

# Creative Discipline & Alternatives to Suspension

## Key Concepts:

- ✓ GOOD discipline takes more time than EASY discipline
- ✓ Interventions should match the students developmental level and/or disability
- ✓ Link your discipline to your school-wide PBIS expectations
- ✓ Consider the function of the student's behavior when determining discipline strategies

## The Three Pillars of Effective Discipline:

**Reflective:** The student should be reflecting & gaining insight into their behavior.

**Restorative:** The student should have an opportunity to repair the relationships or items that were damaged.

**Instructional:** The student should gain specific knowledge and practice skills that will help them in the future.

## Alternative Discipline Strategies:

*(These are ranked in alphabetical order, not order of importance or effectiveness)*

### Behavior Plans and Monitoring

- Create a check-in system (by hour or by day)
- Assign an adult mentor/monitor
- Utilize home-to-school communication log
- Student self-monitors behavior and get teacher feedback to determine agreement
- *Considerations:* Works well with students engaging in attention-maintained behaviors (specifically adult attention, but could work with peer attention if peer attention is included as part of reinforcement strategy)
- *Resources:* "Check-in, Check-Out", "Check and Connect"

### Community Service / Restitution

- Find a work task that is logical for the incident (e.g. shoveling snow for throwing snowballs or cleaning the walls for doing graffiti)
- Provide an opportunity to work off damages
- Allow the student to do volunteer work in the community as an alternative to suspension
- *Considerations:* Involve the person they offended and include them in approval of completion

### Cool Down / Time Out Ideas

- Utilize time in the office or another location to cool down
- Create a Sensory Room for students with significant emotional/behavioral needs
- Allow student to take a walk with an adult
- Allow art or drawing for a specified time period to calm down
- Teach the student acceptable ways to ask for a break
- *Considerations:* May not be a good strategy if function is escape/avoidance
- *Resources:* "Breaks Are Better"

## Educational Projects

- Assign a research project on a specific topic related to the incident (e.g. research the laws around, ,)
- Create a poster board or power point presentation
- Contact community organizations for information
- Develop a video or public service announcement
- Examples:
  - Research the laws around sexual harassment
  - Research variations in respectful behavior across cultures
  - Research the pros and cons of a specific rule
  - Identify a current or historical event where a public figure violated a similar behavior norm

## Detentions / In-school Suspensions

- Add a purpose to detentions so they aren't just sitting around (discussion topic, assignment, etc.)
- Create an alternative lunch location to take away peer interaction
- After-school group format (facilitated group detention)
- Mini-course format (series of learning sessions over a couple weeks)

## Partnering with Parents and Families

- Go beyond just informing and ask for their ideas before determining the consequence
- Collaborate with parents and family members to develop consistent home/school interventions
- Ask parents or family members to complete an information sheet to learn more about the student (e.g. likes, dislikes, interests, challenges)
- *Considerations:* consider family's home language and culture, mode of communication, access to resources, technology, and schedules of availability
- *Resources:* CDE Family, School, and Community Partnering (FSCP) "On the Team and At the Table" Toolkit

## Peer Interventions

- Involve older peers to help model and mentor
- Establish a peer mediator or peer leadership program
- Create a peer committee / peer court as an alternative choice to address certain incidents (student chooses to allow the peer committee to make recommendations)
- Offer to reduce the consequence if the student participates in a positive school activity/event

## Reflective Tasks

- Use reflective "Think Sheets" for students to consider their actions
- Provide writing prompts for a reflective essay
- Allow the student to create a story (written, visual, drawings, video) about what they learned
- Make a comic strip story
- Write a letter to yourself
- Rewind and Role Play (go back and role play how to do it differently next time)
- *Considerations:* follow-up with the student at regular intervals to provide feedback or check in to see if the new strategy is being used

## Restorative Approaches

- Conduct a facilitated mediation (between students, or student/staff)
- Do a Restorative Circle (when more than two people are involved)
- Have a class discussion (when large groups are involved)
- Allow the student to clean up the mess they made in the classroom

- *Considerations:* not to be used for bullying behaviors, could be useful for attention-maintained behaviors
- *Resources:* [www.rjcolorado.org](http://www.rjcolorado.org); [www.irrp.edu](http://www.irrp.edu)

### **Skill-building Course**

- Student can participate in skill-building course related to the incident
- Examples:
  - How to disagree respectfully
  - How to calm down when angry
  - Alternative responses during tense situations
- *Considerations:* follow-up with the student at regular intervals to provide feedback or check in to see if the new strategy is being used
- *Resources:* Skillstreaming PREPARE curricula; IRIS Media Videos

### **Withdraw Privileges / Limit Choices**

- Remove rewards or preferred activities for specified time
- Limit freedoms or choices (such as limiting choices on the playground to specific activities/areas)
- Change class schedule or electives (such as removing off campus lunch privileges)
- *Considerations:* consider whether the preferred activity is the only thing keeping the student connected to school (e.g. school is not a privilege for everyone), may work better when function of behavior is to get access to activity/task