Park Lodge School

Exclusion Policy

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Introduction

School context

Park Lodge School is a highly specialist provision for young people admitted to Park Lodge Clinic, a Tier 4 CAMHS Eating Disorder Service. We are not a mainstream setting: our students present with complex needs that require education to be fully integrated into their clinical care and recovery. While most students have a primary diagnosis of an eating disorder or eating-related difficulty, many also experience co-occurring mental health conditions such as depression, OCD, or anxiety.

A significant feature of our student profile is disengagement from education prior to admission. Many have experienced long periods out of school, disrupted learning journeys, or strained relationships with education. Re-engagement is therefore central to our work. From admission, we build a detailed picture of each young person's educational history, health needs, and personal circumstances, enabling us to design personalised programmes that focus not only on academic progress but also on restoring confidence, rebuilding routines, and preparing students for their next steps.

Students are admitted and discharged throughout the year, with the average stay being 16–20 weeks, though some remain significantly longer depending on clinical needs. All placements are commissioned by home Local Authorities, who retain statutory responsibility for education. Close collaboration with families, home schools, and community teams ensures continuity of learning and a supported transition post-discharge.

The school operates within Park Lodge Hospital and is embedded in the work of the hospital's Multi-Disciplinary Team, including Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, and Nursing and Care staff. Education is not delivered in isolation but as a core part of recovery. Daily collaboration with clinical colleagues aligns learning with therapeutic progress so that barriers are understood holistically and education actively contributes to reintegration.

Our ethos is built on personalisation, flexibility, and partnership. We work at the intersection of health, education, and family life, ensuring every young person has the opportunity to re-engage with learning, develop resilience, and transition successfully back into their home, school, and wider community.

Ethos and Vision

At Park Lodge School, our ethos reflects the unique circumstances in which we work. We educate young people who are inpatients at Park Lodge Clinic, a Tier 4 CAMHS Eating Disorder Service. Education here is not an add-on: it is an essential strand of treatment and recovery. Everything we do is shaped by our commitment to each student's health, wellbeing, and future.

Our core values are expressed through the acronym HEALTH, which captures the spirit of our school:

- Hopeful Environment – We create a climate of optimism and possibility, helping young people to see beyond their immediate challenges and believe in their capacity to grow.
- Empathy and Understanding – We foster a community that listens, understands, and values every individual, ensuring students feel safe, seen, and supported.
- Achievement – We celebrate progress in all its forms. Academic success is important, but so too is confidence, resilience, and re-engagement with learning.
- Lifelong Learning – We model curiosity and growth, encouraging students and staff to continue developing their skills, knowledge, and aspirations.
- Therapeutic Support – Working hand-in-hand with the hospital's clinical team, we integrate therapeutic strategies into daily learning, ensuring education is part of the recovery journey.
- Holistic Wellness – We see the whole child: their health, their learning, their family, and their future. Our goal is to equip students for a successful return to education, home, and community life.

These values underpin our ethos and define our purpose. Park Lodge is a place where education and recovery go hand in hand, where barriers are met with creativity and compassion, and where every young person is given the chance to rediscover their voice, their talents, and their future.

Our vision is that every young person leaves Park Lodge having re-engaged with education, equipped with renewed confidence, resilience, and the skills to thrive in life beyond the hospital.

Statement of Intent

Exclusion is not part of our standard behaviour management practice. Park Lodge School prioritises proactive, therapeutic, and collaborative approaches to behaviour and safety. Formal exclusion is considered only in exceptional circumstances, when risks cannot be safely managed despite comprehensive multi-disciplinary support.

Principles

- Inclusive education is central: every effort is made to maintain engagement and minimise disruption to learning.
- Behavioural challenges are managed through risk-informed, trauma-sensitive planning in partnership with the MDT, not punishment.
- Education continues regardless of setting, tailored to clinical presentation and individual needs.
- Staff approach behaviour with empathy, understanding triggers, and providing consistent, structured support.

Temporary Withdrawal from School Setting

In certain circumstances, a young person may be temporarily withdrawn from the classroom or school environment:

- This is a clinical and educational decision, made collaboratively with the MDT, parents/carers, and where appropriate, the Advisory Board.
- Temporary withdrawal is not a formal exclusion but a measure to manage significant and ongoing safety risks to the student or others.
- During withdrawal, students continue to receive high-quality education and therapeutic support, delivered by teaching or support staff within the ward or alternative safe space.
- Reintegration is carefully planned and guided by risk assessment and MDT discussion, prioritising the student's safety and confidence.

Formal Exclusion (Exceptional Circumstances Only)

While every effort is made to avoid formal exclusion, Park Lodge School reserves the right to exclude a student in line with DfE guidance if:

- The student persistently fails to engage with agreed behaviour expectations despite extensive, personalised support; or
- Their presence presents an unmanageable risk to the safety of themselves or others.

Formal exclusion will only occur:

- As a last resort, after all alternative strategies have been implemented;
- Following a comprehensive review of the student's clinical needs, risk, and best interests;
- In consultation with the MDT, parents/carers, and the Advisory Board.

Support, Reintegration, and Recovery

- Proactive, trauma-informed interventions are used to prevent escalation of challenging behaviours.
- Any student returning to the school environment after withdrawal or exclusion receives a bespoke reintegration plan, ensuring continuity of education, emotional support, and safety.
- Reintegration is gradual, personalised, and closely monitored, with ongoing collaboration between education and clinical teams.
- The focus is on restoring engagement, confidence, and wellbeing, supporting long-term educational and therapeutic outcomes.

Summary

This policy ensures that Park Lodge School remains inclusive, trauma-informed, and SEMH-sensitive, providing a clear, safe, and legally compliant framework for managing exceptional behavioural challenges. Exclusion is extremely rare and always carefully managed in partnership with the MDT and the student's wider support network.