

Note: This Policy should be read in context with the school's Behaviour Policy and Curriculum Policy

Introduction

The Write Time (TWT) is an independent school for young people with special educational needs and at times our young people can display challenging behaviour. We believe that behaviour should be addressed proactively not reactively and that children should be treated as individuals with respect and dignity – behaviour will be much improved when they have high self-esteem. It is important that children are respected for who they are, as well as what they can do, that they are listened to and taken seriously, praised when appropriate and shown by verbal and appropriate physical contact that they are held in regard and valued.

At TWT we understand that our young people bring a wide variety of behaviour patterns based on previous experiences and differences in values, attitudes, parenting skills and peer modelling. For young people with Autistic Spectrum Condition, this will also include behaviours associated with difficulties in developing social understanding, social communication and flexible thinking skills. We also understand that all behaviour displayed by young people is a form of communication, and poor behaviour is often a display of anxiety, confusion, anger or being upset due to not being able to communicate a need to adults and peers.

Values

TWT believes that schools should be inclusive places for every young person and not exclusive places for some. We believe that exclusion for young people with special educational needs and disabilities, whether this is for a fixed term period (suspension) or a permanent exclusion, should be an action of the very last resort. Our children and young people have often been marginalised and excluded by society and will also often have experienced multiple placements, exclusions and/or 'managed moves' – the role of TWT is to help break the cycle of exclusion and potential discrimination of young people as we cannot see the benefit of excluding young persons who have already spent significant time out of education.

Principles

To ensure the students and staff are in a safe learning environment at TWT students embrace five 'non-negotiables', our Conditions of Attendance:

- *No Violence*
- *No Theft*
- *No Bullying*
- *No Drugs and Alcohol*
- *No exclusive internal or external relationships*

Young persons who are not able to follow school expectations at any given time are subject to a wide range of clear learning consequences. This is congruent with TWT School's status as the first Glasser Quality School in the United Kingdom. These learning consequences include refocusing sessions, reflection work, and the work involved in repairing and rebuilding relationships through a restorative justice approach. We believe that our young people can develop key personal skills much faster through this approach. These approaches are detailed in TWT's Behaviour Policy.

As outlined in that policy we believe that the TWT provides opportunities for individual young people through:

- *Appropriate assessment and effective support*
- *Individualised packages of education, support and inclusion*
- *Flexible approaches to educating and supporting young people*
- *Enabling each young person opportunities to achieve their full potential*
- *The development of appropriately trained staff by facilitating internal and external CPD*
- *Involvement and discussion with young people and their families or carers*
- *The development and delivery of a unique ethos as laid out in TWT's Curriculum Policy'*

TWT will use all the above tools to avoid the suspension or exclusion of any young person and promote their well-being. As an inclusive organisation, we will seek to learn, adapt and develop our response to the young person to promote their retention in education.

Where TWT believes that this requires the development of a more individualised and/or flexible full-time package of educational support then there will be clear consultation with all involved parties – parents/carers, commissioners, and the young person themselves. Individualised/flexible packages will always have the aim of ensuring continued and high-quality education for the young person which supports future social and educational exclusion.

We consider our partnership with parents/carers to be central to our success as a school. Within the initial contracting with the parent, there will be a copy of this policy, the school Behaviour Policy, and an agreement about everyone's responsibilities around challenging behaviour signed by the parent/carer and a representative of the school.

Suspension criteria

Exceptionally a young person's behaviour could lead to a period of suspension from school. This option would only be considered when:

- The school felt that it could not guarantee the safety of the young person involved and the safety of other young people and staff.
- The young person has refused to undertake a learning consequence following a serious incident or series of incidents.

Permanent Exclusion criteria

TWT aims to actively avoid permanent exclusion for any young person. We do recognise that there may be circumstances where the placement at TWT school breaks down as the young person's needs cannot be met. In these cases, the school will work with the parents/carers and the commissioners to actively identify and secure an alternative appropriate placement and so avoid a damaging permanent exclusion.

In very exceptional circumstances, when a young person will have received more than 15 days suspension in a term and where the commissioner has not been able to secure an alternative appropriate placement, then a permanent exclusion may be the only available action for the school.

Appendix A: Arrangements around Suspension and Permanent Exclusion

Suspension is a disciplinary sanction and means that a young person is not allowed on the school premises for the duration of the suspension. A young person may have a suspension for one or more fixed events or in very exceptional circumstances permanently excluded.

Suspension

- A set number of days, after which the young person returns to school. This should be no more than 15 days in any one term.
- The school must inform the parents/carers by explaining the reasons for the suspension from school and how long it is to last.
- The school will provide educational resources/activities for the young person.
- The young person will be supported by their ODT Mentor during any period of suspension.
- On returning to school there will be a re-integration meeting, in which all those concerned can discuss the best way forward for the young person.
- Parents can challenge a fixed-term exclusion through written representation to the Proprietor.

What happens following a suspension?

- The Headteacher must, without delay, notify parents/carers of the period of the suspension and the reasons for it, highlighting the process for reintegration.
- The Headteacher must, without delay, notify the Proprietor of the school and the commissioner of the placement of the period of the suspension and the reasons for it.
- The Headteacher must set the date and time of the young person's reintegration into the school
- The Headteacher must send a letter that sets out the date and time of the young person's reintegration into the school to parents/carers
- Meaningful mentoring will take place throughout any suspension to encourage the young person to reflect on why they were suspended and to set goals to help them adopt positive behaviour and create positive change for themselves.

Additional arrangements - Permanent Exclusion

- Any consideration of permanent exclusion will be undertaken by the Headteacher in consultation with the Proprietor. They will consider the circumstances of the potential exclusion and whether the placement has irrevocably broken down and if the school has exhausted all options with regard to provision for the young person.
- They must, without delay, notify the parents/carers and commissioners of the permanent exclusion and the reasons for it
- For the first five days, the parents/carers are responsible for the young person's whereabouts, and he/she must not be in a public place during school hours.
- For the first five days, the school will provide educational resources/activities for the young person.
- An assessment of the young person's circumstances should be undertaken by the Local Authority EHCP co-ordinator so that a long-term re-integration plan and plans for a new placement can be devised.

- The Local Authority commissioner must arrange suitable full-time education for the young person to begin no later than the sixth day of the exclusion.
- Where a young person has an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP), the Local Authority must ensure that appropriate full-time placement is identified in consultation with the parents/carers, who retain their rights to express a preference for a school that they wish their child to attend or make representations for placement in any other school.
- Parents/carers can challenge a permanent exclusion through written representation to the Proprietor.