



Spokane Public Schools
excellence for everyone

Our Behavior & Conflict Philosophy



September 2019

A Restorative Approach to Conflict

At SPS, we strive to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and staff. We want all SPS families to feel connected to their schools and to feel understood, heard, and respected.

Conflicts are a part of daily life and making mistakes is a part of growing and learning. With this in mind, SPS embraces a restorative approach to conflict, meaning that we see conflicts and harmful behavior as an opportunity for students and staff to:

- Learn about themselves and each other
- Take accountability
- Develop empathy
- Repair harm and restore relationships
- Identify supports that meet the individual for each of our students

Restorative Practices

- The standard approach to student behavior.
- A philosophy and a set of practices that keep students and families connected to the learning environment and school community.
- Emphasizes the importance of positive relationships and involve processes that restore relationships when harm occurs.
- Processes include circles for community building and resolving conflict, mediation, and restorative conferences, among others.
- Used to both prevent and respond to behavior that causes harm in a school community.
- Restorative Practices can be used instead of, or with, suspensions and expulsions.



Understanding Suspensions and Expulsion

Where to find detailed information about the suspension and expulsion process:

- For complete, detailed information about student behavior, please refer to district policies and procedures online at spokaneschools.org.
- For specific questions about your child, call the school principal.

When are suspensions and expulsions used?

- All students are expected to follow the district's discipline policy, Rules of Conduct, and the individual school's Student Handbook.
- When a student's behavior disrupts the learning environment, the school will use restorative practices, and when needed, the lowest level of discipline needed to change the behavior. This means the school will first try to resolve the conflict and change the behavior without using suspension or expulsion, unless safety requires immediate removal.



Before a suspension or expulsion:

- The student will have an opportunity to share their perspective about what happened.
- The school will share information with the student about the incident, evidence, and possible discipline.

During an out-of-school suspension or expulsion:

- The school will provide school assignments.
- School staff are available to answer your questions and concerns.
- Your child is not permitted to be at the school, even for extra-curricular activities.

Before a student returns to school after a long-term suspension or expulsion:

- The school will invite you and your child to a re-engagement meeting to create a written plan that makes sure your child gets the support he/she needs to be successful moving forward and to repair harm and restore relationships.
- You are welcome to bring support-people from your family or community.

When a student returns from a short-term suspension:

- A staff member at the school will check in with your child to make sure that they feel supported and welcomed back into the school community.
- This check-in may include discussing what happened, repairing relationships, and identifying supports that your child needs to be successful moving forward. Your child's voice is critical to this process.

If you disagree with your child's suspension or expulsion:

- The school will give you information about the process you should follow.
- Contact the school principal if you have questions, or you can check out our policies online at spokaneschools.org.

For students with a 504 Plan or an Individual Education Program (IEP):

- If your child is removed from school for more than 10 consecutive school days or a total of ten or more school days in the same school year, the school will invite you to a Manifestation Determination meeting.
- The purpose of this meeting is to find out if there is a relationship between your child's disability and the behavior that led to the discipline.

Definitions

Classroom Exclusion

When a student is removed from class or an instructional activity by the teacher for the rest of the school day or less.

In-School Suspension

When an administrator removes a student from their regular educational setting to work on academics, but remains in the same school. An in-school suspension can be used for up to 10 consecutive days.

Short-Term Suspension

When a school removes a student from one or more classes or subjects for 10 days or less.

Long-Term Suspension

When a school removes a student from one or more subjects or classes for 90 days or less.

Expulsion

When a school removes a student from their current school for 90 days or less (the superintendent can make it longer for health or safety reasons).

Emergency Expulsion

When a school removes a student from school for up to 10 school days in a row because the student is putting others in danger or is causing substantial disruption to learning. The school can turn this into another form of corrective action (like long-term suspension) before the 10 days is over.

This guide is intended to summarize relevant SPS policies and procedures. For complete, detailed information about student behavior, please refer to district policies and procedures online at spokaneschools.org.