

Summary of Changes and Modifications to the Discipline Policy

Overview

The review of the discipline policy resulted in extensive changes both in format and in content. Instead of one policy there are six. The first is entitled Discipline, and it provides a general basis for the remaining five policies. The others are Detention, Alternative Educational Environments, Suspension, Expulsion, and Corporal Punishment. These policies have been written to provide greater clarity and specificity.

Policy Statements

Discipline

The major change here is more than just format. The policy focuses on the need to maintain an appropriate educational environment and at the same time continue to foster student growth.

Detention

Detention has long been used as a means of addressing inappropriate student behavior; however, no policy statement had been written to date to recognize its use in Howard County.

Alternative Educational Environments

For a number of years, schools have used programs such as contract rooms, ALPS, and Gateway School for addressing the needs of certain students. These programs are now recognized through policy.

Suspension and Expulsion

These two policies were formerly written as procedures. In order to clarify and to specify the uses of each, policies have been written.

Corporal Punishment

The importance of prohibiting corporal punishment has been recognized by providing a separate policy.

Regulations and Procedures

Discipline

Much of the language in the procedures section from the old policy has been retained, but in most cases it is found in other sections of the policy. The new policy regulations and procedures have been written to identify the various categories of offenses and a progression of intervention techniques.

Detention

The practice used to assign detention has been made explicit.

Alternative Educational Environment

The programs and practice which are associated with this policy have been made explicit.

Suspension

The procedures in this section have been written to include all steps associated with suspending a student whether the student is in regular or special education. Also made explicit are the categories under which suspension may be used. The policy is written to support the concept of progressive discipline.

Expulsion

These procedures have been written to provide guidelines for what must take place after a student has been suspended if he or she is to be expelled.

Corporal Punishment

The regulation and procedures sections have been written to include a definition of what corporal punishment is and what is to be done to report incidents of its use.

DISCIPLINE

POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of Education recognizes the need for a school environment that is orderly and safe. Discipline is intended to foster student growth while ensuring an acceptable environment for students to learn and teachers to teach. Discipline is a means of teaching students methods for self responsibility.

The Board recognizes that the behavior of the student is the shared responsibility of the school, the student, and the home. The professional staff, at a school, has the responsibility for taking appropriate action when a student is involved in a situation which is not conducive to a safe and orderly environment. The student has the right to be informed of the reasons for disciplinary action.

The Superintendent is directed to develop procedures to implement this policy.

Legal Reference: COMAR, 13A.08.01.01

Original Approval: May 2, 1972

Date of Revision:

DISCIPLINE

I. DEFINITIONS

Provided are definitions for terms whose meanings are not fully developed in the text of the policies related to discipline. This includes policies 3431 through 3436.

- A. Detention - the requirement of a student to be supervised in a school setting during the time that would normally be unstructured.
- B. Alternative Educational Environment - a school setting which is designed to accommodate the needs of students who have demonstrated inappropriate behavior to the extent that it is disruptive to their own learning and the learning of others.
 - 1. Contract room - a short term placement of a student in a setting within the school supervised by a staff member in which the student does class work for the classes that are missed and develops a plan to avoid future disciplinary action.
 - 2. Alternative Learning Programs - a long term placement of a student in a setting within the school supervised by a staff member in which the student receives instruction in core courses and develops strategies to avoid the continuation of inappropriate behavior.
 - 3. Gateway School - a school established to provide long term educational opportunities outside of the regular school setting in which students are provided instruction in all subjects as well as the development of behaviors to allow them to re-enter the home school.
- C. Suspension - the denial of a student's right to attend school by a principal for a period of not more than five (5) school days for cause in accordance with all rules and regulations, or the denial of a student's right to attend school for a period of more than five (5) school days for cause in accordance with all rules and regulations after investigation and approval by the superintendent or designee.
- D. Expulsion - the permanent removal of a student from school for cause in accordance with all rules and regulation after investigation by the superintendent or designee.
- E. Admission, Review and Dismissal Committee (ARD) - committee established to consider all admissions, reviews and dismissals of students with respect to special education.

II. REGULATIONS

- A. The Board recognizes the following methods of disciplinary action:
 - 1. Conferences and the Outcomes from the Conferences
 - 2. Detention
 - 3. Alternative Educational Environments
 - 4. Suspension
 - 5. Expulsion

- B. Disciplinary problems may be placed in three categories.
1. Behavior harmful primarily to the individual. Examples are:
 - a. Truancy from school or class
 - b. Inattentiveness
 - c. Use and possession of drugs and alcohol
 2. Behavior which interferes with the responsibilities, privileges, and property of others. Examples are:
 - a. Disrupting classroom lessons and school routine
 - b. Violation of the Smoking Policy
 - c. Theft
 - d. Constant annoyance of another individual
 3. Behaviors which threaten the health or well-being of others. Examples are:
 - a. Fighting
 - b. Violation of the weapons policy
 - c. Making threatening remarks with the intent of doing bodily harm
 - d. Distribution of drugs and alcohol
- C. School personnel have the responsibility for determining the appropriate disciplinary action based on the severity and/or frequency of the action of the student. If a policy is violated by the action of the student, the disciplinary action taken by school personnel will be determined by the specifications in that policy.

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DISCIPLINE IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

The discipline policy is to be implemented in a progressive manner. With the exception of conferences, each of the intervention methods is detailed in a separate policy.

- I. The following procedures are recommended as an effort of progressive discipline:
 - A. Student-teacher conference
 - B. Student-teacher-parent conference
 - C. Student-administrator conference
 - D. Student-teacher-administrator conference
 - E. Parent-administrator conference
 - F. Student-teacher-administrator-parent conference
 - G. Student-teacher-counselor conference
 - H. Student-teacher-counselor-parent conference
 - I. Student-teacher-administrator-specialist conference (e.g., special education teacher, pupil personnel worker, psychologist, etc.)
 - J. Student-teacher-parent-administrator-superintendent designee conference

- II. Other methods of intervention:
 - A. Detention after the usual closing of the school day for students with prior parent approval
 - B. Restriction of privileges with administrative approval
 - C. Withdrawal of a class attendance privilege from one to three classes or activities until a satisfactory parent conference is held
 - D. Change of environment, e.g. class assignment, school assignment
 - E. Suspension
 - F. Expulsion

Administrative Approval: