

OWLCOTES MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy



June 2026

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About Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust (OMAT)

OMAT is committed to the development of inclusive schools, sharing a common purpose to provide excellent education and improved outcomes for pupils.

OMAT strives to provide high-quality education for all children within our local communities by inspiring innovation, creativity and aspiration through an enriched curriculum.

OMAT is committed to the principles of co-operation, collaboration and sharing best practice with a strong focus on staff development.

OMAT is also committed to the preservation of the unique identity of all schools within the trust: each school will have a Local Governing Board (LGB) which is involved in decision making at school level, with autonomy to make decisions for its own school in line with the scheme of delegation.

All trustees and any schools joining must agree to share and uphold all of these principles now and in the future.

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy

1. Policy Statement

At the Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust, our approach to behaviour is rooted in our core principles of being Ready, Respectful and Safe, and in building strong, positive relationships. This policy sets out clear procedures for suspensions and exclusions in line with DfE statutory guidance (Sept 2024), ensuring that every decision is lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate.

Suspension or permanent exclusion will only ever be used as a last resort, when all graduated interventions, restorative practices, and preventative strategies have been exhausted, and where allowing a pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others. Our commitment is to maintain a calm, orderly and supportive environment where pupils can thrive, and exclusions are never used lightly or as a first response.

We will:

- Apply the 4 Rs Framework (Recognise, Report, Respond, Reflect) and Restorative Practice before considering exclusion.
- Take into account pupil voice, age, understanding, and any SEND or SEMH needs.
- Work in partnership with parents and external agencies such as the AIP to explore alternatives.
- Uphold our legal duties under the Education Act 2002, Equality Act 2010, and the SEND Code of Practice.

Our aim is always inclusion, fairness, and consistency, ensuring that every child feels valued and supported, even when behaviour challenges arise.

2. Principles

Every decision around suspension or exclusion is guided by our commitment to fairness, inclusion, and respect. Exclusions must always be lawful, reasonable, and fair, and will only be considered when all graduated interventions and restorative approaches have been exhausted.

We uphold our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice, ensuring that pupils with additional needs receive reasonable adjustments and tailored support before exclusion is considered. Decisions will take into account:

- The child's voice, age, and understanding.
- Any SEND or SEMH needs and the graduated response applied.
- Safeguarding considerations and the impact on wellbeing.

3. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy is written in conjunction with DfE statutory guidance (Sept 2024) and reflects our legal responsibilities under the Education Act 2002, School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) Regulations 2012, the Equality Act 2010, and the Children and Families Act 2014.

At the Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust, these statutory requirements and guidance underpins our ethos of creating a safe, inclusive environment where every child can thrive. We ensure that:

- All decisions about suspension or exclusion are lawful, reasonable, and fair.
- Our approach aligns with the SEND Code of Practice, making reasonable adjustments and applying a graduated response for pupils with additional needs.
- Every step reflects our commitment to being Ready, Respectful, and Safe, and to restorative practices that repair relationships wherever possible.

4. Definitions

At the Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust, we use clear and consistent language when referring to exclusions, in line with **DfE statutory guidance (Sept 2024)**:

- **Suspension:** A temporary removal of a pupil from school for disciplinary reasons. A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods, up to a maximum of **45 school days in a single academic year**. Suspensions do not have to be consecutive and will always be accompanied by a reintegration plan and restorative follow-up.
- **Permanent Exclusion:** The permanent removal of a pupil from the school, used only in response to **serious breaches or persistent breaches** of the school's Behaviour Policy, and where allowing the pupil to remain would seriously harm the education or welfare of others. Permanent exclusion is a last resort after all graduated interventions have been exhausted.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

At the Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust, decisions about suspension or exclusion are made with clarity, fairness, and collaboration.

Headteacher

The Headteacher has the sole authority to decide whether to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. This decision will always be based on the principles of being **Ready, Respectful and Safe**, and only after all graduated interventions and restorative practices have been exhausted. The Headteacher will ensure pupil voice is considered and that parents are engaged at every stage.

For the first five school days of a suspension, the school retains responsibility for supporting the pupil's learning. Work must be set, accessible, and appropriately matched to the pupil's ability, as required by DfE guidance.

During the suspension the headteacher is responsible for welfare check ins and ensuring there is contact and communication between student and school.

Local Governing Board

The Local Governing Board reviews exclusions to ensure decisions are **lawful, reasonable, and fair**, and that statutory guidance has been followed. They will consider reinstatement where required and monitor patterns of exclusions to uphold equality and inclusion.

Local Authority (LA)

The LA is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth day of exclusion. For pupils who are looked after or have a social worker, provision will begin from day one, in partnership with the school. Within Leeds, the Area Inclusion Partnership (AIP) works on behalf of the LA to:

- coordinate the identification of appropriate alternative provision,
- ensure provision is suitable and full-time,
- support reintegration or managed moves where appropriate, and
- monitor pupil engagement and progress throughout the placement.

Immediate Provision for Permanent Exclusions

For pupils who are permanently excluded, the Headteacher will work with the Local Authority and the OMAT Central Team to guarantee that full-time education is in place from day one. This includes safeguarding checks and ensuring that the provision meets statutory requirements.

SEND and Vulnerable Pupils

For pupils with SEND, SEMH needs, or those who are looked after or have a social worker, provision will be prioritised and tailored to their individual needs. The Headteacher will ensure reasonable adjustments and additional support are in place to maintain inclusion wherever possible.

Communication and Oversight

The Headteacher will ensure parents are notified and that contact is maintained to monitor engagement and progress. The OMAT Central Team will be informed to provide oversight and ensure compliance with trust-wide standards.

6. Grounds for Suspension or Exclusion

Suspensions and exclusions will only ever be considered as a last resort, when all graduated interventions, restorative practices, and preventative strategies have been exhausted, and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others. Suspensions may also be used if a pause or reflection time is required to put something different in place, ensuring that the pupil can return to school with a clear plan for success. This reflects our commitment to inclusion and proactive support before escalation.

Our approach aligns with DfE statutory guidance (Sept 2024) and is underpinned by our values of being Ready, Respectful and Safe. Every decision will be lawful, reasonable, and fair, and will take into account pupil voice, SEND needs, and safeguarding considerations.

Exclusions may be considered for serious breaches such as:

- **Physical assault** against a pupil or adult (e.g., fighting, violent behaviour, wounding).
- **Verbal abuse / threatening behaviour** (including swearing, intimidation, homophobic abuse).
- **Bullying** (verbal, physical, homophobic, racist).
- **Racist abuse** (taunting, harassment, racist graffiti).
- **Sexual misconduct** (sexual harassment, assault, lewd behaviour).
- **Drug and alcohol related incidents** (possession, dealing, substance misuse).
- **Damage** (vandalism, arson, graffiti, destruction of property).
- **Theft** (school or personal property, selling stolen items).
- **Persistent disruptive behaviour** (challenging behaviour, repeated breaches of school rules).
- **Use or threat of offensive weapon** (knives, sharp instruments, prohibited items).
- **Abuse against sexual orientation or gender identity** (homophobic, biphobic, transphobic bullying).
- **Abuse related to disability** (derogatory statements, bullying, graffiti).
- **Inappropriate use of social media or online technology** (sharing explicit images, cyberbullying).
- **Wilful breach of public health measures** (deliberate non-compliance causing distress).
- **Other serious incidents** meeting the threshold for exclusion.

All exclusions will be recorded on **CPOMS** under the appropriate category for monitoring and reporting purposes.

7. Factors to Consider

Before any decision to suspend or exclude, Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust schools will take a holistic view of the child and their circumstances. We will always consider:

- **SEND needs** and whether reasonable adjustments or additional support could prevent exclusion.

- **Vulnerability factors**, including safeguarding concerns, mental health, or recent significant life events.
- **Contributing factors** such as bereavement, bullying, or unmet SEMH needs.

8. Preventative Measures

Before any permanent exclusion is considered, Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust schools will explore every possible alternative to keep pupils included in learning. This includes:

- **Managed Moves:** A managed move may be initiated when it is in the pupil's best interest to transfer to another mainstream school permanently. This process will always involve the pupil, parents, and the receiving school, ensuring transparency and collaboration. Detailed records will be kept, and the move will only proceed with voluntary agreement from all parties.
- **Off-Site Direction:** Where appropriate, pupils may be directed to attend another education setting temporarily to improve behaviour and prevent exclusion. This will be done in line with DfE guidance and Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust's commitment to safeguarding and quality assurance. Off-site placements will be regularly reviewed, with clear objectives and timelines agreed with parents and the pupil.
- **AIP Support:** We work closely with the Area Inclusion Partnership (AIP) to provide SEMH support and create viable alternatives to exclusion. This includes multi-agency assessments and targeted interventions to address underlying needs.

9. Notification Procedures

At Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust schools, communication is immediate, clear, and supportive when a suspension or exclusion occurs. In line with **DfE statutory guidance (Sept 2024)**, we will:

- **Inform Parents/Carers Immediately:** Parents will be contacted by phone as soon as the decision is made, followed by a written confirmation outlining:
 - The reason(s) for the suspension or exclusion.
 - The length of the suspension or confirmation that it is permanent.
 - Their right to make representations to the Governing Board and details of how to do so.
 - Expectations during the exclusion period (e.g., ensuring the child is not in a public place during school hours).
- **Notify Key Stakeholders Without Delay**
 - **Local Authority (LA):** All suspensions and exclusions, regardless of length, will be reported immediately to the local authority.
 - **Social Worker:** If the pupil has a social worker, they will be informed at the earliest opportunity to ensure safeguarding and support.
 - **Virtual School Head (VSH):** For looked-after children, the VSH will be notified promptly and invited to any review meetings.
 - **OMAT Central Team:** The central team will be informed to ensure oversight and compliance with trust-wide standards.
- **Provide Details of Next Steps:** Where applicable, parents will receive information about reintegration planning and any support measures being put in place.
- **Offer Reintegration Support:** Parents will be invited to a reintegration meeting before the pupil returns, ensuring a clear plan for success and a restorative approach to repairing relationships.

10. Reintegration

Reintegration is not just a meeting—it is a **planned, phased process** designed to restore relationships, rebuild trust, and set pupils up for success. In line with **DfE statutory guidance (Sept 2024)**, we will have a:

- **Restorative Approach First:** Reintegration begins with repairing harm and restoring relationships. We use Restorative Practice conversations and circles to ensure the pupil feels heard, understands the impact of their behaviour, and agrees on steps to move forward.
- **Structured Reintegration Meeting:** A meeting will be held before or on the day of return, involving the pupil, parents/carers, a senior leader, and where appropriate, the SENDCo. The purpose is to:
 - Review what happened and what needs to change.
 - Agree on expectations and support strategies.
 - Reinforce that the pupil is a valued member of our school community.
- **Phased Reintegration Plan:** Following the meeting, a **phased reintegration plan** will be implemented, tailored to the pupil's needs. This may include:
 - Adjusted timetable or gradual increase in time in class.
 - Additional pastoral or SEMH support.
 - Mentoring or check-ins with a trusted adult.
 - Use of nurture spaces or sensory breaks for pupils with SEND.
- **Two-Weekly Reviews by SLT:** The plan will be reviewed every two weeks by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with input from parents and the pupil. Adjustments will be made as needed to ensure progress and prevent repeat incidents.
- **Link to Preventative Measures:** Reintegration planning will connect with wider strategies such as **Recognition Boards, catching the good**, and **restorative circles**, ensuring positive reinforcement and inclusion.

11. Appeals and Independent Review

Parents and carers have the right to challenge decisions about permanent exclusions through an **Independent Review Panel (IRP)**, as set out in **DfE statutory guidance (Sept 2024)**. At Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust, we ensure this process is transparent, fair, and supportive:

- **Right to Request an IRP:** If the Governing Board upholds a permanent exclusion, parents can request an independent review within **15 school days** of receiving the decision letter. The review will be arranged by the Trust at no cost to parents.
- **Panel Composition and Fairness:** The IRP will consist of trained members who are independent of the school and Trust. The panel will review whether the decision was lawful, reasonable, and procedurally fair, considering all evidence presented.
- **SEN Expert Availability:** Parents have the right to request the appointment of a **Special Educational Needs (SEN) expert**, regardless of whether the school recognises the child as having SEND. The SEN expert will advise the panel on whether the school met its legal duties under the **SEND Code of Practice** and Equality Act 2010.
- **Parental Representation:** Parents may attend the review, bring a friend or representative, and submit written evidence. Meetings can be held in person or remotely if requested.
- **Possible Outcomes:** The IRP can:
 - Uphold the Governing Board's decision.

- Recommend reconsideration of reinstatement.
- Quash the decision and direct the Governing Board to reconsider reinstatement.
- Equality and Safeguarding: If parents believe the exclusion was discriminatory, they may also make a claim under the **Equality Act 2010** to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND) or County Court.

12. Equality and SEND

We are committed to ensuring that every decision about suspension or exclusion is fair, inclusive, and compliant with the **Equality Act 2010** and the **SEND Code of Practice**. In line with **DfE statutory guidance (Sept 2024)**, we will:

- Reasonable Adjustments: Before considering exclusion, we will make all reasonable adjustments to support pupils with SEND or additional needs. This includes adapting teaching strategies, providing sensory breaks, using nurture spaces, and implementing personalised behaviour plans.
- Graduated Response: For pupils with SEND or SEMH needs, exclusion will only be considered after the graduated response process has been fully applied and documented. This ensures that interventions have been tried, reviewed, and refined.
- Avoiding Discriminatory Exclusions: We will never exclude a pupil because of their disability, learning difficulty, or unmet need. Decisions will always take into account whether the behaviour was linked to an underlying condition and whether further support could prevent recurrence.
- Multi-Agency Collaboration: Where necessary, we will involve external professionals (e.g., educational psychologists, AIP, health practitioners) to ensure that decisions are informed and inclusive.
- Equality Monitoring: All exclusions will be monitored by protected characteristics to ensure compliance with the Equality Act and to identify patterns that require action.

13. Monitoring and Data

At Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust, we are committed to transparency and accountability in how suspensions and exclusions are applied. In line with **DfE statutory guidance (Sept 2024)**, the Governing Board plays a key role in monitoring patterns and ensuring compliance with equality duties.

- Equality Impact Monitoring: All exclusions will be tracked by protected characteristics (e.g., SEND, ethnicity, gender) to ensure compliance with the **Equality Act 2010** and to identify any disproportionate impact. This data will inform adjustments to policy and practice.
- Termly Reporting to Governors: The Headteacher will provide a detailed report to the Governing Board every term, including:
 - Number and type of suspensions and exclusions.
 - Patterns and trends across year groups and vulnerable cohorts.
 - Actions taken to reduce exclusions and promote inclusion.
 - Equality impact analysis and any corrective measures.
- Trust-Level Oversight: Reports will also be shared with the OMAT Central Team to ensure consistency across the trust and compliance with statutory requirements.
- Continuous Review: SLT will review exclusion data fortnightly to identify emerging trends and intervene early, ensuring that preventative strategies remain effective.

14. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

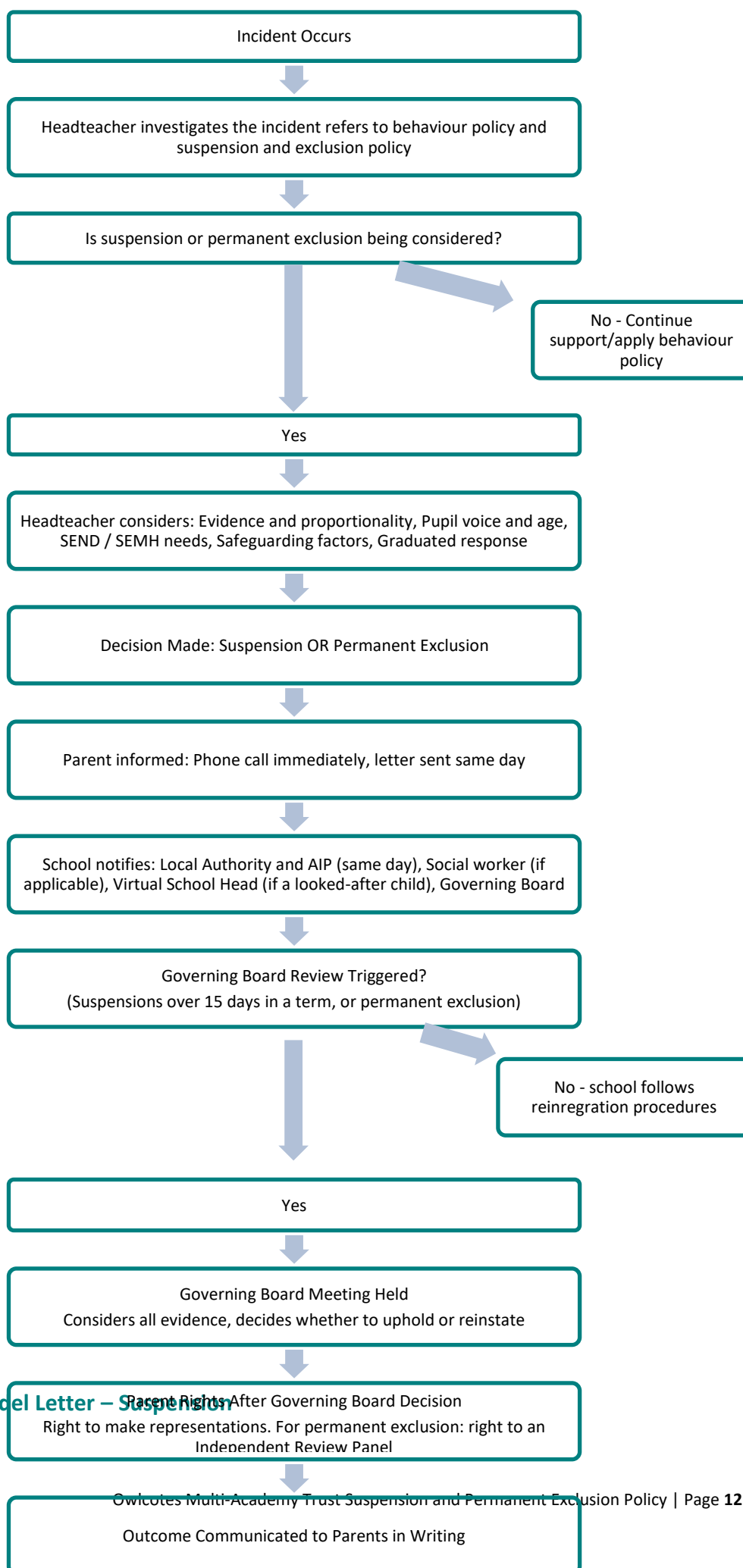
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy

15. Integration with Whole-School Behaviour Approach

The Trust's approach ensures that suspension and exclusion decisions are consistent with the principles that underpin our culture:

- 4 Rs Framework: Every behaviour decision follows the 4 Rs: **Recognise, Report, Respond, Reflect**. This provides accountability and clarity for staff and pupils, ensuring that behaviour incidents are managed consistently and restoratively.
- Restorative Practice as Non-Negotiable: Restorative conversations and circles are central to repairing harm and rebuilding relationships. They are used before exclusion is considered and as part of reintegration planning, ensuring pupils feel heard and supported.
- Ready, Respectful, Safe Ethos: These three words define our expectations and guide every interaction. They are embedded in our curriculum, routines, and language, creating a shared understanding across the school community.
- The 5 Pillars of Behaviour Practice
 - **Consistent, calm adult behaviour** – every adult models the behaviour we expect.
 - **First attention for best conduct** – we catch the good relentlessly.
 - **Relentless routines** – predictable structures that create security and order.
 - **Scripting difficult conversations** – clear, calm, and consistent language for challenging moments.
 - **Restorative follow-up** – repairing relationships and restoring trust after incidents.
- Positive Recognition Systems: Recognition Boards, Milkshake Friday, and other celebration strategies reinforce positive behaviour and reduce the need for exclusion by promoting inclusion and belonging.
- NEAIP Support for SEMH Pupils: We work closely with the North East Area Inclusion Partnership to provide targeted SEMH support and explore alternatives to exclusion, ensuring that pupils with additional needs remain included in learning.
- Structured Reintegration Meetings and Phased Plans: Reintegration after suspension includes a restorative meeting and a phased plan with two-weekly reviews by SLT, ensuring progress and preventing repeat incidents.
- SEND Graduated Response and Reasonable Adjustments: Exclusion decisions always consider SEND needs, applying reasonable adjustments and multi-agency collaboration before escalation.
- Safeguarding Considerations: Behaviour changes are assessed for underlying safeguarding concerns, ensuring that pupil welfare remains the highest priority.

Appendix 1: Flowchart For Reviewing Decisions



Appendix 2: Model Letter – Suspension

Dear [Parent/Carer],

I am writing to inform you that I have decided to suspend [Child's Name] for [number] day(s), from [date] to [date].

Reason for suspension:

[Brief clear explanation of the incident]

This decision has been made in line with our Behaviour Policy and the Department for Education statutory guidance.

During the first five days of the suspension, your child must not be in a public place during school hours. Work will be provided for them to complete at home.

You have the right to share your views with the Governing Board. If you wish to do this, please contact the school.

A reintegration meeting is scheduled for [date/time]. This meeting will help us plan a positive return for your child.

If you have any questions or need support understanding this letter, please contact school.

Kind regards,

Appendix 3: Model Letter – Permanent Exclusion

Dear [Parent/Carer],

I am writing to inform you that I have taken the decision to permanently exclude [Child's Name] from (School name) Primary School. This means they will not return to this school.

Reason for exclusion:

[Clear summary of incident(s)]

This decision has been made following a full investigation and in line with statutory DfE guidance. It is used only for serious breaches of our Behaviour Policy or when allowing the child to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

The Local Authority will contact you to arrange full-time education from day one of the exclusion. The Governing Board must review my decision. You have the right to state your views to them. If the Governing Board upholds the exclusion, you also have the right to request an Independent Review Panel.

You may also request a Special Educational Needs (SEN) expert to support the review, whether or not your child has identified SEND.

If you need help understanding this letter or the next steps, please contact school.

Kind regards,

This Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy was adopted by Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust on **

Chair of Trustees: Mrs Judith Norfolk		
Signature:		Judith Norfolk
Frequency of review:	2 years	
To be reviewed by:	**	
To be approved by:	OMAT Full Board	
Date of next review:	**	

REVIEW RECORD

Date of review	Reason for review	Date of next review

Name:		Signature:	
on behalf of OMAT Full Board			

Date of review	Reason for review	Date of next review

Name:			
on behalf of OMAT Full Board			

Date of review	Reason for review	Date of next review
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Name:		Signature:	
on behalf of OMAT Full Board			