

Red River Valley School Division
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE G9
PROACTIVE INTERVENTIONS & DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES



Student safety is a priority for the Red River Valley School Division. This procedure is intended to support our schools in ensuring student safety through proactive interventions and alternatives to student suspensions whenever possible. Schools will incorporate a continuum of supports including positive and preventative approaches and strategies, as well as consequences corresponding to the nature, severity and frequency of the behaviour or infraction.

Under the Public Schools Act (PSA) and Appropriate Educational Programming Regulation (M.R. 155/05), all students in Manitoba have a right to appropriate educational programming in a safe, caring, and inclusive environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours.

DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Out-of-School Suspension: An instance in which a student is dismissed from school for disciplinary purposes for a finite period of time when their peers are expected to be in attendance.

In-School Suspension: An instance in which a student is temporarily removed from their regular classroom(s) for at least half a school day for disciplinary purposes but remains under the direct supervision of school personnel. Direct supervision means school personnel are physically in the same location as students under their supervision.

Exclusionary Practices: Exclusionary discipline encompasses any type of school disciplinary action that removes or excludes a student from their usual educational setting. Although exclusionary discipline practices might typically be viewed on a continuum of severity, the degree of exclusion for any reason should commensurate with the least restrictive environment and not be punitive. Exclusionary practices should be exercised with due diligence, and educators must take caution that students are not faced with undue hardship or feelings of alienation, as they may not hold the same perception.

Examples of exclusionary practices include:

- Withdrawal from the classroom setting for less than half a school day for disciplinary purposes but under the direct supervision of school personnel.

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- Detention
- Removal of privileges
- Removal from school bus ridership
- Exclusion time-out
- Being sent home early
- In-school suspension
- Expulsion
- Seclusion

Within this range of exclusionary practices, suspension, expulsion and seclusion are considered to be most restrictive.

Expulsion: An extreme exclusionary discipline practice.

Seclusion: A safety response, never to be used as a punishment, consequence, disciplinary action, or a way to force compliance.

Informal Renewals / Being Sent Home: An instance when a student is sent home due to behavioural disruptions for the purpose of a “reset” or “fresh start”.

- Schools must provide all students with the same minimum number of hours of instruction, and document in the student-specific plan (SSP) any reduction or alterations in the school day, including a plan to return to full-time instruction.
- When removals from the classroom and/or school form a recurring pattern, the student-specific planning process should be initiated to identify a student's learning needs and develop, implement, and evaluate appropriate educational interventions.

ENHANCING PROACTIVE AND PREVENTATIVE PRACTICES

The Student Specific Plan process is utilized to meet the unique needs of individual students and to determine, implement, and evaluate appropriate educational interventions.

The [Companion Guide for Safe and Caring Schools](#) (MEECL, 2023) identifies evidence-based

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positive approaches and proactive strategies that limit, reduce, and phase out exclusionary practices, except in situations of imminent safety risk to students and staff.

The following positive and preventative approaches and strategies, as well as consequences corresponding to the nature, severity, and frequency of the behaviour or infraction are listed as follows:

Positive School Climate

- Enhancing school climate as outlined in the Safe and Caring School Documents by MB Education
- Creating and supporting positive behaviour in the classroom

Strengths-Based Practices

- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Culturally Relevant and Responsive Practice
- Restorative Practice and Restitution
- Trauma-Informed Practice

Alternative Approaches to Suspensions:

- Restorative practice such as peace/community circle
- Behaviour contract
- Group brainstorming among student, school staff, and parent(s) and/or extended family
- Referral to counsellor, social worker, occupational therapist, or other clinical supports
- Referral to school or community-based service (in or out of house counselling group, addictions services, anger management, mental health services)
- Mentoring
- Flexible daily schedule as documented in a student-specific-plan
- In-school suspension
- Continued learning at a designated off-campus location

Alternative / Off-Campus Locations:

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Sometimes an alternative/off-campus school location is what the student needs to learn. The shift away from a traditional school environment to classes that have lower enrollment, greater flexibility, and are often more grounded in one-on-one support may be effective for the student. Students sometimes learn in an alternative or off-campus location to provide the school and family with time to work together to determine the most appropriate programming. This may be short term, a few days or weeks, or it could be longer, depending on the services and structures that are provided by the school division. What is most important is that the student does not experience any interruption in their learning, and that they still feel part of their school and educational community.

Some possibilities include the following:

- An alternative age-appropriate classroom within the school
- A school within a school
- An off-campus program linked to the student's home school
- Remote or online learning—supported by professionals from the school division and to be used judiciously

DISCRETION AND CONSIDERATION

Procedures in determining whether suspension is an appropriate disciplinary consequence include:

- Providing reasonable accommodation when disciplining a student and taking into consideration the student's state of development, ability to comply, and the amount of support required.
- Incorporating a continuum of supports, including positive and preventative approaches and strategies, as well as consequences corresponding to the nature, severity, and frequency of the behaviour or infraction.

For some students, the approach to student discipline will need to consider the student's special learning needs and abilities including whether:

- The student is able to access the information
- The student understands the policy or rules
- The disciplinary actions used for the majority of students are appropriate for the student.

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When selecting appropriate consequences, staff should be sensitive to any student who has been the target of unacceptable conduct, as well as to the student who engaged in the misconduct. These factors encourage those with the authority to suspend to avoid disciplining students who did not act deliberately.

Additional factors that may direct the decision to suspend include:

- The information gathered from the student, reporting staff, and others who may have witnessed or been affected.
- Whether a process should be initiated for determining the risk of threat to self or others, and the risk of recurrence.
- Possible motivation or underlying reason(s) that led to the incident (e.g., setting events, antecedent).
- Previous disciplinary incidents
- Previous interventions and their effectiveness
- Student's background and support network
- Alternative approaches not previously employed
- Whether the suspension will be a breach of probation, if applicable.

The decision to suspend may also include the following:

- A discussion with the parent(s)/legal guardians;
- A discussion with the in-school team and/or divisional-level staff

Suspensions are an inappropriate and counterproductive response to absenteeism, and RRVSD will not use suspensions, expulsions, or withdrawals as a response to student presence and engagement.

Suspension duration must not incrementally increase based on the number of suspensions a student has previously received.

School personnel shall not dismiss from school a student who presents an imminent safety risk to self or others before parents have been notified.

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SUSPENSION PROCEDURES

The following outlines procedures for all types of suspensions.

1. Notification to Legal Guardians:

- If the student is suspended, the legal guardians must be promptly notified of the reason and period of suspension by the principal of the school if the student is suspended by a teacher or the principal;
- The Superintendent/CEO or designate, if the student is suspended by the Superintendent/CEO or designate.

Within 24 hours of the decision to suspend, a written letter will be sent to the legal guardians with information that includes the following:

- The student's name, birthdate, and student MET number;
- The nature of the suspension (in-school or out-of-school);
- The reason(s) for the decision to suspend in relation to the code of conduct and divisional policy;
- The period of suspension (with beginning and end dates);
- Information regarding the re-entry process (if applicable);
 - The date, time, and location of the re-entry meeting;
 - Information regarding the opportunity for legal guardians to be provided with accommodations such as an interpreter or having a supporting person accompany them to the re-entry meeting;
- The name and contact information of the school/division staff who will serve as the legal guardian's initial contact for the purpose of arranging appropriate educational programming and maintaining regular contact with the student;
- Information regarding the legal guardian's right to make an appeal and the appeal procedures of the school board (for suspensions of 5 or more days);
- Clarity of any other restrictions.

The report must be entered in the school division's Student Information System within 24 hours of the suspension, which will automatically notify the Superintendents and Student Services departments.

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2. Access to Educational Programming during Suspension:

- The school must offer and arrange educational programming for students who are suspended for 5 or more days.
- Educational programming may range from work at home to alternative courses at a different location or remote learning, depending on the student's needs, length of suspension, or age.
- During suspension, access to learning should be maximized by providing students with the resources they need and by utilizing universal design principles.
- Accessing learning in an alternate, supervised environment must be viewed as an opportunity to offer continuity of learning, maintain connection to the school community, and build skills rather than convey a sense of punishment or discipline.

Out-of-School Suspension:

Students will not be permitted to be present at school and, at the discretion of the principal, may not be permitted to participate in school-sponsored activities, whether they occur inside or outside the school, on the school bus, or on school property.

Schools must develop a student-specific plan for a student who has been suspended out of school more than two times during a school year or out of school for more than 2 days.

A multi-faceted approach that may involve community agencies, organizations and associations, other education authorities, and regional health and children's services authorities should be considered, and the respective agencies should be invited to the student-specific planning process for the student.

Upon an out-of-school suspension, bus transportation privileges will be revoked immediately. The principal or their designate will inform the bus driver as well as the Transportation Supervisor of the suspension.

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The Superintendent & CEO may inform the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and/or the local trustee of suspensions on a case-by-case basis as necessary. Suspensions of 5 or more days will be brought to the Board as information.

In-School Suspension:

Students will be supervised in an educational environment with restricted contact to peers during the instructional day.

- They may be restricted from attending one or more classes and/or school-sponsored activities, whether they occur inside or outside the school or on the school bus.
- Provided there is no safety risk to students or staff, the Superintendent/CEO, principal, or designate may determine if the student can continue to participate in school-sponsored activities with direct supervision, whether they occur inside or outside the school, in order to maintain connection, relationships, and a sense of belonging.

Following the principal's decision to suspend the student, the principal will ensure arrangements are made and communicated to the student, legal guardians, classroom teacher(s), in-school team, and relevant school/divisional staff through the suspension letter.

If a student receives two or more in-school suspensions during a school year, school teams will consider ways to support that student in an effort to decrease future suspension.

Suspension from Class by a Teacher:

A suspension from class by a teacher is to be considered an in-school suspension. A teacher who suspends a student from class must promptly document the suspension and:

- Notify the principal, who will inform the legal guardians of the reason and duration of the suspension, which may not exceed two days;
- Provide the principal with a written report outlining the antecedent event(s) and reason for suspension from class, and action(s) taken by the teacher;
- Arrange for a supervised learning environment and ensure appropriate educational programming continues;
- Discuss with the principal the re-entry process, as well as who will communicate this to legal guardians;

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- Meet with the student, principal, and legal guardians prior to re-entry to communicate expectations and to develop strategies to repair the relationship.

RE-ENTRY PROCESS

The re-entry process should involve the student, legal guardians, and appropriate school team members, include timelines, and ensure re-entry occurs on the day following completion of the suspension. If a legal guardian is unable or refuses to attend the re-entry meeting, schools must document the reasons for refusal and/or actions undertaken by the school to obtain consent and/or resolve concerns.

The completion of schoolwork must not be used as a condition of re-entry. Suspension must not be prolonged due to the legal guardian's inability to be present at the re-entry meeting.

The purpose of a re-entry process is to provide an opportunity to debrief and restore a sense of safety and belonging for all. Important elements include the following:

- Review the reason for the suspension;
- Review the school's code of conduct;
- Clarification of expectations;
- Determination of programming needs (e.g., academic support, increased opportunities to attend to social-emotional learning and regulation);
- Develop a Student Specific Plan for a student who has been suspended out of school more than two times during a school year;
- Review planning needs if a student-specific plan is already in place;
- A safety plan that structures transitions, resources, and environmental considerations to be in place for a safe return;
- Determine whether individual counselling and/or divisional supports are needed (i.e., determine and support student's protective factors);
- Refer to community-based/agency supports, if required;
- Designate staff to case manage (i.e., ensure planning needs are met and follow-up is embedded for ongoing support);
- Review recommendations and update plans as necessary.;

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- Encourage the repair of relationships with those who may have been harmed or affected.

APPEAL PROCESS

Parents/legal guardians have the right to appeal to the Board of Trustees any suspension of 5 or more days, as per the Public Schools Act. As per Board Bylaw, any person wishing to appear before the board as a delegation, either as an individual or on behalf of a group, shall advise the secretary-treasurer in writing of such intent by 12:00 p.m. of the seventh day preceding the regularly scheduled business meeting of the board at which they wish to appear.

Students and legal guardians must follow the established appeal process. In the case of a student who has been suspended 5 or more days, the Board of Trustees must permit the student and their legal guardian(s) to make representations to the Board of Trustees about the suspension. The school board may confirm the suspension, modify it, or reinstate the student.

Board of Trustees appeal procedures must include the following considerations:

- Advise legal guardians of their right to make a formal appeal (within 14 days) of decisions about their children's educational programming and of their right to be accompanied by a supporting person;
- Address the appeal at the next scheduled school board meeting or sooner;
- Ensure procedures support and maintain confidentiality;
- Provide those affected with the opportunity to give or provide a written statement;
- Document in the Student Information System and/or cumulative file component of the pupil file any information about behavioural misconduct and disciplinary measures meted out, including suspension relating to the student;
- Record the decision of an appeal in the pupil file/Student Information System.

DOCUMENTATION

Each event of suspension must be documented. Documentation must include:

- Information about the misconduct;

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- Disciplinary measures issued;
- The actions undertaken by the school in relation to a student.

A copy of the documentation is to be placed in the pupil file and entered in the divisional Student Information System.

Procedures for documenting suspension should consider the following:

- Consultation with the Superintendent/CEO or designate;
- Maintenance of accurate information;
- A record of communication between staff and the student and legal guardians;
- A record of the re-entry meeting;
- A process to identify students with multiple/recurring suspensions;
- A consistent manner to document attendance in the divisional information system for students who are suspended.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Standards for Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba state that school divisions must require schools to keep records on the nature and duration of all suspensions both in and out of school. A principal must:

- Develop categories for the reasons of a student suspension and ensure that each suspension is categorized;
- Ensure that, for each category, the total number of students suspended and the duration of suspensions are tabulated.

Data collection should be used to:

- Inform the annual review of the school's code of conduct and emergency procedures;
- plan for safety and belonging;
- enable schools and the division to understand circumstances around the use of suspension while facilitating the implementation of more effective strategies to support educational programming and responses;
- monitor and analyze suspension rates and trends.

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Schools and the School Division must have a designated group to review school and school division suspension data.

A brief divisional report will be provided to the Board in September by the Superintendent/CEO. The report will include the number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions, incident types as listed in PowerSchool, the number of CFS involved student suspensions and the number of serious incidents by level (early, middle, senior) and by school.

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