

Policy Statement

First Steps Together is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where all pupils can learn and thrive. Exclusion is used only as a last resort, in line with statutory guidance, and only when all appropriate interventions and support strategies have been exhausted or when a serious incident requires immediate action to ensure safety. The school recognises that exclusion can have a significant impact on a child's wellbeing, education, and future outcomes. Decisions are made with great care, fairness, and proportionality.

Aims

- Ensure exclusions are lawful, reasonable, and fair.
- Protect the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff.
- Reduce the need for exclusion through early intervention and support.
- Ensure pupils with SEND, safeguarding vulnerabilities, or unmet needs are not disadvantaged.
- Maintain transparent processes for decision-making, communication, and review.
- Work in partnership with families and external agencies.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Fixed-term suspensions
- Permanent exclusions
- Lunchtime exclusions
- Managed moves (voluntary and agreed)
- Reintegration processes following exclusion

Principles

- Exclusion is a protective measure, not a punitive one.
- Every decision considers the pupil's age, needs, SEND profile, trauma history, and context.
- Reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with SEND.
- The school explores all alternatives before exclusion.
- Parents/carers are engaged early and meaningfully.
- Exclusion is never used for:
 - Minor breaches of behaviour
 - Additional needs or disabilities
 - Lack of academic progress
 - Failure to meet unmet needs

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

- Makes all decisions regarding exclusion.
- Ensures decisions comply with statutory guidance.
- Notifies parents/carers, governors, and the local authority.
- Provides written reasons for exclusion.
- Ensures work is provided during the exclusion period.
- Oversees reintegration planning.

Governing Body

- Reviews exclusions where required.
- Ensures the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Holds leaders to account for exclusion patterns and equity.

Staff

- Implement behaviour and support strategies consistently.
- Record incidents accurately.
- Contribute to risk assessments and support plans.

Parents/Carers

- Work in partnership with the school.
- Attend meetings and reintegration reviews.

Preventing Exclusion

The school prioritises early intervention, including:

- Pastoral support
- Restorative approaches
- Trauma-informed practice
- Behaviour support plans
- Risk assessments
- Reasonable adjustments for SEND
- Multi-agency involvement
- Alternative timetables (time-limited and reviewed)
- Safe spaces and regulation strategies
- Mentoring or key-adult support

For pupils with SEND, the school ensures:

- Needs are assessed
- Provision is reviewed
- External advice is sought where appropriate
- Exclusion is not used as a response to unmet need

Grounds for Exclusion

Exclusion may be considered when:

- A serious breach of the behaviour policy has occurred.
- Allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.
- There is significant risk to safety.
- All other strategies have been exhausted.

Examples include:

- Serious physical assault
- Significant damage to property
- Possession of prohibited items
- Behaviour that places others at immediate risk

Each case is assessed individually.

Decision-Making Process

Before deciding to exclude, the Headteacher will:

- Investigate the incident thoroughly.
- Consider the pupil's SEND, safeguarding, and contextual factors.
- Review previous interventions and support.

- Seek staff accounts and evidence.
- Consider proportionality and alternatives.
- Consult with the DSL if safeguarding concerns are present.

Communication with Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are informed:

- By phone on the day of the decision
- In writing with clear reasons, duration, and next steps
- Of their right to make representations to governors
- Of support available during the exclusion
- Of arrangements for work and reintegration

During the Exclusion

The school will:

- Provide appropriate work from day one
- Maintain contact with the family
- Ensure safeguarding checks where needed
- Record the exclusion accurately

Parents/carers must ensure the child is supervised and not in public places during school hours.

Reintegration

A reintegration meeting is held following every exclusion. This includes:

- Review of the incident
- Reflection and restorative conversation
- Updated risk assessment or support plan
- Adjustments to provision if needed
- Clear expectations and next steps
- Emotional support for the pupil

The focus is on repair, restoration, and re-engagement.

Permanent Exclusion

Permanent exclusion is considered only when:

- A serious incident has occurred, or
- There is a persistent pattern of behaviour despite extensive support, and
- Remaining in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

The Headteacher must notify:

- Parents/carers
- Governing body
- Local authority

Governors must review the decision within statutory timeframes.

Monitoring and Review

SLT and governors monitor:

- Patterns of exclusion
- SEND and safeguarding trends
- Equality and disproportionality
- Effectiveness of interventions
- Reintegration outcomes

The policy is reviewed annually or sooner if guidance changes.

Commitment to Inclusion

First Steps Together is committed to:

- Reducing exclusions
- Supporting pupils with complex needs
- Strengthening relationships and belonging
- Ensuring every child has the opportunity to succeed