

EMPOWERING FUTURES

EXCLUSIONS & SUSPENSIONS POLICY

Policy Owner / Director: Rhean White

Operational Manager: Rena Sparks

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Rhean White

Applies to:

All learners placed at Empowering Futures through Local Authority commissioning, school referral, or other agreed arrangements.

Review Cycle: Annually or sooner if statutory guidance changes

Policy Name	Exclusions and Suspensions
Site	Birmingham
Version	1.0
Approved By	Director / DSL
Date Reviewed & Confirmed	18 January 2026
Next Review Due	January 2027

1. INTRODUCTION

Empowering Futures is an independent Alternative Provision delivering commissioned, bespoke and vocational education for children and young people, many of whom present with SEND, SEMH needs, trauma histories, and complex vulnerabilities.

We recognise that exclusion from education can significantly increase safeguarding risk, including risks relating to:

- children missing education

- exploitation
- disengagement
- mental health deterioration
- escalation of behaviours

As such, exclusion is considered a **serious measure of last resort** and is only used where all reasonable strategies to support the learner have been exhausted, or where safety cannot be maintained.

This policy sets out how Empowering Futures manages suspensions, managed moves, and permanent withdrawal of placements in a manner that is:

- lawful
- proportionate
- safeguarding-led
- transparent
- compliant with Local Authority expectations

2. LEGAL AND STATUTORY CONTEXT

Although Empowering Futures is not a maintained school and is not bound by the statutory school exclusion regulations, this policy is informed by and aligned with:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)**
- **Children Act 1989 & 2004**
- **Education Act 2002**
- **SEND Code of Practice**
- **Local Authority Alternative Provision guidance**

Empowering Futures applies **equivalent safeguards** to those expected within maintained settings, recognising that Alternative Provision learners are often more vulnerable.

3. PRINCIPLES

The following principles underpin this policy:

- Exclusion is **not a behaviour-management strategy**
- Behaviour is understood within the context of **need, trauma and vulnerability**
- Decisions are made in the **best interests of the child**
- Safeguarding considerations take precedence over operational convenience
- Local Authorities and commissioning bodies are fully involved in decisions ●

All actions are **recorded, justified and reviewable**

4. TYPES OF EXCLUSION / REMOVAL FROM PROVISION

Empowering Futures recognises the following forms of exclusion or

removal: **4.1 Suspension (Fixed-Term Exclusion Equivalent)**

A short-term suspension from attending provision, used only where:

- there is a serious breach of behaviour expectations
- safety of the learner or others is compromised
- immediate de-escalation is required

Suspensions are:

- time-limited

- proportionate
- reviewed promptly
- agreed in consultation with the commissioning body

4.2 Managed Break or Reduced Attendance

In some circumstances, a **temporary managed break**, adjusted timetable or reduced attendance may be agreed as part of a **planned safeguarding or reintegration strategy**, not as a punitive measure.

This must:

- be time-limited
- be formally agreed with the Local Authority
- include safeguarding oversight
- not result in unlawful exclusion or CME

4.3 Permanent Withdrawal of Placement

Permanent withdrawal of a placement may be considered only where: •

Empowering Futures can no longer meet the learner's needs safely •

the placement presents an ongoing risk that cannot be mitigated

- all reasonable strategies have been exhausted
- continued placement would compromise safeguarding

Permanent withdrawal is **never immediate**, except in extreme safeguarding circumstances.

5. BEHAVIOURS THAT MAY LEAD TO EXCLUSION

CONSIDERATION

Behaviours that may trigger consideration include (not exhaustive):

- serious or persistent violence
- possession of weapons
- serious safeguarding incidents
- behaviour placing others at significant risk
- serious criminal behaviour
- repeated incidents despite intensive support

SEND, trauma, mental health needs and contextual factors are **always considered** before any decision.

6. SAFEGUARDING CONSIDERATIONS

Before any exclusion decision, Empowering Futures will consider:

- whether the behaviour indicates unmet need

- whether safeguarding thresholds are met
- whether the learner is at risk of harm
- whether exclusion would increase vulnerability
- whether Children's Social Care involvement is required

The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** must be involved in all exclusion decisions.

7. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

No learner will be excluded without:

1. A review of incident records and behaviour history
2. Consideration of reasonable adjustments and SEND needs

3. A safeguarding risk assessment
4. Consultation with the commissioning Local Authority
5. Senior leadership authorisation (Director / DSL)

Decisions are recorded with:

- rationale
- alternatives considered
- safeguarding considerations
- agreed next steps

8. NOTIFICATION AND RECORDING

Where a suspension or withdrawal is implemented:

- the commissioning body is notified immediately
- parents/carers are informed (unless unsafe)
- records are maintained securely
- attendance and CME implications are addressed
- safeguarding records are updated

Empowering Futures does **not** exclude learners informally or without documentation.

9. SUPPORT DURING SUSPENSION

During any suspension:

- safeguarding contact is maintained
- welfare checks are considered where appropriate
- reintegration planning begins immediately
- risk is reviewed prior to return

Suspensions are **not used to off-roll learners**.

10. REINTEGRATION FOLLOWING SUSPENSION

Where a learner returns:

- a reintegration meeting is held
- expectations and support strategies are reviewed
- risk management plans are updated
- behaviour support strategies are adjusted

The aim is always **successful reintegration**, not removal.

11. PERMANENT WITHDRAWAL PROCESS

Where permanent withdrawal is being considered:

- a multi-agency discussion takes place
- the Local Authority leads on alternative arrangements
- Empowering Futures supports transition planning
- safeguarding risks are escalated appropriately
- no learner is left without education due to unilateral action

Empowering Futures will not:

- off-roll learners
- withdraw placements without LA agreement
- create children missing education

12. CHILDREN WITH SEND / EHCPs

For learners with SEND or EHCPs:

- exclusion is a last resort
- reasonable adjustments are reviewed
- EHCP outcomes are considered
- SEND teams are consulted
- behaviour is viewed as communication

13. COMPLAINTS AND CHALLENGE

Parents/carers and Local Authorities may raise concerns

- through:
- commissioning review processes
 - formal complaint procedures

All exclusion decisions are subject to review and scrutiny.

14. MONITORING AND REVIEW

Empowering Futures monitors:

- frequency of exclusions
- patterns by need or cohort
- safeguarding outcomes
- equality impacts

This policy is reviewed annually or following significant incidents.

15. FINAL STATEMENT

Empowering Futures is committed to inclusion, safety, and positive outcomes. Exclusion is never used lightly and is always managed with **professional judgement, safeguarding oversight, and Local Authority partnership.**