

SALEM SCHOOL DISTRICT
Salem, Connecticut

STUDENTS

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response

The following procedures are developed for the implementation of Board policy #5144.12. These procedures are designed to be consistent with the general purpose and principles outlined in the aforementioned policy, as well as consistent with federal and state statutes and regulations.

The District and staff are committed to establishing positive learning environments that ensure that all students have access to a quality education. The District recognizes that a key aspect of maintaining a healthy and safe environment is establishing and maintaining positive and constructive behavior in our schools. This goal can only be achieved through the cooperative efforts of our school personnel, students, parents, guardians, and our community.

School Discipline Administration

1. Staff training will be provided as needed to ensure that the Restorative Practices in each school are effective and that relevant policies and procedures are equitably applied. Such training will include, but not limited to, strategies and approaches related to Restorative Practices and its theoretical framework.
2. School district staff responsible for implementing this policy shall do so without discrimination based on ethnicity, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity or expression, age or disability.
3. Challenging behavior related to students receiving special education and tiered intervention supports shall be in accordance with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), any behavior intervention plan, 504 Plan, and Board policy.
4. The District believes that developing strong relationships with families is the first step in establishing safe and healthy schools. School staff members are encouraged to contact parents early in the school year to proactively establish positive school-home communication and throughout the school year to share student successes and challenges, and develop plans to help students have access to a quality education. The District Schools will convene parent sessions to educate the community on Restorative Practices Response and how it will be implemented in the schools.
5. The District is committed to eliminating disparity in school discipline with respect

to its underserved populations by reducing the number of referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. The staff will engage in restorative practices that enhance school climate and develop a system for addressing challenging behavior that promotes equity. Staff members are specifically charged with monitoring the impact of their actions on students from racial and ethnic groups or other protected classes that have historically been over-represented among those students who are suspended, expelled or referred to law enforcement. The District will collect discipline data examining and aggregating referrals and disciplinary responses. In addition, principals will provide the Superintendent with an annual report highlighting Restorative Practices Response programs and their impact on school climate and the number of referrals and disciplinary actions.

School-Level Rules

In developing school-level rules of behavior, the school shall solicit the participation, views, and feedback of at least one representative selected by each of the following groups:

1. Parents/guardians
2. Teachers
3. School administrators
4. For middle, junior high and high schools, students enrolled in the school

The “rules” shall be consistent with law, Board of Education (Board) policy, and District administrative regulations. The development of the rules shall be informed by school-level challenging behavior data as described in policy #5144.12.

The school shall also solicit participants’ views on whether school-level and District-level standards of behavior are being equitably and fairly applied. The confidentiality of student records shall be maintained at all times.

Interventions

General: Effective school responses related to challenging behavior shall promote interventions that refrain from interrupting a student’s education to the extent possible. Schools should minimize the use of suspensions, recommendations for expulsion, and referrals to law enforcement, to the extent practicable while remaining consistent with federal and state statutes, regulations and Board policies.

Reasonable Responses to Challenging Behavior Consequences: Responses should be reasonable, fair, age-appropriate, and match the severity of the student’s misbehavior, and through restorative practice consider the impact on the victim and/or community. Restorative practices that include meaningful instruction and guidance offer students an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and contribute back to the school community, and are more likely to result in having the student re-engage in learning.

Relevant Considerations For Determining Restorative Practices

1. Age, health and special education status of the student.
2. Appropriateness of student's academic placement.
3. Student's prior conduct and record of challenging behavior.
4. Student's attitude.
5. Student's willingness to repair the harm.
6. Seriousness of the offense and the degree of harm caused.
7. Impact of the incident on overall school community.
8. The availability of prevention programs that are designed to address challenging behavior should also be considered prior to determining a restorative practices response.

Interventions/Alternative Means of Correction: When challenging behavior occurs, schools shall investigate the circumstances and gather facts that will help determine appropriate interventions and a restorative response for that student, with emphasis on correcting student misbehavior through school-based resources. Responses to challenging behavior should provide students an opportunity to learn from their mistakes, and reengage the student in learning. All interventions should balance the needs of the student, the needs of those directly affected by the behavior, and the needs of the overall school community.

Each school is responsible for incorporating a restorative response framework into its planning to reduce referrals and suspensions through pro-active intervention, positive behavioral support, restorative practices, and other non-punitive approaches to challenging behavior focused on maximizing student achievement, reducing such behaviors and avoiding loss of instructional time through the use of tiered interventions. That intervention framework shall integrate a Restorative Practices framework.

Referral of students from the classroom environment for challenging behaviors should be avoided. The District expects that alternatives to suspension and restorative practices shall be utilized prior to referring a student out of the classroom. The District expects that alternatives will be undertaken within the classroom except where suspension for specific offenses is required by statute and Board policy or where it can be documented that the challenging behavior imposes a clear danger to others.

There are three types of intervention strategies to be considered: Administrative, Restorative, and Skill-based/Therapeutic.

1. Administrative Strategies are statutorily, or policy required interventions

responding “to” the offender. These include removal from the classroom, detention, suspension, and expulsion.

2. Restorative Strategies coordinate with Connecticut’s School Climate Policy as they are problem solving interventions responding “with” the offender. They are driven by an opportunity to restoration for the harm caused as much as possible and focus on the harm caused and how it will be repaired. A successful restorative practice response strategy may utilize interventions with allied agencies and professionals. An assessment of the incident/conduct will be completed and a determination will be made by the school or district whether a face-to-face meeting with all parties is appropriate. Examples may include:

- a. Family group conferencing
- b. Victim-offender mediation
- c. Classroom mediation circles
- d. Reparation of harm

3. Therapeutic/Resource Strategies are responses “by” the offender and require intrinsic motivational behavior change. Such interventions include:

- a. Mental health counseling
- b. Anger management classes
- c. Informal mentoring and behavior coaching

Teachers and administrators should intentionally utilize various types of strategies, or multiple strategies simultaneously, to address and correct challenging behavior, especially for multiple offenses.

Consider adopting a District Restorative Practices Response statement and model with a common framework, definitions, and procedures. This statement and model should be widely displayed and available to all members of the school community.

Considerations for adopting a District Restorative Practices Response Model:

- 1. The degree to which the model is easily integrated with the District’s Discipline policy;
- 2. The degree to which the model receives buy-in from the staff and school community;
- 3. The degree to which the model can be consistently and reliably implemented;
- 4. The degree to which adherence to the model is supported by research and yields positive results.

A statement and model can be designed in a manner similar to the following example:

Restorative Justice – Salem School District

The Board considers Restorative Practices Response as a set of principles and practices used to build community, respond to harm/conflict, and provide individual circles of support for students in District schools. By building, maintaining, and restoring relationships between members of the entire school community, the District strives to create an environment where all students can thrive. The Restorative Justice approach to school discipline is to be implemented through a 3- tier, school-wide model.

Tier 1: Community Building (Prevention/Relate)

Tier I is characterized by the use of social emotional skills and practice (classroom circles) to build relationships, create shared values and guidelines, and promote restorative conversations following behavioral disruption. The goal is to build a caring, intentional, and equitable community with conditions conducive to learning.

Tier 2: Restorative Processes (Intervention/Repair)

Tier 2 is characterized by the use of non-punitive response to harm/conflict such as harm circles, mediation, or family group conferencing to respond to disciplinary issues in a restorative manner. This process addresses the root causes of the harm, supports accountability for the offender, and promotes healing for the victim(s), the offender, and the school community.

Tier 3: Supported Re-entry (Individualized/Re-Integrate)

Tier 3 is characterized by 1:1 support and successful re-entry of youth following suspension, truancy, expulsion or incarceration. The goal is to welcome youth to the school community in a manner that provides wraparound support and promotes student accountability and achievement.

Classroom-based Strategies to Reduce Challenging Behaviors

Classroom-based strategies include, but are not limited to:

1. Explicit re-teaching of behavioral expectations;
2. Separating students;
3. Phone call to parent;
4. Keeping students after class;
5. Restorative conference with student(s) or class;

6. Creation of a positive behavior contract;
7. Conference with student;
8. Conference with parent and the student.

School-based Strategies to Reduce Challenging Behaviors

Students who exhibit a pattern of challenging behaviors should be provided more intensive support through a system of tiered interventions. Parents should be notified if there is an escalating pattern of challenging behavior that could lead to classroom or school removal. Appropriate school-based strategies include, but are not limited to:

1. A conference between school staff and the student and his/her parents/guardians.
2. Referral to a school counselor or other school support service personnel for case management and counseling.
3. Referral for drug or alcohol counseling.
4. Convening of a Student Study Team (SST) or other intervention-related team to assess the behavior and develop and implement an individual plan to address the behavior in partnership with the student and his/her parents/guardians.
5. When applicable, referral for a comprehensive psychosocial or psychoeducational assessment, or Applied Behavior Analysis including for purposes of creating a behavior plan, an individualized education program or a Section 504 plan.
6. Enrollment in a program for building anger management skills.
7. Continue to encourage participation in a restorative justice program.
8. A positive behavior support approach with tiered interventions that occur during the school day on campus.
9. After-school programs that address identified challenging behaviors or expose students to constructive activities and behaviors, including, but not limited to, those operated in collaboration with local parent and community groups.

Detention After School

Students may be detained for disciplinary reasons (up to one hour) after the close of the school day.

If a student will miss his/her school bus on account of being detained after school, or if the student is not transported by school bus, the principal or designee shall notify parents/guardians of the detention at least one day in advance so that alternative transportation

arrangements may be made. The student shall not be detained unless the principal or designee notifies the parent/guardian.

Students shall remain under the supervision of a certified employee during the period of detention.

Community Service

For consideration with a restorative practices response strategy, the Board, Superintendent, Principal, or Principal's designee may, at his/her discretion, allow for a student to perform community service during non-school hours on school grounds, or, with written permission of the student's parent/guardian, off school grounds. Such service may include, but is not limited to, community or school outdoor beautification, campus betterment, and teacher, peer, or youth assistance programs.

Referrals

The Board supports the adoption of the SRBI framework to facilitate a systems approach for positive, pro-social behavior management. The District expects teachers to attempt SRBI tiered interventions prior to making a referral out of the classroom whenever possible.

When a referral out of the classroom is made, the principal or his/her designee must ensure that staff making the referral completed the following:

1. Teacher completed a written referral notification/form;
2. Principal or his/her designee reviewed the referral form and, if warranted, assigned appropriate consequences;
3. The Principal or his/her designee or teacher contacted the student's parents/guardians and notified them of any consequences;
4. The Principal or his/her designee investigated the reasons for the student's conduct;
5. The Principal or his/her designee recorded the classroom interventions and referral in the District's database.

Notice to Parents/Guardians and Students

At the beginning of the school year, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall notify parents/guardians about the availability of district rules and procedures related to student behaviors and school climate.

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall also provide written notice of behavior rules to transfer students at the time of their enrollment in the District.

Parent programs will be provided related to how the school integrates Restorative Practices Response in the student discipline/behavior management system.

Annual Review/Discipline Committees

Both individual schools and the district will evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of the school behavior plan using school disciplinary data disaggregated by race, ethnicity and gender of student. This will allow schools and the district to identify areas of need; target areas of concern; access professional development, supports, and services; and revise school procedures as needed.

In consideration with the Connecticut Positive School Climate Policy, schools will review student discipline data.

The review will include the following:

1. Intervention and prevention strategies.
2. The number of referrals, in school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to law enforcement, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, grade, disability, and gender of the students, where available.
3. Differences in referrals among staff members.
4. The extent to which the policy, including but not limited to disciplinary action, is consistently applied to all students.
5. Review of Restorative Practices and their impact on student discipline and climate.

Procedures approved: August 17, 2026