

## **DISCIPLINE**

Middle School students often experiment with inappropriate behavior. Such actions should not be condoned to the point that they develop into emergency situations or a crisis of any kind. It is important to remain aware of the fact that suspensions, opportunity transfers, and recommendations for expulsion must only be the result of a careful process or an extreme situation.

In order to maintain a highly successful instructional program, a basic component is a classroom management system that has a disciplinary policy that is fair, firm, and consistent. This is best accomplished through the cooperation of all staff members.

Most disciplinary problems, especially those occurring in the classroom, should be handled by the classroom teacher. In most cases, individual conferences with the student lead to improved behavior. Teachers are strongly encouraged to initiate direct communication with parents by means of a phone call as soon as possible. It is desirable that the emphasis be positive and just limited to the negative behavior.

Teachers should also work closely with other team members to develop a team discipline policy, which includes clear rules and consequences.

Serious discipline problems, such as fighting, possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs, stealing, vandalism, profanity to any adult, or open defiance of school authority should be referred to the Dean.

All attendance problems, if no improvement after teacher remediation, should be referred to the Assistant Principal, Secondary Student Services.

## **REFERRAL PROCEDURES**

1. Use the official office referral form. Small notes tend to get lost and provide no space for action taken on referral.
2. Inform the student of the rule violated.
3. Indicate the date and method of previous contact(s) with parents.
4. Complete all the required information; list the reason and give specific details.
5. If an incident occurs during your supervision, send the student to the office immediately and send the referral later after you complete your duty.

6. If the violation is not observed by you, please indicate the name of one or more witnesses in the space provided for other information.
7. Send the student to the Dean's Office with the referral.
8. If a student is thought to be in possession of drugs, tobacco, weapons, or explosives, **DO**

**NOT** send the student to the office. Send another student with a note requesting assistance.

See Appendix for copy of "Referral" form.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENT CONFERENCES**

1. Greet the parent as you would a guest in your home and continue as a courteous host during the conference. Try to start the conference on time and keep on schedule. Keeping parents waiting in effect is saying their time is not as valuable as yours.
2. Realize that most parents are more afraid of you than you are of them and reassure them by starting off with a good thing you have to say about their child.
3. Do not overwhelm a parent by trying to discuss all of the problems some children have. Select the one or two things which concern you the most and about which parent cooperation might affect a change. Leave the rest for future conferences.
4. Expect to make appointments for follow-up conferences with some of the parents and be prepared to suggest a time and date.
5. Have examples of the child's work to show the parent, starting off with examples of good work and concluding with work which needs improvement. Solicit ideas from the parents on ways in which you can both help the child.
6. Listen to the parent - not only what he or she is saying, but to the feelings about the child, or the school, as well.
7. Do not contradict parents if you disagree with something they say. Try to think of a question which helps the parent consider the facts upon which your disagreement is based; for example:
  - Aren't there some situations in which...?
  - Are you sure that...?

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8. Try not to give advice. Above all, never say, "IF I WERE YOU I WOULD..." Try to put your suggestions in question form; for example:
  - Do you think it might help if...?
  - Have you ever tried...?
  - How would you (Jose, or his father) feel about...?
9. Information gained during a conference is confidential and we must be professional in our use of it. We should not even discuss it with other teachers or administrators unless it serves the best interest of the child. GOSSIPING is NOT PROFESSIONAL.
10. If the parent introduces other children into the discussion, try to explain that in your school you recognize that children are different, and are more concerned with adjusting to each child's unique needs than with treating all children alike. NEVER TALK ABOUT ANOTHER STUDENT BY NAME.
11. If a favorable remark is made about a previous teacher, try to make some comment that will

reinforce it. If the teacher is criticized, listen carefully. Try to think of a question that may help the parent consider all factors, such as:

Did you ever discuss the situation with...?

Are you basing this on the child's report or have you...?

How do you think she should have handled the situation...?

12. You make a judgment about the child on the report card. Use the conference to help you and the parent share ideas about helping the child. If the parent asks pointed questions about the child's ability or achievement, try, before answering, to find out what impression the parent has by saying, for example, "I'll bet you have a better answer to that than I have, for you know Jose much better than I do." If the parent's impression is fairly accurate, reinforce it; if the parent's opinion differs widely from your "Impression", rather than "facts" which always need interpretations, try to reach consensus.
13. Rather than bluntly saying, "Jose is failing in math," ask the parent how Jose feels about his math, and follow with a discussion of what you can both do to help him.
14. If a parent is worrying about a child's success or behavior, allow the parent to verbalize such fears without interruptions. Follow by trying to get the parent to suggest possible reasons for the fears or worries. You may want to suggest additional causes with a phrase such "Could it be that...?"
15. Remember that parents take any criticism of the child as a criticism of themselves. Parents, like teachers, do the best they can at the moment. Suggestions for improvement, in question form, focus on improvement rather than failure. "Would it help if we...?"
16. It is recommended that you keep notes of your conferences.

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17. Close the conference by standing up, expressing appreciation to the parent for coming and specifically for ideas which help you better understand and help the child - while moving toward the door and ushering the parent out with a genuine invitation to return any time you can be of assistance.
18. After the conference is over, jot down things you want to remember about the child, parent or situation.
19. A brief note, after any improvement, indicating that improvement and expressing appreciation for the parent's help can do much in improving the child's emotional climate at home.
20. Remember the process of parent conferences involves seeking information, giving information and gaining friends.

## **SUSPENSIONS**

### **OFFICE SUSPENSIONS:**

The principal, or designee, may suspend a student for a period not to exceed five school days, and not more than 20 days per school year. The person suspending the student must follow the procedures below:

1. Parent and pupil must be notified of the pupil's rights and a conference must be offered for counseling unless the parent waives this right.
2. Appropriate suspension notices must be given to the student, a copy mailed home and a copy kept for the school files.
3. The Principal must keep a file of substantiations for any and all suspensions.

### **SUSPENSION FROM CLASS**

1. A teacher may suspend a student from the teacher's class for any act enumerated on the Pupil Accounting Report form. **See Appendix page 6.** The period of suspension shall be for the remainder of the period during which the violation took place, and for the next period that the class meets. The teacher shall immediately report the suspension to the principal or designee (Dean) and send the student to the principal or designee and send the student to that person for appropriate action.

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2. The teacher shall ask the parent/guardian of the student to attend a parent-teacher conference to discuss the reason(s) for the suspension. Whenever possible, the Dean should also attend the conference. If requested by either the teacher or the parent/guardian, a school administrator shall attend the conference.
3. The student shall not be returned to the class from which he/she was suspended during the period of suspension without the concurrence of the teacher who effected the suspension.
4. A student suspended from a class must attend all other classes
5. A teacher may require the completion of tests and assignments missed during the period of suspension.

Follow the procedures below to suspend a student from your class:

1. The teacher makes the decision to suspend the student and must provide anecdotal records to support suspension.
2. Send the student to the Dean's Office with the UTLA form. **See Appendix page 5.**
3. The Dean will complete section of the Pupil Accounting Report (PAR).
4. The PAR will be returned to the teacher along with the "Parent Notification of Student Suspension."
5. The teacher will complete section 3 of the PAR and request information on the "Parent Notification of Student Suspension."
6. The teacher will return both forms to the Dean before 2:30 p.m.
7. The teacher is to make every attempt to contact the parent by phone before leaving campus that day to set up a conference. If no contact is made, an attempt should be made the day following the suspension and then followed by a letter; if needed the PSA worker should be

asked to go to the home.

8. The Dean will give the student the pink copy of the PAR and "Parent Notification of Student Suspension" to take home.
9. The student must return the signed "Parent Notification of Student Suspension" on the following day to the Dean.
10. The student will report to the Dean's Office during the class period of the suspension.

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11. The Dean will return the PAR to the teacher who will complete the results of the parent conference in the section marked "Comments." When the PAR is completed, it is to be returned to the Dean.

**See Appendix page 6 for sample of Pupil Accounting Report form.**

### **PARENT CONFERENCE**

1. No penalties may be imposed on a student for the failure of the student's parent/guardian to attend a conference with school officials. The student's return to school at the end of any suspension period shall not be contingent upon attendance by the student's parent/guardian at such a conference.
2. The parent conference shall, whenever possible, be in the primary language of the parent/guardian.

