

SAFE SCHOOLS PROTOCOL



MANUAL FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Department of Education

**4th Revision
December 2009**

From:

The Department of Education.....

The policies and procedures contained in this Safe School Manual for public schools have been prepared by the Department of Education, in consultation with The Bahamas Union of Teachers (*BUT*), Parent Teachers Associations (*PTAs*), Law Enforcement Agencies, Advisory Council on Education, SCAN and the Department of Social Services.

The Department of Education believes that a safe school environment is conducive to learning, personal growth, and overall success for all students. This goal can be best achieved when order is maintained in the school, the classroom, on school property, and at school-based events. Schools, none-the-less, are expected to provide a climate that promotes learning in a safe and peaceful environment. To this end, there must be a discipline policy which governs the conduct and behaviour of all who work and learn within our schools.

The policies and supporting regulations outlined are designed to teach responsible student-behaviour that will result in effective citizenship, caring relationships, and improved student-achievement. Everyone throughout the school system (*parents, students, teachers, administrators, security officers, clerical and custodial staff*) must take a direct, personal and active responsibility for ensuring that a fair discipline system is not only developed, but also maintained.

This document does not contain all solutions for every disciplinary problem in our school system, as no one instrument is capable of solving all of our present and future challenges. However, the guidelines and procedures will, it is hoped, offer a more unified and systematic approach to disciplinary issues faced within all levels of our educational system.

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Director of Education
August 2009**

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1.....GOALS OF THE SAFE SCHOOL MANUAL

The Safe School Manual, which outlines the Department of Education's policies and procedures concerning conduct and discipline, is designed to:

- 1) Ensure that every student follows the accepted rules of conduct and shows respect for, and obeys, persons in authority;**
- 2) Develop in every student a positive attitude towards self-discipline and socially acceptable behaviours;**
- 3) Foster sound educational practice and productive learning;**
- 4) Help schools maintain a learning atmosphere which is safe and conducive to the learning process and free from unnecessary disruption;**
- 5) Let parents and the community know that unacceptable behaviour by students will not be tolerated;**
- 6) Allow for reasonable and appropriate physical intervention or force in dealing with disruptive students;**
- 7) Promote a strong home / school / community partnership in order to maintain a safe, healthy and positive learning environment;**
- 8) Develop in students a perception of safety (*physical, emotional, and spiritual*) of the teaching / learning environment.**

SAFE SCHOOL PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Each school is encouraged to develop a Safe School Plan (SSP) to be used for current and future planning.

2.....COMPONENTS OF A SAFE SCHOOL PLAN COMPULSORY FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS

- \$ A planning team consisting of representatives from all aspects of the community.**
- \$ A site assessment survey to determine extent of school safety problems and / or issues.**
- \$ Strategies to address the needs identified by the survey. Code of conduct, violence prevention programmes, referral procedures.**
- \$ Social support team responsible for providing help in identifying *at risk* students and appropriate support.**
- \$ A crisis response plan which outlines specific procedures for teachers and students during emergencies.**

Efficient and effective programmes are ongoing, systematic and comprehensive and each stakeholder in the education process must become actively involved in promoting safe schools.

The Administrators, the planning team, the teachers, students, other school-based personnel, and parents are essential to a successful discipline system.

3.....SCHOOL-BASED PLANNING TEAM'S ROLE

- i) Review the status of the school discipline, and the adequacy of current rules, procedures and staff support.**
- ii) Develop an in-school suspension programme (*misbehaving students spend the school day doing assigned work under competent supervision*).**
- iii) Recommend suggested actions to be taken in specific discipline cases.**
- iv) Consider issues regarding general discipline matters or special concerns.**
- v) Planning and implementing community programmes for students, teachers, and parents, which promote positive rewarding activities and relationships.**
- vi) Establish guidelines and procedures for identifying students-at-risk.**
- vii) Establish programmes for awarding positive behaviours.**

4.....ROLE OF ADMINISTRATOR

- a) Provide leadership in developing and monitoring the SSP**
- b) Establish a reliable system of tracking and reporting incidences of unacceptable behaviour.**
- c) Establish procedures for emergency evacuation and crisis management.**
- d) Lead in articulating and implementing disciplinary strategies for teachers and students, and a code of conduct.**
- e) Create school-community-home partnerships.**
- f) Develop / have access to comprehensive prevention education and conflict resolution programmes.**
- g) Establish more extra-curricular activities and clubs to keep students constructively occupied.**
- h) Keep staff, students and parents fully and promptly informed of activities, decisions, along with other matters relevant to school discipline.**
- i) Regularly initiate review of discipline strategies and code of conduct.**
- j) Implement and enforce school discipline policy and encourage support of all staff.**
- k) Ensure that all teachers have written classroom rules and access to the discipline policy.**
- l) Control campus access and establish visitor screening procedures.**

5.....ROLE OF TEACHERS

- < **Participate in the development of the SSP and discipline code.**
- < **Accept teaching and modelling of pro-social / positive behaviour as important as the teaching of academic subjects.**
- < **Expect support for discipline from administrators and parents.**
- < **Respond to students in a caring and respectful manner.**
- < **Display impartial behaviour to all students.**
- < **Enforce rules and regulations firmly, consistently and promptly.**
- < **Ensure that consequences for breaking rules and regulations have a positive learning orientation.**
- < **Emphasize positive student self-concept by stressing the benefits of self-discipline.**
- < **Use rewards for good behaviour as well as punishment for negative behaviour.**
- < **Demonstrate fair play by avoiding public embarrassment of students, and / or punishing an entire class for the misbehaviour of a few.**
- < **Include discipline education as a regular part of the instructional programme (*see appendix >A= for possible topics*).**
- < **Accept responsibility for maintaining discipline in school and on school grounds.**
- < **Be an implementer of the school discipline policy and develop (*in consultation with students*) written classroom rules that complement the policy (*see appendix >B=*).**
- < **Be adequately trained in acceptable disciplinary procedures.**
- < **Keep accurate discipline records and consistently inform**

administration of discipline problems.

6.....ROLE OF STUDENTS

Parents and families are expected to help students assume the following responsibilities.

All students are expected to:

- # **Accept responsibility for their own behaviour.**
- # **Use problem-solving skills to resolve conflicts.**
- # **Follow the established school and classroom rules and report violation of these rules to the proper authorities.**
- # **Maintain appropriate dress and hygiene.**
- # **Treat each other and school staff with courtesy and respect.**
- # **Respect the rights and property of others.**
- # **Avoid acting in such a manner as to expose others to risk, danger, harm or injury.**
- # **Avoid the use of threats or intimidation against others.**
- # **Avoid engaging in unlawful or immoral activities.**
- # **Refrain from carrying, bringing, using or possessing any weapon, illicit drugs or prohibited electronic devices in, or on school property.**
- # **Maintain high academic standards.**
- # **Provide (*if age appropriate*) for consideration, views on the school discipline policy and classroom rules.**
- # **Avail themselves of opportunities to perform at their best academically.**
- # **Help create safe schools by:**
 - a) **Creating, joining or supporting student organisations.**

- b) Helping to develop and participate in activities that promote understanding of differences and respect for the rights of all**
- c) Volunteering to mentor younger students or provide peer tutoring.**
- d) Modelling responsible behaviour by reacting to anger without physically or verbally harming others.**

7.....ROLE OF PARENTS

All parents are expected to:

- 1 **Become actively involved in the school community (*know your children's teachers*).**
- 1 **Review the school discipline policies with your children.**
- 1 **Encourage children's participation in post-school and school-sponsored activities.**
- 1 **Have a voice in the development and review of school discipline policy and decisions.**
- 1 **Control and correct the behaviour of your children.**
- 1 **Keep the school informed about your children's needs (*including health*) and request information from the school about your children's performance and behaviour.**
- 1 **Volunteer to help make the school safe by patrolling school routes, monitor the playground, etc.**
- 1 **Request training that will assist in better educating your children.**
- 1 **Make sure that the school can contact you during the day.**
- 1 **Visit the school to discuss children's performance with teachers, (*make arrangements in advance, or notify administration first of your presence in school*).**

8.....GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTERING DISCIPLINE

Creating a positive school climate, and developing a fair and consistently enforced discipline system, is the responsibility of the administrative and teaching staff of the individual schools.

The school has the authority to administer discipline whenever the interest of the school is involved, on or off school property, in conjunction with class or school-sponsored activities.

Further, the school may recommend expulsion but does not have the legitimate authority to carry out the expulsion.

The scope of this authority applies:

- I. During the regular school day (*regardless of time*).**
- II. While the student is participating in any activity on school grounds.**
- III. During lunch (*whether on or off the school campus*).**
- IV. While the student is in attendance at any school-related activity regardless of time, or location.**
- V. For any school-related misconduct regardless of time or location.**
- VI. When the student retaliates, or threatens retaliation, against a school employee regardless of time or location.**
- VII. When the student commits a criminal offence on the school property, or at a school-sponsored event, (*for example: extra-curricular activities, school-sponsored field trips, sports, etc.*) the Law Enforcement Agents will be informed.**

Students are expected to respect those in authority whether inside the classroom, on the campus, or at school-sponsored activities.

Students failing to follow directives from any administrator, teacher or support staff, will be subject to disciplinary action.

To ensure that discipline is administered fairly in all schools, the following guidelines for expected student behaviour in, and around schools, are presented.

Discipline should be based on a careful assessment of the circumstances of each case, reviewing factors such as the:

-) Seriousness of the offence.**
-) Students' age.**
-) Frequency of the misconduct.**
-) Students' attitude.**
-) Potential effect of the misconduct on the school environment.**

Where criminality is involved, the appropriate Law Enforcement Agency is to be introduced.

**PROCEDURAL PROTOCOL FOR CREATING & MAINTAINING
SAFE SCHOOLS**

**9.....EXAMPLES OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS &
DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Categories of Unacceptable Behaviours and Procedural Protocol:

Level I

These are behaviours to be addressed by the staff member responsible for supervision when the behaviours occur, or by the appropriate classroom teacher, and for which disciplinary action is optional.

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour:

- 1. Disrespect for teachers and other authority (*i.e.: rude back talking, etc.*).**
- 2. Loud talking in class.**
- 3. Cheating during examinations / altering classroom records.**
- 4. Repeated lateness (*for class, etc.*).**
- 5. Chewing gum and eating in the classroom without the teacher=s permission.**
- 6. Littering.**
- 7. Arguing.**
- 8. Making fun of other people (*i.e.: name-calling, teasing, skylarking, etc.*).**
- 9. Hitting or inappropriate touching.**
- 10. Bullying.**
- 11. Out of uniform (*without written permission*).**
- 12. Failing to do homework (*three or more times*).**
- 13. Destroying textbooks (*i.e.: writing in them, tearing out leaves / pages, etc.*).**
- 14. Copying/Plagiarism (*writing the work of others to use as your own*).**
- 15. Throwing objects (*i.e.: stones, sticks, paper balls, etc.*).**
- 16. Lack of school supplies (*i.e.: pens, pencils, textbooks, writing books*).**
- 17. Dishonesty (*i.e.: items valued under ten (\$10.00) dollars*).**
- 18. Possessing a paging device, cellular telephone, and hand-held computer games.**
- 19. Obscene gestures (*i.e.: giving the finger*).**
- 20. Playing rough (*i.e.: wrestling, pushing, drop-kicking, >porking=, etc.*).**
- 21. Un-excused absences.**

Examples of Disciplinary Actions:

Disciplinary actions may include, but need not be limited to, one or more of the following:

- A. Parental contact. Parents bring change of clothing or schools provide alternative clothing.**
- B. Detention before and / or after school.**
- C. In-school Suspension (*e.g.: skills centre, study hall, time-out room, and Saturday school*).**
- D. Cleaning the part of the premises where the infraction occurred.**
- E. Assigned community work programme**
- F. Referral to a Guidance Counsellor / Special Services, School Social Worker, School Psychologist.**
- G. Verbal warning and reprimand by the Principal / Administrator. Reimbursing costs for damages incurred.**
- H. If a cell phone rings during class time or is used in any way the cell phone will be confiscated and the parent or guardian can pick up the item by appointments on Fridays. If the item is taken away for the second time the item can be retrieved no earlier than at the end of the school year. The school is not responsible for and will not investigate loss or stolen (prohibited items) mechanical or electronic devices.**

Steps in Action:

- ☐ **First offense - the teacher talks / counsels in private (*e.g.: loss of privileges - EXCEPTIONS: denial of lunch, water, rest room use, medication or snack*).**
- ☐ **Repeated offence:**
 - i) Referred to the Guidance Department (*where available*) or senior master / mistress / administrator and ensure the student is given reasonable time (*two (2) weeks*) to self-correct.**
 - ii) Parent / administrator / child conference.**
 - iii) School-level consequences.**
- ☐ **Chronic offender:**
 - iv) Referral to Special Services (*School Psychology Unit*) but continuing in-school counselling.**

- v) Ten (10) hours of parental / child counselling.**
- vi) Alternative placement over two (2) weeks while on suspension.**

Level II

These are to be addressed by the Principal or Administrator and for which suspension and / or further disciplinary action are optional. Examples of Unacceptable Behaviours:

1. Level One offences which continue after five attempts to correct them.
2. Fighting.
3. Biting other persons.
4. Leaving school campus, or school-sponsored event, without permission.
5. Skipping classes (*without written permission*).
6. Profanity, rude, vulgar language (*cursing, etc.*).
7. Possessing >roach-clip=, rolling papers, needles, baggies with residue, razor blade, pipes, etc. (*used in taking drugs*).
8. Possessing or using matches or lighters without supervision of teacher or administrator.
9. Damaging school property (*anything valued above ten (\$10.00) dollars*).
10. Refusing to wear school uniform.
11. Stealing from other students through violence and / or intimidation.
12. Violating computer rules by using the internet to communicate threats, profanity, racial and ethnic slurs.
13. Possessing or using tobacco products, or any non-prescription drugs on school premises, or at school-sponsored events.
14. Gambling of any kind (*excluding raffles and other fund-raising activities supervised by teachers or administrators*).
15. Refusal to accept discipline from teachers.
16. Continuous outbursts of anger, or any continuous verbal disruption.
17. Failure to complete a disciplinary assignment.
18. Any other similar or related conduct which, in the discretion of the Principal / Administrator, constitutes one or more of the following grounds for suspension:
 - a) Continued wilful disobedience, or open and persistent defiance of proper authority;
 - b) Wilful destruction or defacing of school property;
 - c) Behaviour on or off school property which is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other students, or of school personnel including behaviour which causes a threat of physical harm to the child, or to other children;
 - d) Serious violations in a school building, or on school property;
 - e) Repeated interference with a school=s ability to provide educational opportunities to other students.

Examples of Disciplinary Actions:

Disciplinary actions may include, but need not be limited to one or more of the following:

- A. Charges filed with proper law enforcement authorities.**
- B. Cleaning part of the school premises as punishment.**
- C. In-school Suspension.**
- D. Administrators / parent / student conference.**
- E. Parental contact.**
- F. Parental contact, and billing of parent for damages to school property.**
- G. Recommendation of referral for evaluation / services (*psychological / psychiatric*).**
- H. Referral to Department of Education for frequent and habitual infractions, or as required by policy.**
- I. Suspension by the Principal / Administrator where, in the discretion of the Principal / Administrator, the student=s conduct constitutes one or more of the grounds for suspension as outlined in #18 (*Level II - Unacceptable Behaviours*).**

Steps in Action:

§ **First offence - student referred to Guidance Counsellor (*where available*) or other school administrator who will conduct inquiry and offer counselling.**

§ **Repeated offence:**

- i) **Parents / Guidance Counsellor / child / administrator conferencing;**
- ii) **Eighteen (18) school work hours, supervised suspension with rehabilitative services (*including community counselling / urban renewal, community partners in Family Islands*);**

Chronic:

- i) **Referral to Special Services;**
- ii) **Routing to alternative agencies/programmes, including SURE & TAPS (*Transitional Alternative Programme for Students*).**

Level III

These are to be addressed by the Principal or Administrator, and for which suspension is mandatory and further disciplinary action, including recommending expulsion, is optional.

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviours:

- 1. Continued Level Two unacceptable behaviours.**
 - 2. Sexual harassment.**
 - 3. Knowingly, purposefully or recklessly carrying, bringing, or possessing a pellet gun, air-powered rifle, toy gun, can openers, box cutters, clubs, cutlasses, screwdrivers, sling-shot, stunt guns, car aerials, or any other instrument that can be used as a weapon.**
 - 4. Possessing look-alike drugs or items attempted to be passed off as drugs.**
 - 5. Possession, purchase, or use of marijuana, cocaine, aerosol spray, paint, glue or any non-prescriptive or dangerous drugs.**
 - 6. Possession and use of fireworks.**
 - 7. Damage to the personal property of school staff (*including puncturing car tires, breaking windows, marking paint, or any other damage*).**
 - 8. Retaliating against school employees through threats, bringing in groups, family members, friends, etc., to argue with or assault any teacher, administrator or student.**
 - 9. Possession, production or dissemination of pornographic material.**
 - 10. Wearing pants or shorts that ride below the waist; pants that cannot stay at the waistline or that cause undergarments to be visible; pants cuff that drag on the ground.**
 - 11. Body decoration/Visible tattoos, decals and stick-on tattoos are not permitted-no exceptions. The school reserves the right to suspend students who violate this rule and who refuse to remedy the situation.**
 - 12. Military styled belt buckle that contain initials or other symbols or logos.**
 - 13. Hiding/securing all items to keep others from stealing**
 - 14. Any other similar or related conduct which, in the discretion of the Principal or Administrator, constitutes one or more of the following grounds for suspension and / or expulsion:**
 - i) Continued wilful disobedience, or open and persistent defiance of proper authority;**
 - ii) Wilful destruction or defacing of school property;**
 - iii) Behaviour on or off school property which is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other students or of school personnel
Including behaviour which causes threat of physical harm to the child or to other children;**
 - iv) Serious violations in a school building, or in or on school property;**
- OR**
- v) Repeated interference with a school=s ability to provide educational opportunities to other students.**

Examples of Disciplinary Actions:

Disciplinary actions may include a suspension by the Principal / Administrator and may include, but need not be limited to the following:

- A. Charges filed with proper law enforcement authorities.
- B. Cleaning part of the school premises as punishment.
- C. In-school Suspension.
- D. Administrators / parent / student conference.
- E. Parental contact.
- F. Parental contact and billing of parent for damages to school property.
- G. Recommendation of referral for evaluation / services (*psychological / psychiatric*).
- H. Referral to Department of Education for frequent and habitual infractions or as required by policy.
- I. A parent conference following the suspension with an appropriate administrator for the purpose of discussing re-entry, recommendation for transfer, or expulsion.
- J. Exclusion from ceremonies, activities, and / or commencement exercises.
- K. Expulsion, transfer, or other alternative placement.
- L. For possession or use of marijuana, or for repeat offences regarding the possession, purchase, or sale of drug paraphernalia, the student shall be referred to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Steps in Action:

- § Student referred to local law enforcement personnel.
- § Student brought before penal agencies (*released without charges, i.e.: cleared, the child returns to school*). No further outside intervention. In-school-based intervention is required.
- § Student placed on probation is automatically redirected to SURE Academy/TAPS pending the outcome of the case.

Level IV

These are to be addressed by the Principal or Administrator, and the Department of Education and for which expulsion is mandatory.

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviours:

1. Suspended three times during the school year for causing or initiating wilful disruption in the classroom, on school grounds, or at school activities, and / or events.
2. Making a terrorist threat (*bomb scare*).
3. Carrying, bringing, using or possessing dangerous weapons or firearms.
4. Committing extortion, blackmail or forcing an individual to act, through the use of force or threat of force.
5. Commission of an act that would be robbery or assault under the law if committed by an adult.
6. Performing or orchestrating any sexual act.

Examples of Disciplinary Actions:

Disciplinary actions include mandatory suspension by Principal or Administrator followed by referral to Department of Education for expulsion and may include the following:

- A. Charges filed with proper law enforcement authorities.
- B. Administrators / parent / student conference.
- C. Parental contact
- D. Parental contact and billing of parent for damages to school property.
- E. Recommendation of referral for evaluation / services (*psychological / psychiatric*).
- F. Recommendation for expulsion.
- G. Denial of high school completion certificate or letters of recommendation.

Steps in Action:

§ Referred to Law Enforcement Officer.

§ Alternative placement mandatory.

§ Recommended to the Minister of Education for expulsion.

10.....RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES FOR.....

Detention of Students

Detention of a student after completion of the school day may be used as a disciplinary measure. Time in detention should be spent in a manner that will assist the student in the development of responsible behaviour. When repeated detentions fail to develop responsible student behaviour, the student should be reported to the Principal or Administrator to pursue other means of discipline.

Elementary students should not be kept in school after the usual dismissal time for more than twenty (20) minutes unless the parents have been notified previously.

Judgement should be exercised in keeping junior and senior high school students after school. Detention of more than twenty (20) minutes should have the approval of the Principal and should not exceed one (1) hour.

Students transported on buses should not be detained after regular dismissal without prior arrangement with, and consent of the parents.

Detention Note

Detention is served before school, during break, during recess, after school, or anytime other than classroom or instructional time. Teachers can provide detention time to students on their own, or the staff can set up a detention room and alternate the responsibility of supervising students who must serve detention.

Guidelines for Detention

- T Choose a room that is well lit and well ventilated.**
- T Develop a rotating schedule for teachers who supervise the detention room.**
- T Assign a specific amount of time for the disruptive student to spend in the detention room.**
- T Provide a list of all students who are assigned detention to the staff member in charge. Make note of those who did, or did not serve detention.**

- T Assign a more severe consequence the next day if a student does not appear (*e.g.: in-school suspension*).**
- T Assign extra detention and / or more severe consequence if the student disrupts in the detention room. Notify parents in advance when detention is to be served before and after school hours.**

In-School Suspension

In-school suspension is when the student is removed from regular classroom activities and isolated in a closely supervised environment.

Guidelines for In-School Suspension

- Decide what students are to do when spending time in the in-school suspension room.**
- Students may be given an assignment other than homework.**
- Students will be required to complete classroom assignments.**

Guidelines When Setting Up an In-School Suspension Room

- ... The room should be well ventilated and well lit. (*If a room is not available, organise a classroom / student exchange*).**
- ... The room should be monitored by an administrator, teacher, guidance counsellor or other responsible adult.**
- ... The student eats lunch alone, and is escorted to and from the rest room.**
- ... If the student misbehaves after returning to the classroom, he or she must be sent again to the in-school suspension room.**
- ... Parents must be notified that a student received in-school suspension.**
- ... Primary students must not be left alone.**

... High School level students remain in the room a maximum of one (1) day.

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS DEALING WITH INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL ADVANCES BY SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

Sexual misconduct by school employees against students is possible during a child's school experience. The information contained in this section serves two primary purposes:

- (I) to protect students who can become victims of sexual misconduct by school employees and
- (II) to inform school officials, students, parents and other stakeholders.

Sexual misconduct is the making of unwanted and offensive sexual advances or of sexually offensive remarks or acts, especially by one in a superior or supervisory position.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What types of behaviours constitutes sexual misconduct?

Sexual misconduct by an employee include exposing private parts, forcing you to touch his or her private parts, or requesting you to expose and allowing them to touch your private parts; sexual intercourse, rape, telephone and cyber, and oral/anal sex.

What can you do to protect yourself?

Do not be the last one to leave the classroom or school premises, avoid being alone with any school personnel that you feel uncomfortable around, have a buddy system, do not accept rides, monies, or gifts, avoid going to the homes of school personnel or do not accept rides home, especially if no adult is at home. Always tell someone right away when something inappropriate occurs

Who can you turn to for help?

On the school compound or at a school event you can seek out the Guidance Counsellors, teachers or administrators, any member of the Safe School committee, Peer Counsellors, Attendance Officers, Social Workers. Off the school compound you may inform parents/guardians, pastors or any adult with whom you are comfortable.

What are some emergency contacts/ resources?

*The Principal
District Superintendent's office
Guidance & Counselling Unit
School Attendance Unit
School Psychology Unit
The Ministry of Education
The Police (Law Enforcement Agency)
Social Services Hotline
Crisis Centre
SCAN*

Why must you tell a responsible adult?

*To protect yourself and other students from being hurt,
to let others know what persons are doing; and
to get help for yourself and for other victims.*

TO SCHOOL & DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS-----

Become knowledgeable of the types of behaviours that constitute sexual misconduct and respond immediately to initiate protective measures for the safety of students against predatory employees.

PROBING QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL & DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS

How can schools address sexual misconduct?

*Adopt strict policies in reporting all cases,
Educate the children and school personnel and parents/guardians,
Develop a zero tolerance towards sexual misconduct,*

What are the warning signs of sexual abuse?

*Student becomes withdrawn or aggressive
Heightened interest in a child by an adult
Decline/loss of interest in school work
Decreased interest in hygiene/personal appearance
Talk/rumour of student-adult relationship
Student avoiding an adult
Student acts out sexual behaviours on their peers
Student confiding in their peers*

What should be the response of a member of the school family if informed of sexual misconduct by the student?

Immediately inform the Principal / Guidance Counsellor, Principal / GC interview the child, and refer the case to stakeholders e.g.: Police, Social Workers

What is to be done if there is rumour of sexual misconduct/abuse?

Principal or designated person on staff assigned to interview, if confirmed by the student, the police should be informed, parents and school/social worker notified,

What is the protocol for lodging grievance procedures that tell students and parents and school employees where to file complaints?

***Concerns must be placed in writing, dated, signed
Issued to the Principal and the District Superintendent (DS) office
Copied to the Ministry of Education
Go directly to the police.***

How can adequate, impartial and timely investigations of complaints be handled?

Immediately interview the employee and commence investigations, document incident, or report directly to the police, and notify the DS and the Ministry of Education. Once investigations commenced the alleged employee must limit contact to professional responsibilities only.

How are the school's policies communicated to students and parents?

Individual school handbooks or leaflets, school assemblies, designate specific times when information is shared with students and personnel especially during orientation and continuously thereafter.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMME (AEP)

Students whose documented behaviour is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it seriously interferes with classroom instruction, may be formally removed from the teacher's classroom.

Steps to follow:

- ***Conference with administrator, teacher, parent (if the parent is unable to attend conference, the conference should proceed as long as it is confirmed that the parents have been notified), and student.***
- ***Pending conference with school-based Guidance Counsellor and outside support groups, (e.g.: School Psychological Services, School Attendance Officers and Social Services) where available, students may be placed in the in-school suspension or AEP.***

The AEP is for students who have committed certain serious offences.

The AEP: *(Transitional Alternative Programme for Students (TAPS) or Success Ultimately Reassures Everyone (SURE):*

- < is in a setting other than the student's regular classroom;***
- < is located off a regular school campus;***
- < separates students in the AEP from students in the regular programme;***
- < separates primary school students assigned to AEP from high school students assigned to AEP;***
- < focuses on Behaviour Management, English Language, Mathematics, Arts, Science, History and Family Life;***
- < is a Career Directed Programme.***

Following a special Advisory Panel conference, (of teachers, administrators, and support groups), student may be returned to class or placed in a programme for a specified time.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Corporal Punishment, which is defined as physically handling a student in any way to inflict punishment, should only be administered by the **Principal or Administrator.**

Staff may, in dealing with disruptive students, use reasonable and appropriate physical intervention or force as necessary for the following purposes:

- ☐ **To restrain a student from an act of wrong doing.**
- ☐ **To quell a disturbance threatening physical injury to others.**
- ☐ **To obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects upon a student, or within the control of a student.**
- ☐ **For the purpose of self-defence.**
- ☐ **For the protection of persons or property.**
- ☐ **For the preservation of order.**

ADMINISTERING CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

- I. Corporal Punishment should be limited to certain highly restricted circumstances (e.g. bullying, fighting, obscene language, threats, gross insubordination);**
- II. It may only be inflicted in the case of continued or grave circumstances and after a full inquiry has been carried out, and NOT IN THE PRESENCE OF OTHER STUDENTS. Female students should be punished by a female administrator, and a male by a male administrator, wherever possible.**
- III. Corporal Punishment must be accurately documented in ALL cases (within the same day);**
- IV. It should relate to the offence, and be adapted to fit the individual child and should be preceded by a conference with parents and students, where necessary.**

STUDENT INTERROGATIONS, SEARCHES AND ARRESTS

- I. Before a search is conducted, a school official must establish that there is a reasonable suspicion that a crime**

has been, or is in the process of being committed, or that the search is necessary to maintain school discipline, enforce policies or prevent disruption of the education process, and that the individual to be searched is involved.

II. School officials will ask the students to surrender the contraband he is believed to have and / or seek his consent before making the search. If consent is denied, the following procedures will apply:

III. Locker or school bag searches should be conducted as follows. The school official will:

- a) inform the student that his locker or bag will be searched;
- b) accompany the student and another staff member to the locker or room;
- c) instruct the student to open the locker or bag and remove its contents in his presence;
- d) notify the student=s parents of the action and the results.

IV. STRIP SEARCHES CAN BE CONDUCTED ONLY BY LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL IN THE PRESENCE OF A SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICER OR SCHOOL NURSE OR GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR. A school official may contact any law enforcement agency and inform it of the circumstances supporting his belief that the student is concealing contraband and may request that a strip search be conducted by law enforcement officials.

V. ‘Reasonable’ must be stressed in all instances in which a search is indicated. The school official must consider: *Is there reasonable suspicion to believe.....*

VI. Calm and dignified composure must be maintained by Principal or Administrator.

EXPULSION

Expulsion is permanent removal of students from the public education system. The school can recommend for expulsion to the Ministry of Education, only those students who are sixteen (16)

years and older, if birthday comes on or before 30 September of the current year. Students under sixteen (16), but not under five (5), who commit expellable offences may be placed in an Alternate Education Programme (AEP).

Procedures for Recommending Expulsion:

- i) The Department of Education will determine the number of days for prior written notice of the charges, and the proposed sanctions so as to afford a reasonable opportunity for preparation, including a written invitation to the student's parents / guardian to attend the expulsion hearing. The notice will also include the date, time and location of the hearing, and the names of adult witnesses who will present evidence at the hearing;
- ii) The student will have the:
 - § right to a full and fair hearing before the Minister of Education, or a designee / designate;
 - i) opportunity to testify and to present evidence, and witnesses in his or her defence, and;
 - ii) opportunity to examine the evidence presented by the school administration, and to question the administration=s witnesses.

Representative:

At the hearing, the student is entitled to an adult representative or legal counsel who will provide guidance to the student, and should not be an employee of the Department. The student must notify the school at least one (1) working week if legal counsel will be attending the hearing. The Department may hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, the student's parents or guardian, or another adult representing the student attends, provided the Department makes a good-faith effort to inform the student, and the student's parents or guardian of the time and place of the hearing.

Evidence:

In an expulsion hearing, the Department may rely on hearsay evidence of school administrators who investigate disciplinary infractions. This means that the school administration may present evidence or statements taken from students without revealing the identity of the student. The decision will be based exclusively on the evidence presented at the hearing.

Expulsion Order:

The administration will deliver a copy of the order expelling the student to the student's parent or guardian, who is responsible for providing adequate supervision for the student during the period of expulsion.

Graduating Seniors and Expulsion:

When a student is expelled during the 12th grade, the school should not allow that student to participate in graduation / prize-giving ceremonies, even though all prerequisites for graduation are met.

However, the student should be allowed to write external examinations for which he may have been entered.

11.....DISCIPLINARY STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS

Teachers have a responsibility to teach proper discipline, respect for others, and observance of school rules. Some practical suggestions for dealing with conflicts in the classroom are:

- ! ***Do not raise your voice.***
- ! ***Try to remain calm and rational.***
- ! ***Do not touch an agitated or angry student.***
- ! ***Try to keep the student seated.***

- ! ***Be reassuring to the student as well as the rest of the class.***
- ! ***Explain the importance of protecting every student's right to learn. Talk about options for resolving the conflict.***
- ! ***Send another student for help. The student should be told to go to the nearest office to summon assistance from the administration.***
- ! ***After the incident is over, immediately document everything that happened. The report should be submitted to the administration. You also should keep a copy in case of a future conference with parents or school administration regarding the incident.***

MANAGING A CLASSROOM: (Adapted from ACREL)

- T ***Don't be too quick to send a student to an administrator. You will be more effective if you handle your own problems as often as you can.***
- T ***Engage in effective, long-range, and daily planning.***
- T ***Vary your teaching strategies regularly.***
- T ***Have high expectations for your students.***
- T ***Intervene quickly during inappropriate student behaviour.***
- T ***Be consistently consistent.***
- T ***Reward exemplary behaviour.***
- T ***Use guidance and counselling programmes as the first step in the disciplinary process.***
- T ***Make clear teacher's expectations at the beginning of term so that students know in advance the rules and consequences.***
- T ***Make learning interactive.... student-centred.***
- T ***Praise students' efforts in front of classmates or other teachers.***

- T *Involve students in formulating the class rules so that they have a greater understanding of, and appreciation for the reasons for the regulations.*
- T *Do not lose your temper. When you lose your temper, you place yourself on the same level as your unruly student.*
- T *Do not waste time trying to prove that you are right and your students are wrong. Instead of this time-consuming, impossible task, spend your energy on finding a solution to the problem you and your students are having.*
- T *Never hide a serious problem - such as drug abuse - in a misguided effort to help a student. Involve other concerned adults and follow your school's policy when you have to deal with this type of problem.*
- T *Do not force a student to apologise to you or to the class. Doing so will not only humiliate your student, but is not apt to be sincere.*
- T *Do not reprimand in anger. Calm down, and find a solution instead.*
- T *Do not make deals with your students to convince them to behave better. Enforce your rules instead.*
- T *Do not ignore a small problem that can quickly turn into a much more serious one.*
- T *Do not go straight to severe negative consequences without a building up of penalties for escalating misbehaviour. Follow the plan you establish when you posted your class rules.*
- T *Do not label your students in a negative way. Their behaviour may be bad, but they are not bad people.*

12.....COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH PARENTS **(from A Parents on Your Side by Lee Canter)**

- ☐ *Make sure you have contacted the parents regularly about problems before you call them for a conference.*

- ☐ ***Be flexible in setting up the meeting time.***
- ☐ ***Be sure you have documentation about the child's behaviour for referring to specifics during the conference.***
- ☐ ***Greet the parent(s) warmly.***
- ☐ ***Do not have parent(s) sit on a student-sized chair while you sit in a teacher's chair.***
- ☐ ***Be sensitive to the parents' feelings throughout the conference.***
- ☐ ***Maintain eye contact.***
- ☐ ***Call the parent(s) often by name.***
- ☐ ***Say something complimentary about the student early in the conference.***
- ☐ ***Be a good listener.***
- ☐ ***Do not do all of the talking. Allow the parent(s) to voice their concerns.***
- ☐ ***Ask the parent(s) for their input regarding the student.***
- ☐ ***Explain problems in observable and clear terms.***
- ☐ ***Do not dredge up old incidences from the past, which have already been dealt with.***
- ☐ ***Do not overwhelm the parent(s) with too many problems. Stay focussed on key issues.***
- ☐ ***Do not discuss other students. If the parent(s) tries to shift the blame to others, stay focussed on the major reason the conference was set up for.***
- ☐ ***Make detailed notes of what was discussed. NOTE: If possible, have another teacher or someone from the staff be present as your witness.***
- ☐ ***Consider giving parent(s) some concrete ideas for behaviour management at home.***

- ☐ *Emphasize preventive approaches to discipline;*
- ☐ *Have positive reinforcement or learning experiences to them;*
- ☐ *Be compatible and commensurate with the misbehaviour;*
- ☐ *Avoid consequences that interrupt or interfere with learning, and;*
- ☐ *Include learning about expected behaviour and how to develop it as part of the curriculum.*

APPENDIX C

COMPOSITION OF THE PLANNING TEAM:

- ☐ **Administrators**
- ☐ **Teachers**
- ☐ **Parents**
- ☐ **Students (*if age appropriate*)**
- ☐ **Business representatives**
- ☐ **Religious leaders**
- ☐ **Health / Law Enforcement Officials**

PROTOCOL FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE

The comprehensive approach for the protection of students against abusers is presented in the document *Supporting our Students in Public Schools: A Guide for School Personnel Responding to Child Abuse*.

- **School personnel are required to follow a set protocol when a child discloses information on abuse of any kind.**
- **When a child discloses that an alleged abuse has occurred, it should be treated as serious.**
- **Report the disclosure promptly to the administrator, who must immediately report the matter to the police, then the social worker.**
- **Should it become necessary for the student(s) to leave the school premises, it is the responsibility of the school administrator to inform/contact the parent or guardian prior to students' departure.**
- **In the case of the unavailability of parent/guardian, the student should be accompanied by school personnel.**

The social worker/school welfare division will be responsible for:

- *Investigating all complaints of child abuse, neglect, and abandonment*
- *Identifying suitable alternative placement for students / children*
- *Assisting in the prosecution of those responsible for abusing / mistreating children/students*
- *Providing the technical support to the courts when required*
- *Submitting the written report within twenty-four (24) hours to the Child & Family Services Division*

THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT (SCAN) UNIT IS ANOTHER RESOURCE FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO ABUSED OR NEGLECTED CHILDREN.

18..... R E F E R E N C E S / S O U R C E S

- **National School Safety Centre**
- **A Classroom Management Guide**
- **North Central Regional Educational Laboratory**
- **Shorecast High School Policies**
- **Child Sexual Abuse: Facts about abuse and those who commit it**
- **Centre for the Study of Prevention of Violence**
- **Colorado Springs School District Eleven Policy**
- **Department of Education Code of Conduct**
- **Feedback from Safe School Survey**
- **Interviews/Presentation:**
 - **Community Policing**
 - **Social Services**

- **Attorney-General's Office**
- **National Advisory Council**
- **Sexual Offences Act of The Bahamas, Section 28**
- **SCAN Unit, Department of Public Health**
- **United Nations: Conventions on the Rights of the Child**