

# ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

TITLE: STUDENT SUSPENSIONS

CATEGORY: EDUCATION

NUMBER: 1320

## I. Preamble:

SD46 is committed to fostering safe, caring and healthy schools that promote mutual respect, cooperation, and social responsibility, and support optimal learning. Trauma-informed practices promote the creation and maintenance of safe, inclusive, equitable, welcoming, and nurturing school environments

Our schools are inclusive environments that value all students and families through a lens of equity, diversity and belonging.

SD46 supports strategies that rely on prevention and intervention, so students learn to solve their problems in peaceful ways, value diversity, and defend human rights. This is rooted in the First People's Principles of Learning and recognizes the importance of providing learning opportunities, restitution, and restorative practices as alternatives to suspension.

Students learn and mature as they move through successive grades. As such, the expectations and consequences increase with regard to personal responsibility and self-discipline when a student breaches the code of conduct. Expectations and consequences are student-specific and developmentally appropriate.

The goal for any disciplinary action should be that students learn and develop more appropriate skills from the experience and, as such, all disciplinary measures should reflect this philosophy.

There may be times when it is necessary to use suspension as part of the disciplinary process for a student. Suspensions are used in very specific situations when other interventions have been tried and found to be ineffective, and/or when the exhibited behaviour is severe enough that it places the student and/or others at risk.

A suspension from school is described in sections 26 and 85 (2) (c) of the *BC School Act* which grants the Board of Education authority to allow the Superintendent of Schools, director of instruction, principal, vice-principal or delegate, to suspend a student from attendance at a school.

## II. General Guidelines

### A. District:

1. The District Administration shall offer proactive support to School Administration to:
2. Ensure that acts contrary to the code of conduct are not tolerated.
3. Provide resources and structures for staff on proactive strategies to support students requiring behaviour interventions.

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4. Ensure equitable and consistent processes across the district.
5. Implement and oversee school-level Violent Risk Assessments as determined by the District Team when required: <https://sd46.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/3180-Responding-to-a-Threat.pdf>

## B. Principals:

1. Principals shall offer strategies that proactively support responsibility and respect for the rights of all students and staff. These strategies could include activities such as: discussions, presentations, mentoring, or intervention programs, in order to foster a safe, supportive environment.
2. **Examples of Positive Behaviour Interventions**
  - i. **Education** - An educational component that will help students understand the relationship between behaviour and its impact on others is crucial to the discipline process. Wherever practical and appropriate, students will be provided with opportunities to make restitution for their behaviour.
  - ii. **Restorative Action** - It is recognized that in many instances, a restorative response can have a significant impact on improving relationships and behaviour, helping rebuild community and a sense of safety, preventing further incidents, preserving the dignity of all involved, and creating opportunity for dialogue and meaningful accountability-taking.
  - iii. **Circles** – A proactive, restorative process whereby a larger group meets together in a circle to speak, listen, enhance relationships, support one another, and participate in exercises designed to foster a sense of community and build skills for navigating conflict.
  - iv. **District Inclusion Support Team**– District team that provides specialized integrated service and capacity building alongside school teams for grades K-12 who require enhanced services and supports to meet their needs.
  - v. **Wherever possible, principals will ensure processes are followed related to School Based Team (SBT) and District Inclusion Support Team referrals.**

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3. Principals are responsible for, but not limited to:
  - i. Creating positive learning environments and ensuring regular structure of the SBT.
  - ii. Ensuring that the school code of conduct and Fair Notice: Response to Threat Making Behaviour are communicated to parent(s)/guardian(s), students, and staff <https://sd46.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/3180-Responding-to-a-Threat.pdf>
  - iii. Ensuring that parent(s)/guardian(s), students, and staff are provided with the District practices that lead to safe and inclusive schools.
  - iv. Ensuring the safety of students and staff who report violations of the Code of Conduct.
  - v. Responding appropriately to threats or acts of violence.
4. Formal suspensions of elementary-aged students are only to be used in exceptional circumstances.
5. We endeavour to ensure equitable practices are implemented for all students, with consideration to students identified as those facing systemic, learning or social barriers. We acknowledge that they may require special consideration, consultation, and planning.
6. When the students' actions may result in suspension, the specific needs of the student must be considered prior to a formal suspension being issued.
7. Wherever possible, prior to considering a suspension, school-based and/or district-based staff associated with the student should be consulted to help provide student-specific interventions and strategies.

## C. Student Suspension Protocol:

1. At the start of the school year, or at the time of registration, the principal shall ensure that parents and students have direct communication about of the code of conduct along with the possible consequences for the violation of these expectations.
2. Corrective measures shall include a due warning to both the student and the parent/guardian that continued infractions of the code of conduct could ultimately lead to a suspension.

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3. As part of progressive discipline, suspensions may follow a series of incremental consequences, except in situations where student or staff safety is a consideration.
4. Accurate records shall be maintained and entered into the Student Information System of significant infractions of the code of conduct and the related disciplinary measures that were followed. These records should also include the type and time of communication with the parent/guardian with regard to these infractions.
5. Whatever the length of suspension, the principal shall ensure the continuance of an educational program for the student.
6. Parents are entitled to appeal decisions to suspend or exclude by using the procedures in Regulation 2070 (How to Communicate with Us) and Bylaw 70 (Appeals Bylaw).
7. By September 30th of each year, the principal of each school shall notify the Superintendent in writing, of the names of any Principal or designate(s) having authority to suspend students from school under section 177 of the *BC School Act*.

## D. Out-of-School Suspension Process:

1. A principal or designate may suspend a student from attendance at a school and may determine the length of the suspension. The principal will ensure students have been adequately assessed, that appropriate interventions have been applied, that the grounds for suspension are clear and appropriate and, if applicable, that the potential for the involvement of other agencies before suspension is used.
2. The student will remain at the school under the administrator's supervision until contact has been established with the student's parents or caretaker and a plan put in place for the return of the student to the parents.
3. All out-of-school suspensions will be reported to the superintendent, parents and/or guardians in writing, with a cc: to the appropriate district level personnel. The letter will include: the infraction, and, if applicable, any previous restorative action or indication of previous suspensions or warnings, a request for a meeting with the parent if that has not happened, the provision for the continuity of the educational program, and the re-entry plan.
4. All student suspensions in excess of five days will be immediately communicated to the superintendent.

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5. Provision shall be made for the continuance of an educational program for the student during the period of the out-of-school suspension. Appropriate interventions must be offered and planning undertaken for successful re-entry.
6. The superintendent has the authority to readmit a student who has been suspended.

**E. Exclusions:**

1. Please refer to Regulation 3150 (Medical Exclusions).

**F. In School Suspension:**

1. A principal or designate may suspend a student from attendance in classes and have the student spend the period of time in a designated area of the school.
2. Parents or guardians shall be notified of the change in educational program, including the length, the reason and any conditions for reinstatement.
3. Provision shall be made for the continuance of an educational program for the student during this time.
4. The principal shall provide for staff supervision of the student during this period.

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**References:** *School Act*, Section 26, 85 (2) c, d; Board Policies 1.3 and 11.5; Regulation 3150 (Medical Exclusions), Regulation 2070 (How to Communicate with Us) and Board Bylaw 70 (Appeals Bylaw)