



LATHALLAN SCHOOL

FORMAL SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION POLICY

Definitions:

Suspension is defined by the school as a period of time when a pupil is not allowed to be in school as a result of actions that break school rules in a way that is deemed as a serious misdemeanour. This length of time will typically vary from 1 to 5 days depending upon the seriousness of the activity but is not limited to this. If appropriate and in consultation with parents, pupils may be asked to stay at home informally as a result of transgressions. It is likely that conditions of return will be placed upon the pupil (known as a Pastoral Care Plan) but discussed with parents and the pupil concerned before return.

Expulsion is defined by the school as a permanent exclusion from the school and will only occur when other avenues have been explored. This is the end of the discipline line barring a right to appeal to the school board (see below).

Criteria:

Suspension will be imposed for a variety of serious misdemeanours. These will include activities such as serious incidents of bullying either one off or lower level repeat offences that have been previously documented, theft, damage to property, harassment on grounds of race or sexual orientation or other serious breaches of the school rules. Parents are alerted to these rules each year and those pupils who board are alerted to their separate conditions regularly.

Expulsion may occur when a pupil has already been suspended for a similarly serious offence and thus broken the terms of their return, a one off misdemeanour that is deemed by the Headmaster to be so serious that retention of the pupil would endanger others (e.g., use of violence, sexual assault), or undermine the authority of the school rules (e.g. use of drugs/alcohol – see drugs and alcohol policy).

Investigation

This will be based on initial evidence gathered by the teacher(s) who will then pass on their findings to a member of the SLT or the Headmaster. Relevant interviews will then be conducted with pupils and with external agencies involved if deemed appropriate. The school's Child Protection Policy plays a vital role in all that is done. While it is preferable to have a second adult present during interviews, due to a number of factors, it may be necessary for the Headmaster and other members of the teaching staff to speak to pupils without another adult present.

Hearing (Expulsions)

Once the information gathering stage has been completed, the next step is to hold a hearing. The hearing will generally be heard by the Headmaster and attended by the pupil, parents, a note taker and any other person required. If this route is pursued evidence will be circulated to all parties in good time. *The above process may be pertinent for some cases of suspension, although through clear communication this may not be necessary or achievable for the parents of full boarders. However, their wishes will be listened to.*

Decision

Any decision on suspension or expulsion will take the following into account:

- that each case will be considered fairly, taking into account the individual circumstances
- the school's duty of care to safeguard the welfare of the pupil concerned and that of other pupils in the school
- take into account the pupil's previous record of good behaviour/misbehaviour
- other relevant circumstances (e.g. domestic situation, harassment at school)
- Parents will be informed as soon as possible of a decision to suspend or expel by appointment and arrangements for studying at home made. This will be supported by written confirmation as soon as possible.
- Parents will be consulted on the terms of any return to school by appointment.

Questions

Any questions regarding the policy may be addressed to the Headmaster.

Right to Appeal

If any parent wishes to appeal against a decision to expel they can do so in writing to the school board within 5 working days of an expulsion being imposed and should state their grounds for appeal. The board will form an appeals panel of at least 3 members who have not been involved in the original decision and would look to meet within a week of receiving the appeal and give their verdict in writing to parents thereafter. Correspondence to the board can be made confidentially through the school office.