# EXCLUSION POLICY

Safety, fair decisions and support for students

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| ORGANISATION | SKAPE North East Ltd | POLICY REFERENCE | P03 |
| UPDATED | 09 November 2026 | NEXT SCHEDULED REVIEW | 09 November 2027 |
| POLICY OWNER | Centre Manager | RELATED POLICY | Behaviour Policy |

## 01 BACKGROUND

This policy deals with the policy and practice which informs SKAPE's use of exclusion. It is underpinned by the shared commitment of all members of SKAPE's community to achieve two important aims:

1. The first is to ensure the safety and well-being of all members of SKAPE community, and to maintain an appropriate education environment in which all can learn and succeed;

2. The second is to realise the aim of reducing the need to use exclusion as a sanction.

SKAPE is a non-school alternative provision. In this policy, exclusion means a temporary pause in attendance at SKAPE or the ending of a SKAPE placement under the commissioning arrangements. It does not mean a statutory suspension or permanent exclusion from the student's registered school. Any such school decision remains with the headteacher or principal under the applicable procedures. The registered school or commissioning local authority retains responsibility for arranging the student's education; a placement pause or ending must be coordinated with the commissioner and must not be used as an informal school exclusion.

## 02 INTRODUCTION

The decision to exclude a student will be taken in the following circumstances:

(a) In response to a serious breach of SKAPE's Behaviour Policy

(b) If allowing the student to remain at SKAPE would seriously harm the education or welfare of other persons or the student him/herself/themself at SKAPE.

Exclusion is an extreme sanction and is only administered by the Centre Manager. Exclusion, whether for a fixed term or permanent, may be used for any of the following, all of which constitute examples of unacceptable conduct, and are infringements of SKAPE's Behaviour Policy:

- Verbal abuse to staff and others
- Verbal abuse to students
- Physical abuse to/attack on staff
- Physical abuse to/attack on students
- Indecent behaviour
- Damage to property
- Misuse of illegal drugs
- Misuse of other substances
- Theft
- Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff
- Sexual abuse or assault
- Supplying an illegal drug
- Carrying an offensive weapon
- Arson
- Unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported and for which SKAPE's sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the student's behaviour.

Repeated disruptive behaviour that significantly affects the learning, safety or wellbeing of others, despite appropriate support, reasonable adjustments and behaviour interventions, will trigger a placement review. This may result in exclusion or the placement ending. The Centre Manager will make a proportionate decision in liaison with the registered school or commissioner, considering the student's needs, the support provided and the impact on others.

This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other situations where the Centre Manager makes the judgement that exclusion is an appropriate sanction.

At times the Centre Manager will decide not to use the extreme sanction of an exclusion but will decide that a Behaviour Support Plan should be drawn up to try to avoid the sanction of an exclusion in the future. This might be accompanied by an internal exclusion.

Any internal arrangement must provide suitable supervised education and support. It must not involve confining a student or preventing them from leaving a room; staff must follow the Behaviour and Positive Handling policies.

## 03 EXCLUSION PROCEDURE

Most exclusions are of a fixed term nature and are of short duration (usually between one and three days). Decisions about attendance at SKAPE will be made by the Centre Manager, following discussion with senior staff and in liaison with the registered school or commissioning local authority. Parents or carers and the commissioner will receive written reasons, the duration or end date, review arrangements and the agreed arrangements for the student's education and safeguarding. If a student is excluded on more than one occasion, SKAPE reserves the right to terminate the contractual placement agreement if the placement is clearly not working, following a review with the commissioner. (See Permanent Exclusion below.)

Where an immediate risk requires attendance to stop before a full review, staff will secure safe supervision and handover, inform the commissioner and parents or carers promptly, and arrange an urgent placement review. A student must not simply be sent home without safe arrangements. Any pause will be kept as short as necessary and reviewed with the commissioner.

A 'return to SKAPE' meeting will be held following the expiry of the fixed term exclusion and this will involve the Centre Manager and other staff where appropriate. During this meeting a Behaviour Support Plan may be drawn up, if appropriate, which will include a review date.

Records relating to exclusions will be stored confidentially. Decisions, evidence, reasons, support considered and commissioner discussions will be recorded and shared securely with those who need the information.

## 04 PERMANENT EXCLUSION

The decision to exclude a student permanently is a serious one.

For SKAPE, permanent exclusion means ending the SKAPE placement, not removing the student from the registered school's roll. The commissioner will be involved in planning a safe transition and continuity of education and support.

The first is a final, formal step in a concerted process for dealing with disciplinary offences following the use of a wide range of other strategies, which have been used without success. It is an acknowledgement that all available strategies have been exhausted and is used as a last resort. This would include persistent and defiant misbehaviour including bullying (which would include racist or homophobic bullying) or repeated possession and/or use of an illegal drug on SKAPE premises.

The second is where there are exceptional circumstances and it is not appropriate to implement other strategies and where it could be appropriate to permanently exclude a student for a first or 'one off' offence. These might include:

- Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff
- Sexual abuse or assault
- Supplying an illegal drug
- Carrying an offensive weapon (as defined in section 1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953, as amended).

- Arson
- Behaviour which poses a significant risk to the child's own safety.

SKAPE will involve the police for any relevant offences. These instances are not exhaustive but

indicate the severity of such offences and the fact that such behaviour seriously affects the discipline and well being of SKAPE.

## 05 GENERAL FACTORS SKAPE CONSIDERS BEFORE MAKING A DECISION TO EXCLUDE

Exclusion will not be imposed instantly unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of others at SKAPE or the student concerned. Before deciding whether to exclude a student either permanently or for a fixed period the Centre Manager/school staff will:

- Ensure appropriate investigations have been carried out
- Consider all the evidence available to support the allegations taking into account the Behaviour Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy
- Allow the student to give her/his/their version of events
- Explore the wider context, taking into consideration how much the incident may have been provoked (for example by bullying or by racial or sexual harassment).

If the Centre Manager, in liaison with the registered school or commissioner, is satisfied on the balance of probabilities that the student did what is alleged, a proportionate decision will be made under this policy and the Behaviour Policy. Exclusion is not automatic. The decision will consider the seriousness and impact of the incident, the risk of further harm, the student's age, understanding, SEND and other needs, reasonable adjustments, and support already in place. SKAPE will not continue a placement where risks to staff or students cannot be safely managed.

## 06 SAFEGUARDING AND SERIOUS INCIDENTS

Physical attacks on staff or students, serious or credible threats of violence, sexual violence, carrying an offensive weapon, arson and other serious incidents are unacceptable and will trigger an immediate placement review. Staff will act immediately to protect those at risk and inform the Centre Manager. Such incidents may result in exclusion or the placement ending, following the proportionate decision process above.

Exclusion or a placement ending must never replace a safeguarding response. Staff must report safeguarding concerns promptly to the DSL and follow SKAPE's Safeguarding Policy alongside the relevant commissioning school or local authority policy and agreed reporting arrangements. The commissioning school retains its overarching safeguarding responsibility; SKAPE retains its own responsibility to safeguard students in its care. Where the local authority commissions the placement, SKAPE will follow the authority's agreed safeguarding and placement oversight arrangements, involving the registered school where applicable.

The DSL will liaise promptly with the commissioner's DSL or designated safeguarding contact about serious incidents and safeguarding concerns, coordinate risk assessment and support for all students affected, and make referrals where required. Staff must not delay protective action or a safeguarding referral while waiting for a placement decision or commissioner response. Call 999 where there is immediate danger. Behaviour may indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation or unmet needs and must be considered in that context. Concerns about sexual harassment or sexual violence will be managed under the Safeguarding Policy, with support and protection for those affected.

## 07 RELATED POLICIES GUIDANCE AND REVIEW

Read alongside SKAPE's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy, No Bullying Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Positive Handling Policy and Complaints Policy. Parents or carers and students may raise concerns about a SKAPE placement decision through the Complaints Policy; this does not replace any rights relating to a separate decision by the registered school.

Guidance considered: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026; Arranging Alternative Provision: A Guide for Local Authorities and Schools (February 2025); and Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (effective 26 July 2026). School-specific exclusion powers and procedures are not conferred on SKAPE by this policy. The Centre Manager will review this policy annually, or sooner following relevant changes or significant incidents.

DfE guidance: www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2; www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision; www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions.

## 08 DOCUMENT REVISION HISTORY

| DATE | CHANGE | APPROVAL | REV. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 31/01/2023 | Initial policy | K. Watson | 01 |
| 31/01/2024 | Annual policy review | K. Watson | 02 |
| 02/02/2024 | Policy review- Updated guidelines | K. Watson | 03 |
| 07/02/2025 | Annual policy review | K. Watson | 04 |
| 01/03/2026 | Annual policy review | K. Watson | 05 |
| 09/11/2026 | SKAPE rebranding and format updated; safeguarding, AP placement decisions and Behaviour Policy alignment reviewed; current staffing structure updated.. | For approval | 06 |