



**GWINNETT
COUNTY
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS**

Gwinnett County Board of Education

Level: Policy J-Students	Accompanying Procedure:	Descriptor Code: JCDI	Rescinds NEW
Descriptor Term: Board's Theory of Action for Change to Improve Student Behavior and Outcomes		Effective Date: August 18, 2022	Last Reviewed Date: August 18, 2022

1) Theory of Action

The Gwinnett County Board of Education sets forth in policy its Theory of Action to effectuate the Board's core beliefs and commitments; namely, to maintain and improve a district in which high-performing schools educate all children to high standards; eliminate the achievement gap; provide a quality program that includes a rigorous curriculum, effective teaching, and ongoing assessment; and ensures that all students are taught in a safe, secure, and supportive learning environment.

The Gwinnett County Board of Education sets forth the expectation that schools will be environments that are conducive to teaching and learning. Consistent, fair, and equitable application of behavior standards will be established to promote and teach appropriate expectations for positive behavior.

The Board's Theory of Action for Change to Improve Student Behavior and Outcomes includes the following tenets:

- a) Each and every student shall experience schools that create a culture of belonging, where they are cared for, respected, and affirmed as an individual with innate dignity and value.
- b) Students shall be *taught* expectations about how to conduct themselves at school, at school sponsored events, on GCPS buses, and all other times and locations when student behavior is within the application and scope of the code of conduct.
- c) Adhering to disciplinary expectations is a developmental process, and effective discipline strategies should meet students varied behavioral and developmental needs with tiered responses and interventions as part of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS).
- d) Schools should view disciplinary incidents as teachable moments and design responses to capitalize on the opportunity to teach life-long lessons of appropriate behavior and self-control.
- e) Behavioral interventions should be restorative, educational, and supportive, as well as implemented within a school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) framework.
- f) Suspensions or expulsions should only be used as a consequence to the most severe infractions that disrupt the learning environment and/or threaten the safety and security of the school community.

Therefore, in alignment with this Theory of Action, school discipline should be administered in a way to support students in their regular academic program to the greatest extent practicable.

Gwinnett County Public Schools shall employ a continuum of behavior interventions, strategies, and techniques designed to enable students to examine their attitudes and behaviors in a supportive

environment while working to repair harm and prevent recurrence of behavior that is inappropriate, disruptive, harmful, dangerous, or interferes with the rights of others.

2) Purpose of Policy

Gwinnett County Public Schools is committed to implementing the Gwinnett County Board of Education's Theory of Action to Improve Student Behavior and Outcomes towards creating a safe, secure, and supportive learning environment.

The District will utilize a multi-tiered system of responses in order to address the behavioral, social, and emotional needs of students. The Superintendent, or designee, shall develop procedures implementing the Gwinnett County Board of Education's Theory of Action for Change to Improve Student Behavior and Outcomes which provides for disciplinary responses and multi-tiered interventions as set forth below.

3) Disciplinary Responses (subject to applicable State laws)

Behavioral Correction Plan	A set of behavioral intervention strategies devised for students who have been identified as chronic disciplinary problem students. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-765)
Behavior Intervention Plan	A set of strategies to support students with inappropriate classroom behaviors. (BIP)
Bus Suspension	The student is suspended from the bus for a specified period of time by the local school administrator. The student is expected to attend school, but the parents are responsible for providing transportation to and from school.
Check-in with School Counselor or other support staff	Student is prompted by school staff to have an informal check-in with a school counselor, teacher, school psychologist, school social worker, coach or other support staff who has a relationship with the student.
Classroom Based Responses	Prompting students to reflect on their behavior using classroom strategies such as verbal correction, written reflection, reminders/redirection, role play, daily progress sheet, time-out, teacher-student conference, reflection chair, seat change, parent outreach, loss of classroom privilege, or apology letter.
Community Service	Allowing students to participate in an activity that serves and benefits the community (e.g., working at a soup kitchen, cleaning up public spaces, in school or elsewhere, or helping at a facility for the elderly).
Detention	Keeping a student before or after school for a reasonable time or during school hours, such as lunch time.
Drug/Alcohol Program (Creating Lasting Family Connections, CLFC, Program)	This drug/alcohol education program is for first time offenders of Level II violations in Rule 7 of the Student Conduct Behavior Code. At least one parent must accompany the student at each of the four sessions (lasting two hours each). Not all Rule 7 violations will qualify for this program.
Functional Behavioral Assessment/Behavioral Intervention Plan	A Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) gathers information about a student's inappropriate or disruptive behavioral patterns and determines approaches that school staff should take to correct or manage that behavior. The information is then used to develop a Behavioral Intervention Plan for the student. Using an FBA, a school staff team and the student's parent/guardian, develop appropriate behavioral goals and interventions to prevent and respond to the problem behavior, and strategies to teach replacement or alternative behavior.
In-School Suspension (ISS)	A disciplinary measure that permits the student to attend school but prohibits him or her from attending his or her regular classes. Students assigned to ISS are not permitted to participate in extracurricular activities on the date of their ISS assignment. The student is still afforded the opportunity to continue to progress in the

	general curriculum, receive the special education and related services specified in the student's IEP, and receive instruction appropriate for the program afforded to the student in the regular classroom.
Interim Alternative Program	Any educational setting that is designed to accommodate the delivery of a special education student's IEP during a period of suspension from school.
Mentoring Program	Pairing students with mentors (e.g., counselor, teacher, staff member, fellow student, or community member) who help their personal, academic, and social development.
Out of School Suspension - Short Term	The removal of a student from school for up to, but no more than, three (3) school days for disciplinary reasons by the principal, with notice to the parent/guardian. Prior to suspension, student must be provided with a brief description of the evidence and provided an opportunity to respond.
Out of School Suspension - Long Term	The removal of a student from school for a time period between 4 and 10 school days for disciplinary reasons by the principal, with notice to the parent/guardian. Prior to suspension, student must be provided with a brief description of the evidence and provided an opportunity to respond.
Out of School Suspension - Extended Term	The removal of a student from school for a period between 11 days and one calendar year. A student may only be subjected to an Out of School Suspension for an Extended Term in accordance with applicable Georgia law and/or after a Disciplinary Tribunal held in accordance with the School Disciplinary Tribunal Act. A student may only be taken to a Disciplinary Tribunal for a Level V offense for which the principal recommends suspension for a period of more than (10) days and the following criteria are satisfied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Superintendent, Cluster Superintendent or Superintendent's designee has determined that Out of School Suspension for an Extended Term is appropriate as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The student's continued presence in school poses a threat of serious physical, mental or emotional harm to other students and staff; b. The student has engaged in chronic and/or extreme disruption of the educational process and has failed to respond to appropriate disciplinary responses and interventions; c. The student engaged in intentional physical contact of a threatening or provoking nature to a school employee; or d. The student solicited, received or possessed a firearm or dangerous weapon.
Parent/Family Outreach	Informing parents/guardians of their children's behavior and, in the context of discipline, seeking their assistance in correcting inappropriate or disruptive behavior.
Parent/Family and Student/Teacher Conference	Involving students, parents/guardians, teachers, school staff, and/or principals in discussion about the student's behavior and potential solutions that address social, academic, and personal issues related to the behavior.
Permanent Expulsion	A student is removed from all GCPs property, activities, and events for an indefinite period of time. This action may be taken only by the Board of Education. School work may not be made up or credit earned.
Peer Mediation	Employing a form of conflict resolution in which trained students serve as mediators and help their peers deal with and develop solutions to conflicts.
Recommend for Administrative Action	Recommending a student to a school administrator(s) for long-term suspension, expulsion, referral to alternative instructional, or contact with law enforcement.
Referral to Appropriate Substance Abuse Counseling Services	In consultation with principal or designee, referring students to services, both in and out of school, such as a local health department or a community based service for counseling related to substance abuse.
Referral to Community Based Organizations	In consultation with principal or designee, referring students for a variety of services, including after school programming, individual or group counseling, leadership development, conflict resolution, and/or tutoring.

Referral to Health/ Mental Health Services	In consultation with principal or designee, referring students to school based or community based health and mental health clinics or other social services for the purpose of providing counseling and assessments to students in need. Students are encouraged to privately share issues or concerns that lead to inappropriate or disruptive behavior or negatively affect academic success and discuss goals and learn techniques that help them overcome personal challenges. These services may include anger management classes and formal or informal behavior coaching.
Removal from Extracurricular Activities/Loss of Privileges	In consultation with principal or designee, revoking a student's privilege to participate in extracurricular activities, including sports and clubs, or revoking a student's privilege to participate in school events or activities, such as attending a field trip or participating in a school dance. If the behavior warrants this consequence, any monies paid by the student for the missed activity will be refunded.
Restitution	Requiring a student to compensate others for any loss, damage, or injury that has resulted because of a student's behavior. Compensation may be made monetarily or by a student's assignment to a school work project, or both.
Restorative Practices	Restorative Practices are a continuum of processes that include preventive, proactive and responsive measures for both staff and students. Restorative Practices do not negate the need for disciplinary consequences; rather, they enable students to examine their attitudes and behaviors in a supportive environment while working to repair harm in a way that is meaningful to those who were affected.
School Bus Behavior Contract	A contract developed by the parent or guardian of a student and appropriate school district officials in response to (1) chronic misbehavior on the school bus; (2) bullying on the school bus; or (3) physical assault or battery on the school bus. A School Bus Behavior Contract sets progressive age-appropriate discipline, penalties, and restrictions for student misconduct on the bus. Contract provisions may include but shall not be limited to assigned seating, ongoing parental involvement, and suspension from riding the bus. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.5(b)(2)
Social Emotional Learning Strategies	Strategies designed to help students acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to manage their emotions and achieve goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.
Student Tribunal Hearing	A hearing in which a hearing officer(s) or panel hears the evidence presented, determines if the student has violated any rules of the student behavior code, and, if so, issues appropriate consequences.
Student Support Team (SST)	A school based team usually consisting of a teacher, an administrator, a counselor, psychologist and/or social worker, and parents/guardians, that convenes to discuss issues (and make recommendations) related to a student.
Temporary Removal from Class	Removing students within the school building from their regular education program for up to, but not more than, one class period.

4) Levels of Responses

The Gwinnett County Board of Education is committed to equitably utilizing restorative practices and behavioral intervention strategies.

The decision to provide a behavioral response for a violation of a school rule shall be made by the administration of the local school using the established guidelines of this policy. The range of behavioral responses that can be assigned by a local school administrator may include:

LEVEL I	Examples of Classroom and Teacher-led Responses
	Level I responses are classroom management tools and techniques that facilitate the teaching of appropriate behavior to allow students to self govern their behavior, respect others, and contribute to a classroom environment that facilitates teaching and learning. Teachers are

encouraged to employ the full spectrum of instructional and classroom management strategies. When appropriate, teachers may engage the student's support system for assistance in successfully responding to and modifying the student's inappropriate or disruptive behavior. Level I disciplinary responses should be used in a progressive manner.

- Check-in with School Counselor or other support staff
- Classroom based responses (e.g., verbal correction, written reflection/apology, reminders/redirection, role play, daily progress sheet)
- Detention
- Parent/guardian outreach (contact parent/guardian via telephone, email, or text)
- Peer mediation
- Mentoring Program
- Restorative practices or other social emotional learning strategies

LEVEL II Examples of Teacher-led/referred and Administrative Supported Responses

Level II responses are designed to teach appropriate behavior to allow students to self-govern their behavior, respect others and contribute to a classroom environment that facilitates teaching and learning. In many cases, Level II responses engage the administrative and instructional support system and address factors within and outside the school environment that contribute to the student's inappropriate or disruptive behavior. Level II responses are intended to address behavior by educating the student about the severity of the behavior and the harms that may result therefrom. Level II responses should be used in a progressive manner. A teacher referral for administrative support is required for any serious incident or other incident that may impact or implicate the health or well-being of students.

TEACHER-LED

May be implemented at classroom level

- Behavioral contract
- Check-in with School Counselor or other support staff
- Classroom based responses (e.g., verbal correction, written reflection/apology, reminders/redirection, role play, daily progress sheet)
- Detention
- Mentoring Program
- Parent/guardian outreach (contact parent/guardian via telephone, email, or text)
- Parent/guardian and student conference (with teacher)
- Restorative practices or other social emotional learning strategies
- Temporary removal from class

TEACHER-REFERRED

Implemented with administrative support

- Community service
- Functional Behavioral Assessment/Behavioral Intervention Plan
- Loss of privileges/removal from extracurricular activities
- Peer mediation
- Referral to appropriate substance-abuse counseling services
- Referral to community based organization
- Referral to health/mental services
- Referral to student support team
- Restorative practices or other social emotional learning strategies
- Restitution

LEVEL III Examples of Administrative Supported and /or Removal Responses

Level III responses employ the administrative and instructional support system to develop interventions that promote learning and address factors within and outside the school environment that contribute to the student's inappropriate or disruptive behavior. Level III responses are intended to address behavior by educating the student about the severity of the behavior and the harms that may result therefrom. Level III responses may involve in-school suspensions, in-school interventions, and in the most serious cases Out of School Suspension -

	<p>Short Term. Level III responses should be used in a progressive manner with administrative support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any Level I or Level II Teacher-Led response paired with any of the following: • Community service • Functional Behavioral Assessment/Behavioral Intervention Plan • In-school suspension • Loss of privileges/removal from extracurricular activities • Out of School Suspension - Short Term (1-3 days) • Parent/guardian and student conference (with administrator) • Peer mediation • Referral to appropriate substance abuse counseling services • Referral to community based organization • Referral to health/mental health services • Referral to student support team • Restorative practices or other social emotional learning strategies • Restitution
LEVEL IV	Examples of Administrative Supported , and Short-term Out-of-school Exclusionary Responses
	<p>Level IV responses address serious behavior with a focus on allowing the student to remain in school. As a last resort, when the nature of the behavior is severe or implicates future harm, a student may be subject to Out of School Suspension - Long Term. Level IV responses are intended to protect the school community by addressing destructive, dangerous and disruptive behaviors in a progressive manner, with administrative support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional Behavioral Assessment/Behavioral Intervention Plan • In-school suspension • Loss of privileges/removal from extracurricular activities • Mentoring Program • Out of School Suspension - Short Term (1-3 days) • Out of School Suspension - Long Term (4-6 days) • Parent/guardian and student conference (with administrator) • Restitution • Restorative practices or other social emotional learning strategies
LEVEL V	Examples of Long-term Administrative Supported , Out-of-school Exclusionary , and Referral Responses
	<p>Level V responses result in the student's suspension or expulsion from school for an extended period of time and is reserved for severe behavior, behavior establishing that the student's continued presence in school poses a threat of serious physical, mental or emotional harm to other students, staff or members of the school community, or chronic and/or extreme disruption of the educational process. Level V responses may involve the placement of the student in an alternative educational environment that provides additional structure, services and supports. Although Level V responses include suspension and expulsion, these responses promote the safety of the school community by addressing destructive and dangerous behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Service • Loss of privileges/removal from extracurricular activities • Out of School Suspension - Long Term (4-10 days) • Out of School Suspension - Extended Term (11-180 days) • Permanent Expulsion (indefinite suspension) • Recommend for further action • Referral to alternative education • Referral to student support team • Restitution • Restorative practices or other social emotional learning strategies

5) Restorative Practices

Restorative practices are relationship-building and self-reflection strategies that promote a positive and orderly school environment. Students and all members of the school community learn and practice self-discipline, empathy, and accountability with strategies that promote inclusiveness, relationship-building, and problem-solving. Restorative practices are leveraged through methods such as circles for teaching, conflict resolution, and reflective conferences and conversations focused on helping students become more self-aware, take personal responsibility for actions, and develop responsible decision-making skills. Restorative practices allow individuals to take full responsibility for their behavior by supporting their understanding and acknowledgment of the impact their behavior has had on others. These practices help individuals work toward repairing relationships, rebuilding trust, and making more responsible decisions in the future. Restorative practices and social emotional learning (SEL) strategies work within the positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) framework to teach and address behavior expectations and provided appropriate tiered interventions.

Restorative practices are a continuum of activities and strategies that include prevention, intervention, and post-response support measures for both staff and students. Restorative practices are aimed at building and repairing productive relationships by providing opportunities for self-reflection of one's behavior as well as the opportunity to understand how one's behavior impacts their peer from the peer's perspective. Restorative practices are not aimed at negating disciplinary responses when serious behavior infractions dictate such action. Rather, restorative practices are aimed at becoming part of the school's culture to prevent serious discipline behaviors from occurring. These practices complement discipline responses as a tool used to help students reflect on their behavior, return to positive behaviors, and develop plans to maintain positive behavior in the future.

The Gwinnett County School Board will establish restorative practices that are inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:

- **"I" Statements and Questions**

Proactively used to explore positive changes in behavior and responsively used to explore harm and how harm impacts others

- o Establish appropriate boundaries
- o Provide feedback
- o Teach empathy
- o Allow individuals space to explore issues in non-threatening way
- o Address past, present, and future

- **Restorative Conversations**

Proactively used in small groups and responsively used to resolve lower-level incidents through modeling healthy approaches to conflict resolution (peer mediation)

- o Encourage empathetic communication and active listening
- o Facilitate opportunities to build relationships and increase social awareness

- **Restorative Circles**

Can be used proactively and responsively to specific events or situations

- o Allow for the full community participation and all members to be heard
- o Establish a safe environment for problem-solving, general discussion, and brainstorming
- o Build connections and relationships among peers and teacher

- **Restorative Conferences**

Primarily used as a response to more serious concerns

- o Provide opportunity for students to take full responsibility for their actions
- o Support repairing and building relationships
- o Support self-reflection and reflection on consequences
- o Provide an opportunity for students to create more positive behavior plans in the future

6) Change Management

The Superintendent is responsible for maintaining and improving Gwinnett County Public Schools' multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) and positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS) initiative. Accordingly, effective change management leadership by the Superintendent, supported by a comprehensive internal and external communication system, is required.

The Board asserts that MTSS and PBIS are foundational to its theory of action for change and are stable, long-term frameworks for improving student behavior and outcomes in Gwinnett County Public Schools. From time to time, based on research and experience, this theory of action will need to be revised. The Board remains committed, however, to MTSS and PBIS as the broad path for improving student behavior and outcomes and pledges its best efforts to educate the workforce, the public, and new Board members so that subsequent Boards will hold constant to this vision.