

SUSPENSION & EXCLUSION

Policy Statement



- Written August 1997
- Modified October 1998 with reference to Schools (Suspension and Exclusion of Pupils) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998
- Modified and corrected September 1999
- Minor modifications in September 2000 on the appointment of the Deputy Principal
- Revised and updated 2005 on advice from NEELB

Summary:

Procedures and regulations relating to suspensions and exclusions of pupils from the college by the Principal and Board of Governors.

EG Martin
Principal

September 1997

Additional Notes

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Board of Governors

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POLICY ON SUSPENSION AND EXCLUSION

Under the terms of Article 49 of the Education and Libraries Order 1986, as substituted by Article 39 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1993, Ulidia Integrated College, Carrickfergus is required to prepare a scheme specifying the procedures to be followed in relation to the suspension or expulsion of its pupils.

SUSPENSIONS

The suspension of pupils from all grant-aided schools is governed by Statutory Rule No.99 Schools (Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 as amended by Statutory Rule No. 225 Schools (Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils) (Amendment) Regulations 1998.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHEME

Background

The Board of Governors of Ulidia Integrated College recognises that the following fundamental principles underlie discipline in the College:

- (1) Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive full-time education by ensuring regular attendance at school;
- (2) Every student is entitled to be educated and is expected to attend college regularly and to accept and follow college routines and procedures;
- (3) Every student is expected to be tolerant and to show understanding towards others and to accept responsibility for their own actions;
- (4) The Scheme of Management for the college provides for the Principal and Board of Governors a Behaviour & Relationships policy which is made available to all parents;
- (5) When a student fails to meet the minimum required standard of behaviour, as laid out in the Behaviour & Relationship policy the college is entitled to impose such sanctions as contained within our policies which may include suspension and, if necessary, permanent exclusion from the college.

Exclusions are generally one of three kinds, namely;

- (a) Temporary – known as suspension
- (b) Indefinite – also known as suspension
- (c) Permanent - formally known as Expulsion

THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

- (1) The legal position is set out in Article 49 of the Education & Libraries (NI) Order, 1986, as amended by Article 39 of the Education & Libraries (NI) Order, 1993 which provides as follows;
 - a. The college shall prepare a scheme specifying the procedure to be followed in relation to the suspension and exclusion of students from the college.
 - b. A Scheme prepared under paragraph (i) shall provide that a student may be permanently excluded from a school only by the Board of Governors and shall include provision for such other matters as may be prescribed.
- (2) The Schools (Suspension and Exclusion of Pupils) Regulations (NI) 1995 SR No. 99 requires that a scheme for the Suspension and Exclusion of pupils shall include provision for certain matters as are set out within those regulations.
- (3) The Schools (Suspension and Exclusion of Pupils) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 1998 SR No. 225 amendments have also been incorporated into this policy statement.

THE SCHEME

Commencement

The scheme shall come into operation on approval by the Principal and Board of Governors of Ulidia Integrated College on 1 September 2000.

Interpretations

- (1) In this SCHEME:

“Chairperson of the Board of Governors” includes, where the chairperson is absent or otherwise unavailable, the member of the Board of Governors deputising for, or performing the duties of, the Chairperson;

“a college day” means a day on which the college is in operation, this includes non-teaching days when the college is open. The term ‘a college day’ excludes weekends, bank and customary holidays.

- (2) In this scheme any reference to the parent of a student shall include, in the cases of a student who has attained the age of 18, the student himself.

SUSPENSION

A student may be suspended from the college only by the Principal

Normal Circumstances – Temporary Suspension

- (1) In normal circumstances, suspension will be considered only after all reasonable attempts to integrate the student into the college have been made.

Suspension of a student from the college is a severe sanction which can only be imposed by the Principal in situations where a pupil's behaviour is presenting seriously difficulties to the college.

In such cases, where there are indications that a student may have to be temporarily suspended, the Principal must ensure the following steps are taken:

- (a) Make reasonable effort to ensure the relevant background information on the pupil(s) involved is readily available.
 - (b) Contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the problems and enlist their support for the college's efforts to resolve the difficulty presented by the student.
 - (c) Discuss the situation with the appropriate member(s) of staff;
 - (d) Ensure that a full record of events, situations and information is kept and that the student records are appropriately amended to reflect the suspension.
- (2) The Principal may suspend a pupil for an initial period of not more than FIVE college days and not more than 45 college days in total in any one school year. Written notification of the suspension must be sent to the parent/guardian at the beginning of the suspension period.
- (3) The Principal may extend the suspension of a pupil for not more than an additional FIVE college days at a time. Written notification of the extension must be sent to the parent/guardian at the beginning of the suspension period.

Exceptional Circumstances

Where a situation arises which causes grave concern to the Principal because of the unacceptable behaviour of a student, the Principal may suspend the student immediately for a period of not more than FIVE college days and the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be so informed.

Should it be necessary to send the student home immediately, the parents will be contacted by telephone and asked to come to the school, where the pupil will be placed into the care of his/her parent/guardian to whom written notification of the suspension will be given.

GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION

- (1) Only the Principal may suspend a student from the college
- (2) When a student is suspended from the college, whether in normal or exceptional circumstances, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be notified in writing as soon as possible. The letter must inform the parent(s)/guardian(s):
 - (i) of the reasons for the suspension;
 - (ii) of the period of the suspension;
 - (iii) that the student will be regarded as being in the care of the parent(s)/guardian(s) from the end of the college day on which the suspension occurs, or in exceptional circumstances when collected by, or taken to, the parent/guardian, until such time as the suspension expires; and
 - (iv) to invite the parent(s)/guardian(s) to visit the college to discuss the suspension with the principal. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors may attend this meeting and will if requested by parents or Principal. This meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s) should normally take place during normal college hours within 5 days of the receipt of the letter
- (3) Where the parent(s)/guardian(s) have visited the college, the Principal must inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) either
 - (i) of the date on which the pupil may return to college and the agreement that has been reached with the parent(s)/guardian(s)or if the period of suspension is to be extended by the Principal or Board of Governors,
 - (ii) of the reasons for the extension, the requirement that the student must return at the end of the stated time and the agreement that has been reached with the parents(s)/guardian(s).
- (4) Where the parent(s)/guardian(s) has/have not visited the college within a specified period, the Principal must ensure they are informed of his/her decision in terms of the alternatives set out in point (3) above.

(5) The Principal must not extend a period of suspension except with the prior approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Governors unless the situation of point (4) above has arisen. Notification of the reasons for the exclusion and the period of extension must be given to:

- (i) the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the pupil; and
- (ii) the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

(6) Acceptable reasons for extending a period of suspension would include: -

- (i) Parents have failed to enter into proper consultation with the college;
- (ii) Discussion with educational psychologist, the Educational Welfare Officer and/or other agencies would be facilitated;
- (iii) permanent exclusion was being considered;
- (iv) where the return of the student concerned would pose serious problems of organisation and discipline within the college.

(7) A student may be suspended from college for not more than 45 college days in anyone academic year.

Permanent Exclusion

The Board of Governors recognises that, in coping with children with serious behavioural problems, there are sanctions, strategies and options available to the college.

Prior to considering a case for permanent exclusion from the college, the Board of Governors would want to be satisfied that all reasonable options and alternative strategies have been exhausted in coping with serious behavioural problems.

The Board of Governors is the only body that can authorise permanent exclusion of a student from the college.

The Principal must submit a written report to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors on any student under consideration of expulsion from the college.

When the exclusion of a student is to be considered it may only be:

- (1) after he/she has first served a period of suspension;
- (2) after there has been consultation between the Principal, the parent(s)/guardian(s), an officer of the NEELB and the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

This consultation must include discussion about the future provision of suitable education for the student concerned. The parents may submit written evidence.

Any neglect or refusal on the part of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to take part in such consultations shall not prevent a pupil being expelled from the college.

General Procedures for Permanent Exclusion

- (1) In considering exclusion of a pupil the Board of Governors should consider the following:
 - (a) records of the students behaviour including the steps taken by the college at each stage;
 - (b) a record of any sanctions used and/or alternative strategies adopted;
 - (c) any records, if available, from the school or college previously attended by the student;
 - (d) correspondence with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and other agencies, if available,
 - (e) advice and/or support and/or evidence from the board's Chief Education Welfare Officer, its Educational Psychology Service and other appropriate agencies such as the Probationary Service, if available.
- (2) The Principal must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing of the action which is being proposed and give them the opportunity for consultation.
- (3) The Board of Governors shall convene within 10 college days of a request from the Principal a special meeting to consider the report from
 - (i) the Principal via Chairperson of the Board of Governors;
 - (ii) the submission from the parent/ s)/guardian(s) who has been invited to the meeting and who has been informed in advance of the purpose of the meeting. The parents may present written and oral evidence and bring with them a representative. If the representative is to be there in a legal capacity, the college must be informed 5 college days prior to the meeting. Failure to disclose this information may result in the meeting being suspended.
- (4) The Board of Governors, as part of its deliberations, must:
 - (i) consider all documentary evidence presented by the college and any other appropriate source relating to the past history and misconduct of the pupil;

(5) The Board of Governors, after the parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Principal have left the meeting, at the conclusion of its deliberations, must determine:

- (i) that the exclusion should be effected; or
- (ii) that the student should be retained in the college; or
- (iii) that some other arrangement should be made for the continued education of the students.

(6) The college must, as soon as practicable, in writing, inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of its decision.

- (i) Where a student has been permanently excluded from the college the Principal shall immediately give written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student of his/her right to appeal the decision to exclude the student, of the time limit set for lodging an appeal and where the appeal may be lodged.
- (ii) Notice of an intention to make a formal appeal must be made within 10 college days of the receipt of the letter from the college setting out the decision to expel the student from the college.
- (iii) Inform the Local Area Board of its decision.