

Public Schools Branch

OPERATIONAL POLICY

STUDENT SUSPENSION	
<i>Policy Section</i> Programs and Services	<i>Policy Number</i> 407
Page 1 of 6	<i>Approved Date</i> November 15, 2017
<i>Reviewed Date</i>	<i>Effective Date</i> November 15, 2017
<i>Replaces:</i> Western School Board #6 - Student Suspensions, Expulsions and Appeals – January 26, 2009	

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To support a safe learning and teaching environment.
- 1.2 To outline the authority and circumstances for a suspension or expulsion of a student within a context of progressive discipline.
- 1.3 To provide the procedures that must be followed regarding suspension or expulsion in accordance with the *Education Act* and Student Regulations

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 The Public Schools Branch (PSB) is committed to providing safe and caring learning environments for students and recognizes the role of discipline in creating such an environment. The PSB acknowledges the role of suspension and expulsion of a student in response to a student's non-compliant and/or dangerous behavior when:
 - a) Other means of progressive discipline have failed to bring about acceptable or appropriate conduct on the part of the student; or
 - b) The student's behavior is so severe that lesser corrective action would be insufficient.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Suspension - The exclusion of a student from attending school or a class, and/or the placement of a condition(s) on a student. A suspension can also include an in-school suspension where there is a formal arrangement for a student to remain in school under appropriate supervision, usually in a private area.
- 3.2 School premises – a building or property under the management or operation of the Public Schools Branch that is used in whole or in part for the instruction of students.
- 3.3 Progressive discipline – an approach that makes use of a continuum of prevention programs, preventative actions, interventions, supports, consequences and strategies which promote and build upon positive behaviours.
- 3.4 Restorative Justice – an approach to discipline and an alternative to punitive responses to wrongdoing which brings together persons harmed with persons

responsible for harm in a safe and respectful space, promoting dialogue, accountability and a stronger sense of community.

- 3.5 Threat assessment – a systematic process to assess the risk of violence and address dangerous behaviour through an integrated intervention plan. This plan provides documentation of the incident, an assessment of the level of risk that the student's behaviour presents to the school, and interventions that correspond to the staff's level of concern.
- 3.6 Hearing Committee - A committee authorized by the *Education Act* which has the authority to make decisions related to student appeal and expulsion matters. The membership of the Hearing Committee is in accordance with the Hearing Committee Terms of Reference – GP 8d.
- 3.7 Expulsion - An exclusion from school until the end of the school year in which the exclusion occurs, with the exception of section 6.4.2.

4.0 GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION

- 4.1 Disciplinary practices must reflect respect for each student's worth, dignity and self-esteem.
- 4.2 Under normal circumstances, a thorough review of all sides of an incident shall be conducted by the principal or appropriate staff person(s) with the individual(s) concerned before any decision to suspend is finalized.
- 4.3 Where a student has committed one or more of the infractions below, whether on or off school premises, on a school bus or during a school-related activity/event, that affects the school environment a suspension from school and/or conditions on a student may be considered as part of a progressive discipline approach. These infractions include but are not limited to:
 - a) Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person;
 - b) Possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
 - c) Acts of verbal (written or oral) or physical abuse toward staff or students;
 - d) Committing an act of vandalism that causes damage to a school or PSB property or to property located on school grounds;
 - e) Bullying or cyberbullying;
 - f) Opposition to school authority;
 - g) Any act considered by the principal to negatively affect the school environment or the physical or mental well-being of a member of the school community; and
 - h) Any act considered by the principal to be contrary to the *Education Act*, PSB policies and procedures or a student's school code of conduct.
- 4.4 Where a student's actions result in a suspension, a student may be suspended from:
 - a) Attending one or more class periods;
 - b) Attending one or more courses or school programs;
 - c) Riding on a school bus;
 - d) Participating in a school-sponsored activity; and/or
 - e) Attending school or any or all school activities.
- 4.5 Student absenteeism is not grounds for a suspension from school. However, student absenteeism may be grounds for conditions to be placed on a student.

- 4.6 Where a student is suspended from attending school, the student is not permitted to be on school premises, school busses or to participate in any school-sponsored activities/events for the duration of the suspension, unless prior permission is given by the person who imposed the suspension.

5.0 CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 When consideration is being given to suspend or place conditions on a student, the following factors will be taking into account:
 - 5.1.1 The student's age;
 - 5.1.2 The student's history (disciplinary history, personal history, recent trauma, etc.);
 - 5.1.3 The student's level of accountability;
 - 5.1.4 The student's ability to control his/her behavior;
 - 5.1.5 The student's ability to understand the consequences of his/her actions;
 - 5.1.6 Whether an alternative disciplinary approach, like restorative justice, would be appropriate and effective, in the opinion of the authorized person considering the suspension.
 - 5.1.7 Whether the student's presence in the school creates an unacceptable safety risk; and
- 5.2 A student who is suspended from school may be offered supports to promote positive behavior and an academic program that will assist with continued learning.
- 5.3 Where a student has been suspended from riding the bus, the parent/guardian will be required to arrange transportation to and from school.
- 5.4 A parent/guardian of a student who has been suspended from school may be requested to arrange for the student to be picked up from school. Where the student cannot be picked up from school, the student may be permitted to follow the regular dismissal plan for that day or serve an in-school suspension for the remainder of the day.

6.0 AUTHORITY/REPORTING

- 6.1 In accordance with the *Education Act*, the PSB has the authority to suspend a student in the following manner:
- 6.2 Teacher
 - 6.2.1 A teacher may suspend a student for a period not exceeding one half day.
 - 6.2.2 Unless used as a defined and agreed upon behavior management strategy, a teacher who excludes a student from part or all of his/her class shall:
 - a) Provide written notice to the principal,
 - b) Provide notice to the parent/guardian; and
 - c) Meet with the student to discuss the exclusion from class.
 - 6.2.3 A teacher may not suspend a student from the school premises or place any additional conditions on a student.
- 6.3 Principal
 - 6.3.1 A principal may suspend and/or place conditions on a student for a period not exceeding five consecutive instructional days.

- 6.3.2 A principal who suspends or places conditions on a student shall promptly notify the student's parent/guardian by phone and provide written notice within five business days.
- 6.3.3 The Suspension Report shall serve as the written notice which includes:
 - a) A description of the circumstances leading to, the reasons for, the duration of and the placement of conditions on or suspension of the student.
 - b) A copy of any supporting documentation; and
 - c) Information respecting the right of the parent/guardian to appeal the decision in accordance with the *Education Act*, Student Regulations and the Student Appeal Policy.
- 6.3.4 The principal shall also provide a copy of the Suspension Report to the Director of Student Services.
- 6.3.5 A principal may revoke the conditions on a student at any time while the conditions are in place.
- 6.3.6 A principal may reinstate a student who is suspended at any time during the period of the suspension.
- 6.4 Director
 - 6.4.1 The Director of the Public Schools Branch (Director) may suspend a student for a period determined by the Director.
 - 6.4.2 The Director may suspend a student from school for any period after April 30 that continues until the end of the school year, and that suspension shall not be considered to be an expulsion of the student.
 - 6.4.3 Where the Director is considering the suspension or placement of conditions on a student, the Director:
 - a) May arrange a meeting with the involved staff;
 - b) May arrange a meeting with the student;
 - c) May arrange a meeting with the student and a parent/guardian of the student; or
 - d) Shall arrange a meeting with the student and a parent/guardian of a student at the request of a parent/guardian.
 - 6.4.4 Where the Director suspends or places conditions on a student, the Director shall promptly notify the student's parent/guardian by phone and provide written notice within five business days.
 - 6.4.5 The Suspension Report shall serve as the written notice which includes:
 - d) A description of the circumstances leading to, the reasons for, the duration of and the placement of conditions on or suspension of the student.
 - e) A copy of any supporting documentation; and
 - f) Information respecting the right of the parent to appeal the decision in accordance with the *Education Act*, Student Regulations and the Student Appeal Policy.
 - 6.4.6 The Director shall also provide a copy of the Suspension Report and submit it to the Director of Student Services or in the case of a bussing suspension to the Transportation Services Coordinator.

- 6.4.7 The Director shall promptly report, in writing, the suspension or placement of conditions on a student, for more than five consecutive days, to the Board Chair.
- 6.4.8 The Director may revoke the conditions on a student at any time while the conditions are in place.
- 6.4.9 The Director may reinstate a student who is suspended at any time during the period of the suspension.

7.0 TRANSFER OF SUSPENSION

- 7.1 Where a student who is currently suspended changes schools within the Public Schools Branch, the suspended student will complete the suspension at the new school. Any exception must be agreed upon by the respective principals or the Director.

8.0 APPEAL

- 8.1 Where the parent/guardian considers a suspension or conditions place on a student to be unwarranted, the parent/guardian can ask for a review in accordance with the Concerns and Resolutions Procedure.
- 8.2 Where the parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the review, the parent may appeal the decision in accordance with the Student Appeal Policy.
- 8.3 A request for an appeal does not delay a suspension or the conditions placed on a student.

9.0 SCHOOL RE-ENTRY

- 9.1 The principal or Director will request a meeting with the parent/guardian and student prior to school re-entry to develop a plan to support a change in student behavior.
- 9.2 Where there is a threat to the student's safety or the safety of others, a threat assessment may be required prior to school re-entry.

10.0 EXPULSION

- 10.1 A student may be expelled from school in accordance with the *Education Act*, Student Regulations and the Expulsion Hearing Policy.
- 10.2 Where the PSB Board of Directors is considering the expulsion of a student, a hearing must first be held with the Hearing Committee.
- 10.3 A student who has been expelled from school has lost the right to access the education program of the PSB, is not permitted on school grounds or school buses and is not permitted to attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities for the duration of the expulsion.

11.0 SUSPENSION/EXPULSION RECORDS

- 11.1 Suspension or expulsion records should be managed in accordance with the Student Record policy and procedure.

12.0 FORM

- 12.1 Suspension Report

13.0 CROSS REFERENCE

- 13.1 Operational Procedure 102.1 - Concerns and Resolutions
- 13.2 Governance Policy GP 11 - Student Appeal Policy
- 13.3 Governance Policy GP 16 - Expulsion Hearing
- 13.4 Operational Policy and Procedure 103 & 103.1- Student Record
- 13.5 PSB Incident Response Guide
- 13.6 *Education Act*
- 13.7 Student Regulations

~ ~ ~