

Woodard Schools (Nottinghamshire) Limited Discipline and Exclusions Policy

School Tier: Whole School

Related Policies: This policy is designed to operate in the context of the following College and Prep School policies and documents:

- The Behaviour codes as they appear in The Pupil Charter
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Pupil Sanctions Record
- Woodard Schools (Nottinghamshire) Limited Complaints Procedure
- The School's Standard Terms and Conditions
- Behaviour Policy

Policy Aims

Through the operation of this policy, we aim to:

- support the School's Behaviour Policy and Discipline Codes
- ensure procedural fairness and natural justice
- promote co-operation and shared responsibility between the school and parents

Worksop College and Ranby House School regard it as educationally right to impose reasonable sanctions if a pupil falls short of behavioural expectations. Physical or dangerous punishment will never be sanctioned by the school, but the following are regarded as a reasonable range of sanctions to which the Governors, through the Heads and staff, might resort in cases of indiscipline: a reprimand, a letter to parents or guardians, removal from a class or group, loss of privileges, confiscation of a possession that is inappropriate, detention, community service, close supervision by house or senior staff or exclusion. Exclusion, whether temporary or permanent, is a last resort. Permanent exclusion is used only in the most serious circumstances.

This policy covers both the College site and the Prep School site at Ranby House, including the EYFS. Pastoral leaders at the College are referred to as Housemasters or Housemistresses; at the Prep school they are in the first instance, the class teacher but also includes the House Leaders and House Parents. Their role is central in the delivery of this policy.

Transparency

This Policy on Discipline and Exclusions is:

- i) readily available to parents, pupils and staff on the school website,
- ii) included in the 'Welcome Pack' sent to all parents of pupils joining the school for the first time and,
- iii) available in hard copy from either school office.

DISCIPLINARY POLICY & PROCEDURES

1. What Behaviour Merits Exclusion?

No list will describe every nuance of a pupil's behaviour, but the following are examples of behaviour that merit exclusion:

- Drug abuse
- Alcohol abuse
- Theft
- Bullying
- Physical assault/ threatening behaviour
- Fighting
- Sexual harassment
- Racist abuse
- Sexual misconduct
- Damage to property
- Persistent disruptive behaviour
- Parental misbehaviour
- The cumulative effect of a significant number of more minor offences

2. Introduction

Expectations of pupils in terms of both attitude and behaviour at both Worksop College and Ranby House are set out in the respective behaviour policies and Pupil Charters/Core Values. At the College all pupils will receive a digital copy of the Pupil Charter and copies will be posted in Houses. At Ranby House copies are displayed in classrooms and in House Books. All pupils are expected to be familiar with the codes of conduct these contain. Copies of detailed policies are available to all pupils and can be requested by parents. This policy contains guidelines, which will be adapted as necessary, explaining the different procedures which will be followed to pursue disciplinary matters within the school. This policy applies to all pupils at the school whether or not in the care of the school.

3. Misconduct

- 3.1 Minor disciplinary matters will be dealt with by the member of staff to whom they are reported or by whom they are witnessed. These minor offences will normally be resolved very quickly and may not require any further response. Without abusing their position, Prefects (College only) are allowed to deal with low level disruption, something that is covered in their induction and training; such incidents should always be reported to either Housemasters / mistresses of the pupils concerned and / or the Deputy Head i/c Prefects. House-based issues are covered in the relevant House handbooks.
- 3.2 Pastoral Leaders (Housemaster/mistress, House Leader or Class/Form Tutor) and Heads of Departments have a role in establishing positive behaviour in their respective houses and departments. Staff may refer disciplinary matters to them and with their agreement, may choose to impose a sanction, such as a detention.

3.3 A Prefect (College) or member of staff may choose to report a more serious disciplinary matter to the appropriate Pastoral Leaders, who will investigate the circumstances further and take whatever action is deemed to be necessary. This may involve house or school gating or withdrawal of privilege. Parents will often, but not necessarily, be informed by telephone or by letter in such cases. This will be at the discretion of the Pastoral Leaders, bearing in mind, amongst other things, the seriousness of the offence and a pupil's previous disciplinary record.

4. Major Breaches of School Rules

- 4.1 For major breaches of rules at each site, the Pastoral Leaders will undertake preliminary investigations and establish the facts as far as they are able to. A written record will be kept of these investigations. He or she will then discuss the circumstances of the offence with the Assistant/Deputy Heads, who may interview further the pupil or pupils involved. When the Pastoral Leaders and Assistant/Deputy Heads are satisfied that they have established the facts they will then discuss what further action they believe to be appropriate. This decision may be referred to the Deputy Heads or to the Head for approval.
- 4.2 Only the Headmasters, Assistant/Deputy Heads or Pastoral Leaders will interview pupils about major breaches of school discipline. In exceptional circumstances a Pastoral Leader may delegate this task to another member of their team. When dealing with serious disciplinary matters a pupil may have an advocate present. This will be a senior pupil or a member of staff. All interviews will be conducted in a non-threatening environment. Confidential information will only be passed on if absolutely necessary. Confidential information will be passed on if any pupil's welfare might be compromised by failing to do so. Confidential information regarding child protection issues will be passed only to the relevant Safeguarding Officer and in their absence, the relevant Head.
- 4.3 Pupils will be informed that a written record of any interview will be kept. Pupils may be asked to read and sign it to agree that it is an accurate record. Pupils may be asked to write a statement giving their version of events, which they then date and sign. This will be done away from any other pupils who are suspected of being involved in the same incident. Segregated pupils will not be left on their own for long periods of time.
- 4.4 On occasions it may be necessary to search a pupil's desk, locker or other space (including technology such as iPads, laptops or phones) if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that they may contain items banned under school rules or prohibited items. Searches will be carried out sensitively and normally in the presence of the pupil. There may be occasions on which a study or studies may be searched in the absence of the pupils concerned. Searches will always be witnessed by a member of the teaching staff.
- 4.5 If there are reasonable grounds for suspicion a pupil may be asked to turn out his/her pockets or bag.
- 4.6 When major disciplinary matters are being investigated, Pastoral Leaders will usually contact parents of pupils involved and College pupils are encouraged to telephone their parents if they are being questioned about a serious breach of school discipline. Once a decision has been taken about disciplinary action, parents will be informed. This will initially be by telephone by the relevant Pastoral Leader, but parents will also be informed by letter, either by the Headmasters, or the Deputy Heads.

5. **Sanctions**
- 5.1 The severity of punishment for major breaches of school discipline will depend on individual circumstances. A pupil's previous disciplinary record may be taken into account.
- 5.2 Sanctions which may be imposed at the **College**:
- withdrawal of privileges,
 - at the College, a Head's or Deputy Head's Punishment, which involves signing in at stipulated times, withdrawal of privileges, and the requirement to do some form of community service on a Wednesday or Saturday afternoon,
 - fixed term exclusion, which involves a pupil being sent home for a specified period of time, usually two or three days,
 - suspension, which involves sending a pupil home pending further investigations into a disciplinary offence,
 - if a pupil is expelled or required to leave, his/her leaving status will be one of the following: "expelled", "removed" or "withdrawn by parents"; "removal" means that a pupil has been required to leave but without the stigma of expulsion.
- 5.3 Sanctions which may be imposed at **Ranby House**:
- withdrawal of privileges - including break/lunchtime
 - formal verbal warning
 - formal written warning
 - time for reflection, which involves sending a pupil home pending further investigations into a disciplinary offence. If it is not deemed appropriate to send a child home, an internal suspension with the Deputy Head to complete tasks is agreed. Tasks relating to the incident will be set for pupils to explain, reflect upon and/or rectify their behaviour/actions.
 - if a pupil is expelled or required to leave, his/her leaving status will be one of the following:
"expelled", "removed" or "withdrawn by parents"; "removal" means that a pupil has been required to leave but without the stigma of expulsion.
6. **Review by the Governing Body**
- Request for Review: Parents may ask for a Governors' Review of a decision to expel or require the removal of a pupil from the school or from boarding (but not a decision to suspend or that results in a fixed-term exclusion for the pupil, unless it is for 11 school days or more, or would prevent the pupil taking a public examination). The request must be made as soon as possible and in any event within 7 days of the decision being notified to the parents. The request for a review should be made to the Clerk to the Governors.
 - Grounds for Review: In their application the parents must state the grounds on which they are asking for a review and the outcome which they seek.
 - Review Panel: The Review will be undertaken by a panel of up to 3 Governors (including an Independent Member if requested). The Independent Panel Member will be nominated by the school and approved by the parents (with approval not being unreasonably withheld). On appointment, the panel members will have no detailed previous knowledge of the case or of the pupil or parents and will not normally include the Custos (Chair of Governors). Selection of the Review Panel will be made by the Clerk to the Governors in consultation with the Custos. Parents will be notified in advance of the names of the panel members.

- (d) Review Meeting: The meeting will take place at the school premises, normally between 3 and 10 days after the parents' application has been received. A Review will not normally take place during school holidays. A Review meeting is a private procedure and all those who are concerned in it are required to keep its proceedings confidential, subject to law.
- (e) Attendance: Those present at the Review Meeting will normally be:
Members of the Review Panel and the Clerk to the Governors or his deputy.
The Head and any relevant member of staff whom the pupil or his/her parents have asked should attend and whom the Head considers should attend in order to secure a fair outcome.
The pupil, together with his/her parents and, if they wish, a member of the school staff who is willing to speak on the pupil's behalf. The parents may be accompanied by a friend or relation; they can be there to provide support, not as legal representation.
- (f) Conduct of Meeting: The meeting will be chaired by one member of the Review Panel and will be conducted in a suitable room and in an informal manner. All statements made at the meeting will be unsworn. The proceedings will not be recorded without the consent of both the Chair and a parent, and any recording will be used only to assist the panel members in reaching their decision and formulating their reasons and will belong to the School. The Clerk will be asked to keep a hand-written minute of the main points which arise at the meeting. All those present will be entitled, should they wish, to write their own notes. The meeting will be directed by the Chair who will conduct it so as to ensure that all those present have a reasonable opportunity of asking questions and make appropriate comment. Everyone is expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners. The Chair may at his/her discretion adjourn or terminate the meeting. If the meeting is terminated, the original decision will stand.
- (g) Procedure: The Panel will consider each of the questions raised by the pupil or his/her parents so far as relevant to:
- (i) Whether the facts of the case were sufficiently proved when the decision was taken to expel or remove of the pupil. The civil standard of proof, namely, "*the balance of probability*" will apply; and whether the sanction was warranted, that, whether it was proportionate to the breach of discipline or the other events which are found to have occurred and to the legitimate aims of the School's policy in that respect.
 - (ii) The requirements of natural justice will apply. If for any reason the pupil or his/her parents are dissatisfied with any aspect of the meeting they must inform the Chair at the time and ask the Clerk to note their dissatisfaction and the reasons for it.
- (h) Identification: If the Headmaster considers it necessary in the interests of an individual or of the School that the identity of any person should be withheld, the Chair may require that the name of that person and the reasons for withholding it be written down and shown to the Panel Members. The Chair at his/her discretion may direct that the person be identified, or not as the case may be.
- (i) Pupil's Character: Up to two members of the school staff may speak generally about the pupil's character, conduct and achievements at the School if they are willing to do so.

- (j) Leaving Status: If, having heard all parties, the Panel is minded confirming the Headmaster's earlier decision, it is open to the Panel, with agreement of the Headmaster, the pupil and his/her parents to discuss the pupil's leaving status with a view to reaching agreement.
- (k) Decision: When the Chair decides that all issues have been sufficiently discussed and if by then there is no consensus, s/he may adjourn the meeting; alternatively, the Chair may ask those present to withdraw while the Panel considers its decision. The decision of the Review Panel will be final. It will be notified, with reasons, to the parents of the pupil concerned by the Chair of the Review Panel by letter within seven working days of the meeting.

References:

A Legal Requirement & an ISI Reporting Standard:

A. Human Rights Act 1998

B. "Behaviour and Discipline in Schools" DFE-00023-2024

D. "Excluding Pupils –A Practical Guide for Independent Schools" by Farrer & Co (an ISBA Briefing Document) October 2024

E. The Education Act 2002

F. SI2003/1910 – the ISI Regulatory Checklist (0907)

G. "Screening, Searching and Confiscation: Advice for headteachers, school staff and governing bodies." DfE 2022

Legal Framework:

General Guidance:

Technological:

Boarding Schools:

Appendix: