



Portland Public School's Investigation Process

When an incident occurs that may violate our student discipline policy, we follow a structured process to ensure **impartiality** and gather all necessary facts. Our goal is to determine what happened and address it in a way that supports all students involved.

Core Principles

- **Objectivity and Impartiality:** The investigation is conducted thoroughly and **without bias**, focused strictly on the facts and evidence.
- **Focus on Safety:** We prioritize the physical and emotional **safety** of all students.
- **Student Support:** We approach all discussions with students in a **supportive, trauma-informed** manner, recognizing the stress that any incident can cause.

What the Process Entails

1. **Gathering Information (Interviews):**
 - We speak individually with the students who were **impacted or harmed**, any **witnesses**, and the student(s) **alleged to have caused the harm**. Speaking to everyone individually ensures the due rights of students and maintains confidentiality.
 - We take our time, as students may recall details non-linearly. Our questions are **neutral** and focused on gathering facts.
 - Students will be asked to provide a **written statement** of their account of the situation. If they are unable to write a statement on their own, school staff may write the statement for them making sure to use the student's own words exactly.
2. **Reviewing Evidence:**
 - We review all available evidence, which may include written statements, photos, videos, relevant documentation, or, in complex cases, building a detailed timeline of events.
3. **Determining the Outcome:**



- The investigator thoroughly explores all the facts to determine whether a violation of the discipline policy is **more likely than not to have occurred**.
- If a violation is found, we apply appropriate interventions or consequences that are aligned with the Student Rights & Responsibilities Handbook, often focusing on **restorative measures** that help repair the harm and prevent recurrence.

We contact parents/caregivers as early and often as possible, with information on why the investigation is taking place, and what the next steps are once the investigation is complete. Our priority is to ensure a safe and productive learning environment for every student.