

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

It is essential for schools to maintain a safe school environment that supports student learning and achievement. Behavioral expectations and school disciplinary practices shall include instructional and environmental supports that teach positive social skills and alternatives to interfering behaviors. Disciplinary action may apply if a student violates policies, rules, or laws, or if student conduct directly interferes with the operations or general welfare of the school.

The Board expects the following principles to guide the development and implementation of school rules and disciplinary procedures:

- A. Behavioral expectations should be clearly communicated and easily accessible to staff, students, and families, and should be positively reinforced through universal (schoolwide) supports.
- B. Teachers are authorized to develop and enforce rules for effective classroom management, and to foster safe, respectful student behavior.
- C. School discipline should have an educational and restorative purpose, providing tiered interventions and consequences that are meaningful, fair, and proportional with respect to the behavior and the developmental capabilities of the students.
- D. Exclusionary consequences that remove a student from the regular learning environment, (out-of-school suspensions) should be used only in extreme cases and only when other available interventions and options have been exhausted. Exclusionary discipline measures shall be overseen by the building administrator (or designee) in accordance with administrative procedures and laws.
- E. In making decisions regarding exclusionary discipline, school administrators should consider and seek to address multiple factors which may be outside of the student's control and which may have contributed to the problem behavior. Examples of such factors include disability, mental illness, current or past trauma, domestic violence, homelessness, substance use disorder, age and/or ability to understand consequences.
- F. Administrators shall have the discretion to tailor disciplinary interventions as warranted by the facts and circumstances of each case.
- G. Physical force and corporal punishment shall not be used as disciplinary measures. Restraints and seclusions, as defined in rule Chapter 33, shall not be used as any part of the discipline protocol and shall not be used as a punitive response to student behavior.
- H. Discipline for students with disabilities is subject to IDEA.
- I. All disciplinary practices shall avoid discriminatory and/or disproportionate consequences of students based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristics, and schools shall regularly examine discipline data for disproportionate impact on these student groups and to identify practices that have a positive effect on student outcomes.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA § 1001 (9-B)
 20-A MRSA § 1001(15-A)
 Chapter 33: *Rule Governing Restraint and Seclusion*