



OTTAWA-CARLETON  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

# Safe Schools

## Student Suspension and Expulsion

Offering a safe and inclusive learning environment is one of our top priorities. We believe a positive climate exists when all members of the community feel safe, comfortable, accepted, and valued. Creating and maintaining a safe environment requires the active involvement and vigilance of students, parents/guardians, and staff.

With a number of new safe school initiatives arising from the Ontario Government and Bill 13 — the Accepting Schools Act, 2012, we are revising our policies and procedures dealing with suspension and expulsion. This is being done in consultation with students, staff, school councils, community and advisory groups.

### Key Priorities are:

- Using a progressive discipline approach in the case of inappropriate student behaviour
- Looking at mitigating and other factors before students are suspended or expelled
- Offering an educational program to students who have been suspended for more than five days or who have been expelled

### What This Means to Our Students and Parents

A school is a place that promotes acceptance, responsibility, respect, and academic excellence in a safe and caring learning environment. *The Board Code of Conduct* (Policy P.125.SCO) available at [www.ocdsb.ca](http://www.ocdsb.ca) and the School Code of Conduct that can be found in your child's school handbook set clear standards of behaviour that apply to all individuals in our learning community.

### Progressive Discipline

A progressive discipline approach is used to deal with inappropriate behaviour. This may include written work with a learning component, withdrawal of privileges; withdrawal from class; detention; restitution

for damages; conflict resolution; individual, peer and group mediation; service to the school community; referral to counselling; suspension; and expulsion.

### Suspensions

(Policy P.020.SCO, Procedure PR.511.SCO)

Parents need to know that students may be suspended from one to 20 school days if they are engaged in any of the activities listed below while at school, or at a school-related activity off school property. Students may also be suspended for conduct in other circumstances where engaging in the conduct will have an impact on the school climate.

### Reasons for suspension include:

- uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person
- possessing alcohol or illegal drugs
- being under the influence of alcohol
- swearing at a teacher or another person in a position of authority
- bullying
- committing an act of vandalism that causes damage to District property or to property located on the premises of the District
- persistent opposition to authority
- habitual neglect of duty as a student
- wilful destruction of school property or property located on school premises
- use of profane or improper language
- conduct injurious to the moral tone of the school or the physical or mental well-being of others in the school
- inappropriate use of information technology as defined in District policies and procedures

- smoking on school/District premises
- possession or sale of illegal or unauthorized tobacco products, prescription drugs, and alcohol
- being under the influence of illegal drugs
- violation of the District dress code
- any act considered to be contrary to the District or school code of conduct

### **Student Suspension/Investigation/Possible Expulsion**

(Policy P.026.SCO, Procedure PR.515.SCO)

A student may be expelled by an Expulsion Hearing Panel following an investigation for the following reasons:

- possessing a weapon including possessing a firearm
- using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person
- committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner
- committing sexual assault
- trafficking in weapons or illegal drugs
- committing robbery
- giving alcohol to a minor
- bullying, if,
  - the pupil has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying, and
  - the pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person.
- any activity listed in subsection 306 (1) that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor
- any other activity for which a principal must suspend/conduct an investigation which may lead to expelling a student as a result of Board policy
- the student's pattern of behaviour is so refractory that his or her presence is injurious to the effective learning environment of others
- the student has engaged in activities that cause his or her presence

in the school to be injurious to the physical or emotional well-being of other persons in the school

- the student has engaged in activities that cause extensive damage to property of the District or to the property on District premises

### **Appealing a Suspension**

(Policy P.022.SCO, Procedure PR.512.SCO)

Should you choose to appeal a suspension, the following steps must be followed:

- Suspensions made in accordance with Policy P.020.SCO and Procedure PR.511.SCO can be appealed by sending a written request to the Director of Education/Secretary of the Board within ten (10) school days of the beginning of the suspension.
- Suspensions made in accordance with P.026.SCO and Procedure PR.515.SCO can be appealed by sending a written request to the Director of Education/Secretary of the Board within five (5) school days of the notice not to recommend expulsion.

In both cases, the Superintendent of Instruction has the discretion to settle the appeal through a review. If a settlement is not reached, the appeal will be heard by an Appeals Hearing Panel (a formal committee of the Board) in accordance with Policy P.022.SCO and Procedure PR.512.SCO. The appeal will be heard within 15 school days of receiving your notice of appeal.

### **Appealing an Expulsion**

(Policy P.023.SCO, Procedure PR.513.SCO)

Expulsions can also be appealed to the Child and Family Services Review Board of the Province of Ontario, 2 Bloor Street West, 24th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3V5.

### **Comments or Concerns**

We encourage parents to review the information contained in this factsheet with their children.

If you have any comments or concerns regarding the information in this factsheet, please contact your school principal or call the Principal of Inclusive, Safe and Caring Programs at 613-596-8211 ext. 8464.

For further information, visit the Ministry of Education's website at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/pdfs/saferSchools.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/pdfs/saferSchools.pdf).

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