

PRE-KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 2

Aggressive behavior in young children is often a result of a child’s unskillful attempt to communicate what they want, need and/or don’t like. When a child engages in a violent act that threatens or harms other children or makes the learning environment feel unsafe, special procedures need to be in place to ensure that any children involved receive immediate attention.



The Schenectady City School District is committed to reducing and significantly limiting expulsion and suspension practices, with the goal of eliminating these practices in all early childhood settings.

If a student in grades prek-2 engages in pervasive or serious aggressive acts that cause injury or threaten children’s safety in the classroom, the principal can determine the most appropriate interventions and request an out of school suspension.

Any suspension of a student in grades prek-2 requires the permission of the superintendent, assistant to the superintendent or district director of pupil personnel services. The principal must immediately provide written notification to the superintendent’s designee upon suspension. In addition, **an intervention plan should be developed and parents invited to be directly involved in its development.**

LEVELS OF BEHAVIORS AND RESPONSES

The Schenectady City School District Code of Conduct includes five levels of possible response to inappropriate behavior. Each inappropriate behavior (violation of the code of conduct) is assigned to one or more levels of intervention/response.

If the behavior is assigned to, or falls under two or more levels, the lowest level of intervention and disciplinary response should be imposed first. For example, if a student refuses to follow directions, intervention strategies and responses in Level 1 should be issued before moving to any response in Level 2.



In all cases, the school personnel authorized to impose the consequence or response must inform the student of the alleged misconduct and must investigate the facts surrounding it. All students will have an opportunity to present their version of the facts to the school personnel imposing the disciplinary penalty. If students are given penalties other than a verbal warning, parents should be notified before penalty is imposed.

The following pages present an overview of each of the resolutions to behaviors, a chart that outlines grade-appropriate responses based upon the level of offense. You will notice that as behaviors increase in severity (1 being least and 5 being most severe), the response becomes more intense (A being least and D being most intense). Please note that grade level is considered for all behaviors and responses. This chart is on page 26.

A listing of behaviors and the range of resolutions at each level (1 being least and 5 being most severe) is located on pages 27—31.

PROGRESSIVE CONSEQUENCE (RESOLUTION)

Understanding consequences as “teachable moments” is fundamental to a positive approach to discipline. Instead of seeking punishment, progressive consequences seek to ensure accountability and behavior change.

With progressive consequences, a student’s first violation will usually merit a lower level consequence than subsequent violations. A variety of factors are, however, taken into account and considered before determining consequence. In instances where a student’s conduct is dangerous or threatens the safety of others, more severe disciplinary action may be warranted, even if it is the student’s first violation.



With progressive consequences, we aim to help students:

- ◆ Understand why the behavior is unacceptable.
- ◆ Understand the harm the behavior caused and the impact that it has.
- ◆ Take responsibility for their action.
- ◆ Be given the opportunity to repair the harm caused by their behavior.
- ◆ Be given the opportunity to learn pro-social strategies and skills to use in the future.



Every reasonable effort should be made to correct student misbehavior through interventions and other school-based resources. **Interventions are essential because inappropriate behavior or violations of the code of conduct may be symptomatic of more serious problems that students are experiencing such as homelessness, poverty, trauma and loss. It is imperative that school personnel be sensitive to any issues that may influence the behavior of students and respond in a manner that is most supportive of their needs.** SCSD supports a trauma sensitive schools model which provides all staff with professional development in responsive and supportive intervention strategies.

When student conduct becomes a disruption to the educational process, school staff and principals respond logically, appropriately and consistently.

THE IMPACT OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

Suspension from school does not benefit the suspended student or peers. Not only is a student who is suspended from school less likely to graduate, but being suspended also increases a student’s risk for dropping out of school. A single 9th grade suspension doubles the risk that a student will drop out of high school.

Research also shows that within 12 months of being suspended from school, a student is 50% more likely to engage in anti-social behavior and 70% more likely to engage in violent behavior.

Out-of-school suspension should be avoided whenever possible. If a suspension is necessary, it should always be coupled with intense intervention and support.