



Compendium of School Discipline Laws and Regulations Categories & Definitions

Categories & Definitions of School Discipline Laws and Regulations

Category	Specific Subcategories	Definition
Codes of Conduct	Authority to develop and establish codes of conduct	Establishes authority (i.e., state or local) to develop rules governing student conduct. May include specific requirements for stakeholder involvement, specific content provisions, and formal processes for regular review and update of policies.
	Scope	Establishes school jurisdiction over student conduct (i.e., where discipline policies apply). For example, on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities or events, or on school-provided transportation.
	Communication of policy	Sets requirements for how or when schools must communicate behavioral expectations and rules of conduct to students, parents, and school employees.
In-School Discipline	Discipline frameworks	Provides guidance to schools on the content of discipline policies that may include graduated consequences for violations of codes of conduct.
	Teacher authority to remove students from classrooms	Authorizes teachers to remove disruptive students from classrooms, establishes grounds for removal, and may include time limits, parental notification requirements, and procedures for students' return to classrooms.
	Alternatives to suspension	Encourages schools to use alternative forms of discipline as a preference over student removal. May include mention of specific alternatives, including detention, counseling, or mediation.
Conditions on use of certain forms of discipline	Corporal punishment	Prohibits the use of corporal punishment or defines the parameters within which corporal punishment is allowable.
	Search and seizure	Outlines practices, policies, procedures, and limitations on search and seizure of students and school lockers.
	Restraint and seclusion¹	Outlines practices, policies, procedures, limitations, and cautions on the use of restraint and seclusion in schools.
Exclusionary Discipline: Suspension, Expulsion, and Alternative Placement	Grounds for suspension or expulsion	Identifies specific causes or circumstances that may result or must result in suspension or expulsion.
	Limitations or conditions on use of exclusionary discipline	Sets limits restricting use of suspension or expulsion, such as limitations on use for certain types of offenses or for students in certain grade levels.
	Due process	Establishes administrative rules and procedures governing imposition of suspension or expulsion, including rights to due process, appeals, and other procedural safeguards.
	Return to school following removal	Establishes procedures governing a student's return to school following suspension or expulsion, including terms of conditional reenrollment.
	Alternative placements	Includes provisions governing continuing education of students removed from school settings or transfer of students to alternative education settings.

¹ The U.S. Department of Education has provided a Resource Document on the use of restraint and seclusion in schools. See U.S. Department of Education, Restraint and Seclusion: Resource Document, Washington, D.C., 2012 available at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/seclusion/restraints-and-seclusion-resources.pdf>.

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Discipline Addressing Specific Code of Conduct Violations	Firearms and other weapons violations²	Includes specific provisions in law addressing student possession or use of firearms or other types of weapons.
	Students with chronic disciplinary issues	Identifies specific disciplinary guidelines for students who exhibit chronic behavioral problems.
	Chronic absenteeism and truancy	Includes specific provisions in law concerning truancy and chronic absenteeism.
	Substance use	Includes specific provisions in law concerning student possession or use of substances, including tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs; provisions may address referrals to substance use disorder (SUD) intervention or treatment.
	Gang-related activity	Includes specific provisions in law addressing gang-involvement among students.
	Bullying, harassment, or hazing	Addresses school responses to bullying behavior, including incidents of bullying, harassment, or hazing behaviors
	Dating violence	Includes specific provisions in law addressing dating or relationship violence.
Prevention, behavioral intervention, and supports	State model policies and implementation support	Designates role for state education agencies to support school implementation of evidence-based models and policies for managing student behavior, for example, through the provision of state model policies or programs, guidance documents, funding opportunities, or other resources.
	Multi-tiered frameworks and systems of support	Includes provisions requiring or encouraging schools to implement universal school-based prevention strategies, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) or Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) models to manage student behavior and link students with appropriate resources.
	Prevention	Includes provisions addressing school implementation of prevention programs and behavioral interventions to promote positive school climate and behavior.
	Social-emotional learning (SEL)	Includes provisions for implementing character education and social-emotional learning (SEL) programs, standards, or health education curricula addressing SEL.
	Trauma-informed practices	Includes provisions for school districts to adopt trauma-informed practices including professional development for school staff or trauma-informed discipline policies.
	Mental health literacy training	Includes provisions for school districts to implement professional development addressing mental health literacy and the identification of signs and symptoms of mental health issues.
	School-based behavioral health programs	Addresses the provision of school mental health services for students, including early identification and referral systems, school-based mental health counseling programs, or partnerships with community-based providers.

² The Federal Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA) requires that each State receiving Federal education funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA) (20 U.S.C. § 7151) must have in place a law that requires local school districts to expel, for at least one year, any student who brings a firearm to, or possesses a firearm at, a school, unless the local school district's chief administering officer modifies that sanction in writing, on a case-by-case basis. See ESEA § 4141(b)(1) (20 U.S.C. § 7151(b)(1)); see also Guidance Concerning State and Local Responsibilities Under the Gun-Free Schools Act, U.S. Dep't of Educ., Jan. 2004 available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/gfsa.html>.

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Monitoring and Accountability	Formal incident reporting of conduct violations	Establishes procedures for reporting violations of codes of conduct to the school administration and maintaining written records of violations.
	Parental notification	Identifies requirements for schools to notify parents in the event of a disciplinary action. Includes mandatory parent participation in disciplinary proceedings.
	Data collection, review, and reporting of discipline policies and actions	Includes provisions for schools to collect and review data or submit reports of disciplinary policies, actions, or statistics to a district, county, state, or other entity; may include requirements for disaggregating data by race/ethnicity, gender, or disability status for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness or equity of school policy or assessing school climate.
Partnerships between Schools and Law Enforcement	Referrals to law enforcement	Includes provisions addressing referrals to law enforcement or the power for school law enforcement officers to arrest or take students into custody.
	School Resource Officer (SRO) or School Security Officer (SSO) training or certification	Includes provisions requiring specialized training for school resource officers (SROs) and school security officers (SSOs) on the scope of their authority, responsibilities, and allowable practices.
	Authorizations, Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), and/or funding	Outlines options or requirements for developing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or other authorization models governing the placement and funding of safety personnel functioning as a police officer in the school setting. Specifically, outlines activities that must be coordinated between education and law enforcement officials.
	Threat assessment protocols	Includes provisions to encourage or require school districts to implement threat assessment teams or protocols to identify threats and determine how serious or credible they are.