Learners Suspension and Exclusion Policy

POLICY APPROVAL

Approval Required	Indicate with a tick (✓)		Annual Review Required	Indicate with a tick (✓)	
	Yes ✓	No		Yes ✓	No
Approval Panel	Loren Janes				
Approved by	Name: Loren Janes		Signature:	Date: March 2026	
Policy Review Date	March 2027				
Policy Writer/s:	Charlotte Manford				

Introduction

Futures Changing Ltd is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and structured learning environment within Alternative Provision (AP). Learners attending AP often present with complex and intersecting needs, including social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, trauma histories, disrupted education, and safeguarding vulnerabilities.

Our approach is trauma-informed, relational, and preventative, recognising that behaviour is often a form of communication. We prioritise early intervention, de-escalation, and multi-agency support.

However, in rare circumstances where behaviour:

- presents a significant risk to safety, or
- seriously disrupts the learning environment,

a formal suspension or permanent exclusion may be necessary.

All decisions are made in line with principles of lawfulness, proportionality, fairness, and safeguarding.

Policy Statement

Futures Changing Ltd recognises that suspension and permanent exclusion are serious interventions with significant and lasting implications for learners. These measures will only be used where they are lawful, proportionate, and necessary.

Our approach prioritises early intervention, safeguarding, and inclusive practice. Suspension will only be considered where all reasonable alternatives have been explored, or where there is an immediate and demonstrable risk to the safety or welfare of others.

Scope and Application

This policy applies to all learners attending Futures Changing Ltd provision, including those:

- Placed by commissioning schools
- Directed by Local Authorities
- Who is care-experienced or otherwise vulnerable

It applies to all serious behavioural incidents that may result in temporary removal, suspension, off-site direction, or permanent exclusion.

This policy should be read alongside the Behaviour & Anti Bullying Policy and Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

Key Principles

All decisions are underpinned by the following principles:

- Proportionality: Sanctions reflect the severity, context, and risk presented
- Safeguarding: The welfare of all learners is paramount
- Inclusion: Full consideration of SEND, SEMH needs, and trauma-informed practice
- Accountability: Clear, evidenced decision-making and record-keeping
- Continuity of Education: Learning disruption is minimised

Informal or unlawful exclusions are strictly prohibited.

Definitions

- **Suspension**: A formal, time-limited exclusion from provision
- **Permanent Exclusion:** Removal from the provision
- **Temporary Removal:** Short-term, safety-led removal within provision (not a formal exclusion)
- **Off-Site Direction**: A planned, time-limited placement at another setting to support improvement (not a sanction)
- **Alternative Provision (AP):** Education arranged outside a mainstream setting

Roles and Responsibilities

- Centre Manager: maker for suspension and exclusion (where applicable)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Ensures safeguarding considerations are central
- SENCO: Advises on SEND needs, reasonable adjustments, and support strategies
- Staff: Follow behaviour procedures, record incidents accurately, and implement support strategies

All roles contribute to fair, consistent, and lawful decision-making.

Responding to Serious Behaviour

A structured and evidence-led process must be followed:

1. **Immediate Response:** Ensure safety and de-escalate
2. **Recording:** Accurate, factual incident reporting
3. **Initial Review:** Consider severity, intent, safeguarding, SEND, and contextual factors
4. **Risk Assessment:** Where appropriate, assess ongoing risk
5. **Decision-Making:** Apply proportionality and consistency

Reasonable adjustments and support strategies must be evidenced prior to exclusion, unless there is an immediate risk.

Notifications: Parents/carers, commissioning bodies, and relevant professionals must be informed within one working day of any formal suspension or permanent exclusion. Written confirmation is required.

Principles of Decision Making

All decisions must be:

Safeguarding-Led

- DSL must review all serious incidents
- Decisions must consider risk of harm and vulnerability

Proportionate

- Sanctions reflect severity, intent, and context

Trauma-Informed

- Behaviour understood within context of need, not just compliance

SEND-Inclusive

- Reasonable adjustments must be evidenced
- Unmet needs must be considered

Documented and Transparent

- All decisions must be recorded and justifiable

Roles and Responsibilities

Centre Manager

- Holds sole decision-making authority
- Must ensure:
    1. Full investigation completed
    2. Safeguarding and SEND input considered
    3. Decision is lawful, reasonable, and proportionate
    4. All statutory processes are followed

DSL/ DDSL

- Conducts mandatory safeguarding review for every serious incident
- Assesses:
    - Contextual safeguarding risks
    - Exploitation indicators
    - Mental health risk
- Initiates referrals where thresholds are met

SENCO (External contact)

- Reviews:
    - EHCP and SEND needs
    - Evidence of reasonable adjustments
    - Potential unmet needs
- Advises whether behaviour is linked to disability

Staff

- Implement de-escalation strategies
- Apply behaviour support plans
- Record incidents factually and promptly

Preventative Strategy

Before suspension is considered, the following must typically be evidenced:

1. Identification of behavioural patterns
2. Implementation of behaviour support strategies
3. Reasonable adjustments (SEND)
4. Risk assessment
5. Parental engagement
6. Multi-agency involvement (where needed)
7. Review of interventions

Exceptions may be imposed with Immediate risk situations

Immediate Response to Serious Incidents

Step-by-step:

1. Secure safety of all individuals
2. Remove learner from immediate environment (temporary removal)
3. Alert senior leader
4. Notify DSL immediately
5. Begin incident recording
6. Consider medical/safeguarding needs
7. Contact parents/carers where appropriate

This is a protective measure, not a suspension

Investigation Procedure

A fair and robust investigation must include:

1. Immediate fact-finding
2. Written staff statements
3. Learner voice (opportunity to respond)
4. Review of CCTV (where lawful and available)
5. Behaviour history analysis
6. SEND review by SENCO
7. Safeguarding analysis by DSL
8. Risk assessment
9. Consideration of mitigating/contextual factors

A fully documented evidence base for decision-making

Decision Making: Suspension

Threshold

Used where:

- Serious breach of behaviour policy
- Risk to safety
- Significant disruption

Decision Process

1. Review investigation findings
2. Confirm SEND considerations and adjustments
3. Confirm safeguarding review
4. Apply proportionality test
5. Determine length of suspension

Legal Requirements

- Must not exceed 45 school days per academic year
- Must be lawful, reasonable, and procedurally fair

Actions

1. Immediate phone call to parents/carers
2. Written notice issued same day / within one working day
3. Notify commissioning school / LA
4. Record formally

Education Provision

- Days 1–5: Work provided
- Day 6+: Full-time provision arranged by responsible body

Off-Site Direction

Off-site direction is:

- A planned intervention, not a sanction
- Used to support behaviour improvement

Process:

1. Identify need
2. Consult parents
3. Gain commissioning approval
4. Risk assess
5. Set objectives and timeframe
6. Review regularly

Reintegration

Mandatory Multi-Agency Meeting Required For:

- Looked After Children
- LA placements
- SEND/SEMH learners
- Serious or repeated incidents

Process

1. Schedule meeting prior to return
2. Invite:
    - Parents/carers
    - Commissioning school
    - Local Authority
    - Social worker
    - Virtual School
    - Relevant professionals
3. Review:
    - Incident and triggers
    - Safeguarding concerns
    - Risk assessment
4. Agree:

    - Support strategies
    - Adjustments
    - Behaviour targets
5. Produce written reintegration plan
6. Assign responsible staff
7. Set review date
8. Monitor and adjust

Representation and Appeal

Parents/carers have the right to:

1. Receive written notification
2. Request a meeting
3. Make formal representations
4. Request SEND expert involvement

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Futures Changing Ltd will:

1. Maintain a central exclusions log
2. Analyse data termly by:
    - SEND
    - Gender
    - Looked After status
    - Vulnerability
3. Identify patterns and disproportionality
4. Take corrective action

Prohibited Practices

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Informal exclusions
- Sending learners home without process
- Rolling suspensions
- Pressuring parents to remove learners