Separation of Pupils for Safeguarding Purposes Protocol

Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that temporary or longer-term separation of pupils is used only where necessary to:

- protect pupils and staff from harm;
- preserve the integrity of safeguarding investigations;
- reduce the risk of intimidation, retaliation or further incidents;
- support victims and vulnerable pupils;
- enable appropriate risk assessment while educational provision continues wherever possible.

Separation for safeguarding purposes will only be used in exceptional circumstances where it is necessary, proportionate and cannot practicably be achieved in a manner that allows one or more pupils to remain on EOTAS premises safely.

Separation is a safeguarding measure and is not in itself, a disciplinary sanction.

Scope

This protocol applies to all pupils in Fernbrook, Riverside, Oakfield Colleges and AUS whom it is deemed necessary to be separated for safeguarding purposes.

This is not an exclusion on disciplinary grounds.

EOTAS will ensure the wishes and the feelings of the child remain front and centre, ensuring that the pupil understands the reasons for any arrangements, taking into account any additional support requested by the pupil.

Where appropriate and having regard to age and understanding, pupils will be given an opportunity to express their views regarding the arrangements being made and any support they may require.

This protocol supports EOTAS Swindon's safeguarding priorities and compliance with the latest statutory guidance on suspensions and exclusions (July 2026). It ensures clarity, accountability, and pupil safety during periods when pupils are off-site.

Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement

For pupils who are classed as Children We Care For (CWCF – previously LAC) EOTAS will ensure that the separate protocols **(section 8**)are followed ahead of any suspension.

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1. Circumstances Where Separation May Be Used

In certain circumstances, EOTAS can temporarily forbid a pupil from attending any of its premises, for example, due to an allegation of harm by one pupil against another which might require physically separating a pupil from one or other pupils.

Separation may be necessary where:

- there has been violence or serious aggression;
- there are allegations of sexual violence or sexual harassment;
- there are safeguarding concerns requiring pupils to remain apart;
- there is risk of witness intimidation;
- there is significant bullying or harassment;
- police or children's social care advise separation;
- there is a serious ongoing conflict creating an unacceptable risk;
- risk assessments indicate immediate separation is necessary to protect pupils or staff.

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2. Process

- A need for separation for safeguarding purposes is identified either by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Headteacher (HT) or EOTAS Head of College (HOC) / Associate Lead (AL).
- EOTAS HT, DSL & HOC / AL will meet **without delay** in order to make an immediate risk and needs assessment (**see section 5**).
- EOTAS HT & DSL will authorise separation arrangements, ensuring decisions are evidence based. Separation decisions will not be made in the absence of DSL or DDSL.
- EOTAS HT, DSL & HOC / AL will facilitate plans for education and safeguarding on a case-by-case basis using their professional judgement and in conjunction with other agencies, such as children's social care, virtual school and the police as required (**see section 6**). EOTAS will agree the most proportionate type of separation needed for robust safeguarding purposes (**see section 4)**.
- Should EOTAS or parents/carers not be able to arrange suitable education then the Local Authority must do so.
- Suitable full-time education should continue wherever possible whilst safeguarding arrangements are in place unless the pupil's individual needs require otherwise
- EOTAS will notify parents / carers **without delay** the reasons for the separation and **anticipated timeframes for separation.**
- The Management Committee will also be notified without delay and they will ensure that the process is used only for rare circumstances and only when separating pupils is essential and cannot practicably be done in a way that lets one or more pupils remain on school premises.
- Daily Monitoring of attendance and engagement in educational provision;
- Immediate follow-up of any unexplained absences in accordance with EOTAS Attendance Policy.

- Weekly welfare checks will be completed on all separated pupils at the home address.
- EOTAS DSL & HOC / AL will ensure any victims and or perpetrators receive appropriate support which may include ongoing safety plans for victims.
- Therapeutic or pastoral support where required.
- EOTAS DSL will monitor safeguarding concerns arising from separation.
- EOTAS Headteacher and DSL will review arrangements regularly.
- Separation in place will be reviewed at every PRISM meeting.

All decision-making rationale and steps taken will be documented on CPOMS, shared with parents / carer and any professional network.

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3. Review

EOTAS HT, DSL & HOC / AL will review every separation arrangement:

- within five school days;
- following any further incident;
- following new safeguarding information;
- before any extension to initial expected timeframes.

Reviews will consider whether:

- risks have reduced;
- education is being maintained;
- further support is required;
- separation remains necessary.

Separation arrangements will remain in place only for as long as is necessary to manage identified safeguarding risks.

All decision-making rationale and steps taken will be documented on CPOMS, shared with parents / carer and any professional network.

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4. Reintegration

- A reintegration strategy will be formulated by EOTAS HT, DSL & HOC/AL at the **earliest opportunity**.
- The reintegration strategy will be clearly communicated at a reintegration meeting before or at the beginning of a return to school.
- Pupils will not be prevented from returning to a mainstream classroom if parents are unwilling or unable to attend a reintegration meeting.

- The reintegration strategy will be regularly reviewed and adapted where necessary throughout the reintegration process in collaboration with the pupil, parents, and other relevant parties.
- EOTAS will consider a range of measures to enable the pupil's successful reintegration which can include, but are not limited to;
    - maintaining regular contact during the suspension or off-site direction and welcoming the pupil back to school
    - daily contact with a designated pastoral professional in school
    - planned pastoral interventions
    - regular reviews with the pupil and parents to praise progress being made and raise and address any concerns at an early stage

All decision-making rationale and steps taken will be documented on CPOMS, shared with parents / carer and any professional network.

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5. Types of Separation

Depending upon assessed risk, EOTAS HT, DSL & HOC/AL will decide on the most appropriate and proportionate separation for safeguarding purposes. These may include:

- different teaching groups;
- staggered timetables;
- separate entrances or exits;
- different break and lunch arrangements;
- supervised movement between lessons;
- restricted access to identified areas;
- supervised transport arrangements;
- alternative provision where appropriate.

Any arrangement will be proportionate and reviewed regularly by Senior Leaders at EOTAS.

Where alternative provision is used as part of safeguarding separation arrangements, EOTAS will assure itself that the provision is suitable, safe, able to meet the pupil's needs and that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place.

All decision-making rationale and steps taken will be documented on CPOMS, shared with parents / carer and any professional network.

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6. Risk Assessment

Before implementing separation (unless immediate action is required), the EOTAS DSL will complete a written safeguarding risk assessment and this may be in conjunction with the LA Safeguarding in Education Team or other stakeholders:

- nature of the incident;
- likelihood of further harm;
- wishes and safety of the victim;
- age and vulnerability of all pupils;
- SEND and medical needs;
- safeguarding history;
- impact on education;
- equality considerations;
- staffing implications.

All decision-making rationale, steps taken and supporting documentation will be recorded on CPOMS, shared with parents / carer and any professional network.

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7. Pupils with Social Workers

Where a pupil has a social worker and there is an identified need for safeguarding separation, EOTAS will collaborate with the relevant professional network at every stage and at the earliest opportunity so that relevant professionals can contribute to planning and risk management.

All decision-making rationale and steps taken will be documented on CPOMS, shared with parents / carer and any professional network.

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8. Looked After Children

Where separation involves a looked-after child, EOTAS Designated Teacher & DSL will:

- inform the Virtual School Head (VSH);
- review the Personal Education Plan (PEP);
- consider whether additional support is required;
- work with carers and the social worker.

Any safeguarding arrangements should be reflected within the PEP where appropriate.

All decision-making rationale and steps taken will be documented on CPOMS, shared with parents / carer and any professional network.

9. Communication

Parents will be informed promptly of any decisions throughout the process by EOTAS HT unless doing so would increase safeguarding risk (see EOTAS Safeguarding & Child Protection policy).

Where relevant, communication will also include:

- social workers;
- Virtual School Head;
- local authority where statutory duties apply;
- police or children's social care where appropriate.

EOTAS will ensure communication is accessible and timely and recorded on CPOMS.

10. Educational Provision

Separated pupils should continue to receive the most suitable education wherever possible.

Separation will not unnecessarily restrict:

- curriculum access;
- examinations;
- SEND provision;
- therapeutic support;
- pastoral support.

EOTAS HT, DSL & HOC/AL will review alternative arrangements regularly and document any amendments on CPOMS. Any amendments will be shared with professional networks.

11. Confidentiality

Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

Staff will:

- avoid discussing cases unnecessarily;
- protect victim confidentiality;
- comply with data protection legislation;
- follow KCSIE information-sharing principles.

All decision-making rationale and steps taken will be documented on CPOMS, shared with parents / carer and any professional network.

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12. Record Keeping

EOTAS will retain:

- safeguarding risk assessments;
- decision records detailed on CPOMS;
- chronology of incidents;
- review notes;
- communication logs;
- agency involvement;
- pupil and parent representations.

Records will be stored securely in accordance with EOTAS' safeguarding procedures as documented within the Safeguarding & Child Protection policy & KCSIE.

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13. Equality, Inclusion and Avoidance of Informal Exclusion

EOTAS recognises that safeguarding separation arrangements must not amount to an informal or unlawful exclusion. Decisions will be lawful, proportionate, necessary and regularly reviewed. EOTAS will have due regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will consider whether pupils with SEND or other vulnerabilities require reasonable adjustments or additional support before, during and following any period of separation.
