



# Archdiocese of Westminster Education Service

*Dedicated to Lifelong Growth of the Whole Person in Faith*

## THE EXCLUSION OF PUPILS GUIDANCE FOR GOVERNING BODIES

Issued: May 2004

This guidance replaces *The Exclusion of Pupils from School; Guidance for the Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided Schools* published in December 1999 by the Westminster Diocese Education Service, which is now withdrawn.

The governing body of each school must agree a written statement of general principles (the *Discipline Policy*) that should include:

- The ethos of the school, offering a clear and defensible set of values and making clear the boundaries of acceptable behaviour;
- The school's moral code;
- Positive and constructive rules of conduct; and
- The rewards and punishments to be consistently applied.

Before making or revising its statement, the governing body must consult the headteacher and the parents and take account of comments made. The governing body must also have regard to guidance issued, from time to time, by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

The **headteacher** must draw up a school discipline policy which:

- Promotes, among pupils, self-discipline and a proper regard for authority;
- Encourages good behaviour and respect for others;
- Ensures that pupils' standard of behaviour is acceptable;
- Regulates pupils' conduct.

Our schools should be seeking to promote an inclusive culture and challenging values that seek to exclude pupils from the school community. This approach is particularly important in a Catholic school, where every member of the school community is of equal importance

in the eyes of God and all policies are set in an explicitly religious moral and spiritual context.

*Every member of a school or college community “possesses a basic dignity that comes from God” and is, therefore, worthy of respect. In Catholic education, we are challenged by Christ “to see his presence in our neighbour, especially the neighbour who suffers or who lacks what is essential to human flourishing”. That is why the poor and disadvantaged – in financial, social, academic or spiritual terms – must be our primary concern, so that they can live their lives to the full”.*

The Common Good in Education, 1997

The focus of the school’s behaviour policy should be on fostering good behaviour and avoiding the need to exclude a pupil; it should emphasise what needs to be done to help meet the needs of children who become disaffected at school. All schools are required to have in place policies and strategies to deal at an early stage with absence from school, bullying and disruptive behaviour. A hierarchy of sanctions is required in which permanent exclusion is viewed as a **last resort** and, when used, can be justified as such.

Detailed guidance on behaviour policies and the development of an inclusive school is published by the *DfES* in circular 10/99 *Social Inclusion: Pupil Support* which can be accessed at: [www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/guidanceonthelaw/10-99](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/guidanceonthelaw/10-99) Chapter 6 of this document gives detailed guidance on the legal requirements relating to the exclusion of a pupil and the procedures to be adopted. This section of the circular was amended in January 2003 and schools must have regard to the new guidance which can be accessed at: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/exclusion>

Further advice can also be obtained from the local education authority or from this department (Contact: Maureen Roe, Assistant Director, 020 7798 9005)

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