

Boys/Men of Color Alliance testifying about school discipline

If your Child is Suspended

DISCIPLINE RESULTS

What Happens to Suspended Students?

- misses from 1—10 days from school
- is not allowed to make up missed work
- is two times more likely to fail all courses
- is at home unsupervised
- they may or may not have anything productive to do
- parents/guardians are mad at them
- if groups of friends were expelled at the same time, can lead to students hanging out together getting involved in a variety of mischief

What Happens to Expelled Students?

- misses school up to 45 days before expulsion hearing to determine if he/she should be expelled
- is not allowed to make up school work while waiting for hearing
- is at home unsupervised
- they may or may not have anything productive to do
- parents/guardians are extremely upset with them
- could be away from school for as long as one year
- could be referred to a County School during the period of expulsion
- can lose a whole year of instruction
- if groups of friends were expelled at the same time, can lead to students hanging out together getting involved in a variety of mischief

THINGS TO DO– IF YOUR CHILD IS SUSPENDED

Adapted from Dore Frances, IEC

GET THE FACTS:

1. Contact the school immediately and request: 1) a copy of the students' school records for attendance, grades, and any past discipline; 2) a copy of any statements about the charge/incident 3) a copy of the school's discipline policy and verification that it was sent home.
2. Be sure school administrators provide a copy of the charge, the basis for the charge and an opportunity for your child to tell his/her side and bring witnesses.
3. Talk to your child and review the details. Make sure they are honest about the matter.

MEET WITH SCHOOL OFFICIALS:

1. Call the principal and set up a face to face meeting at a time convenient for you. Ask for accommodations to assist you i.e., a special education service provider or translator to ensure your child is being treated fairly. Never go to the meeting alone– always have a friend, clergy, community service person or relative to accompany you.
2. Make a commitment to attend the meeting with an open mind and a firm commitment not to argue or raise your voice. Remain calm at all times.
3. Bring your list of questions or write them down during the meeting.

QUESTIONS THAT PARENTS CAN ASK

1. What rule did my child break? May I see it in writing? What did my child do to break the rule.
2. What is the normal punishment for breaking this rule. Is there a different punishment for a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd offense?
3. Where was my child when this happened? Were there others involved and what were their punishments? Where was the teacher in charge? What other adults were around? How often do students break this rule? Can I read the statements of all of the witnesses to the event?
4. Exactly what did my child say and or do? What did others say or do? Could the teacher/adult have handled this differently? Did you get statements from my child's witnesses?
5. Has my child had similar problems like this before and is it documented? What can the school do to avoid these kind of problems in the future?
6. Can my child make up his schoolwork and test?

ASK FOR HELP TO ENSURE THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS OF YOUR CHILD

1. Ask the school to provide all of your child's schoolwork and test so your child can complete all work during the suspension.
2. Ask is there homework help in the community or tutoring help.
3. Ask if your child can finish the suspension in an on campus suspension program.
4. Ask if the school can assign another punishment
5. Ask for a hearing to request that a situation that would harm your child's educational progress be reconsidered, or appeal the suspension decision.
6. Ask the school for other community services that you could use to assist your child i.e., counseling, testing, special education, mentoring, peer mediation or restorative justice programs.

