MIAG

SUSPENSIONS & EXCLUSIONS POLICY

MIAG ORGANISATIONAL POLICY

Organisation-wide

Supporting consistent, effective practice across the MIAG organisation.

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS | CREATING OPPORTUNITIES | ENRICHING COMMUNITIES

Policy Statement:

MIAG is committed to maintaining safe, calm, supportive and inclusive learning environments. Suspension or exclusion is a serious decision and will only be used where proportionate, necessary and consistent with the learner's circumstances, the safety and welfare of others, the MIAG behaviour policy and the legal/contractual arrangements applying to the provision.

MIAG recognises that behaviour is communication and that many learners have experienced trauma, disrupted education or previous exclusion. Our approach is relational, restorative and focused on reducing risk, repairing relationships and re-engaging learners wherever this can be achieved safely.

Scope and Status:

This is an organisation-wide MIAG policy applying to all MIAG Schools and Provisions, including Independent Special Schools and Alternative Provision. The term 'suspension' is used for a temporary removal from provision. 'Permanent exclusion' means the ending of a learner's placement/registration where the applicable legal, contractual and commissioning arrangements permit this.

The statutory DfE guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion applies specifically to maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units. MIAG Independent Schools must nevertheless operate fair, lawful and transparent arrangements consistent with their legal duties, the Independent School Standards, safeguarding requirements, equality law and the terms governing the learner's placement. MIAG will apply the DfE suspension and exclusion guidance as a benchmark for good practice and will comply with it where it is legally applicable to the particular provision.

For MIAG Alternative Provision or other non-school placements, suspension or ending a placement must also follow the relevant commissioning, referral, placement agreement and local authority arrangements. A contractual/placement decision must not be represented as a statutory school exclusion where the statutory exclusion framework does not apply.

Legislative and Guidance Framework:

The policy is informed by and must be read with the current requirements applicable to the relevant MIAG provision, including:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, particularly Part 3 paragraph 9 on promotion of good behaviour, written behaviour policy and records of sanctions for serious misbehaviour
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, including safeguarding, child-centred practice, information sharing and record keeping
- Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, current edition), which applies to independent schools
- Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement – DfE statutory guidance effective from 26 July 2026, where legally applicable and as a benchmark elsewhere
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- Equality Act 2010, including duties relating to disability discrimination and reasonable adjustments
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, as updated/current statutory guidance
- Working together to improve school attendance – current statutory guidance, including requirements relevant to independent schools

- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, where provisions are applicable to the relevant MIAG setting and arrangements
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR in relation to records and information sharing
- Relevant local safeguarding partnership, local authority, commissioning and placement requirements

Principles for Decision-Making:

- **Safety first:** protect learners, staff and others from serious or foreseeable harm
- **Proportionality:** use the least restrictive effective response that can safely manage the situation
- **Individuality:** consider age, SEND, disability, communication, mental health, medical needs, trauma, safeguarding and other relevant circumstances
- **Reasonable adjustments:** consider whether reasonable adjustments or additional support could reduce the risk or prevent recurrence
- **Fairness and evidence:** decisions should be based on reliable information, investigation and the learner's circumstances
- **Last resort:** where appropriate, suspension/exclusion follows consideration of earlier support and intervention, but an exceptionally serious incident may justify immediate action
- **Safeguarding:** consider whether behaviour or the circumstances surrounding it indicate a safeguarding concern
- **Partnership:** communicate appropriately with parents/carers, commissioning schools/local authorities and relevant professionals
- **Restoration:** wherever a learner returns, the focus is on repair, learning and what needs to change

Circumstances in Which Suspension or Exclusion May Be Considered:

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Serious violence, threatening behaviour or credible threats to safety
- Serious assault or behaviour causing significant risk of harm
- Possession or use of weapons or other prohibited items
- Serious misuse or possession of drugs or other prohibited substances
- Serious damage to property or conduct creating a significant health and safety risk
- Serious abusive, discriminatory or harmful behaviour
- Persistent serious behaviour where agreed support and intervention have not resulted in sufficient improvement
- Behaviour that creates a level of risk which the provision cannot safely manage despite reasonable adjustments and appropriate support

The presence of a learner's SEND, disability, medical condition or safeguarding vulnerability must never be treated as the reason for exclusion without proper consideration of the individual circumstances and applicable legal duties.

Investigation and Decision-Making:

Before a suspension or permanent exclusion decision is made, the Headteacher/Provision Leader should ensure that sufficient information has been gathered to understand what happened and why, unless immediate removal is necessary to protect safety. The learner should be given an appropriate opportunity to give their account, taking account of communication needs.

- Review the incident, available evidence and relevant records
- Consider the learner's EHCP, SEND, individual plans, risk assessments and reasonable adjustments

- Consult the DSL where safeguarding may be relevant
- Consult the SENCO/SEND lead or other appropriate professional where SEND needs may affect the decision
- Consider previous support, interventions and behaviour patterns where relevant
- Consider the impact on other learners and staff
- Consider whether the provision can safely continue to meet the learner's needs
- Record the decision, rationale and actions taken

Suspension:

A suspension is a temporary removal from the provision for a defined period. The length should be proportionate to the circumstances and should not be extended simply because a reintegration meeting has not yet taken place.

Where the statutory DfE exclusion framework applies, MIAG will follow its requirements on maximum suspension periods, notification, education during suspension, governing/proprietor oversight and review rights. Where it does not apply, MIAG will follow the learner's placement arrangements and its organisational process, ensuring the learner remains appropriately supported and their education is considered.

MIAG does not use a routine fixed number of days as an automatic sanction. The length of a suspension must be individually determined.

Education and Contact During Suspension:

- MIAG will consider what education, learning or appropriate engagement should be provided during a suspension, taking account of the length of the suspension and the applicable statutory/placement arrangements
- Parents/carers should receive clear information about the suspension, expectations during the period and the arrangements for return
- Where appropriate, staff may maintain supportive contact with the learner/family during suspension
- Safeguarding responsibility and any relevant welfare concerns remain active during the suspension

MIAG Reintegration Meeting – 'What's Changed?'

A MIAG reintegration meeting is a required part of the organisational process following a suspension and takes place before the learner returns to normal provision. It is not intended to be a punitive meeting or an additional sanction. Its purpose is restorative: to understand what happened, repair relationships, identify what has changed and agree what is needed for a successful return.

The meeting should normally involve the learner, parent/carer and appropriate MIAG staff. The DSL, SEND lead, commissioner or other professional should be involved where appropriate.

Focus:	Questions to explore:
Reflect	What happened? What was going on for the learner and others? What was the impact?

Focus:	Questions to explore:
What's changed?	What has happened since the incident? What has the learner understood? What has MIAG understood?
Repair	What relationships or trust need repairing? Is there an apology, restorative conversation or other repair that is appropriate?
Support	What support, reasonable adjustments or changes are needed?
Expectations	What needs to be different when the learner returns? What will adults do differently?
Plan	Who will do what, when will it be reviewed, and what happens if concerns re-emerge?

Restorative and Supportive Follow-Up:

- Agree clear, achievable actions for the learner and adults
- Review or amend behaviour, support, risk or safety plans where necessary
- Identify any additional SEND, wellbeing or safeguarding support
- Ensure relevant staff understand the agreed plan and professional boundaries
- Set a review point and monitor whether the agreed changes are working
- Record the outcome and any further actions

Permanent Exclusion / Ending a Placement:

Permanent exclusion or ending a learner's placement is the most serious response and should only be considered where the circumstances are sufficiently serious, the provision cannot safely or appropriately continue to meet the learner's needs, or other lawful grounds for ending the placement apply.

- An exceptionally serious incident may justify consideration of permanent exclusion
- Persistent serious behaviour may justify consideration where reasonable support and intervention have been exhausted or are demonstrably insufficient
- Any decision must consider SEND, disability, reasonable adjustments, safeguarding and the learner's individual circumstances
- Recommendations for such decision must be discussed with the COO/CEO prior to a final decision being made as dependent upon the circumstances the route may be a termination of placement rather than a permanent exclusion
- Commissioning/referring schools, local authorities and other relevant parties must be involved where required by the placement or commissioning arrangements
- A written decision and rationale must be provided to the relevant parties
- Where a placement ends, MIAG will support an appropriate transition/exit process wherever practicable and safe

Equality, SEND and Safeguarding:

MIAG will not discriminate unlawfully against a learner because of disability or SEND. Decision-makers must consider whether behaviour is connected to disability or unmet need and whether reasonable adjustments, additional support or changes to provision are required.

Suspension or exclusion may also identify a safeguarding concern. Staff must consider whether the incident is linked to abuse, exploitation, neglect, contextual safeguarding, mental health, unmet need or another vulnerability. The DSL must be consulted where appropriate and safeguarding records maintained in accordance with MIAG arrangements.

Attendance, Registration and Information Sharing:

Suspension and exclusion must be recorded accurately in the relevant attendance and learner records. MIAG will comply with the current statutory attendance requirements applicable to the relevant setting. For Independent Schools, current DfE attendance guidance applies to independent schools.

Where a learner's placement ends, MIAG must ensure that any required notifications, records and information are provided to the relevant local authority, commissioner, referring school or other body within the applicable timescales. MIAG will not use informal withdrawal, pressure on parents/carers or administrative removal as a substitute for a lawful exclusion or agreed placement-ending process.

Records and Reporting:

- Record the incident, evidence considered, decision, duration, communication, support offered and outcome
- Record suspension and exclusion decisions securely on the relevant MIAG system
- Maintain reintegration meeting records and agreed actions
- Record relevant safeguarding concerns on the appropriate safeguarding system
- Report serious incidents through the MIAG incident/RIDDOR route where applicable
- Include appropriate suspension/exclusion data in provision and organisational quality assurance reporting
- Review patterns by learner group, SEND, ethnicity, sex, disability and other relevant characteristics to identify disproportionality and improvement need

Review, Appeal and Complaints:

MIAG will provide parents/carers and, where appropriate, learners and commissioners with clear information about how a suspension or permanent exclusion decision can be reviewed or challenged under the arrangements applying to the provision.

For MIAG Independent Schools, the specific statutory governing-body and independent-review mechanisms in the DfE exclusion guidance for maintained schools and academies do not automatically apply. MIAG will therefore provide a clear organisational review route, without presenting it as a statutory exclusion appeal where it is not.

Where a decision has been made by the Headteacher/Provision Leader, the organisational review will normally be considered by the COO/CEO in accordance with MIAG's governance arrangements. A separate complaint about the process may be made under the MIAG Complaints Policy. Nothing in this policy limits any statutory right a learner or parent/carer may have.

Monitoring and Assurance:

- Headteacher/Provision Leader monitors local use of suspension and exclusion
- DSL reviews safeguarding implications and patterns
- Provision leadership reviews reintegration outcomes and whether support plans are effective
- COO provides organisational assurance and may audit decisions, records, patterns and reintegration practice
- Governance receives appropriate anonymised reporting on use, trends, disproportionality, serious incidents and organisational learning
- This policy is reviewed annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, Independent School Standards, Ofsted expectations or MIAG arrangements change

Related MIAG Policies and Documents:

- MIAG Behaviour Policy
- MIAG Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- MIAG SEND Policy and SEND Information Statement
- MIAG Equality Policy
- MIAG Risk Management and Risk Assessment Policy
- MIAG Physical Intervention / Positive Handling arrangements
- MIAG Attendance Policy
- MIAG Complaints Policy
- Local commissioning, placement and referral arrangements

Key Reference Sources:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 – statutory guidance, in force from 1 September 2026
- Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff – DfE, current edition; applies to independent schools
- Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement – DfE statutory guidance effective 26 July 2026; applied where legally applicable and used as a benchmark elsewhere
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 3 paragraph 9 and related welfare standards
- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- Equality Act 2010
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Working together to improve school attendance – current statutory guidance
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, where applicable
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Relevant local safeguarding partnership, local authority and commissioning guidance

Document Control:

Policy	Suspensions & Exclusions
Policy Type	MIAG Organisational Policy
Policy Owner	Lisa Savage, Chief Operating Officer
Responsible Lead	Headteacher/Provision Lead
Safeguarding Lead	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Approved By	Guy Hopson, Chair of Governors
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Applies To	MIAG organisation-wide

Version History:

Version	Date	Summary of Change
1.0	October 2026	New MIAG Organisational Policy outlining Organisational arrangements for all suspensions and exclusions