



Exclusions Policy

Date Approved by Governing Body:	May 2026
Last Review:	
Next Review Date:	May 2028
Chair of Governors:	Teresa Cutler

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out Uffculme School's approach to suspension (fixed-term) and permanent exclusion. It should be read alongside, and applied in conjunction with, the Behaviour Policy and the Restrictive Interventions Policy, which establish the school's needs-led, relational approach to behaviour, safety and wellbeing.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that any exclusion decision is lawful, proportionate, fair, and consistent with national guidance, while fully reflecting the specialist context and ethos of Uffculme School.

2. Ethos and context of Uffculme School

Uffculme School is a Special School for children and young people with autism and associated needs. Many pupils experience differences in communication, sensory processing, emotional regulation, executive functioning and social understanding.

In line with the Behaviour Policy:

- Behaviour is understood as communication of need or distress, not deliberate defiance.
- The school prioritises prevention, understanding and support, rather than punishment.
- Crisis and dysregulation are approached as opportunities for learning, reflection and adjustment to provision.

Exclusion is therefore regarded as a serious and exceptional measure, used only when allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously compromise safety or the effective education of others, and when all reasonable adjustments and supportive strategies have been exhausted or are temporarily insufficient.

3. Legal framework and national guidance

This policy reflects current statutory and non-statutory guidance, including:

- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

Nothing in this policy removes or reduces the Headteacher's statutory authority in relation to exclusion decisions.

4. Relationship to other school policies

This policy operates within Uffculme School's wider framework of support:

Behaviour Policy – defines the school’s needs-led, graduated response to behaviour and outlines proactive and reactive supports, sanctions, and thresholds for exclusion.

Restrictive Interventions Policy – defines how risk is managed safely and lawfully, including when behaviour presents an immediate risk of harm.

Safeguarding Policy – exclusions are considered through a safeguarding lens at all times.

Exclusion will never be used as a substitute for appropriate behaviour support, reasonable adjustments, or risk management planning.

5. Principles governing exclusion decisions

Any decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil will be:

- Lawful – in line with statutory guidance and equality duties
- Proportionate – reflecting the seriousness of the incident and the pupil’s individual circumstances
- Fair and transparent – with clear rationale and documentation
- Individualised – taking full account of need, context, triggers, and developmental profile
- A last resort – where alternative strategies cannot sufficiently reduce risk at that time

6. Grounds for exclusion

As set out in the Behaviour Policy, exclusion may be considered where behaviour is so severe or persistent that it results in:

- Serious and sustained risk of harm to the pupil or others
- Serious targeted assault of staff or peers
- Serious and deliberate damage to property
- Possession of weapons or illegal items with intent to cause harm
- Other exceptional circumstances where safety cannot be reasonably maintained

Exclusion will not be used to manage:

- Disability-related behaviour where the pupil was unable to act differently
- Behaviour arising from unmet needs where reasonable adjustments have not yet been implemented
- Situations better addressed through changes to provision, staffing, environment or timetable

7. Graduated response and alternatives to exclusion

Before exclusion is considered, the school will normally demonstrate evidence of a graduated response, which may include:

- Individualised behaviour support plans
- Risk assessments and risk reduction plans
- Environmental or curriculum adjustments
- Increased adult support or altered staffing
- Therapeutic or pastoral interventions

- Temporary internal arrangements aimed at regulation and safety
- Multi-agency involvement, where appropriate

In urgent situations involving immediate risk, exclusion may occur without all steps being completed; however, this will trigger an immediate review of provision and support.

8. Decision-making and process

Only the Headteacher (or Acting Headteacher) can make the decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil.

When making a decision, the Headteacher will consider:

- The incident(s) leading to exclusion
- The pupil's SEND profile, EHCP outcomes and known vulnerabilities
- Whether behaviour was a direct or indirect consequence of disability
- What preventative and de-escalation strategies were attempted
- Whether reasonable adjustments were in place
- The safety and welfare of all pupils and staff

Parents/carers will be informed without delay and provided with written confirmation and information about their rights.

9. Reintegration following suspension

Uffculme School places strong emphasis on successful reintegration following suspension.

Reintegration will:

- Be planned and supportive, not punitive
- Include a reintegration meeting with parents/carers
- Review triggers, supports and any changes required to provision
- Focus on restoring safety, trust and relationships
- Where appropriate, pupils will be supported to reflect using communication methods suited to their needs

10. Equality statement: pupils with EHCPs and/or disabilities

Uffculme School is fully committed to its duties under the Equality Act 2010. The vast majority of pupils at Uffculme School have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and are disabled within the meaning of the Act.

We recognise that:

- Behaviour leading to exclusion may be a manifestation of disability
- Pupils with SEND may not have the same capacity to regulate behaviour or foresee consequences
- Disproportionate exclusion of pupils with disabilities is a known national risk
- Reasonable adjustments and SEND considerations

Before any exclusion decision, the school will carefully consider:

- Whether behaviour is linked to the pupil's disability or unmet need
- Whether reasonable adjustments were made (or could have been made)
- Whether the pupil was able to understand and comply with expectations
- Whether alternative responses are available that better meet the pupil's needs
- Exclusion will not normally be appropriate where behaviour is a direct result of the school's failure to implement agreed support, provision or adjustments.
- Use of exclusion for pupils with EHCPs

Exclusion of a pupil with an EHCP will be:

- Exceptional and carefully justified
- Used only where safety cannot be maintained in the short term
- Accompanied by a prompt review of provision, risk management and placement suitability

The school will work collaboratively with parents/carers and relevant professionals to reduce the likelihood of recurrence and to ensure the pupil's right to education is protected.

11. Monitoring and governance

The Headteacher will report exclusions to the Governing Body in line with statutory requirements.

Exclusion data will be monitored to identify:

- Frequency and patterns
- Any disproportionate impact on pupils with protected characteristics
- Links to unmet need, provision or systemic factors

Findings will inform school improvement, staff training and policy review.

12. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to national guidance or the school's context.

This Exclusion Policy must be read alongside the Behaviour Policy and Restrictive Interventions Policy and reflects Uffculme School's commitment to dignity, understanding, equity and safety for all.