

## **SUPPORTING STUDENT BEHAVIOUR -SUSPENSION OF STUDENTS PROCEDURES**

When a student exhibits concerning behaviour, the unique needs of each student, divisional policies and protocols, as well as the procedures below will guide behaviour support planning directed to the professional judgement of the Principal or designate.

When a Principal decides that a student suspension is necessary, the student's parents/guardians/caregivers must be informed immediately and the Superintendent or designate must be informed of the name of the student, the period of suspension, and the acts or conduct for which the student was suspended. The suspension report must be provided on-line within five school days of the start of the suspension.

When a Principal requests that a suspension exceed the five day limit, the Principal should be prepared to submit to the Superintendent documentation relating to the behaviour of the student being suspended.

A student who is eighteen years of age or over should be given an opportunity to have a conference with the Principal and his/her parent/guardian/caregiver (if the student has given permission for such conference) soon after notification of the suspension.

For suspensions greater than five (5) days, the school shall provide work for the student to complete while on suspension.

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Whenever a student is involved in a high risk behaviour resulting in an immediate five (5) day suspension, the circumstances shall be reviewed and further action taken to insure the safety of all students and staff (Pembina Trails Policy JIC Student Standard of Behaviour).

## **General Process and Procedures for Suspension**

### **Out of School Suspensions**

- The principal or designate investigates the allegations that have led to consideration of suspension of the student and provides the student with an opportunity to respond to the allegations.
- The principal or designate must contact the student's parents/guardian/caregiver immediately to inform them of the incident, the decision to suspend, and provide the parents/guardians/caregivers the opportunity to discuss the suspension. A letter outlining the dates of the suspension and the reason for the suspension must be sent to the parents/guardians/caregivers. The Accessibility for Manitobans Act
- The student is not allowed to leave the building unless the parents/guardians/caregivers have been notified.
- It is the responsibility of the principal or designate to provide educational assignments for the students who are suspended. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians/caregivers (or student if age 18 or over) to make arrangements to pick up assignments.
- It is the responsibility of the principal or designate to record the details of the suspension in the divisional Student Suspension Form JKD-E.
- The principal or designate informs the parents/guardians/caregivers of the procedures for student re-entry.
- A re-entry meeting involving the principal or designate, the student, parents/guardians/caregivers must be held for those students suspended for five or more days. The appropriate school/division team members must be involved in the re-entry

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process where required by policy or regulation and may be involved in other re-entry meetings at the discretion of the principal.

- A student-specific plan must be written for a student who has received more than two suspensions in a school year.
- Requests for suspension from school for a period longer than five days shall be forwarded in writing to the superintendent or designate for consideration, outlining the reasons for the request and actions taken by the school to address the situation. No action on the request shall be taken until approval from the superintendent or designate has been received. Once approved, the principal shall inform the parents/guardians/caregivers in writing of the approval of the extension and the date when the student can return.

### **In-School Suspensions**

- The primary purpose of an in-school suspension is to offer a structured, supervised program to suspended students in lieu of an out of school suspension. Students who are assigned to in school suspensions will be in an educational environment where contact with their peers is limited.
- The principal or designate investigates the allegations that have led to consideration of suspension of the student and provides the student with an opportunity to respond to the allegations.
- The principal or designate must contact the student's parents/guardians/caregivers immediately to inform them of the incident, the decision to suspend, and provide the parents/guardians/caregivers the opportunity to discuss the suspension.
- It is the responsibility of the school to record the details of the suspension in the divisional student discipline tracking system.
- In school suspensions of any duration must be recorded in the Student Suspension Form JKD-E.

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- In-school suspensions of five (5) days or more must have Superintendent's approval.

### **Suspension from Class by a Teacher**

- Following the Teacher's decision to suspend a student from the class, the Teacher will:
  - Notify the parents/guardians/caregivers as to the reasons for suspension and the duration of the suspension, which may not exceed two days;
  - Provide a written report outlining the activities that resulted in the suspension from class and the action taken by the teacher;
  - Inform the parents/guardians/caregivers of the re-entry procedure; that a meeting with the Teacher is required prior to re-entry to clarify expectations for re-entry;
  - if the student is eighteen years of age or over, the Teacher meet with the student to clarify expectations for re-entry.

### **Informal Removals/Being Sent Home**

There may be instances when a student is sent home due to behavioural disruptions for the purpose of a 'reset' or 'fresh start'. Although this practice may be well-intended, if a student's day is reduced, such informal removals must be documented in the student-specific plan (SSP) of any reduction or alternatives in the school day, including a plan to return to full-time instruction. (Standards for Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba 2022). When removals from the classroom and/or school form a recurring pattern, the student-specific planning process should be initiated to identify a student's learning needs and develop, implement, and evaluate appropriate educational interventions.

### **PROCEDURES**

#### **Behaviour Support Planning**

1. The school and divisional team will support Principals in developing the most appropriate response to behaviour which includes data collecting, evaluation of data, and planning.

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2. Gathering historical, personal, and contextual information (refer to Pembina Trails School Division Policy JICFB when determining the seriousness of behaviour to provide the team with information to develop plans for the student's success. Information about risk, resiliency, or mental health status is also gathered if required. Divisional support team such as Clinicians and Consultants are used to assist with the planning.
3. Informal Discussion:  
A teacher or administrator speaks with the student to reach an agreement regarding the student's behaviour. Parents/guardians/caregivers may be contacted in some circumstances. Students who are 18 years of age or older must give their consent to contact parents/guardians/caregivers.
4. Parental Involvement:  
Contact is made with the parents/guardians/caregivers to discuss the student's specific behaviour and the steps that must be undertaken to change it. The contact could vary from a telephone conversation to a formal conference at the school with parents/guardians/caregivers, student, and school personnel.
5. School Counsellor/Resource Teacher:  
A school counsellor and/or resource teacher meets with the student with the specific goal of developing a plan for educating students and moving towards improving student behaviour. Parents/guardians/caregivers must be informed.
6. Formal Interview:  
A conference is held with the student, the teacher, and an administrator and/or school counsellor and the parents/guardians/caregivers to develop an appropriate plan in order to meet the Student Standard of Behaviour).
7. Withdrawal from Classroom Setting:  
Where specific student conduct is deemed to have a negative impact upon the classroom learning environment, the student is withdrawn to a supervised alternate location to complete his/her/their or her assignment. Such withdrawal would normally be temporary, but when a prolonged withdrawal is recommended,

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parents/guardians/caregivers will be informed.

8. Restitution/Compensation:

The student and/or parents/guardians/caregivers are required to compensate for damages incurred to school division property by the intentional or negligent act of a child. Such compensation may be monetary in nature but could take alternative forms such as community service.

9. Education Support Services:

A referral may be made to Clinical Services personnel who can assist school personnel in the remediation of concerning student conduct. Such involvement may include a level of counseling or clinical supports for the student that is beyond the school's capabilities. Parent/guardian/caregiver permission must be obtained for assessments and/or interventions.

10. Outside Agency/Community Involvement:

A referral to an outside agency or a community resource may be necessary to address a student's behaviour (e.g., a physician, adolescent or adult mental health services). In all cases, parent/guardian/caregiver permission must be obtained.

11. Policy JICM ARTO ARTS - Student Threat/Risk Assessment

The school will respond to all student threats to self or others through administrative action and/or school division risk and threat assessment protocols. Outside agency and/or police involvement may be requested. Parents/guardians/caregivers will be informed.

12. Police Notification:

Police notification does not mean that police will lay charges in every situation; however, police should be notified for Justice-related incidents that happen at school, during school-related activities in or outside school, or in other circumstances if the incident has a negative impact on the school environment. Consultation regarding planning is required with the Senior Admin Team.

13. Student Suspension:

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Alternatives should be considered before suspension (e.g., classroom strategies, in-school alternatives, school-wide programs, and alternative and/or off-site locations).

14. Educational programming for students who are suspended for more than five (5) days remains the responsibility of the school. Programming may range from work at home to alternative courses at a different location or remote learning, depending on the student's needs, length of suspension, or age. Access to learning will be maximized by providing students with the resources they need to build skills and maintain a connection to the school community.
15. Out of School suspensions beyond five (5) days must be approved by the Superintendent of Schools (or designate).
16. Upon completion of suspension expectations, a re-entry meeting will be provided. Details will be provided in the suspension letter. The purpose of the re-entry process include:
  - Provide an opportunity to debrief
  - Review the reason for suspension
  - Reflect upon the incident and circumstances
  - Clarify expectations
  - Work towards addressing relational problems, if applicable
  - Plan for the student to rejoin the classroom/school community
  - Restore a sense of safety and belonging for all.
17. Suspension can lead to disruption in learning, routine, and connections. Schools will use a restorative approach, which focuses on accountability, empathy and healing whenever possible.
18. Pembina Trails School Division will monitor, evaluate and review the data related to the use of suspension as outlined in Safe and Caring Schools: A Policy Directive Enhancing Proactive Supports to Minimize The Use of Suspensions (MLEEC 2023).
  - Inform the annual review of the school's code of conduct and emergency procedures,
  - Plan for safety and belonging,

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- Enable schools and the division to understand circumstances around the use of suspension while facilitating the implementation of more effective strategies to support educational programming and responses.
- Monitor and analyze suspension rates and trends.

### **Right of Appeal and Appeal Procedures Regarding Suspension and Expulsion**

Students or parents/guardians/caregivers of students suspended or expelled from school may appeal as follows (Pembina Trails Policy KE Public Concerns and Complaints)

- The decision of a teacher may be appealed to the principal.
- The decision of the principal may be appealed to the Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Learning Services.
- The decision of the Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Learning Services may be appealed to the Superintendent.
- The decision of the Superintendent may be appealed to the Board of Trustees.
- The decision of the Board may be appealed by a petition to the Board.

All student suspensions shall be recorded and filed using JKD-E, Student Suspension Form within five school days of the start of the suspension.

The Superintendent shall report all student suspensions to the Board on a regular basis.

### **Enhancing Proactive and Preventative Practices**

The Companion Guide for Safe And Caring Schools (MEECL, 2023) identifies evidence-based positive approaches and proactive strategies that limit, reduce, and phase out exclusionary practices.

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The Student-Specific Planning process is utilized to meet the unique needs of individual students and to determine, implement, and evaluate appropriate educational interventions.

The following positive and preventative approaches and strategies, as well as consequences corresponding to the nature, severity, and frequency of the behaviour and/or infraction are delineated as follows:.

- Positive School Climate
  - Enhancing School Climate as outlined in the Safe and Caring School Documents by Manitoba Education
  - Creating and supporting positive behaviour in the classroom.
- Strengths-Based Practices The Companion Guide for Safe And Caring Schools (MEECL, 2023)
  - classroom behavioural expectations
  - classroom organization
  - differentiated instruction
  - fair and predictable consequences
  - gathering data to understand student behaviour
  - PERMA-H-Plan
  - planning for behavioural changes
  - positive reinforcement
  - positive relationships
  - social skills instruction

Learning new pathways to success leads to new ways of thinking, being, and doing—actions that move school communities toward Truth and Reconciliation (MEECL, Mamàhtawisiwin: The Wonder We Are Born With, 2022). Additional classroom strategies include the following:

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- celebrating student diversity
- putting students at the center of all planning and responses
- meeting the instructional needs of each child through activities that are attainable, building on student areas of strength, and demonstrating care and respect for all 8 Companion Guide for Safe and Caring Schools: A Policy Directive Enhancing Proactive Supports to Minimize the Use of Suspension
- creating a safe, welcoming, and culturally responsive environment to strengthen student engagement and encourage a strong sense of belonging and acceptance
- creating an effectively designed physical environment (e.g., a sense of calmness, removing visual distractions, using soft music in the background, providing preferential seating based on need)
- creating a growth mindset classroom environment where mistakes are viewed as opportunities for learning
- utilizing restorative practices in the classroom
- involving parents in problem-solving
- using conflict resolution strategies
- using strategies to help students reduce stress and/or anxiety
- Alternative to Suspensions
  - Restorative practice such as peace/community circle
  - Behaviour contract
  - Group brainstorming among student, school staff, and Parent/guardian/caregiver and/or extended family
  - Referral to school-based and Divisional supports
  - Referral to community-based service
  - Mentoring
  - Wrap-Around support

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- Flexible daily schedule as documented in a student-specific plan.
- In-school suspension
- Continued learning at a designated off-campus location.
- Alternative/Off-Campus Locations
  - The shift away from a traditional school environment to classes that have lower enrollment, greater flexibility, and are often more grounded in one-to-one support may be effective for the student. Students sometimes learn in an alternative or off-campus location to provide the school and family with time to work together to determine the most appropriate programming. This may be short term, a few days or weeks, or it could be longer, depending on the services and structures that are provided by the school division. What is most important is that the student does not experience any interruption in their learning, and that they still feel part of their school and in an alternative age-appropriate classroom within the school educational community.
    - alternative age-appropriate classroom within a school
    - alternative program within a school
    - an off-campus program linked to the student's home school.
    - remote or online learning—supported by professionals from the school division and to be used judiciously.

## Discretion and Consideration

Procedures in determining whether suspension is an appropriate consequence include:

- Providing reasonable accommodations when disciplining a student.  
Consideration of student's state of development, ability to comply, and the amount of support required
- Provision of a continuum of supports, including positive and preventative

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approaches and strategies, as well as consequences corresponding to the nature, severity, and frequency of the behaviour or infraction

- Consideration of the student's special learning needs and abilities including whether the student is able to access the information, understands the policy or rules, and the disciplinary actions used for the majority of students are appropriate for the student.
- When selecting appropriate consequences, staff should be sensitive to any student who has been the target of unacceptable conduct, as well as to the student who engaged in the misconduct. These factors encourage those with the authority to suspend to avoid disciplining students who did not act deliberately.
- Adhere to Pembina Trails Policy JIC Student Standard of Behaviour).

Additional factors that should inform the decision to suspend include the following:

- The information gathered from the student, reporting staff, and others who may have witnessed or been affected.
- Whether a process should be initiated for determining the risk of threat to self or others, and the risk of recurrence.
- Possible motivation or underlying reason(s) that led to the incident (e.g., setting events, antecedent)
- Previous disciplinary incidents
- Previous interventions and their effectiveness
- Student's background and support network
- Alternative approaches not previously employed.
- Whether the suspension will be a breach of probation, if applicable

The decision to suspend may also include the following.

- A discussion with the parent/guardian/caregiver
- A discussion with the in-school team and/or divisional-level staff

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\*Suspension is an inappropriate and counterproductive response to absenteeism; therefore, is prohibited as a response to absenteeism (refer to JE and JE-R).

\*Suspension duration must not incrementally increase based on the number of suspensions a student has previously received.

Examples of exclusionary practices include the following:

- withdrawal from the classroom setting for less than half a school day for disciplinary purposes but under the direct supervision of school personnel.
- detention
- removal of privileges
- removal from school bus ridership
- exclusion time-out
- being sent home early or late start
- in-school suspension
- out-of-school suspension
- expulsion
- seclusion

*Within this range of exclusionary practices, suspension, expulsion, and seclusion are considered to be most restrictive.*

A brief divisional report will be provided to the Board in September by the Superintendent/CEO. The report will include the number of in-school and out- of-school suspensions, incident types, the number of Children in care involved student suspensions and the number of serious incidents by level (early, middle, senior) and by school.

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