



Academic support and disciplinary process

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Woodhouse College's academic support and disciplinary process

Process overview

Most students fare well at the College and this process will not affect them. However, challenging courses and high expectations require a high level of sustained commitment from students whilst being part of a busy, diverse community demands good standards of behaviour. This process is aimed at providing a framework for students to improve their academic progress, attendance and behaviour when they fall short of what is required of them. It does this by stating the issue(s) clearly, setting explicit targets, reviewing progress in relation to the targets and deciding on whether the improvement has been sufficient. The main features of the process are summarised below.

Key features of the process:

- It separates academic, attendance and behavioural issues and treats them differently. Punctuality is dealt with in the same way as attendance.
- Each issue forms a strand in the process and has a concern stage (zero), then four further stages if targets are not met for each of the three strands.
- The stages 1 to 4 are intended to communicate to the student, parents, carers and staff that there is an escalating level of concern.
- The whole process is summarised in the diagram on the last page.
- Students can be on more than one strand of the system simultaneously at the same or different levels
- The process involves and is the responsibility of academic and pastoral staff.
- The stage a student is at is 'visible' to students and their parents who can see the nature of the issues on the dashboard. Communicating with parents is a key part of the process
- Whilst often, the contract is issued following a discussion with the student, this is not always possible such as when attendance is the issue, or where there is a need to document the situation straightaway.
- At each stage, there are four steps: issues should be discussed and made clear, improvement targets should be set, progress against those targets is reviewed and then a decision is made about what then needs to happen
- Students ascend the stages if they do not meet their targets and descend the stages if they do by improving their attendance and academic performance. This provides an incentive to improve which is, of course, the focus.
- Sometimes it can be clear that a student has not met their targets prior to the review date. In these instances, staff can escalate a student to the next stage without waiting for the entire review period to lapse. This is often in the student's interest because it can bring about improvement sooner than it might otherwise occur.
- Behavioural stages are not removed and a failure to improve behaviour will of course lead to an escalation through the stages.
- There are sanctions for failing to improve once stage 2 is reached.
- If a student is permanently excluded, they can appeal to Governors and this builds in an extra safeguard for the student by taking the final decision away from the Principal.

The process is divided into strands and each has four main stages. Stages 0-4 for each strand are summarised below.

The Academic strand

Academic concern - Stage 0

Issued by a teacher when a student is not meeting academic expectations.

Following or during a discussion with the student the teacher triggers an Academic Concern on the dashboard. The form states

- The issue (ie. what the teacher is concerned about)
- Targets agreed (ie. what the student should do to address the issue)
- Review date – in no more than four weeks though could be less

It should be sent to:

- Personal tutor.

The teacher should diarise the review date set and on the review date, the student has to show they have met the targets. If they have, the teacher notes this and no further action is taken. If they have not, the teacher issues a learning contract.

Academic - Stage 1 Learning Contract

Issued by a teacher when a student has not met the targets set out in an Academic concern and / or is making identifiably less progress than expected and/ or than other students.

Following or during a discussion with the student the teacher triggers a Stage 1 Learning Contract. The form states:

- The issue (ie. what the teacher is concerned about)
- Targets agreed (ie. what the student should do to address the issue)
- Review date – in no more than four weeks though could be less

It should be sent to:

- HoD
- Cc. personal tutor.
- Parents should be informed

The teacher should diarise the review date set and on the review date, the student has to show they have met the targets. If they have, the teacher notes this and no further action is taken. If they have not, the teacher refers the student to the Head of Department.

Academic - Stage 2 Learning contract

Issued by a Head of Department when a student has not met the targets set on a Stage 1 Learning Contract and / or is discernibly behind where they should be and / or their teaching group. There is a risk of underachievement and this will probably be evident because key assessments and the mean markbook grade are below MEG.

Following or during a discussion with the student the HoD¹ completes a Stage 2 Learning Contract.

The form states:

- The issue (ie. what the teacher is concerned about)
- Targets agreed (ie. what the student should do to address the issue)
- Student should attend Directed Study four times a week unless these have already been added because of issues in another subject.
- Review date – in no more than four weeks though could be less

It should be sent to:

- ST
- Cc. personal tutor; teacher.
- Parents should be informed.
- The student is encouraged to attend subject tutorials or other sources of support.

The HoD diarises the review date set and on the review date, the student has to show they have met their targets. If they have, the HoD notes this. If they have not, the teacher notes this on the contract and refers to the Senior Tutor.

Academic - Stage 3 Learning Contract

Issued by a Senior Tutor when a student has not met the targets set on an Academic Contract Stage 2, underachievement is likely and could diminish the likelihood of progression in their chosen direction. This can also be the case if mock exams show underachievement in multiple subjects. Key assessments and the mean markbook grade are likely to be below the MEG. It is common for more than one subject to be affected at this stage.

At this stage, the situation is discussed with the student and parents are contacted by the Senior Tutor. In most cases, this will be by phone but sometimes face to face. The issues reported by subject teachers are discussed, targets are agreed and a review date set. Additional Directed Study sessions are timetabled upto the review date in order to maximise the chances of catching up. Internal suspension and other strategies are considered.

Following or during the discussion with the student the ST completes a Stage 3 Academic contract.

The form states:

- The issue (ie. what the teacher is concerned about)
- Targets agreed (ie. what the student should do to address the issue)
- Student should attend Directed Study eight times a week
- Review date – in no more than four weeks though could be less

It should be sent to:

- Director of Student Progress
- Cc. personal tutor; all teachers

¹ For students whose teacher is a HoD, the HoF is likely to take the HoD's role as 'next level up' for students on Stage 2.

- The student will be referred to the SPM motivational programme and / or other sources of support.

The Senior Tutor diarises the review date set. On the review date, the student has to show they have met their targets. If they have, the Senior Tutor notes this and no further action is taken. If they have not, the ST notes this on the contract and refers to SLT.

Academic - Stage 4

Issued by the Director of Student Progress when a student has not met the targets set on an Academic Contract Stage 3 or is found to be at risk of failure/ significant underachievement for other reasons. Failure to respond to Stage 3 raises the question of the student's suitability for the course, the college or A levels and it appears that not much is likely to be achieved by continuing.

At this stage, parents are contacted about the most recent reports from teachers. This outlines to parents and the student what was and was not achieved during Stage 3 and the reasons why there is now a question about the student's suitability. The programme taken is reviewed in case that is a contributory factor. Targets are set with a two week review period. If the student fails these targets they are excluded. Temporary exclusion for no more than a week is normal at this stage, pending a meeting with the Principal. It is unlikely that a further review period will be attempted though it is possible if there are strong indications it would succeed. The student may of course withdraw from College at any time.

Following the discussion with the student and their parent / carer the SLT member completes a Stage 4 notification which goes to:

- Principal
- Cc. SLT; personal tutor; all teachers

It summarises:

- Issues
- Strategies which have been tried and not worked sufficiently well
- Date of the end of the two week review period.
- Exclusion date if applicable

Principal arranges to meet the student and a parent / carer along with the SLT member involved.

The Principal hears the reasons for the temporary exclusion and the student's response. Parents are invited to contribute. The Principal decides on whether to permanently exclude the student or to re-admit on other terms. If the decision is to exclude, the student can appeal to governors and should be told how to do so.

The Attendance strand

Attendance concern - Stage 0

Issued when a student is not meeting expectations in relation to their attendance and / or punctuality.

At this stage there is a largely automated system in which anyone with attendance below the threshold will be issued with a stage 0 concern by email. There is a three week review period.

If the improvement within the review period is unsatisfactory, the student and their parent / carer will be informed by a further email that they will be placed on Stage 1.

Attendance Contract - Stage 1

Issued by a member of the Attendance team when a student has not met the targets set out by an Attendance Concern and / or has attendance or punctuality rates below 95%.

Following or during a discussion with the student the attendance team member triggers a Stage 1 Contract.

The form states:

- The issue (ie. state why the student is on an attendance contract)
- Targets agreed (ie. what the student should do to address the issue) including signing in at 8.45 daily.
- Review date – in three weeks.

It should be sent to:

- Senior Tutor
- Tutor.
- Parents should be informed

Attendance team member diarises the review date set. On the review date, the student has to have met their targets. If they have, the attendance team member notes this and no further action is taken. If they have not, the attendance team member notes this on the contract and refers to ST.

Attendance contract – stage 2.

Issued by a Senior Tutor when a student has not met the targets set on an Attendance Contract Stage 1. Their attendance is below the minimum acceptable level and there is a risk of underachievement. Consequently, targets may reflect these wider concerns.

Following or during a discussion with the student the ST completes a Stage 2 Attendance contract.

The form states:

- The issue (ie. what the Senior Tutor is concerned about)

- Targets agreed (ie. what the student should do to address the attendance issue and possibly conduct or academic issues also) including signing in at 8.45 daily.
- Student should attend Directed Study four times a week
- Review date – in no more than four weeks though could be less

It should be sent to:

- Cc. personal tutor; attendance team, MIS
- Parents should be informed.
- The student will be referred to the SPM motivational programme and / or other sources of support.

The Senior Tutor diarises the review date set. On the review date, the student has to have met their targets. If they have, the Senior Tutor notes this and no further action is taken. If they have not, the Senior Tutor notes this on the contract and proceeds to Stage 3.

Attendance contract – stage 3.

Issued by the Senior Tutor when a student has not met the targets set on an Attendance Contract Stage 2. Attendance and / or punctuality are poor because the student has not shown sufficient sustained resolve to improve them and are inconsistent with the requirements of a course designed for full time attendance. Typically, more than one subject is affected.

At this stage, the situation is discussed with the student and parents are contacted by the Senior Tutor. In most cases, this will be by phone but sometimes face to face. There is a review of the student's position which may involve reports from teachers. Targets are agreed and a review date set. Further compulsory private study sessions are timetabled up until the review date in order to maximise the chances of catching up. Internal suspension and other strategies are considered.

The Senior Tutor completes a Stage 3 Attendance contract.

The form states:

- The issue (ie. state why the student is on an attendance contract)
- Targets agreed (ie. what the student should do to address the issue) including signing in at 8.45 daily.
- Student should attend Directed Study eight times a week
- Review date – in no more than four weeks though could be less

It should be sent to:

- SLT
- Cc. personal tutor; all teachers; attendance team, MIS
- The student might be referred to the SPM motivational programme and / or other sources of support.

The Senior Tutor diarises the review date set. On the review date, the student has to have met their targets. If they have, the Senior Tutor notes this and no further action is taken. If they have not, the Senior Tutor notes this on the contract and refers to SLT.

Attendance - Stage 4

Issued by Director of Student Services when a student has not met the targets set on an Attendance Contract Stage 3 or is found to be at risk of failure/ significant underachievement because of poor attendance. Failure to respond to Stage 3 raises the question of suitability for the college because delivery is based on full time attendance.

At this stage, parents are contacted about the most recent attendance and other information. This outlines to parents and the student what was and was not achieved during Stage 3 and the reasons why there is now a question about the student's suitability. The programme taken is reviewed in case that is a contributory factor. Targets are set with a two week review period. If the student fails these targets they are excluded. Temporary exclusion for no more than a week is normal at this stage, pending a meeting with the Principal. It is unlikely that a further review period will be attempted though it is possible if there are strong indications it would succeed. The student may of course withdraw from College at any time.

The Director of Student Services completes a Stage 4 notification which goes to:

- Principal
- Cc. SLT; personal tutor; all teachers; HoDs; HoFs; attendance team

It summarises

- Issues
- Strategies which have been tried and not worked sufficiently well
- Date of the end of the two week review period.
- Exclusion date if applicable

The Principal arranges to meet the student and a parent / carer along with the SLT member involved. The Principal hears the reasons for the temporary exclusion and the student's response. Parents are invited to contribute. The Principal decides on whether to permanently exclude the student or to re-admit on other terms. If the decision is to exclude, the student can appeal to governors and should be told how to do so.

The Behaviour strand

Behaviour concern – Stage 0

Issued by a teacher, tutor or other member of staff when the student is not meeting expectations in relation to their behaviour.

Following or during a discussion with the student the staff member triggers a Behaviour Concern

The form states:

- The issue (ie. what behaviour the staff member is concerned about)
- Targets agreed (ie. what the student should do or not do to address the issue)
- Review date – in no more than four weeks though could be less

It should be sent to:

- Personal tutor - if sent by another member of staff
- Senior Tutor if sent by the tutor

The staff member diarises the review date set. By the review date, the student has to show they have not repeated the poor behaviour and have behaved well in other respects. If they have a 'clean' record, the tutor or teacher notes this and no further action is taken. If they have not, the tutor or teacher refers to the tutor for a behaviour contract.

Behaviour Contract – stage 1.

Issued by the tutor because of repeated behaviour which is a concern or any member of staff if a student is not keeping to the student code of conduct. These behaviours could include:

- Smoking on site
- Not showing ID immediately on request
- Minor IT violations
- Inconsiderate behaviour

This is not intended as an exhaustive list but indicative of the sorts of behaviours at this stage.

Following or during a discussion with the student the staff member triggers a Stage 1 Behaviour Contract.

The form states:

- The issue (ie. state why the student is on a behaviour contract)
- Targets agreed (ie. what the student should do or not do to improve their behaviour)
- Review date – in no more than four weeks though could be less

It should be sent to:

- Senior Tutor
- Tutor if triggered by someone else; teacher

The staff member diarises the review date set. On the review date, the student has to have met their targets and show they have not repeated the poor behaviour and have behaved well in other respects. If they have, this is noted and no further action is taken.

If they have not, the student is referred to the Senior Tutor.

Behaviour Contract – stage 2.

Issued by the Senior Tutor (or SLT) when a student has failed to improve on their behaviour set out in Behaviour Contract Stage 1 or their behaviour has been inconsistent with membership of the College on at least one occasion.

As such there has been a major rule violation usually which has the potential to impact negatively on others.

- Being careless about College security...including cybersecurity
- Damaging College property – incidentally cf. deliberately
- Minor threatening or bullying episodes

This is not intended as an exhaustive list but indicative of the sorts of behaviours at this stage.

Following or during a discussion with the student the staff member completes a Stage 2 Behaviour Contract.

The form states:

- The issue (ie. state why the student is on a behaviour contract)
- Targets agreed (ie. what the student should do or not do to improve their behaviour)
- Student referred to compulsory private study – four times a week.
- Review date – in no more than four weeks though could be less

It should be sent to:

- Tutor
- Cc. others as appropriate

The Senior Tutor or SLT member diarises the review date set. On the review date, the student has to have met their targets. If they have, this is noted and no further action is taken. If they have not, ST notes this on the contract and proceeds to Stage 3.

Behaviour Contract – stage 3.

Issued by the Senior Tutor (or SLT member) when a student has failed to improve their behaviour as set out in Behaviour Contract Stage 2 because the student has not shown sufficient, sustained resolve to improve or is high risk / antisocial / inconsistent with being part of the College community.

Students could go straight onto a behaviour contract at this level for:

- Dangerous or antisocial behaviour
- Violence on or off site – but now resolved
- Possession and / or consumption of alcohol on site
- (Risk of) causing reputational damage
- Inviting or helping intruders gain access
- Hacking or serious IT violations
- Minor theft

This is not intended as an exhaustive list but indicative of the sorts of behaviours at this stage.

At this stage, behaviour is discussed with the student and a parent is contacted to review the student's behaviour. Targets are agreed and a review date set. Further compulsory private study sessions are timetabled up until the review date. Internal suspension and other strategies are considered.

In cases where a student is going straight to a stage 3 contract for their behaviour, temporary exclusion may be necessary in order to emphasise the seriousness of the situation, to separate groups or individuals temporarily and / or to allow for further risks to be assessed. Temporary exclusion will be for no more than a week.

A Stage 3 Behaviour contract is completed following or during the discussion with the student where possible.

The form states:

- The issue (ie. state why the student is on a behaviour contract)
- Targets agreed (ie. what the student should do or not do to improve their behaviour)
- Student referred to compulsory private study – eight times a week.
- Review date – in no more than four weeks though could be less

Sent to:

- SLT
- Cc. personal tutor; all teachers; ST; MIS

The ST or SLT member diarises the review date set. On the review date, the student has to have met their targets. If they have, this is noted and no further action is taken. If they have not, the student is referred to SLT.

Behaviour Contract – stage 4.

Issued by a member of SLT when a student has not met the targets set out in their Behaviour Contract Stage 3 and / or has high risk behaviour. Failure to respond to Stage 3 or evidence of high risk behaviour raise the question of suitability for the College.

Students could go straight onto a contract at this level for one-off acts of:

- Violent behaviour onsite or offsite – especially if there is risk of recurrence
- Causing reputational damage
- Undermining the work of the College
- Carrying a weapon
- Possession and / or use of illegal drugs
- Out of control behaviour or intoxication on site – caused by alcohol, drugs, or other factors
- Threatening a member of staff
- Other bullying and / or intimidation
- Inviting or helping intruders gain access or otherwise undermining the security of the site
- Any criminal behaviour

This is not intended as an exhaustive list but indicative of the sorts of behaviours at this stage.

At this stage, behaviour is discussed with the student and a parent is contacted to review the student's behaviour. Discussion will outline to parents and the student what was and was not achieved during Stage 3 and the reasons why there is now a question about the student's suitability. It is unlikely that a further review period will be attempted though it is possible if there are strong indications it would succeed. The student may of course withdraw from College at any time.

In cases where a student is going straight to a stage 4 for their behaviour, temporary exclusion is likely, to indicate the seriousness of the behaviour, and / or to separate groups or individuals temporarily and / or to allow for risks to be assessed. Both the student and their parent / carer will be informed.

A Stage 4 Behaviour contract is completed following or during the discussion with the student where possible.

This goes to:

- Principal
- Cc. SLT; personal tutor; all teachers; ST

It summarises

- Issues
- Strategies if applicable
- Date of temporary exclusion if applicable.

The Principal arranges to meet the student and a parent / carer along with the SLT member involved.

The Principal hears the reasons for the temporary exclusion and the student's response. Parents are invited to contribute. The Principal decides on whether to permanently exclude the student or to re-admit on other terms. If the decision is to exclude, the student can appeal to governors and should be told how to do so.

Conduct of the Principal's meeting at Stage 4. (All strands)

Following the temporary exclusion of a student at Stage 4, the Principal should hold a meeting with the student and at least one family member or carer. The broad purpose of the meeting is for the Principal to decide whether or not the student should be permanently excluded. This is not a court room but a discussion between concerned people presenting their views and enabling the Principal to reach a reasonable decision.

Possible reasons for permanent exclusion are that:

1. the student is not sufficiently benefitting from or making progress on their course(s), and is not meeting the course requirements of a full time student. This failure to improve has been sustained despite a series of documented interventions by staff where targets to improve have been set but not met by the student.
2. the student lacks the required commitment to study on a full time programme and their attendance and / or punctuality have been too low for too long despite repeated documented interventions by staff (or the student has been absent for four weeks or more).
3. the student has a deleterious effect on the learning or well-being of other students because they have not taken seriously or are otherwise unable to meet the obligations which come with being part of a wider College community.
4. the student has behaved in a way which means their continuing as part of the College poses too great a risk to the College, to staff members, other students or themselves.

The Principal has to form a view on whether any of the above reasons pertain and if they do, will balance the student's individual needs in relation to the needs of the wider College.

In order for that decision to be reached, the Principal will hear initially from the SLT member who excluded the student temporarily at Stage 4². The SLT member will present the immediate reasons for the exclusion and other relevant information about the student's conduct and progress. It is likely that most of this evidence will be documented and where this is the case copies of papers will be made available to the Principal, the student and their parent/carer in the meeting. Where appropriate, the SLT member may invite other staff members to the meeting to give their views. The Principal and then the student and / or their parent / carer will be able to ask questions of the SLT member after their initial presentation has concluded.³

The Principal will then ask the student and their parent or carer if there is anything they would like to be taken into consideration.

The Principal will then have to reach a decision. This may happen at the time, or following an adjournment or be delivered in writing after further deliberation but within two working days during which time the student would remain excluded.

If permanent exclusion is the outcome then the student will be taken off roll though may be offered a career related interview or other assistance and the college may consider providing a reference should that be requested. The student and their parent or carer will be told how to appeal at this point.

If the outcome is re-admittance then there will be discussion to agree the basis on which that would happen. This would in practice be a final set of targets or conditions and if the student failed to meet these would have to leave. A repeat of the Stage 4 meeting would not be required in such a case.

Rarely, the outcome might be to extend the temporary exclusion pending further information, assessment or for other reasons.

If a student passes stage 4, they cannot keep bouncing between stages 3 and 4. If they pass stage 4 twice and come to stage 4 a third time, they will be permanently on stage 4 and thus constantly at risk of permanent exclusion. If they have been temporarily excluded and later return to stage 4, they cannot be temporarily excluded again, they would be permanently excluded if they failed stage 4.

The following diagram summarises what can happen at stage 4.

² With the need to process these situations as quickly as possible, on occasion it may be necessary for the Vice Principal to deputise for the Principal and / or a fellow SLT member to deputise for the member who issued the temporary exclusion.

³ If the need for further information becomes apparent, the meeting can be adjourned or postponed at this point.

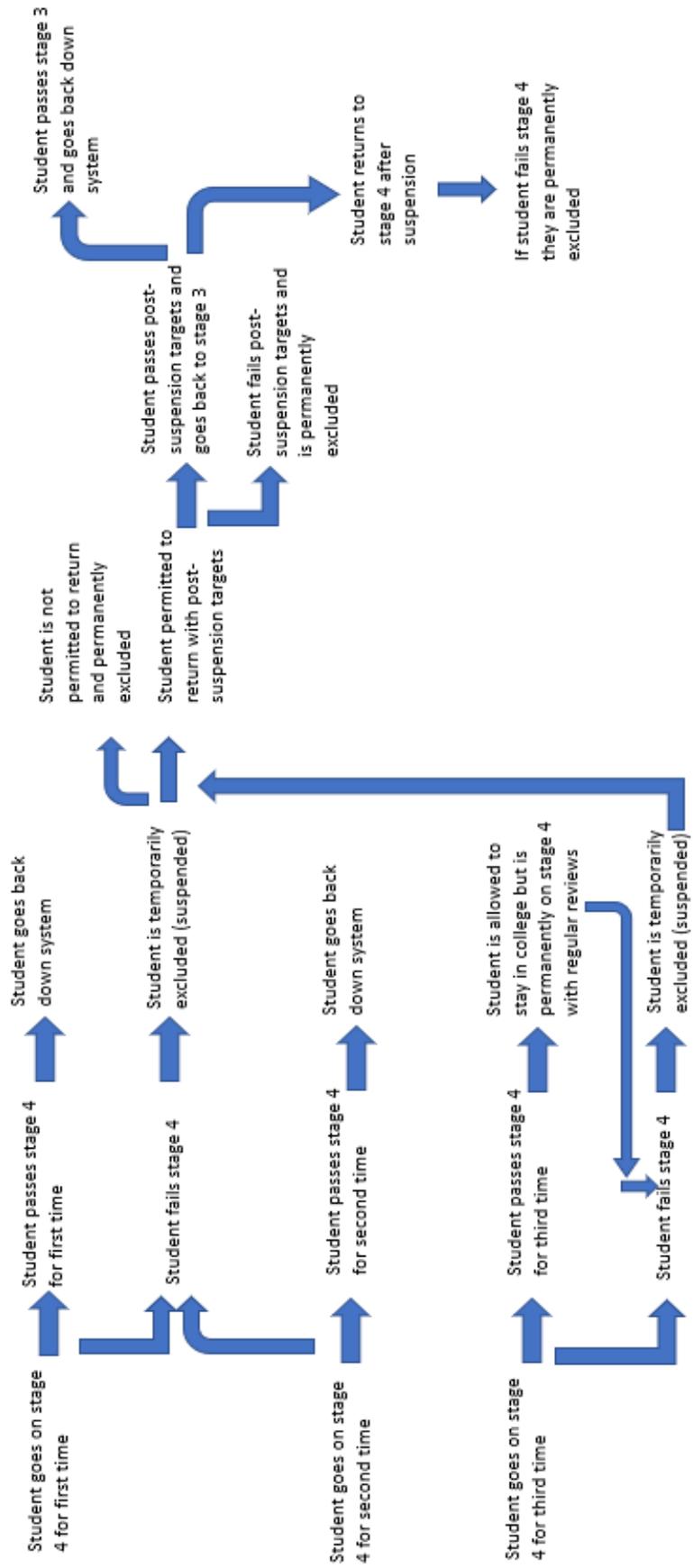


Diagram showing what happens at Stage 4.

Appeal against the decision to permanently exclude

If the Principal decides to exclude the student permanently, the student and / or their parent/carer can appeal to the Board of the College. An appeal should be made within five working days⁴ of receiving the Principal's decision and should be in writing to the Chair of the Corporation. Appeals can be made on any of these grounds, singly or in combination:

- The process leading up to the Stage 4 exclusion had not been operated as the SLT member had described or had been materially different from the way it is outlined to students.
- The decision to exclude was unreasonable.
- The balance between the needs of the individual student and those of the wider College had not been adjudicated fairly.
- The presentation of other evidence in mitigation

An appeal should state clearly which of these grounds form(s) the basis for the appeal and explain, giving as much evidence as possible, why they consider this to be the case.

When an appeal is made, the Clerk should co-ordinate the formation of an exclusion hearing panel. Such a panel should consist of three members of the Corporation and meet within fifteen working days of the Appeal being received with the student and their family or carer being given a maximum amount of notice of the time and date of the panel meeting. The exact composition of the panel will be contingent on Board members' availability but must not include the Principal, other staff or student governors, parent governors or any governors who may have prior knowledge of the student. All parties should be given access to all relevant papers as early as possible and prior to the meeting. These would normally include the following four items but may include other documents where relevant:

- The Principal's decision
- The appeal.
- The SLT member's documentation used as the basis for the meeting with the Principal.
- Contextual information about the student's conduct and progress at the College.

Exclusion hearing

The exclusion hearing is not a trial and whilst it is important that the student and parent or carer has a chance to present their appeal, legal representatives will not be admitted. The exclusion hearing panel will consist of a chair and two other independent governors.

They will invite the student or their parent or carer to explain the reasons for appealing against the Principal's decision and the grounds on which the appeal is based. They can refer to the appeal letter and may be asked to clarify points and questioned about their appeal by the panel or the Principal.

The Principal will then be invited to explain the exclusion decision highlighting the key points which led to the decision. The Principal will then answer any questions from the panel or the student and their parent or carer.

⁴ 'Working days' refers to days when the College is open to students on their normal lesson timetables.

Exceptionally, other staff members may be invited to give their views to the panel after which they would also be open to questions from the panel, the Principal and the student or their parent / carer.

After hearing from those making the appeal and from the Principal, and others representing the College's view, the panel may ask both parties to briefly summarise the key points in their case. The panel will then meet to deliberate. It will consider whether the grounds for the appeal are substantial enough for the Principal's decision to be overturned or upheld. In the case of the panel recommending re-admittance, the terms under which this should take place will be specified by the Principal. If permanent exclusion remains the outcome then the student will be taken off roll.

The outcome of the hearing will be summarised in writing by the Clerk and a copy sent to the student within five working days.

