



**Compendium of School Discipline
Laws and Regulations
Categories & Definitions**

Categories & Definitions of School Discipline Laws and Regulations

Category	Specific Subcategories	Definition
General Provisions	Authority to develop and establish rules of conduct	Establishes authority (i.e., State or local) to develop rules governing student conduct. May include specific requirements for stakeholder involvement, specific content provisions, and formal processes for regular review and update of policies.
	Scope	Establishes school jurisdiction over student conduct (i.e., where discipline policies apply). For example, on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities or events, or on school-provided transportation.
	Communication of policy	Sets requirements for how or when schools must communicate behavioral expectations and rules of conduct to students, parents, and school employees.
In-School Discipline	Use of multi-tiered discipline approaches	Directs schools to adopt discipline policies that include graduated consequences and supports.
	Teacher authority to remove students from classrooms	Authorizes teachers to remove disruptive students from classrooms, establishes grounds for removal, and may include time limits, parental notification requirements, and procedures for student's return to classrooms.
	Alternatives to suspension	Encourages schools to use alternative forms of discipline as a preference over student removal. May include mention of specific alternatives, including detention, counseling, or mediation.
	Use of corporal punishment	Prohibits the use of corporal punishment or defines the parameters within which corporal punishment is allowable.
	Use of student and locker searches	Allows for the inspection of students or their personal property while on school grounds, including drug testing, as well as protocols for locker searches.
	Other in-school disciplinary approaches	All other statutes and regulations related to in-school disciplinary approaches that do not fit into one of the established subcategories, such as deferring graduation, or withholding grades.
Out-of-School and Exclusionary Discipline: Suspension, Expulsion, Restraint and Seclusion, and Alternative Placements	Grounds for possible suspension or expulsion	Identifies specific causes or circumstances that may result in suspension or expulsion.
	Grounds for mandatory suspension or expulsion	Identifies offenses or circumstances which must result in either expulsion or suspension of a pupil (e.g., violence against staff, possession of a firearm, selling of narcotics). May also stipulate that the principal, superintendent, or other authority figure may mitigate or change the punishment should a more appropriate or effective course be available. Often uses the directive verbs 'must' or 'shall.'
	Limitations, conditions, or exclusions for use of suspension and expulsion	Sets limits restricting use of suspension or expulsion, such as maximum terms of suspension in number of days or exclusions for specific types of offenses.

Category	Specific Subcategories	Definition
Continued from above.	Administrative procedures related to suspension and expulsion	Establishes administrative rules and procedures governing imposition of suspension or expulsion, including rights to due process, including appeal, and other procedural safeguards. Includes terms for the provision of academic work during periods of exclusion, ¹ and may include state-level protections for students with disabilities. ²
	In-school suspension	Outlines provisions for in-school suspensions including eligible offenses, duration, and opportunities to participate in learning experiences or complete regular school work during the suspension.
	Return to school following removal	Establishes procedures governing a student’s return to school following suspension or expulsion, including terms of conditional reenrollment.
	Use of restraint and seclusion³	Outlines practices, policies, procedures, limitations, and cautions on the use of restraint and seclusion in schools.
	Alternative Placements	Includes provisions governing continuing education of students removed from school settings or transfer of students to alternative education settings.
Disciplinary Approaches Addressing Specific Infractions and Conditions	Firearms (as required by the Gun-Free Schools Act)⁴	Includes specific provisions to address student possession or use of firearms.
	Other weapons	Includes specific provisions to address student possession or use of weapons other than firearms (e.g., knives, stun guns, explosives).
	Students with chronic disciplinary issues	Identifies specific disciplinary guidelines for students who exhibit chronic behavioral problems; may include teacher identification, parental notification, and procedures governing readmission to school following removal.
	Attendance and truancy⁵	Disciplinary provisions related to truancy, tardiness, or school attendance.
	Substance use	Includes specific provisions in law concerning student possession or use of banned substances, including tobacco.
	Bullying, harassment, or hazing⁶	Includes specific disciplinary guidelines for students who are perpetrators of bullying, harassment, or hazing behaviors.

¹ See also subcategory “In-school suspension” for additional information about the provision of academic work during periods of exclusion.

² Note that this Compendium does not focus on State level protections for students with disabilities; however, policy information relating to laws covering students with disabilities may be included if identified as part of a State’s general school discipline policy.

³ The U.S. Department of Education has provided a Resource Document on the use of restraint and seclusion in schools. See U.S. Department of Education, *Restraint and Seclusion: Resource Document*, Washington, D.C., 2012 available at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/seclusion/restraints-and-seclusion-resources.pdf>.

⁴ The Federal Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA) requires that each State receiving Federal education funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA) (20 U.S.C. § 7151) must have in place a law that requires local school districts to expel, for at least one year, any student who brings a firearm to, or possesses a firearm at, a school, unless the local school district’s chief administering officer modifies that sanction in writing, on a case-by-case basis. See ESEA § 4141(b)(1) (20 U.S.C. § 7151(b)(1)); see also *Guidance Concerning State and Local Responsibilities Under the Gun-Free Schools Act*, U.S. Dep’t of Educ., Jan. 2004 available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/gfsa.html>.

⁵ See also subcategory “Reporting & referrals between schools and law enforcement” and major category “School Resource and Safety Officers (SROs/SSOs) and Truant/ Attendance Officers” for additional information regarding truant officers’ responsibilities and authority.

⁶ See also subcategories “Prevention” and “State model policies and implementation support” for additional information about non-punitive policies related to bullying, harassment, and hazing.

Category	Specific Subcategories	Definition
Continued from above.	Other special infractions or conditions	A specific offense or circumstance that is explicitly prohibited or otherwise discouraged through the code or statute, including policies related to telecommunications devices, secret societies, vandalism, and participation in gang-related activities.
Prevention and Behavioral Interventions (Non-Punitive)	Prevention	Includes provisions requiring or encouraging schools to implement school-based strategies to prevent school discipline problems.
	Behavioral interventions and student support services	Includes provisions requiring or encouraging schools to implement supportive (non-punitive) discipline strategies, including behavioral interventions and other student support services, such as identification and referral for assessment.
	Professional development	Includes a provision for school districts to provide training for school staff on the development and implementation of positive discipline strategies.
Monitoring and Accountability	Formal incident reporting of conduct violations	Establishes procedures for reporting violations of codes of conduct to the school administration and maintaining written records of violations.
	Parental notification	Identifies requirements for schools to notify parents in the event of a disciplinary action. Includes mandatory parent participation in disciplinary proceedings.
	Reporting and referrals between schools and law enforcement	Outlines requirements for schools to notify law enforcement officials of school offenses that are in violation of state criminal codes or policies which govern communication between educational, law enforcement, and/or judicial actors for the purpose of discipline or safety.
	Disclosure of school records	Provisions related to the disclosure of identifying information from a student's education records.
	Data collection, review, and reporting of disciplinary policies and actions	Includes provisions for schools to collect and review data or submit reports of disciplinary policies, actions, or statistics to a district, county, state, or other entity, as well as any requirements for disaggregation by race, disability, etc., for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of disciplinary policy, the equity of its implementation, or determining a rating for individual school sites or districts for the purpose of funding or program implementation.
School Resource and Safety Officers (SROs/SSOs) and Truant/Attendance Officers	Authority and power to implement school arrest	Provides for the incorporation of SROs, SSOs, and Truant/Attendance Officers and/or addresses their role, if any, in enforcement of the discipline code, school board directives, or safety concerns, including the power to arrest or take students into custody.
	Certification or training	Includes a provision for required training for SROs, SSOs, and truant/attendance officers on the scope of their authority, responsibilities, and allowable practices.
	MOUs, authorization, and/or funding	Outlines options or requirements for developing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or other authorization models governing the placement and funding of safety personnel functioning as a police officer in the school setting. Specifically, outlines activities that must be coordinated between education and law enforcement officials.
State Education Agency Support	State model policies and implementation support	Designates role for state education agencies to support school implementation of discipline policies through the development of state model discipline policies or provision of other resources.
	Funding appropriations	Includes appropriations to support implementation of school disciplinary policies and programs.

Category	Specific Subcategories	Definition
Other/ Uncategorized	Professional immunity or liability	Includes provisions addressing liability or protections of school personnel in reporting misconduct or carrying out discipline policy.
	Community input or involvement	Requires or encourages community involvement, often involving the formation of committees related to prevention or intervention programs.
	Other/Uncategorized	All other statutes related to school discipline that does not fit into an established category or disciplinary approach. Includes a range of provisions.