

*Section I.
Discipline and
Procedures*



PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE

Rapides Parish School Board endeavors to offer each pupil an education which shall be offered in an orderly, healthful atmosphere, physical and emotional, firm and fair in all matters pertaining to school life.

Every child shall comply with all rules and regulations, state and local, having to do with pupil behavior. In a democracy, there exist many privileges and freedoms, all of which are dependent on the observance of certain rules and regulations. **ANY PUPIL BY HIS/HER OWN FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH SCHOOL REGULATIONS MAY LOSE HIS/HER RIGHT TO A PUBLIC EDUCATION.**

All personnel of the Rapides Parish School Board shall strive to provide an environment that will bring about effective learning, thus enabling each student to achieve his or her own potential.

All Board employees, parents or guardians and students shall, to the greatest degree practicable, enjoy the maximum protections fostered by the rules, regulations and laws of the Rapides Parish School Board and the State of Louisiana while in the school environment. Any person initiating a physical attack upon another person while in the school environment will be referred by school personnel to the appropriate authorities for prosecution or disciplinary action and further will be held responsible civilly for any losses for which the Board may be responsible or for damages to school property.

In the event of a physical attack upon any teacher, support personnel, principal, assistant principal, or other Board employees on school property, or at a school-related function, the school principal or designee or other supervisory personnel in charge at the time of the attack shall immediately report the incident to the appropriate law enforcement personnel having jurisdiction of the location of the attack. Additionally, in the event of a physical attack by a non-student on a student or a visitor that results in physical injury or property damage, the appropriate law enforcement authorities shall be notified and a report made of the incident. Additionally, where confrontation between students on school property or at a school related function results in serious physical injury to a student, the appropriate law enforcement officers shall be notified and a report made of the incident. Where a physical attack upon a member of the teaching staff results in a sick leave under the provisions of R.S. 17:1201 (C), an incident file containing all reports and investigations of the incident accumulated by the principal or central office staff shall be referred to the Board's legal advisor for initiation of legal action against the perpetrator of the attack and any persons or insurers who might be responsible for possible recovery of losses and damages to the Board caused by the payment of the statutory benefits to the injured employee. An employee who is so injured, shall, on request by the Superintendent's office, execute such subrogation agreements or assignment documents as might be required under the circumstances.

MANDATED PROCEDURES FOR DISSEMINATING MATERIALS IN THE DISCIPLINE POLICY

The following steps will be taken to insure that everyone involved is properly informed of all aspects of the discipline policy:

1. The Central Office staff will conduct an in-service workshop for all principals and assistant principals, prior to the opening of school.
2. Each principal will hold in-service training sessions for the teachers and other personnel in the school.
3. Each student will be given a copy of the discipline policy and be required to return receipt signed by the parent or legal guardian.
4. Home-room teachers will discuss each part of the policy with their students.
5. Each principal will use an assembly period to emphasize the importance of strict observance of the school's rules and the Parish Discipline Policy.
6. Each school staff will provide opportunities for discussion of the policy during Parents' Night activities.

7. “Additionally, each school administration shall require that every student be provided an orientation during the first five days of each school year regarding school disciplinary rules and provisions of the Code of Student Conduct which shall include general information as to the rights afforded teachers pursuant to R.S. 17:416.18. If a student enrolls after the beginning of the school year, a similar orientation shall be provided during the first five days of enrollment. In no case, however, shall the failure to provide the formal orientation constitute a defense to the imposition of any disciplinary action or other action against the student because each student will receive a copy of this policy handbook and be required to submit the parent or guardian’s acknowledgment of receipt of the handbook as a condition of enrollment – a copy of the ‘Teacher Bill of Rights’ provided by R.S. 17:416.18 is attached as an appendix to this handbook; additionally a copy shall be posted in a prominent place in every school and administrative building operated by the board and posted on the board’s web site.”

DEFINITION OF DISCIPLINE

Discipline is the combination of a mental attitude and a system of self-control that results in a standard of behavior demonstrated by appropriate conduct in all situations. In education it is a process which strengthens, molds and corrects students through a system of essential rules, a program of teaching and supervisory control and when necessary, just and constructive punishment.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Each principal shall exercise the proper disciplinary control of the school to which the principal is assigned through the authority granted by the federal government, Louisiana state law and the Rapides Parish School Board. In order to establish and maintain this control, the principal will utilize the following:

Discipline of pupils: suspension and expulsion

Every teacher shall endeavor to hold every pupil to a strict accountability for any disorderly conduct in school or on the playgrounds of the school, on the street or road while going to or returning from school or during intermission or recess or while attending school functions or events.

Each teacher may take disciplinary action to correct a pupil who disrupts normal classroom activities, who is disrespectful to a teacher, who willfully disobeys a teacher, who uses abusive or foul language directed at a teacher or another pupil, who violates school rules, or who interferes with an orderly educational process.

Disciplinary action may include but is not limited to:

1. Oral or written reprimands
2. Referral for a counseling session which may include but shall not be limited to conflict resolution, social responsibility, family responsibility, peer mediation and stress management.
3. Written notification to parents of disruptive or unacceptable behavior, a copy of which shall be provided to the principal.
4. Other disciplinary measures approved by the principal and faculty of the school and in compliance with School Board policy.

WRITTEN PUNISHMENT

Written punishment should be kept to a minimum and should be related to the subject or discussions of an offense. Handwritten reports shall be limited to three (3) handwritten pages or less.

When a pupil's behavior prevents the orderly instruction of other pupils, or poses an immediate threat to the safety or physical well being of any pupil or teacher, or when a pupil exhibits disrespectful behavior toward the teacher such as using foul or abusive language directed at a teacher or threatening a teacher, the teacher may have the pupil immediately removed from the classroom and placed in the custody of the principal or the designee. A pupil removed from the classroom pursuant to this subparagraph shall not receive credit for school work missed.

Upon being sent to the principal's office pursuant to the provisions of this subparagraph, the principal or designee shall advise the pupil of the particular misconduct on the basis for such accusation, and the pupil shall be given an opportunity at that time to explain the pupil's version of the facts. The principal or the designee shall then conduct a counseling session with the pupil that may be appropriate to establish a course of action consistent with school board policy to identify and correct the behavior for which the pupil is being disciplined. A pupil in kindergarten through grade six removed from a class pursuant to this subparagraph shall not be permitted to return to the class for at least (30) thirty minutes, unless agreed to by the teacher initiating the disciplinary action. A pupil in grades seven through twelve removed from a class pursuant to this subparagraph shall not be permitted to return to the class during the same class period unless agreed to by the teacher initiating the disciplinary action. Additionally, the pupil shall not be readmitted to the class until the principal has implemented one of the following disciplinary measures:

- In-school suspension
- Detention
- Suspension
- Initiation of expulsion proceedings
- Assignment to an alternative school or detention program
- Any other disciplinary measure authorized by the principal with the concurrence of the teacher or the building level committee pursuant to law and board policy

When a pupil is removed from a classroom pursuant to this subparagraph, the teacher may require that the parent, tutor, or legal guardian of the pupil have a conference with the teacher in the presence of the principal or designee before the pupil is readmitted.

Upon the third removal from the same classroom pursuant to this subparagraph, the teacher and the principal shall discuss the disruptive behavior patterns of the pupil and the potentially appropriate disciplinary measure before the principal implements a disciplinary measure. If appropriate, a referral of the matter may be made to an appropriate building level committee. In addition, a conference between the teacher or other appropriate school employee and the pupil's parent, tutor, or legal guardian shall be required prior to the pupil being readmitted.

If the disruptive behavior persists, the teacher may request that the principal transfer the pupil into another setting.

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, whenever a pupil is formally accused of violating the provisions of R.S. 14:34.3, or school disciplinary rules or both, by committing a battery or an assault on any school employee, the principal shall suspend the pupil from school immediately and the pupil shall be removed immediately from the school premises without the benefit of the suspension procedures provided by R.S. 17:416 and this disciplinary handbook; however, the necessary notifications and due process procedures shall follow as soon as practicable. In accordance with 2006 La. Acts 733, 'assault' means an attempt to commit a battery on a school employee or administrator, or the intentional placing of those persons in reasonable apprehension of receiving a battery by the student, or the student's making statements threatening physical harm to the employee or administrator. 2006 La. Acts 733

When there is an incident involving a student and there is also an issue of immediate danger or intent to do harm or harm himself/herself, the student may be placed immediately as appropriate at the Learn Effective Attitudes and Discipline Center (LEAD) pending the investigation and the hearing.

NOTE: Any student committing battery on a school board employee shall be automatically suspended in accordance with R.S. 17:416 A (1) (c) and the principal shall recommend expulsion as provided by school board policy.

For students age ten (10) and under, if appropriate, law enforcement officials should be contacted. For all students over the age of ten (10), the principal shall contact the law enforcement officials.

No pupil suspended in accordance with the provisions of the above paragraph shall be considered for readmission to the school in which the school employee allegedly battered by the pupil is assigned, until all hearings and appeals associated with the alleged violation have been exhausted.

Except when the school system has no other school of suitable grade level for the pupil to attend, no pupil found guilty by a court of competent jurisdiction of violating the provisions of R.S. 14:34.3 or found guilty at a school system suspension hearing of committing a battery on any school employee shall be assigned to attend or shall attend the school in which the school employee battered by the pupil is assigned.

Notwithstanding any provision of R.S. 17:158 to the contrary, a school system shall not be required to provide transportation to any pupil reassigned to attend a school pursuant to the provisions of the above paragraph if providing such transportation for the pupil will result in additional transportation costs to the school system.

REFERRALS

1. The teacher who refers a student to the administrator for disciplinary action will complete the teacher's portion of the Louisiana Department of Education School Behavior Report.
2. The administrator handling the referral will indicate on the referral form the disposition of the case and send a copy of the completed form to the referring teacher.
3. Copies of the completed Behavior Report Form will be kept in the student's permanent discipline file, filed in the administrator's office and a copy mailed to the parent or legal guardian.
4. The referring teacher's name shall be listed on the suspension/expulsion form.
5. A bus driver referring a student for disciplinary reasons shall complete the Bus Behavior Form attached to this policy.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

1. Parents who wish to exclude their child from corporal punishment must send a written statement to the child's principal. The statement will be kept on file.
2. Corporal punishment should be used only after other methods of seeking the student's cooperation in developing self-discipline have failed or as an alternative to suspension.
3. Corporal punishment shall not be administered because of poor grades.
4. Before corporal punishment is administered, the student shall be advised of his/her misconduct and shall be given the opportunity to explain his/her version of the facts.
5. Corporal punishment shall be administered by the principal or assistant principal(s) as designated in writing by the principal, said punishment to be administered in the presence of another adult.
6. A paddle made of wood with no holes or splinters shall be used in administering corporal punishment, said paddle not to exceed twenty (20) inches in length, one-fourth (1/4) inch in thickness and at least three (3) inches in width, with rounded edges and corners.
7. The paddle is to be applied to the buttocks, the punishment not to exceed six (6) strokes.

8. A record of each incident of corporal punishment shall be kept. Upon request, the principal shall make information in said record available to the parent.

Approved: July 5, 2005 for Parish Policy Handbook and Student Code of Conduct

ARREST OF STUDENTS BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

When law enforcement agents appear at the school site to take students into custody, the officers should be encouraged to wait at the principal's office and the administration should summon the student to the principal's office for whatever action is deemed appropriate by law enforcement officers. If a student is taken into custody by law enforcement officers, the school administration, unless specially instructed in writing to the contrary by a law enforcement agency, should immediately attempt to contact the student's parent or guardian. The decision by law enforcement officers of the manner in which a student is taken into custody or whether to do so at all is solely within the province of law enforcement officers, and school administrators should not attempt to physically restrain or prevent officers from taking a student into custody because to do so may subject the administrator to personal arrest or resisting or interfering with an officer. Administration concerns over the wisdom or manner of taking a student into custody should be addressed in the proper forum, i.e., an inquiry of the officer's supervisor or a court of law, and not through physical resistance at the scene of the detention.