

THE MOUNT SCHOOL

SUSPENSION AND PERMANENT EXCLUSION POLICY

2026–2027

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Policy writer	Euan Burton-Smith
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This policy replaces the 2025–2026 version, which was based on the statutory exclusion regime for maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units. The Mount is an independent school and therefore operates its own published suspension and permanent exclusion procedure within its contractual, safeguarding, equality and regulatory obligations.

1. Aims

- ensure suspension and permanent exclusion are used fairly, consistently and only where justified;
- protect the safety, welfare and education of all pupils;
- ensure pupils and parents understand the School's procedure and review/complaints routes;
- avoid informal, hidden or unlawful removal from education;
- identify and address safeguarding, SEND, disability, health, mental-health and other underlying needs;
- ensure serious sanctions are recorded and subject to appropriate leadership/proprietor oversight; and
- support successful reintegration following suspension.

Permanent exclusion is a serious sanction and will normally be used only where the Headteacher concludes that continued attendance is no longer compatible with the safety, welfare, discipline or effective education of the School community, having considered the individual circumstances and reasonable alternatives.

2. Status of this policy and legal framework

The 2025–2026 policy stated that The Mount would follow the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012 and the DfE statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units. That was not the correct legal basis for The Mount.

The DfE Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance, updated in July 2026, expressly states that it does not apply to independent schools other than academies, which have separate suspension and permanent exclusion procedures. The Mount will nevertheless have regard to relevant principles in that guidance as useful good practice where they are compatible with independent-school law and the School's contractual arrangements.

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, particularly the requirement for a written behaviour policy setting out sanctions, effective implementation and records of sanctions for serious misbehaviour;
- DfE Independent School Standards guidance, April 2026;
- Equality Act 2010, including disability discrimination and reasonable-adjustment duties;
- Children and Families Act 2014 and applicable SEND duties;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance, July 2026;
- the School's parent contract/terms and conditions, Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy, SEND Policy, Attendance Policy and Complaints Procedure; and
- Ofsted's September 2026 non-association independent-school inspection framework and definition of off-rolling.

The maintained-school statutory timetable for governing-board reinstatement meetings, independent review panels, sixth-day provision and local-authority exclusion duties is therefore not reproduced as if legally binding on The Mount.

3. Definitions

3.1 Suspension

A suspension is a formal, temporary disciplinary sanction under this policy during which a pupil remains on The Mount's admission register but is not permitted to attend the School for the specified period. It was previously commonly called a fixed-term exclusion.

3.2 Permanent exclusion

Permanent exclusion is the formal termination of a pupil's place on disciplinary grounds under this policy and the School's contractual arrangements. The pupil's name will be removed from the admission register only when a lawful ground for deletion under the 2024 Pupil Registration Regulations applies and the required local-authority return has been made.

3.3 Internal removal

Internal removal is a short-term arrangement in which a pupil remains on site but is educated separately from their normal class. It is not a suspension and will be used only where reasonable, supervised and educationally purposeful.

3.4 Alternative provision

Alternative provision is education arranged away from the School site. The School will not describe a unilateral behavioural placement as an 'off-site direction' carrying the maintained-school statutory meaning. Any alternative provision will have a clear lawful/contractual basis, parental involvement where required, safeguarding due diligence, attendance arrangements and regular review.

3.5 Managed move

A managed move is a voluntary, planned transfer to another school agreed with the parents and receiving school. It must be in the pupil's best interests and must not be used to pressure a family to leave.

3.6 Off-rolling

For inspection purposes, off-rolling occurs where leaders act in the interests of the School rather than the pupil by, for example, removing a pupil from roll without a formal permanent exclusion in line with the published behaviour policy and parent contract; preventing normal attendance without a suspension; placing a pupil on a behavioural part-time timetable without parental consent; or pressuring parents to withdraw.

4. Principles governing serious disciplinary sanctions

- Decisions will be based on the civil standard of proof: whether, on the balance of probabilities, the behaviour occurred.
- The Headteacher will consider the seriousness and context of the behaviour, the pupil's age and maturity, previous conduct and support, any provocation, safeguarding information, SEND/disability, health or mental-health needs and the impact on others.
- A pupil will be given an age-appropriate opportunity to explain what happened before a final decision, unless immediate safety requires an interim response first.
- The School will take reasonable steps to obtain relevant evidence and will avoid prejudicing a police or safeguarding investigation.
- Sanctions will not discriminate unlawfully and reasonable adjustments will be considered.
- The School will not permanently exclude solely because it believes it cannot meet a pupil's SEND, because of poor academic attainment or because a pupil/parent has failed to attend a reintegration meeting.
- Where behaviour may be a manifestation of unmet need, this will be considered, but SEND or safeguarding vulnerability does not prevent the School taking proportionate action where behaviour creates serious risk.
- Suspension or permanent exclusion will not be used simply to improve attendance or inspection data.

5. Behaviour that may lead to suspension or permanent exclusion

The School's Behaviour Policy identifies expected standards and sanctions. Suspension may be appropriate for serious or repeated breaches. Permanent exclusion may be considered for a serious single incident or persistent serious misconduct where continued attendance is judged untenable.

- serious physical assault or violence;
- serious or repeated threats, intimidation or bullying;
- sexual violence, sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour;
- possession, use or threat of use of a weapon or prohibited dangerous item;
- serious discriminatory abuse, including racist, homophobic, biphobic, sexist, misogynistic, misandrist or disability-related abuse;
- serious online abuse, image-based abuse or misuse of technology;
- criminal exploitation, drug/alcohol-related misconduct or other serious unlawful behaviour;
- serious damage, theft or deliberate risk to safety;
- persistent disruptive behaviour following appropriate support/intervention; or

- serious behaviour outside School where there is a sufficient connection to pupils, staff, the School's reputation, safeguarding or orderly operation.

This list is illustrative, not exhaustive. The sanction must always be justified by the facts of the individual case.

6. Safeguarding before and during the decision

A disciplinary incident may also be a safeguarding incident. Where behaviour suggests abuse, neglect, exploitation, child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, serious violence, weapon risk, mental-health crisis or other safeguarding concern, the DSL must be involved promptly.

The School will consider the needs and safety of the pupil harmed, the pupil alleged to have caused harm and other pupils. Safeguarding referrals, risk assessments and safety/support plans may be required independently of the disciplinary outcome.

The School will not delay necessary safeguarding action merely because disciplinary evidence is still being gathered. Equally, a safeguarding referral does not automatically determine the disciplinary sanction.

7. SEND, disability and health

Before a serious sanction, the Headteacher will consider whether SEND, disability, communication difficulty, trauma, medical needs or mental ill-health are relevant; what support and reasonable adjustments have been provided; whether further adjustments are practicable; and whether the proposed sanction would amount to unlawful discrimination.

The SENDCO will be consulted where appropriate. Where a pupil has an EHC plan, the School will liaise with the local authority and parents and consider whether an urgent review or other statutory action is needed.

The School will not use exclusion as a substitute for making reasonable adjustments or obtaining appropriate SEND support. However, reasonable adjustment does not require the School to tolerate conduct that creates an unacceptable risk where proportionate alternatives cannot adequately manage that risk.

8. Authority to suspend or permanently exclude

The Headteacher normally makes the decision to suspend or permanently exclude. In the Headteacher's absence, the person formally acting as Headteacher may make the decision where necessary.

The Director/Proprietor does not make the initial disciplinary finding where they may later be required to review the decision. This separation supports fairness and effective oversight.

The School will not send a pupil home as an informal disciplinary measure. If a pupil is required to leave site because of misconduct, the action will be recorded under the appropriate formal procedure.

9. Immediate removal from a situation

Where a pupil presents an immediate risk, staff may remove the pupil from a classroom/activity, use reasonable force where lawful and necessary, or arrange close supervision in a safe space. Such immediate safety action is not automatically a suspension.

Restrictive intervention, including use of force or seclusion, will be recorded and reported in accordance with the School's separate procedures and the Independent School Standards applying from 2026.

10. Decision-making process

- establish the alleged facts and gather proportionate evidence;
- hear the pupil's account in an age-appropriate way;
- consider witness accounts and relevant records;
- consider safeguarding and whether DSL action is required;

- consider SEND, disability, health, reasonable adjustments and equality;
- consider previous behaviour, support and interventions;
- consider the impact and safety of other pupils/staff;
- consider alternatives to exclusion and whether they can manage the risk;
- decide whether the allegation is established on the balance of probabilities; and
- record the reasons for the sanction and why it is proportionate.

Where police or social care are involved, the School may need to adapt the timing or scope of its enquiries. It will seek advice where necessary but is not required to await the outcome of criminal proceedings before making a school disciplinary decision, provided doing so is fair and does not prejudice external action.

11. Suspension

A suspension will be for a specified period and will be recorded formally. The School will avoid open-ended suspensions.

The maintained-school statutory maximum of 45 school days in an academic year is not stated as a legal limit for The Mount. Nevertheless, repeated or lengthy suspension will trigger senior review because it may indicate that the pupil's needs, placement or risk-management arrangements require a different response.

The Headteacher may cancel a suspension where new information or exceptional circumstances justify this. Parents will be informed promptly and the pupil returned without unnecessary delay. The record will show that the decision was cancelled and why.

12. Notification to parents following suspension

Parents will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable and will receive written confirmation setting out:

- the reason for suspension and relevant factual basis;
- the start and end date/time;
- arrangements for education/work during the suspension;
- expectations for contact and supervision;
- the proposed reintegration arrangements;
- how the parent may make representations or request review under this policy; and
- any safeguarding or practical arrangements that the parent needs to know.

The School will not require immediate collection where this would create an unsafe arrangement. The pupil will remain appropriately supervised until safe handover.

13. Education during suspension

The Mount will take reasonable steps to minimise educational disruption during suspension. Appropriate, achievable work will normally be provided and arrangements made for submission/feedback, taking account of the pupil's age, SEND and access to technology.

The maintained-school statutory rule requiring governing bodies to arrange sixth-day education does not apply to The Mount as an independent school. The School will nevertheless review longer suspensions carefully and consider whether additional educational provision is necessary and practicable.

Remote education must not be used as an informal substitute for a formal suspension or as a way of keeping a pupil off site for behaviour reasons without following this policy.

14. Reintegration after suspension

The School will plan reintegration so that the pupil can return successfully. A reintegration meeting will normally be offered, but return to School will not be made conditional on the pupil or parent attending such a meeting.

- review the incident and what has been learned;
- hear the pupil's perspective;

- clarify expectations and relationships;
- identify pastoral, SEND or safeguarding support;
- agree any reasonable adjustments or safety plan;
- consider restorative work where safe and appropriate;
- identify a trusted adult/check-in arrangement; and
- set review points where concerns are ongoing.

The School will not use part-time attendance as a behaviour sanction following suspension. Any temporary part-time timetable must meet the exceptional criteria in the Attendance Policy and cannot be imposed unilaterally to keep a pupil away from School.

15. Permanent exclusion

Permanent exclusion is reserved for the most serious circumstances. The Headteacher will consider whether:

- there has been a serious breach or persistent serious breaches of the Behaviour Policy;
- the conduct and surrounding circumstances are established on the balance of probabilities;
- continued attendance would create an unacceptable impact on safety, welfare, discipline or education;
- reasonable support, adjustments and alternatives have been considered;
- safeguarding and SEND implications have been properly addressed; and
- permanent exclusion is proportionate in all the circumstances.

The decision will be recorded in detail. The School will distinguish disciplinary permanent exclusion from termination of a nursery/EYFS placement or contractual withdrawal for a non-disciplinary reason; the latter requires its own lawful, fair and non-discriminatory process.

16. Permanent exclusion notification and transition

Parents will be informed promptly in writing of the decision, reasons, effective date, review route and any contractual consequences.

The School will cooperate with parents, the local authority and receiving education provider to support continuity of education and safeguarding. Relevant safeguarding and SEND information will be transferred securely in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

The maintained-school statutory duty on the local authority to arrange sixth-day education following a permanent exclusion is not presented in this policy as automatically applying to an independent-school exclusion. The School will notify and work with the relevant local authority where a compulsory-school-age child may otherwise be without suitable education or where statutory notification/safeguarding duties require this.

17. Review by the Director / Proprietor

A parent may request a review of a suspension or permanent exclusion by the Director/Proprietor. This is The Mount's internal review mechanism; it is not the statutory governing-board review procedure that applies to maintained schools and academies.

A request should normally be made in writing within 10 school days of the written decision, explaining the grounds of challenge. The Director may extend this where fairness requires.

The Director will consider the material relied upon by the Headteacher, the pupil/parent representations, procedural fairness, safeguarding, SEND/equality considerations, proportionality and whether the decision was consistent with published School policy and contractual arrangements.

The Director may uphold the decision, overturn/cancel it, vary a suspension where appropriate, or require the Headteacher to reconsider specified matters. The outcome and reasons will be given in writing.

Where the Director has been directly involved in the underlying incident or has another material conflict, the School will arrange an appropriately independent person/panel to conduct the review so far as practicable.

18. Complaints and external rights

Following the internal review, a parent may use the School's Complaints Procedure where they allege that the School failed to follow its published procedure, acted unfairly or breached another applicable obligation. The complaints process is not intended simply to rehear the disciplinary merits indefinitely.

The statutory independent review panel procedure described in maintained-school exclusion guidance does not apply to The Mount. The 2025 policy's independent-review-panel section and SEN-expert panel procedure have therefore been removed.

Nothing in this policy removes any external legal right a parent or pupil may have, including rights under the Equality Act 2010. The School will provide information about relevant external routes where required.

19. Admission register and local-authority notification

A permanently excluded pupil will not be deleted from the admission register simply because the Headteacher has announced the decision. Deletion must be made under a ground permitted by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and any required local-authority notification must be completed.

The School will record attendance correctly while a pupil remains on roll. It will not automatically use the maintained-school exclusion code or the old code descriptions from the 2025 policy without checking the current 2024 Regulations and MIS code set.

Where the pupil leaves The Mount, safeguarding records will be transferred separately and securely to the new setting, normally within the KCSIE transfer timescales, with relevant risk/context shared in advance where necessary for safety.

20. Off-rolling and prohibited informal practices

- sending a pupil home for disciplinary reasons without recording a formal suspension;
- repeatedly asking a parent to keep a pupil at home informally;
- placing a pupil on a part-time timetable for behaviour reasons without a lawful/appropriate basis and parental agreement;
- pressuring parents to withdraw or home educate to avoid permanent exclusion;
- withholding normal attendance while keeping the pupil on roll without following the published procedure;
- removing a pupil from roll outside the statutory registration grounds; or
- using remote education as a hidden exclusion.

Ofsted's September 2026 inspection information defines off-rolling by reference to whether leaders act in the interests of the School rather than the pupil and whether removal/non-attendance is consistent with the published behaviour policy and contractual arrangements. The School will scrutinise unusual pupil movement and patterns of suspension accordingly.

21. Alternative provision and managed moves

Alternative provision will be used only where it is suitable for the pupil and the School has completed safeguarding and quality due diligence. The Mount retains safeguarding responsibility for pupils it places in alternative provision and will monitor attendance, welfare, progress and the effectiveness of the placement.

A managed move must be voluntary, transparent and in the pupil's best interests. Parents and the receiving school must agree. A managed move must not be used as a threat or to conceal a permanent exclusion.

22. Looked-after children, children with social workers and other vulnerable pupils

Where a pupil is looked after, previously looked after, has a social worker or is otherwise known to safeguarding services, the School will involve the relevant professional promptly when suspension/permanent exclusion is being considered and will consider the pupil's education, safeguarding and placement stability.

For looked-after children, the Designated Teacher/appropriate School lead will work with the social worker, carers and virtual-school arrangements as applicable. Permanent exclusion of a vulnerable pupil requires particularly careful consideration of alternatives and transition planning.

23. Nursery and EYFS placements

This policy's disciplinary principles apply to children in the School-based EYFS where age-appropriate. However, nursery placement decisions require additional care because very young children's behaviour is strongly developmental and may indicate unmet SEND, communication, attachment, health or safeguarding needs.

The School will not terminate an EYFS/nursery placement simply because a child is disabled or has SEND that is challenging to support. Before considering termination or a significant reduction in attendance, leaders will consider reasonable adjustments, graduated SEND support, risk assessment, external professional advice, safeguarding, equality duties and engagement with parents/local authority as relevant.

Where immediate risk requires temporary non-attendance, the School will document the safeguarding/risk basis, review the arrangement promptly and avoid allowing a temporary safety measure to become an unreviewed informal exclusion.

Any contractual termination of a nursery place for non-disciplinary reasons must be distinguished from permanent exclusion and follow the applicable parent contract, Admissions/SEND arrangements, Equality Act duties and complaints process.

24. Recording and monitoring

The School will keep a record of serious disciplinary sanctions as required by the Independent School Standards. Suspension and permanent exclusion records will include the behaviour, evidence considered, decision, duration/outcome, safeguarding/SEND/equality considerations, parent communication, education arrangements and reintegration/review.

- number, duration and reasons for suspensions;
- repeat suspensions and escalation;
- permanent exclusions and pupil movement;
- patterns by SEND/disability and other relevant pupil characteristics;
- whether particular pupils/groups are disproportionately sanctioned;
- links with attendance, safeguarding and child-on-child incidents;
- use of alternative provision and managed moves;
- whether support/interventions were timely and effective;
- off-rolling indicators; and
- whether policy and actual practice match.

The Director will review and challenge serious-sanction data and individual permanent exclusions as part of governance oversight.

25. Inspection readiness

Leaders will be able to explain to Ofsted and ISI why individual pupils were suspended or permanently excluded, what support preceded the decision, how SEND/equality/safeguarding were considered, what happened to the pupil's education, and whether any unusual movement from roll was in the pupil's interests and consistent with policy/contract.

The School will not rely on the existence of this policy alone; inspectors may sample case records, attendance, pupil movement, alternative provision, safeguarding information and serious-sanction records.

26. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and Director will review the operation of this policy at least annually and after any permanent exclusion, significant safeguarding incident, complaint finding, relevant legal/guidance change or inspection learning.

The policy will remain aligned with the Behaviour, Safeguarding, SEND, Attendance, Admissions and Complaints policies and with the School's parent contract/terms and conditions.

Appendix A – Headteacher serious-sanction decision record

Pupil / year group / date:

Incident/allegation:

Evidence considered:

Pupil account:

Finding on balance of probabilities:

Impact/risk to others:

Safeguarding considerations / DSL involvement:

SEND/disability/health/mental-health considerations:

Reasonable adjustments considered:

Previous support/interventions:

Alternatives considered:

Decision and duration/effective date:

Why sanction is proportionate:

Education arrangements:

Parent notification:

Reintegration / transition plan:

Review rights explained:

Headteacher signature/date:

Appendix B – Reintegration checklist

- Pupil welcomed back without public shaming.
- Pupil's account and current wellbeing checked.
- Any victim/other pupil safety plan reviewed.
- Expectations restated clearly.
- SEND/medical/mental-health adjustments reviewed.
- Trusted adult/check-in agreed.
- Academic work/catch-up considered.
- Restorative work considered only where safe and appropriate.
- Parent communication completed.
- Review date and responsible staff member recorded.

Appendix C – Independent-school legal distinction: staff guide

Do	Do not
Use The Mount's published Behaviour and Suspension/Permanent Exclusion procedures.	Say the 2012 maintained-school exclusion regulations legally govern The Mount.

Record any disciplinary sending-home as a formal sanction where applicable.	Send a pupil home informally.
Consider safeguarding, SEND, disability and reasonable adjustments.	Exclude because the School simply feels unable to support SEND.
Offer the Mount internal review route and Complaints Procedure.	Promise a statutory governing-board/independent review panel process that does not apply.
Check current registration rules before removing a pupil from roll.	Delete a pupil from roll merely because permanent exclusion has been decided.
Use alternative provision only with safeguarding due diligence and review.	Use remote/AP/part-time attendance to hide an exclusion.
Work with the LA where a child may otherwise be without suitable education.	Assume the maintained-school sixth-day LA duty automatically applies to a Mount exclusion.