



Merchant Taylors'
School

Behaviour Policy

Policy owner:	Assistant Head Pastoral
Type of policy:	Policy and Procedure
Regulatory Body:	Department for Education / Independent Schools Inspectorate
Relevant Legislation / Guidance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework for Assessment & Evaluation of Pupil Performance • Externally Published Documents • ISI Handbook for the Inspection of Independent Schools September 2021 • 'Behaviour and Discipline in Schools' DfE January 2016 • Equality Act 2010 • KCSIE 2023 • DFE guidance (Searching, Screening and Confiscation January 2018) • DFE Circular: Use of reasonable force'
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Linked Policies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct (Pupils) • Admissions Policy • Anti-Bullying Policy • Parents Handbook • Pastoral Care Policy • Physical Contact and Restraint Policy • Pupil Searches and confiscation of Pupils' Belongings Policy • Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy • SEND Policy • Curriculum and Teaching and Learning Policy • Equal Opportunities Policy (Pupils) • Complaints Policy



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1. Aims and Objectives

- 1.1.** The School's Behaviour Policy promotes an explicitly anti-discriminatory position. Specifically, the School holds positions that are anti-racist, anti-sexist – including misogyny – and, explicitly, anti-HBT. School seeks through its policies and lived experienced to provide an environment which is inclusive for any and all minority groups.
- 1.2.** The School has adopted the definition of racism, as defined in the MacPherson report : 'Conduct or words which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. In its subtle form it is as damaging as its more overt form.'
- 1.3.** The objectives of this policy are to promote good behaviour, self-discipline and respect, and to show the place of the School's rewards and sanctions, by:
 - ensuring that all members of the school community – pupils, staff, Governors and parents – understand their role in contributing to the creation of a safe and caring environment where pupils are encouraged to realise their potential in all areas of school activity;
 - making clear the standards of behaviour that the School expects from pupils;
 - encouraging pupils to adopt the positive attitudes and values outlined in the Code of Conduct (Pupils);
 - setting out the means by which the School will praise and reward pupils when they reach these standards and thereby help them to grow into responsible members of the school community;
 - giving a clear, easily understood framework in which pupils who fail to meet the expectations of the Code of Conduct will be told that this is the case, be given clear guidelines and expectations for improvement, and issued with proportionate sanctions as appropriate.
- 1.4.** This policy takes account of the DfE guidance Behaviour and Discipline in Schools: Advice for headteachers and school staff (January 2016) and acknowledges the School's legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and in respect of pupils with SEND.
- 1.5.** This policy has regard to Part 3 (Welfare, health and safety of pupils), Paragraph 7 (Safeguarding), 9 (Behaviour) and 10 (Bullying) of the Independent School Standards Regulations, together with the ban on corporal punishment

2. Code of Conduct (Pupils)



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- 2.1.** As highlighted by the Code of Conduct (Pupils), the school expects the highest values and standards of behaviour inside and outside the classroom, as well as outside the school and in any written or electronic communication concerning the school.
 - 2.2.** We expect pupils to treat staff and each other with consideration and good manners and to respond positively to the opportunities and demands of school life. They should follow the school's rules and regulations and understand what is expected of them and why sanctions may be imposed for inconsiderate behaviour.
 - 2.3.** Everyone has a right to feel secure and to be treated with respect. Harassment and bullying will not be tolerated. Our anti-bullying policy is published on the website. The school is strongly committed to promoting equal opportunities for all, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability or learning difficulty.
 - 2.4.** We expect pupils to be ready to learn and to participate in school activities. They should attend school and lessons punctually and follow the school's attendance policy. They should care for the buildings, equipment and furniture. The school expects pupils to behave at all times in a manner that reflects the best interests of the whole community.
 - 2.5.** The school's rules and regulations are designed to encourage positive behaviour and self-discipline. Our Sanctions and Rewards policy is published on the portal. Sanctions are imposed fairly, and, where appropriate, after due investigative action has taken place. The use of force is never used as a punishment in accordance with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
 - 2.6.** The school's Pastoral Care Policy is available on the portal. In applying sanctions, especially those with serious consequences, we undertake to take reasonable steps to avoid placing children with a disability at a disadvantage compared to children who are not disabled.
- 3. The promotion, measurement and reward of good behaviour**
- 3.1.** All members of staff are encouraged to:
 - lead by example in promoting good behaviour by fostering positive interaction between colleagues, pupils and parents based on the expectations outlined in the Code of Conduct (Pupils).
 - acknowledge and show they value good behaviour by pupils, where standards of good behaviour are based on the expectations outlined in the Code of Conduct (Pupils)
 - 3.2.** The Code of Conduct (Pupils) is communicated through:
 - the distribution of the document to pupils and parents
 - the induction of new pupils
 - teaching of the curriculum
 - the delivery of the PSHE programme and the form-time and assembly programmes.



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- the PSHE Policy.

3.3. Opportunities for staff to endorse and acknowledge good behaviour arise in both formal and informal settings, including daily contact in corridors and classrooms, oral and written comments on submitted work, and during interaction with pupils whilst engaged in duties outside of lessons. The following have a key role to play in the promotion of good behaviour and the prevention of disciplinary problems:

- Well-planned lessons that challenge pupils and set appropriate learning goals.
- Activities that boost self-esteem, self-confidence and self-discipline.
- A clear and informed understanding of the impact of learning difficulties and / or disabilities on an individual's behaviour and careful consideration of the preventative role of making reasonable adjustments.
- An efficient and well-informed pastoral system that responds promptly to concerns of staff, pupils and parents.
- respectful relationships between staff and pupils.
- Strong and supportive links with parents.
- Activities that promote a sense of pride in the School.

The School has adopted a formal structure of rewards that provides a clear framework for recognising and rewarding good behaviour by pupils; this is set out in this policy.

3.4 Pupils with identified educational needs and/or an Educational Health Care Plan

Pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan or with identified educational needs are expected to follow the school's Behaviour Policy and comply with all consequences. Where behaviour places a pupil at risk of exclusion, all appropriate support agencies will be contacted and every reasonable step will be made to ensure the needs of the pupil are being supported and that 'reasonable Behaviour and Discipline Policy adjustments' are set in place to support the pupil's needs. It may still, however, be appropriate to impose an exclusion following the implementation of reasonable adjustments.

4. Incentives and Rewards

We aim to reward good work or effort with public acknowledgement. We hope to recognise good behaviour both in and outside the classroom. We think encouragement should be the prime motivator in our rewards procedures. Formal encouragement is recognised in the following ways:

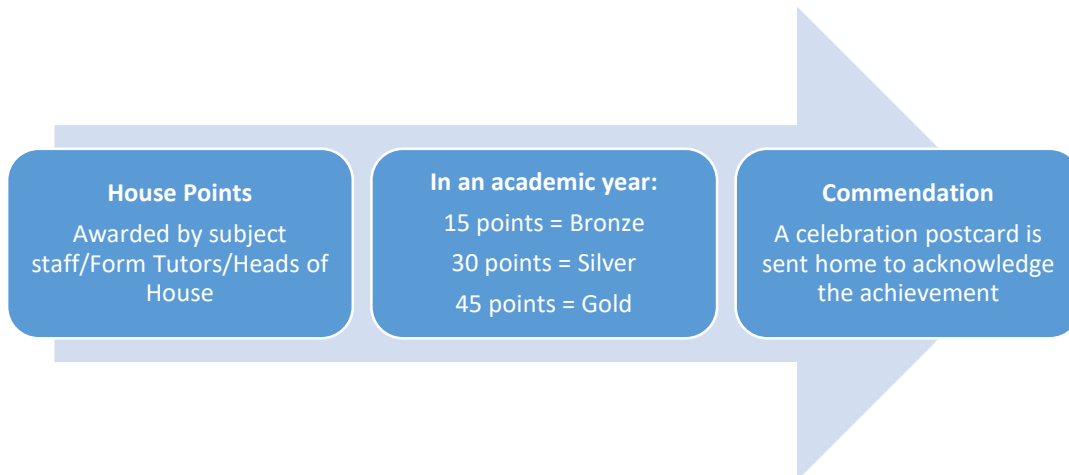
4.1. House Points

All pupils will start the academic year with 50 house points. The house points total for each pupil will be adjusted when they receive rewards or sanctions:

- When pupils receive a merit their house points total will increase
- When pupils receive a sanction their house points total will decrease



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House points will contribute towards final house totals at the end of the academic year and can be awarded in recognition of Effort, Achievement and Contribution, examples might include:

- An excellent piece of work
- Consistent work of a high standard for that particular student (e.g. 3 excellent pieces of homework).
- Consistent and sustained effort.
- Significant improvement in attainment over a substantial period of time, e.g. half a term.
- Significant improvement in effort over a substantial period of time, e.g. half a term.
- Notable contribution to Extra-Curricular Activities, e.g.: regular performance in a team.
- Outstanding commitment over a significant period of time, e.g. half a term, to extracurricular teams, groups or clubs.
- Contributions to the community life of the school, e.g. courtesy, kindness, helpfulness, care for the environment, most likely to be judged by Heads of House and Form Tutor.
- Outstanding contribution to tutor group and House charity events and activities and the community service programme, as judged by Heads of House, Form Tutors.
- Contributions to School, Year and House Assemblies.

4.2. Postcards and letters of congratulations

Postcards and/or Letters of congratulations will be sent home by Heads of House after mid-term and end-of-term reviews, to pupils whose effort and/or attainment has been considered excellent by several teachers. The Headmistress may also write to girls for exceptional effort, attitude or achievement. The Headmistress will see individual students at lunchtime to congratulate them personally on for exceptional achievement, effort or contribution to the school life.

4.3. School Prizes (awarded at Speech Day)



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Contributions to school life, academic ability and improvement are recognised through prizes at our annual Speech Day at the end of Year 13. There are a number of service prizes awarded at the end of Year 12. There are also some subject prizes that are awarded to students in KS3 and KS4.

4.4. Displays of good work

Departments are encouraged to display good pieces of work on their departmental noticeboards. The publication of such work helps to set standards.

4.5. School and House Colours

The system of School and House colours is valued by pupils and contributes to the recognition of non-academic achievement. House Colours are awarded by Heads of Houses.

School Colours are awarded by the Headmistress for co-curricular activities on the recommendation of the SMT and other interested parties including the Heads of Sport, Music and Drama. There are three grades of School Colours: Junior, Half and Full:

- Junior Colours are awarded for excellence to pupils up to and including Year 10.
- Half Colours are for pupils in Year 11 and above. They recognise stalwart service and a good standard.
- Full Colours are awarded to pupils in Year 11 and above to recognise excellence and ongoing commitment. School Colours are recorded by the Assistant Head, Pastoral.

4.6. Rewards for Sixth Form

Given the expectation of students to work much more independently in Years 12 and 13, the Sixth Form students are also rewarded through special privileges in the Sixth Form.

- students are allowed to leave school at lunch time or before the end of the school day if their timetabled lessons have finished. With written permission from their Head of House
- students are also allowed to leave school during their frees.
- Timetable permitting, students are allowed one free morning or afternoon a week. This is recorded in the register by the student's form tutor, and a central list of free mornings and afternoons is kept by the Assistant Head, Pastoral.

At the end of the Easter term, The Head and Assistant Head of Sixth Form take the House Captains and Senior Committee out for a thank you dinner. The Headmistress and the Head of Sixth Form take the Head Girl Team out for a thank you dinner and give them a thank you gift at the end of the Easter term.

5. The scope of this Behaviour Policy with regard to sanctions

- 5.1.** Pupils' behaviour should reflect favourably on the School. The actions and expectations outlined in this policy relate to behaviour at school, both inside and outside the classroom, when travelling to and from school, when in the vicinity of school, when engaged in a



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School activity (at school or elsewhere), when wearing school uniform, or when in some other way identifiable as a member of the School's community. In some circumstances, however, pupils' actions outside of school may be relevant within the terms of this policy, whether or not these conditions apply. This may include any act by or conduct of a pupil which:

- could have repercussions for the orderly running of the School.
- threatens (or could potentially threaten) the well-being of any member of the School community or a member of the public.
- is damaging (or potentially damaging) to the good reputation of the School. Any such behaviour may require a response from the School.

5.2. Where, in the School's view, the welfare, safety or continuing education of a pupil or pupils requires it, the Head, Assistant Head, Pastoral or relevant Head of House may conduct an inquiry into an event or alleged event arising outside of school. The Head / Assistant Head Pastoral / Head of House will exercise discretion in determining what specific inquiries are proportionate and reasonable in any given circumstances. There is no requirement of the school to inform parents or guardians in advance of the inquiries

The School reserves the right to impose sanctions as outlined below upon the conclusion of any inquiry into an event occurring outside of school.

5.3. In accordance with the School's Anti-Bullying Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Policy for Pupils, online actions (e.g. insensitive internet postings, malicious emails or texts) will be viewed as actions with the potential to threaten well-being of any and all stakeholders of the school regardless of the time or location of the post

6. Sanctions

6.1. The general aim of pastoral care is to encourage pupils to be considerate and responsible members of the community, both at school and outside, and to help them to achieve their full potential. The School seeks to create a happy and positive community in which praise and encouragement are much more common than reprimands and sanctions. Day-to-day chivvyng should be the main way staff try to change inappropriate behaviour. From time to time, however, sanctions are necessary. When applied, their aim is to emphasise the unacceptability of certain types of behaviour and to deter any recurrence of such behaviour.

6.2. Principles for applying sanctions

When the Code of Conduct (Pupils) is breached, sanctions are to be applied as outlined below, in line with the following principles:

- Members of staff are encouraged to deal with incidents potentially involving sanctions on a personal basis in the first instance.



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- Where sanctions are necessary, it is recommended that they be used sparingly to avoid diluting their impact.
- The sanction applied should be commensurate with the offence committed.
- Where sanctions are necessary to deal with incidents involving a pupil with known special educational needs, members of staff should consider their appropriateness in the context of the individual's learning difficulties or disability.
- Every pupil has the right to a fair hearing.
- The Form Tutor should be informed of any sanction imposed on a member of their tutor group.

6.3. Record keeping

The school is moving towards a centralised record keeping system using the CPOMS platform. The Assistant Head, Pastoral maintains records of all sanctions issued to pupils. The sanction record of pupils is reviewed regularly by the Assistant Head, Pastoral together with Heads of House and, in addition to any disciplinary action that may be taken, support mechanisms (such as monitoring report) will be discussed with the pupil and communicated with her parents.

6.4. Serious offences

Serious offences should be reported to the Head of House, Assistant Head, Pastoral or Head as appropriate. These offences will be investigated following the procedures outlined below.

The Head maintains a record of more serious offences and the disciplinary measures taken, including suspensions (internal exclusions) or expulsions (permanent exclusions).

6.5 Corporal Punishment

The School rejects the use of corporal punishment and the sanctions detailed below specifically exclude its use.

6.5.2 The Use of Reasonable Force

The Use of Reasonable Force From time to time, it may be necessary to use reasonable force to either restrain or control pupils. All members of staff have the power to use reasonable force. If force is ever used it will be 'reasonable for the circumstances' and may be used to prevent a pupil causing harm to himself/herself or others, damaging property or causing disorder. The DfE set out clear guidance on the use of reasonable force in a 2013 circular entitled 'Use of reasonable force' that will be followed by all school staff.

6.6.1 Investigations

Disciplinary offences are investigated, depending on the nature and level of the offence, by the Form Tutor, Head of House, Assistant Head, Pastoral and / or Head as appropriate. Initial statements may be taken by any member of the school staff, if it is felt appropriate



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and in the pupil's best interest. Parents will be informed of such an investigation if the sanction is likely to be a suspension or expulsion (see below). Investigations will normally involve an interview with the pupil concerned, as well as gathering evidence from other pupils and members of staff involved (if any). When interviewed by a senior member of staff, and where appropriate, the pupil will be accompanied by their Form Tutor. Details of the investigatory procedures for more serious offences are outlined below.

6.6.2 Searching of pupils

Under Section 90 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and Part 2 of the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil's property and protect the College from liability of damage. All procedures for searching, screening and confiscation will be fully compliant with the DfE guidance (Searching, Screening and Confiscation January 2018). The College reserves the right to search without consent for prohibited items. These include: tobacco products including e-cigarettes, alcohol, illegal drugs (psychoactive substances are banned in the school and will be treated as illegal drugs), stolen items, weapons or any other item which the school deems could be considered harmful to a pupil. Refusal to comply with a search will be treated as a serious breach of this Policy. Sanctions will be imposed if a prohibited item is found, depending upon the judgement of the Principal. The school also reserves the right to search for, and remove from pupils, the following: e-cigarettes and vaping paraphernalia, and any other items which they believe may be sold for financial gain. Possessions' means any goods over which the pupil has or appears to have control – this includes desks, lockers and bags. All searches of pupil's possessions ('possessions' means any goods over which the pupil has or appears to have control – this includes desks, lockers and bags) will be conducted in the presence of two members of staff, one of whom will be the same sex as the pupil being searched. If possible, the witness will also be the same sex as the pupil. However, the School can carry out a search of a pupil of the opposite sex to the member of staff conducting the search and / or without a witness present, when the College reasonably believes that there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the school does not conduct the search immediately and where it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff. Where a pupil has been searched, her parents will be informed. Where the school finds an item which is banned under the school rules, the school will take into account all relevant circumstances and use professional judgement to decide whether to return it to the parent, retain it or dispose of it. The member of staff conducting the search will not require the pupil to remove any clothing (blazer/jumper) other than outer clothing. Outer clothing means clothing that is not worn next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear but does include; hats; shoes; boots; gloves; scarves. The member of staff conducting the search can use reasonable force when conducting a search for knives, weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, cigarettes, fireworks, pornographic images or articles that have been used to commit an offence or cause harm. Force will not be used to search for items banned under school rules. Where any weapon or illegal drug is found on a pupil and this compromises the safety of all pupils and staff, this may result in the Head and Executive Head imposing a permanent exclusion and the police will be informed (in



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accordance with DfE guidelines).

6.5. Details of available sanctions

The system of sanctions is cumulative (to combat consistent poor conduct) and hierarchical (to escalate the severity of sanctions, based on the seriousness of the offence or if it is repeated) and gives each pupil a clear understanding of the consequences of any form of behaviour that contravenes the Code of Conduct (Pupils).

A sanction will never be humiliating or degrading and the School will not impose blanket punishments.

When imposing a sanction, a pupil's prior conduct may be taken into consideration.

Sanctions will be reasonable and proportionate and will consider the individual circumstances of the pupil.

The most effective sanctions are completed expeditiously and as soon after the event as possible

6.5.1. Level 1 Sanctions

Pupils in years 7-11

Level 1 sanctions might include, according to seriousness, rebuke, repetition of work, withdrawal of privileges, or contacting parents.

Pupils may also lose house points for any of the following reasons:

- Lateness to lessons (one major infringement or 3 minor lapses of punctuality with no clear explanation / reason).
- Missed deadlines for homework (one major infringement e.g.: coursework or over 24-hour delay for homework or 3 minor delays e.g.: forgot to bring to lesson but has in school).
- Poor quality of work handed in (3 below standard pieces of work for the individual concerned).
- Disruptive behaviour in lessons
- Misuse of technology.
- Uniform infringement.
- Disruptive behaviour in the dining room.

Pupils who persistently ignore uniform rules will be required to change and borrow from the second-hand uniform store. They may also be sent home to change and return that morning.



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Sixth Form Pupils

Pupils in the Sixth Form will lose privileges for 1 day and house points as appropriate to the infringement.

6.7.2 Level 2 Detentions or significant loss of privileges

These are given mainly for behaviour offences but may also be given for work-related offences. Detentions should be used sparingly if they are to be effective. Often the threat of a detention or loss of privileges is sufficient to bring about a positive change in behaviour.

Pupils in Years 7-11

Pupils will be given an SMT detention for persistent infringements. Guidelines for giving a detention

- Detentions are given usually for repetitive misdemeanours of a minor sort (such as lateness, uniform offences, inattention in class, or distracting other pupils, etc.)
- may also be given for deliberate failure to hand in homework on time or other repeated work-related offences.
- Sometimes detentions are given for a single offence (such as failure to explain absence, failure to complete an imposition or attend an informal detention, aggressive behaviour, discourtesy, swearing, or going out of bounds).
- Detentions may be awarded for the accrual of a loss of house points. In these circumstances, the detention would be issued by the Tutor or Head of House.
- At least 48 hours' notice of a detention must be given.
- A letter will be sent to parents to advise them of the detention and a detention log will be kept centrally within school

All pupils in Years 7- 11 who are given a detention will serve this with a members of SMT in the library at 4 pm on a Friday. Pupils may be given community jobs, to support school or maybe required to complete their work, depending on circumstances.

Sixth Form

Pupils will lose privileges for up to a week for persistent infringements.

6.7. Persistent Misbehaviour

Teachers will report causes for concern/persistent offenders/underachievers to the relevant Head of House. This might result in weekly meetings with the Form Tutor/Head of House, or the pupil being put on a monitoring report until things improve. A report can monitor attendance/punctuality, quality of homework and/or quality of class work. If a pupil is on report, her form tutor checks and signs it each day and she meets the relevant Head of house on a weekly basis. Parents are then informed of the pupil's response to being on report.

6.8. Malicious Allegations



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Malicious allegations against staff are considered a very serious offence and will be dealt with in an appropriate manner and receive an appropriate sanction, could comprise of temporary or permanent exclusion.

7. Levels 3 and 4: Suspensions and Exclusions

7.7. Principle

For the most serious offences, the Assistant Pastoral/ Assistant Head Operations may recommend to the Head that a pupil be suspended or excluded from School. The first level of suspension is internal and is at the Head's discretion. There is no requirement for an internal suspension (removed from classes and works in isolation within school, supervised by members of the school staff) to be undertaken before an external suspension or expulsion.

Exclusion from School, in accordance with the School's Terms and Conditions, can be a temporary withdrawal for a fixed term (suspension) or a permanent exclusion (expulsion). The Head may at their discretion suspend or, in serious or persistent cases, expel a pupil from the School if the Head considers that the pupil's conduct or behaviour (including behaviour or conduct outside school) is unsatisfactory and the suspension or exclusion is in the best interests of the pupil, other pupils or the School. Examples of behaviour for which a pupil may be suspended or excluded are given below. Work will be provided by the pupil's teachers to be completed during the duration of the exclusion. The pupil will only be allowed to return to school following a reintegration meeting with their Head of House and Assistant Head, Pastoral. Upon a satisfactory meeting, in which the pupil will be encouraged to reflect upon their actions and a check of the work set has taken place, the pupil will be allowed to return to school.

Only the Head or Executive Head have the authority, after proper consideration, to exclude from the School any pupil for a single serious incident or a repeated failure to observe the Code of Conduct (Pupils), or whose work or academic progress is unsatisfactory, or in circumstances which do not fall into any of these categories but which in the opinion of the Head or Executive Head justify exclusion.

Where it is appropriate to do so, the Head can look at retrospective cases. If it is a safeguarding concern, there is no time limit to this and all cases that are brought to the schools attention will be investigated. Any concerns that are raised retrospectively that are not of a safeguarding nature, will be investigated, if deemed appropriate by the Head and/or it falls within the same academic year or it is within one term from the previous academic year.

7.8. Behaviour and Conduct

The following list is not exhaustive or exclusive but provides an indication of the sort of behaviour or offence that the School would consider serious enough to merit consideration of a suspension or permanent exclusion from School:

- physical assault against pupils or adults



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- verbal abuse of, threatening behaviour towards or malicious allegations against pupils or adults
- bullying (including cyber-bullying)
- racism
- homophobia, or any other discrimination on grounds of gender or sexuality • sexual misconduct
- drug and alcohol misuse
- damage to property
- theft
- persistent disruptive behaviour
- any conduct that facilitates, encourages or makes possible any of the offences listed above
- disrespectful behaviour or behaviour that goes substantially against or undermines the core values of the School
- any conduct that significantly harms, or has the potential significantly to harm, the reputation of the School

7.9. Academic Progress

In the event of a pupil struggling with school work, the School will contact parents / carers, and will aim to distinguish between difficulties caused by a pupil's waywardness or wilfulness and those arising from a pupil's lack of ability. The list below is not exhaustive or exclusive but provides an indication of the sort of unsatisfactory approach to school work and lessons which may be considered serious enough to prompt a review of either a pupil's suitability to progress to the next year or the School's willingness to permit the pupil to continue in the School. In such circumstances, pupils and parents will receive notice of what a pupil must do to improve, an indication of the timeframe during which improvement must happen, and the guidance which will be offered to the pupil. In such cases it is likely that issues will involve a number of the examples in the list below and that the pupil will not have responded satisfactorily or at all to the guidance and encouragement already provided by staff as a matter of course:

- a persistent pattern (i.e. over three or more terms) of School Reports that highlight academic issues, or receiving sanctions or low effort grades for failing to participate positively in lessons
- at reporting points, receiving very unsatisfactory assessments or effort grades in one or more subjects (Sixth Form) or in a third or more of subjects (Years 7-11)
- very unsatisfactory performance (relative to a pupil's ability) in end-of-year examinations or in public examinations
- a persistent lack of interest in or commitment to school work, including refusing to work independently or to do work which goes beyond the needs of public examinations
- either a persistent pattern of low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons, which may be reflected in the School Reports and grades or the issuing of Red slips, or single instances of very disruptive behaviour



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- a persistent pattern of receiving sanctions for unsatisfactory classwork (such as insufficient quality or length; not revising or preparing for routine tests; repeatedly handing in work late or not handing in work at all; or not preparing for lessons or not bringing equipment to lessons)
- upon being offered guidance and support to improve behaviour or academic performance, a lack of cooperation with the School as demonstrated by a persistent pattern of disregarding such support
- a serious instance of cheating or plagiarism or a record of passing off, or seeking to pass off, others' work as one's own (including, but not limited to, in coursework, internal examinations and public examinations)

7.10. Investigations prior to Suspension or Expulsion

The details of investigations into disciplinary offences are given in Section 6.6 above. This section outlines the additional procedures relating to a serious offence where a suspension or expulsion may be considered as a sanction.

Depending on the nature of the offence, it may be necessary to suspend a pupil from School whilst the investigation is being carried out. This does not constitute a disciplinary sanction. Any such suspension will be kept under review and will not last for any longer than is reasonably necessary. It may also be necessary for the School to contact Social Services or the Police.

Pupils' involvement in investigations

An investigation will necessarily involve an interview with the pupil whose behaviour is being considered such that the pupil's voice is heard. If it is clear that suspension or expulsion is a possible outcome, the pupil will, where possible, be offered the opportunity to be accompanied during the interview by a member of staff (e.g. their Form Tutor or Head of House) who is not conducting the investigation. In addition to interviewing any other pupils and staff involved (if any), and where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion, evidence may be obtained through the confiscation and searching of pupils' clothing, bags, lockers and mobile electronic devices (as detailed in the Pupil Searches and Confiscation of Pupils' belongings Policy).

Parents' involvement in investigations

Parents do not have the right to be present at any investigatory meetings conducted by the School with pupils. In the event of a suspension or expulsion of a pupil being deemed a possible consequence of an action or incident the Head or Assistant Head, Pastoral, or another senior member of staff where appropriate, will notify parents as soon as reasonably practicable and, after investigation, will provide parents with the details of the breach of the Schools' Code of Conduct (Pupils), where applicable, the particular action or incident, and the basis for the decision to consider suspension or expulsion.



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7.11. Hearings

What is a Hearing? A disciplinary meeting (the 'Hearing') will be held by the Head after the investigation has been completed so that the member of staff who conducted the investigation can present the information that has been gathered and to give an opportunity for the pupil to respond. The Hearing will usually be attended by:

- The pupil
- The pupil's Form Tutor or other nominated member of staff, should the pupil wish this
- The Head of House (with knowledge of the pupil and the relevant incident)
- The Assistant Head, Pastoral and / or Head
- The member of staff who conducted the investigation, if not already included in the list above
- Other members of staff will be on hand to join the meeting if required and their statements will be disclosed.

The Headmistress's objective is to establish all the relevant facts and, having done so, to reach a fair decision. Evidence that will be made available to the Head at the Hearing may include:

- A statement setting out the points of complaint against the pupil
- Written statements and notes of the evidence supporting the complaint, and any relevant related correspondence
- The investigation report of the Assistant Head, Pastoral/ Head
- The pupil's School file
- The relevant School policies and procedures

The Hearing will consider the allegations and the evidence available. The anonymity of any other pupils included in the investigation will normally be preserved insofar as it is possible to do so while still conducting a fair hearing, and in all cases where in the opinion of the Head it is necessary to do so for the welfare of the other pupils.

There will be two distinct stages of the Hearing:

- The complaint(s): The Headmistress will consider the complaint(s) and the evidence, including statements made by and / or on behalf of the pupil. Unless the Head considers that further investigation is needed, the Head will decide whether the complaint has been sufficiently proved. The standard of proof shall normally be civil standard, i.e. on the balance of probabilities.
- The sanction: if the complaint has been proved, the Head will outline the range of sanctions which may be considered. The Headmistress will take into account any further statement which the pupil and / or others present on her behalf wishes to make. The pupil's prior disciplinary record will be taken into account.

When will a Hearing take place? A Hearing will always take place in the event of a suspension of three or more days' duration or an expulsion of a pupil being deemed a possible consequence. At the Headmistress's discretion, and in exceptional circumstances



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only, a Hearing may also be held when a suspension of one to two days' duration is deemed a possible consequence.

Parents' attendance at a Hearing The pupil's parents will not be invited to attend any Hearing held when a one to two-day suspension may be considered. The pupil would, where possible, be offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a member of staff (e.g. their Form Tutor or Head of House). The pupil's parents will be invited to attend the Hearing where the nature of the offence is such that either a suspension of three days or more or a permanent exclusion may be considered (see above for an indication of the sort of offences for which these may be considered).

Following a Hearing

At the conclusion of the Hearing, the Headmistress will indicate when he expects to be able to consider all the evidence and reach a decision; ideally, this will be within two school working days. The decision will be confirmed in writing by the Headmistress, clearly stating:

- the nature of any sanction, including any decision to suspend or exclude a pupil
- the reasons for the suspension or exclusion
- where the sanction is a suspension, the length of the suspension, and the dates when the suspension will begin and when the suspended pupil is permitted to return to school

A pupil may be required to remain away from School for the period of time pending the Head's decision.

Where pupils are required to leave the School site, it is preferable that pupils are escorted off the School site by parents. Pupils below the Sixth Form will only be allowed to leave School on their own with permission from parents; Sixth Form pupils will be allowed to leave on their own. A member of staff may accompany a pupil to retrieve items from her locker before departure.

The Head or Assistant Head, Pastoral will normally be the point of contact for any further correspondence with parents.

7.12. Level 3: Suspension (Temporary Exclusion)

Suspensions are to be served at home (other than in extra-ordinary circumstances where they may be served at School) and, depending on the circumstances and seriousness of the situation, usually range from one to five days' duration. The Headmistress, where they deem it appropriate, reserves the right to suspend a pupil for a longer duration. Work will be provided for the duration of any suspension. This work will be marked and returned as appropriate, usually via the pupil's Tutor or Head of House. Any pupil who has been suspended is required to attend a meeting with the Headmistress and / or the Head on the morning of her return to school. Parents may also be invited to attend this meeting, where strategies for returning to normal school life, expectations for future conduct, and potential consequences of further breaches will be established.



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7.13. Level 4: Permanent Exclusion (“Expulsion”)

Expulsion from the School is regarded as a last resort and will usually be considered in response to highly unsatisfactory conduct or behaviour, such as:

- a history of persistent disruptive behaviour or unsatisfactory academic progress or poor attendance, where other strategies and sanctions to modify the conduct, progress, work or attendance of the pupil have proved to be ineffective
- an extremely serious breach of the School’s Code of Conduct (Pupils) or school discipline, such as persistent bullying or the making of malicious accusations against other pupils or staff
- a criminal offence, such as theft or drugs abuse • the accumulation of five or more days of suspensions in any school year

Required removal

The Headmistress may require the removal at any time of any pupil who, in the Headmistress’s opinion, is failing to make proper use of the instruction provided by the School, or is exercising a harmful influence on others, or as an alternative to exclusion in the circumstances set out above.

The Headmistress may also require the removal of any pupil whose attendance, conduct or progress is unsatisfactory, and, in the reasonable opinion of the Headmistress, the removal is in the best interests of the pupil, other pupils or the School. In reaching the decision to expel or require removal, the Headmistress will review the evidence available (including mitigating and aggravating factors relating to any incident; medical or SEND considerations; the academic, co-curricular and disciplinary record of the pupil concerned) to establish if the behaviour might be the result of unmet educational or other needs.

Representations from senior pastoral staff and the pupil and her parents at the Hearing will also be taken into account. If the Headmistress decides that a pupil must leave the School, she will consult with the Chairman of the Board of Governors (or, in the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman) to confirm that the Chairman supports the proposed action.

The Head will then consult with parents before deciding on the pupil’s leaving status. Where the Head believes it to be appropriate, parents may be offered the opportunity to “withdraw” the pupil from the School. In this instance, the option of a voluntary managed move to another institution may be considered. The School will always try to offer advice on the placing of a pupil into another suitable school.

Parental behaviour and conduct

The Headmistress may also require the removal at any time of any pupil whose parent’s or parents’ behaviour or conduct is unreasonable; and / or adversely affects (or is likely to adversely affect) the pupil’s or other pupils’ progress at the School, or the wellbeing of School staff; and / or brings (or is likely to bring) the School into disrepute; and / or is not in accordance with the pupil’s parents’ obligations under the School’s Terms and Conditions.



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Financial impact or expulsion or required removal Parents should refer to the School's Terms and Conditions for details of the financial implications of an expulsion.

8. Complaints Procedure and Appeals

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Complaints Policy

8.7. Appealing suspensions

When a decision is taken to suspend a pupil from School, parents and pupils may contact the Headmistress if they have concerns about the process or the fairness of the conclusion reached. A formal appeal to Governors is not part of the suspensions' procedure, but parents may enact the Complaints Policy if they have any concerns about the decision or the process by which it was reached.

8.8. Appealing exclusions and required removals

Should an expulsion or required removal occur, the School's Procedure for the Review of a Pupil's Required Removal gives details of the procedure for a review of the process and the School's decision. The review will be conducted by an appeal panel involving members of the Board of Governors and a person independent to the School.

Covid-19 Addendum to the Behaviour Policy This could probably be removed

In addition to the main school rules, the Behaviour Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy, there will be some new disciplinary regulations related to protecting pupils and staff whilst COVID-19 remains a threat to health. These regulations will cover transgressions or negative behaviour in relation to the following areas:

- Any potentially harmful behaviour in terms of spreading the virus or, indeed, any illness, such as deliberately coughing on people or surfaces, or spitting at people or on surfaces.
- Deliberately not complying with social distancing rules.
- Face coverings – in terms of using them properly and showing respect for the choices of others.
- Playing one's part in cleaning surfaces, as directed.
- Personal hygiene in terms of hand sanitising or washing
- Ensuring the correct equipment is brought to lessons
- Conforming to uniform expectations
- Any repeated or deliberate behaviour which negatively impacts the smooth running of the school during these difficult times.

These additional rules will be explained to pupils when they return/arrive in September. The likely sanctions will be explained. We will encourage pupils to adopt these norms and remind them to do



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so as they adjust to school life under our new circumstances. More serious transgressions (those that could potentially harm others) will attract more serious sanctions.