 2026

Signed

(Chair of Governors)

Signed

(Headmaster)

Rationale

The School recognises that it is unlawful to take into account anyone's gender, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age or sexual orientation. Full consideration has been given to this during the formulation of this policy as it is our aim that no one at Ratcliffe should suffer unlawful discrimination, either directly or indirectly, or harassment on any of these grounds.

Definitions

Where the following words or phrases are used in this policy:

References to **working days** mean Monday to Friday when the School is open during term time. The dates of terms are published on the School's website. In the event that the application of this definition is likely to introduce excessive delays, due to intervening School holidays, the School's approach is to take sensible and reasonable steps so as to minimise any hardship or unfairness arising from such delays.

References to the **Headmaster** may include deputies.

References to **Parent** or **Parents** includes one or both of the parents, a legal guardian or education guardian.

References to the **Review** and **Review Hearing** are to the review by the Panel of the Headmaster's decision, in accordance with this policy.

References to the **Panel** are to the three-member panel selected by the Clerk to the Governors to undertake the Review.

Aims

We aim to include, not exclude, and seek to approach challenging behaviour in a supportive and positive way. We recognise that such behaviour can sometimes be symptomatic of a real, deeper need for our support and understanding. All children can go through times of inappropriate

behaviour, and we strive to never “give up” easily on a child as we recognise that each person has a unique contribution to make to school life and we want to support them to achieve this.

A decision to exclude a student, either for a fixed period (suspension) or permanently, is generally seen as a last resort by the School and/or a necessary step to secure the good order of the School and welfare and safety of the school community. The physical and emotional health of our children and staff is our primary concern, and we therefore accept, that in some situations, exclusion may be necessary, if all other strategies have been exhausted, or if the behaviour is so extreme to warrant such action.

The School is responsible for communicating to students, parents, and staff its expectations of standards of conduct. A range of policies and procedures are in place to promote good behaviour and appropriate conduct.

These include:

- Acceptable Use Policy
- Positive Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy
- Drugs Policy

No exclusion will be initiated without first exhausting other strategies or, in the case of a serious single incident, a thorough investigation.

Reasons for exclusion:

1. Serious breach of the School’s rules or policies.
2. Risk of harm to the education or welfare of the child or others in the School.

Any exclusion will be at the decision of the Headmaster, in consultation with the Chair of Governors. If a member of staff is conflicted in their role, another member of SLT or Governor will be consulted.

Suspension

A suspension should be for the shortest time necessary. Ofsted evidence suggests that 1-3 days is usually enough to secure benefits without adverse educational consequences.

Persistent or Cumulative Problems

Suspension for a period of time from half a day to 5 days for persistent or cumulative problems may be imposed when the School had already offered and implemented a range of support strategies including, although not limited to, any or all of the following:

- Meetings with the child/student and their parents.
- Access to talking therapy via the School Counsellor or Listener or member of staff.
- Behaviour report or Behaviour Contract.
- Alternative sanctions, e.g., Saturday detention, internal suspension from lessons.
- Forfeit of opportunities such as sport or a School trip.

Single Incident

Suspension may be used in response to a serious breach of School rules and policies. In such cases the Deputy Head Pastoral, Assistant Head, or Head of Boarding or a Head of Year will

investigate the incident and consider all evidence to support the allegation, taking account of the School's policies. The student will be given the opportunity to give his/her version of events and the member of staff investigating will check whether the incident may have been provoked, for example by bullying or harassment. If necessary, the investigating member of staff will consult with colleagues.

Exclusion

Exclusion is a very serious decision, and the Headmaster will consult with the Senior Deputy Head and Deputy Head Pastoral and/or members of the Senior Leadership Team and the Chair of Governors before enforcing it. If a member of staff is conflicted in their role, another member of SLT or Governor will be consulted.

As with a suspension, it will usually follow a range of strategies and be seen as a last resort, or it may be in response to a single very serious breach of School rules and policies such as:

- Physical assault against a pupil
- Physical assault against an adult
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a pupil
- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult
- Use, or threat of use, of an offensive weapon or prohibited item that has been prohibited by a school's behaviour policy, for example a knife.
- Bullying, whether face to face and/or online (cyber).
- Racist abuse
- Abuse against sexual orientation or gender reassignment
- Abuse relating to disability
- Breach of the Drugs Policy - Possession, supply, use or misuse of an illegal drug on School premises or beyond School (See Drugs Policy).
- An accumulation of suspensions (normally 3) for unacceptable behaviour during their school career to date. This unacceptable behaviour need not be of the same nature to warrant expulsion if a student has served 3 suspensions.
- Vandalism of school property

This list is non-exhaustive and is intended to offer examples rather than be complete or definitive.

The Decision to suspend and exclude

If the Headmaster decides to suspend a student, he, or one of the Deputy Heads on his behalf, will:

- Ensure that there is sufficient recorded evidence to support the decision.
- Explain the decision to the student.
- Contact the parents (this communication may be devolved to a Deputy Head or Assistant Head), explain the decision and ask that the student to be collected (suspensions can start the same day, but the School cannot make parents collect their child straightaway).
- Explain to the parents how to challenge the suspension or exclusion if they so wish.
- Explain that, for the first 5 school days of a suspension or exclusion, it is the parents' responsibility to make sure their child is not in a public place during normal school hours unless there is a good reason. Parents can be prosecuted if their child is found in a public place when they are not supposed to be.

- Send a letter to the parents confirming the reasons for the suspension or exclusion, If a student were to be excluded, a letter would follow a disciplinary meeting with the parents.
- The length of the suspension and any terms or conditions agreed for the child's return;
- In cases of **more than two days' suspension**, ensure that appropriate work is set and that arrangements are in place.
- Where appropriate, plan how to address the child's needs and integration back into their class on his/her return. This routinely involves a meeting with the Headmaster or a senior member of staff to discuss the suspension and how best to manage questions and comments from other students, as well as reiterating the School's expectations about appropriate behaviour.
- Where appropriate, plan a meeting with parents and child on his/her return.

Safeguarding

- A suspension or exclusion will not be enforced if doing so may put the safety of the child at risk. In cases where parents will not comply, for example, by refusing to collect the child, the child's welfare is the priority. In this situation, depending on the reason for suspension or exclusion, the School may consider an internal suspension until the end of the day, implementing the original suspension decision from the time the child is collected from School, or, in more severe circumstances, the School may contact Social Services and/or the Police to safely take the pupil off site safely.
- The School is mindful of guidance within Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and Working Together to Safeguard Children (December 2023) that the School should be alert to the need for 'Early Help' for a student who has experienced multiple suspensions or is at risk of exclusion.
- In considering the use 'early help', and its effectiveness within a disciplinary process, the Headmaster will consult with the Director of Safeguarding to review all the circumstances and any other information that may be available that would impact on any disciplinary decision. Information known to members of Student Support Services should also form part of this review i.e. pastoral, medical, SEND, to give a holistic understanding of the student's circumstances. Any consultation should be recorded along with outcomes.
- In considering the use of 'Early help' it should be noted that the process requires the agreement of the student, and their parents/guardians, for it to be implemented along with ongoing engagement. 'Early help' should not be seen as an alternative to a sanction that the school may deem reasonable.
- The welfare of the student involved in the disciplinary process should be always considered alongside the welfare of other students attending Ratcliffe College who may have been impacted by any incident or set of circumstances.

Behaviour Outside of School

- The child's behaviour outside School, but on school business, e.g., on school trips, at sports fixtures, is subject to the School's Behaviour Policy. Unacceptable behaviour in such circumstances will be dealt with as if it had taken place in School.
- The child's behaviour outside school at all other times will only be subject to the School's Behaviour Policy if it could:
 - threaten the safety or well-being of members of the School community.
 - bring the good name of the School into disrepute.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabled Pupils

- The School will make reasonable adjustments for managing behaviour which is related to a pupil's disability. Staff should seek advice from the Deputy Head Pastoral and the SENCo if they are unsure about how to manage a pupil's behaviour where this is related to a disability.
- Where permanent exclusion needs to be considered, the School will ensure that a pupil with a disability or special educational needs is able to present their case fully where their disability or special educational needs might hinder this.

Pupils who have a social worker, including looked-after children, and previously looked-after children

- Where a pupil has a social worker, e.g., because they are the subject of a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan, and they are at risk of suspension or exclusion, the Headmaster or Deputy Head Pastoral should inform their social worker, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the pupil's parents to involve them all as early as possible in relevant conversations.
- Where a looked-after child (LAC) is likely to be subject to a suspension or exclusion, the Designated Teacher (DT) should contact the local authority's Virtual School Head (VSH) as soon as possible. The VSH, working with the DT and others, should consider what additional assessment and support need to be put in place to help the school address the factors affecting the child's behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or exclusion. Where relevant, the school should also engage with a child's social worker, foster carers, or children's home workers.
- Where previously looked-after children face the risk of being suspended or permanently excluded, the school should engage with the child's parents and the school's DT. The school may also seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support the pupil.

Marking Attendance Registers Following Exclusion

- When a pupil is suspended, he/she should be marked as absent using Code E.

Managed Move

- In cases where the Headmaster and parents agree that the progress of the pupil has been unsatisfactory and the child is unwilling or unable to profit from the educational opportunities offered, or if a parent has treated the School or members of its staff unreasonably, the Headmaster may work with the parents to move the child at the end of a term. This is not an exclusion and in such cases the Headmaster may assist the parents in placing the child in another school.

Removal from the School for Other Reasons

- The Headmaster may send a child home, after consultation with that child's parents and a health professional, as appropriate, if the child poses an immediate and serious risk to the health and safety of other children and staff; for example, because of a diagnosed illness such as a notifiable disease. This is not an exclusion and should be for the shortest possible time.

Review

- A pupil or his / her Parents may request a Review of the Headmaster's decision to exclude or remove a pupil or where a decision has been made to suspend a pupil for a fixed term of up to 11 working days or more where such suspension would prevent a pupil from taking a public examination.
- Please see Appendix 1 for details about how to request a Review and the Review procedure.

Record keeping

All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.

Administration of major punishments are recorded, with the name of the pupil concerned, the reason for the punishment including relevant dates, and the name of the person administering the punishment. This log is reviewed regularly by the Deputy Head Pastoral so that patterns in behaviour can be identified and managed appropriately.

Links to other Policies

Positive Behaviour and Relationships Policy

Drugs Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

Acceptable Use Policy

Appendix 1 Review procedure

1 Review

- 1.1 A pupil or his / her Parents may request a Review of the Headmaster's decision to exclude or remove a pupil or where a decision has been made to suspend a pupil for a fixed term of 11 working days or more where such suspension would prevent a pupil from taking a public examination.
- 1.2 This procedure does cover cases when a pupil has to leave because of ill-health, non-payment of fees, or withdrawal by his / her Parents.
- 1.3 The pupil will remain suspended and away from the College until the outcome of the Review is known.

2 How to request a Review

- 2.1 A request for a Review must be put in writing to the Clerk to the Governors using the request form at Appendix 2. The request must be made within five working days of the date of the Headmaster's letter confirming his decision.
- 2.2 The request should include:
 - 2.2.1 a copy of all relevant documents and full contact details;
 - 2.2.2 the grounds on which the Parents are asking for a Review and the outcome desired;
 - 2.2.3 a list of the documents which the Parents believe to be in the School's possession and wish the Panel to consider; and
 - 2.2.4 whether the Parents propose to be accompanied to the Review Hearing by someone who is legally qualified.
- 2.3 For the avoidance of doubt, a mere disagreement with the decision of the Headmaster will not of itself be grounds sufficient for a Review.
- 2.4 If assistance with the request is required, for example because of a disability, this should be indicated in the request form.
- 2.5 The Clerk to the Governors will acknowledge the request for a Review in writing within three working days of receipt.
- 2.6 Every effort will be made to enable the Review to take place within 15 working days of receipt of the request.

3 Planning the Review

- 3.1 The Clerk to the Governors will send written notification to each party of the date, time and place of the Review at least ten working days before the date of the Review.

- 3.2 Copies of any documents additional to those specified in the Review form that the Parents wish the Panel to consider should be sent to the Clerk to the Governors to be received at least seven working days prior to the Review.
- 3.3 On receipt of new information not previously available to the Headmaster before his decision was made, the Clerk to the Governors should contact the Chair of Governors who will decide whether to:
 - 3.3.1 include the new information in the bundle; or
 - 3.3.2 omit the information if not relevant to the grounds for Review; or
 - 3.3.3 make further enquiries of the Parents or the pupil about the information or
 - 3.3.4 refer the information to the Headmaster for his consideration as to whether the decision should be revisited.
- 3.4 The Clerk to the Governors will circulate a copy of the bundle of documents to be considered by the Review Panel to all parties at least three working days prior to the Review.
- 3.5 The Parents may be accompanied at the Review Hearing, for example by a relative or friend. The Review is an internal proceeding, not legal proceedings, and legal representation is unnecessary.
- 3.6 The Parents are required to notify the Clerk to the Governors if they wish to be accompanied by someone who is legally qualified in their initial request for a Review. The Parents should note that the Panel will wish to speak to them directly. The legally qualified person will not be permitted to act as an advocate or to address the Review unless invited to do so by the Chair of the Panel.
- 3.7 A person will be appointed to take a minute of the Review Hearing.

4 Composition of the Panel

- 4.1 The Panel will comprise at least three individuals who have no detailed prior knowledge of the case or of the pupil or the Parents and will not include the Chair of Governors. With the exception of the Chair of Governors, Governors not appointed to the Panel will not be provided with information about the case.
- 4.2 The Parents may ask the Clerk to the Governors to inform them who has been appointed to sit on the Panel ahead of the Review. Fair consideration will be given to any reasonable objection to a particular member of the Panel.
- 4.3 The Panel members will appoint one of themselves to be the Chair of the Panel throughout the proceedings.

5 Role of the Panel

- 5.1 The role of the Panel is to consider:
- 5.2 Whether, on the facts, the decision-making relating to the breach of College policy/ies and sanction imposed followed a fair process.

Whether an appropriate procedure was followed allowing the facts of the case to be sufficiently proved when the decision was taken to exclude or remove the pupil. The civil standard of proof, namely, "the balance of probability", will apply. Observance of the School's relevant policies and rules will be taken into account but may not be determinative.

- 5.3 Whether the sanction was within the range of reasonable responses.

Whether the sanction was proportionate: whether it was warranted in respect of the breach of discipline or the other events that are found to have occurred and to the legitimate aims of the School's policy in that respect.

- 5.4 In addressing the matters above, the Panel will consider the documentation provided by the parties, representations made by the parties and any other factors which the Panel considers to be relevant.
- 5.5 The Panel will determine whether to uphold the Headmaster's decision or refer the decision back to the Headmaster with recommendations so that he may consider the matter further.

6 **Review Hearing**

- 6.1 The Review will be conducted in an informal manner observing principles of natural justice or the "duty to act fairly".
- 6.2 During the Review, the parties shall have the opportunity to ask questions and make comments in an appropriate manner. The Review is not a legal proceeding, and the Panel shall be under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses but may do so and / or may take written statements into account.
- 6.3 All statements made at the Review will be unsworn. The parties will be entitled to write their own notes for reference purposes.
- 6.4 All those present during the Review are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners or, after due warning, the Review may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the Chair of the Panel. Any person who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way the Review is being conducted must say so before the proceedings go any further and his / her comment will be minuted.
- 6.5 The Chair of the Panel may, at his / her discretion, adjourn the Review if he / she considers it appropriate to do so. This may include an adjournment for the parties to take legal advice on a specific issue arising.
- 6.6 A Review is a private procedure and all those who are concerned in it are required to keep its proceedings confidential, subject to law. The requirement is without prejudice to the parties' right to refer to the Panel's decision in any subsequent legal proceedings.
- 6.7 When the Chair of the Panel is satisfied that sufficient consideration has been given to the documentation provided and any representations made by the parties, he / she will conclude the Review Hearing.

7 Decision

- 7.1 The Panel's decision and any recommendations will be notified in writing, with reasons, to the Headmaster and the Parents by the Chair of the Panel or the Chair of Governors within three working days of the Review Hearing.
- 7.2 In the absence of a significant procedural irregularity, the Head's decision will then be final;
- 7.3 If the Head's decision is upheld then the decision will be final; and
- 7.4 If the Head is asked to reconsider their decision, the pupil will remain suspended until this has been done. The Headmaster will provide his response to recommendations, if appropriate, in writing within three working days. The Headmaster's decision will then be final.

Appendix 2 Form for requesting a Review

To [•]

Subject [• name of pupil]

I / we request a Review of the Headmaster's decision to permanently exclude or require the removal of the above named pupil. I/we agree that the Review will be carried out in accordance with the School's review procedure and I / we agree to abide by the terms of that policy.

I / we confirm that I / we have parental responsibility for the above named pupil and that I / we have consulted the pupil who wishes the Review to be undertaken.

I / we understand that the Panel will be concerned with the fairness and proportionality of the Head's decision in accordance with the School 's existing policies (where applicable and relevant) on educational, pastoral care and administration matters.

I / we understand that we may be accompanied at the Review Hearing by a friend or relation. If I / we wish to bring a friend or relation who is legally qualified I / we set out details of this person below.

I / we will inform the Clerk to the Governors if I / we have any special needs or disabilities requiring additional facilities or adjustments.

The grounds upon which I / we seek a Review and the outcome which I / we seek are as set out below.

Grounds for Review	
Desired outcome	

Details of accompanying person if legally qualified	
List of all documents which we wish the Panel to consider (please enclose copies if you have them)	

Signed	Signed
Full name	Full name
Relationship to pupil	Relationship to pupil
Date	Date
Address	Address
Telephone number	Telephone number

(Two signatures required where practicable)