

Policy 5144.1: Suspension And Expulsion/Due Process

Status: ADOPTED

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CSBA NOTE: Education Code 35291 requires the Governing Board to prescribe rules and regulations for maintaining discipline in the schools under its jurisdiction. Education Code 48918 mandates the setting of rules and regulations for student expulsion as specified in this Board policy and the accompanying administrative regulation.

While recognizing that suspension or expulsion of students is sometimes necessary, legislative, administrative, regulatory, civic, and educational leaders are united in the belief that instructional time should be used for student learning purposes and that school discipline should be imposed in a way that, as much as possible, does not exclude students from school or limit their ability or opportunity to learn. The U.S. Department of Education's (USDOE) March 2023, "Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive, and Fair School Climates," states that unfair student discipline can result in a negative school climate, and an array of serious educational, economic, social, and emotional problems, including school avoidance and diminished educational engagement, decreased academic achievement, increased behavior problems, an increased likelihood of repeating a grade or dropping out, and involvement with the juvenile justice system. Consequently, USDOE recommends districts ensure the fair administration of student discipline in ways that treat students with dignity and respect while using a continuum of supports to increase student success and promote positive and supportive school environments that support students and keep them in the classroom learning as much as possible. Additionally, USDOE recommends schools to adopt a coordinated system of whole school evidence-based intervention practices that are more effective than exclusionary discipline in addressing student behavior and improving school climate and safety, such as positive behavioral interventions and supports; trauma-informed practices; social and emotional wellbeing; and restorative practices.

Pursuant to Education Code 48900.5, a district is not authorized to suspend a student for certain specified violations unless the student has been subjected to other means of correction which have failed to bring about proper conduct. Such other means of correction include, but are not limited to, conferences between school personnel, the student, and the student's parent/guardian; use of study, guidance, or other intervention teams to develop a plan to address the behavior in partnership with the student; referral for behavioral supports; and participation in restorative justice programs. Additionally, pursuant to Education Code 48900.5, as amended by AB 1165 (Ch. 22, Statutes of 2023), districts are encouraged to have a student who has been suspended, or for whom other means of correction have been implemented, for an incident of racist bullying, harassment, or intimidation, as well as the victim, to engage in a restorative justice practice suitable to address the needs of both the victim and the perpetrator, as specified in the accompanying administrative regulation. For further information about specific disciplinary strategies, including alternatives to class or school removals, see BP/AR 5144 - Discipline.

Education Code 48900.5 authorizes a district to document in a student's records the alternative means of correction used to address the student's behavior. Furthermore, when a student is being suspended by the Superintendent, principal, or designee, Education Code 48911 requires that the student be informed, during the informal conference that precedes the suspension, of the other means of correction that were attempted before the suspension.

Pursuant to Education Code 48913.5, when a student in any of grades 1-12 has been suspended for two or more school days, the student's parent/guardian, or other person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student, may request homework that the student would otherwise have been assigned, and the student's teacher is required to provide such homework; see BP 6154 - Homework/Makeup Work.

The Governing Board desires to provide district students access to educational opportunities in an orderly school environment that protects their safety and security, ensures their welfare and well-being, and promotes their learning and development. The Board shall develop rules and regulations setting the standards of behavior expected of district students and the disciplinary processes and procedures for addressing violations of those standards, including suspension and/or expulsion.

The grounds for suspension and expulsion and the procedures for considering, recommending, and/or implementing suspension and expulsion shall be only those specified in law, in this policy, and in the accompanying administrative regulation.

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Education Code 48900(s), a student may be subject to discipline only when the violation is related to a school activity or school attendance as specified below. A student may also be disciplined for a violation committed away from school if it is related to a school activity or to school attendance. For example, Education Code 48900 defines bullying by means of an electronic act as including an act that originates off campus;

see the accompanying administrative regulation and BP/AR 5131.2 - Bullying. Another example is the hostile school environment which a victim may suffer from sexual harassment that occurs off campus; see BP/AR 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment.

Except when otherwise permitted by law, a student may be suspended or expelled only when the behavior is related to a school activity or school attendance occurring within any district school or another school district, regardless of when it occurs, including, but not limited to, the following: (Education Code 48900(s))

1. While on school grounds
2. While going to or coming from school
3. During the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus
4. During, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity

CSBA NOTE: The following paragraph addresses the problem of unlawful discrimination in the administration of student discipline. In their joint March 2023 publication, "Resource on Confronting Racial Discrimination in Student Discipline," the USDOE Office for Civil Rights and Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division noted that, based on decades of enforcement activity, discrimination based on race, color, and national origin in student discipline continues to be a significant concern and that disparities by race have persisted in the application of student discipline in schools.

District staff shall enforce the rules concerning suspension and expulsion of students fairly, consistently, equally, and in accordance with the district's nondiscrimination policies.

Appropriate Use of Suspension Authority

CSBA NOTE: Education Code 48900.5 requires districts to use other means of correction instead of suspension, except when a student commits certain enumerated offenses. The following section reflects legislative intent regarding appropriate use of suspension as a means of disciplining students and may be modified to reflect district practice.

Except when a student's act violates Education Code 48900(a)-(e), as listed in Items #1-5 under "Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion: Grades K-12" of the accompanying administrative regulation, or when the student's presence causes a danger to others, suspension shall be used only when other means of correction have failed to bring about proper conduct. (Education Code 48900.5, 48900.6)

CSBA NOTE: The following optional paragraph may be revised to reflect district practice.

A student's parents/guardians shall be notified as soon as possible when there is an escalating pattern of misbehavior that could lead to on-campus or off-campus suspension.

CSBA NOTE: Education Code 48900(k), as amended by SB 274 (Ch. 597, Statutes of 2023), extends the prohibition from suspending a student for disruption or willful defiance, formerly applicable to students in grades K-8, to all students. Suspension of a student in grades 6-12 for disruption or willful defiance is prohibited until July 1, 2029. However, teachers may still suspend a student from class for willful defiance pursuant to Education Code section 48910. As part of the other means of correction specified in Education Code 48900.5, employees may also refer students for timely in-school interventions or supports for disruption or willful defiance.

Pursuant to Education Code 48900, if a student is referred on this basis, school administrators, are required to inform the referring employee within five business days, verbally or in writing, of the actions taken and, if none, the rationale for not providing any timely in-school interventions or supports. See "Suspension from Class by a Teacher" in the accompanying administrative regulation.

No student may be suspended for disruption or willful defiance, except by a teacher pursuant to Education Code 48910. (Education Code 48900)

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Education Code 48900(w), as amended by SB 274, a student may not be suspended or expelled based solely on the fact that they are truant, tardy, or otherwise absent from school activities.

Students shall not be suspended or expelled based solely on a student's truancy, tardiness, or absenteeism from assigned school activities. (Education Code 48900)

On-Campus Suspension

CSBA NOTE: As an alternative to off-campus suspension, Education Code 48911.1 authorizes a supervised suspension classroom program for students who pose no imminent danger to anyone at school and who have not been recommended for expulsion, as specified below.

The following optional section is for use by districts implementing a supervised suspension classroom program. Such districts may continue to claim funding apportionments for students so assigned, provided they meet specific criteria which are set forth under "On-Campus Suspension" in the accompanying administrative regulation. A district does not receive funding for off-campus suspensions.

To ensure the proper supervision and ongoing learning of students who are suspended for any of the reasons enumerated in Education Code 48900 and 48900.2, but who pose no imminent danger or threat to anyone at school and for whom expulsion proceedings have not been initiated, the Superintendent or designee shall establish a supervised suspension classroom program which meets the requirements of law.

Except where a supervised suspension is permitted by law for a student's first offense, supervised suspension shall be imposed only when other means of correction have failed to bring about proper conduct. (Education Code 48900.5)

Authority to Expel

A student may be expelled only by the Board. (Education Code 48918(j))

As required by law, the Superintendent or principal shall recommend expulsion and the Board shall expel any student found to have committed any of the following "mandatory recommendation and mandatory expulsion" acts at school or at a school activity off school grounds: (Education Code 48915)

1. Possessing a firearm which is not an imitation firearm, as verified by a certificated employee, unless the student had obtained prior written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the principal or designee's concurrence
2. Selling or otherwise furnishing a firearm
3. Brandishing a knife at another person
4. Unlawfully selling a controlled substance listed in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058
5. Committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code 261, 266c, 286, 287, 288, or 289, or former 288a, or committing a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code 243.4
6. Possessing an explosive as defined in 18 USC 921

For all other violations listed in the accompanying administrative regulation, the Superintendent or principal shall have the discretion to recommend expulsion of a student. If expulsion is recommended, the Board shall order the student expelled only if it makes a finding of either or both of the following: (Education Code 48915(b) and (e))

1. That other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct
2. That due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the student causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the student or others

A vote to expel a student shall be taken in an open session of a Board meeting. (Education Code 48918(j))

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Education Code 48917, the Board may suspend the enforcement of an expulsion order as long as a student satisfies specific criteria. See "Decision to Suspend Expulsion Order" in the accompanying administrative regulation for criteria. In addition, the Attorney General opined, in 80 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 85 (1997), that the enforcement of an expulsion order may be suspended even in those cases where the student has committed an offense for which expulsion is required by law. CSBA's District and County Office of Education Legal Services or district legal counsel should be consulted as appropriate.

The Board may vote to suspend the enforcement of the expulsion order pursuant to the requirements of law and the accompanying administrative regulation. (Education Code 48917)

No student shall be expelled for disruption or willful defiance. (Education Code 48900)

CSBA NOTE: The following paragraph is for use by districts that contract with the California Department of Education (CDE) to operate a California State Preschool Program. Education Code 8489.1 prohibits the expulsion or disenrollment of a child in a preschool program unless the district has taken specified steps, the child's continued enrollment would present a serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children, and the district refers the child's parents/guardians to other appropriate placements. For further details regarding the steps the district must take prior to expelling a child, see AR 5148.3 - Preschool/Early Childhood Education.

No child enrolled in a preschool program shall be expelled or unenrolled except under limited circumstances in accordance with Education Code 8489.1 and as specified in Administrative Regulation 5148.3 - Preschool/Early Childhood Education.

Due Process

The Board shall provide for the fair and equitable treatment of students facing suspension and/or expulsion by affording the students due process rights under the law. The Superintendent or designee shall comply with procedures for notices, hearings, and appeals as specified in law and administrative regulation. (Education Code 48911, 48915, 48915.5, 48918)

Maintenance and Monitoring of Outcome Data

CSBA NOTE: Education Code 48900.8 and 48916.1 require the district to maintain data related to suspensions and expulsions as provided below. Pursuant to Education Code 48916.1, the Superintendent of Public Instruction may require submission of such data as part of the Federal Program Monitoring process. In addition, 20 USC 7961 requires districts to submit to CDE a description of the circumstances surrounding any expulsions based on bringing or possessing a firearm on campus, including the name of the school, the number of students expelled, and the type of firearms involved.

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain outcome data related to student suspensions and expulsions in accordance with Education Code 48900.8 and 48916.1, including, but not limited to, the number of students recommended for expulsion, the grounds for each recommended expulsion, the actions taken by the Board, the types of referral made after each expulsion, and the disposition of the students after the expulsion period. For any expulsion that involves the possession of a firearm, such data shall include the name of the school and the type of firearm involved, as required pursuant to 20 USC 7961. Suspension and expulsion data shall be reported to the Board annually and to the California Department of Education when so required.

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Education Code 52060, districts are required to address school climate in the local control and accountability plan, as measured by student suspension and expulsion rates and other local measures for each school and each numerically significant student subgroup. Education Code 52052, as amended by SB 114 (Ch. 48, Statutes of 2023), defines numerically significant subgroups to include ethnic subgroups, socioeconomically disadvantaged students, English learners, long-term English learners, students with disabilities, foster youth, and homeless students, when there are at least 30 students in the subgroup or at least 15 foster youth or homeless students.

In presenting the report to the Board, the Superintendent or designee shall disaggregate data on suspensions and expulsions by school and by numerically significant student subgroups, including, but not limited to, ethnic subgroups, socioeconomically disadvantaged students, English learners, long-term English learners, students with disabilities, foster youth, and homeless students. Based on the data, the Board shall address any identified disparities in the imposition of student discipline and shall determine whether and how the district is meeting its goals for improving school climate as specified in its local control and accountability plan.

Policy Reference Disclaimer:These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

State References

Civ. Code 47
Civ. Code 48.8
Code of Civil Procedure 1985-1997
Ed. Code 17292.5

Description

[Privileged communication](#)
[Defamation liability](#)
[Production of evidence; means of production](#)
[Program for expelled students; facilities](#)

State References

Ed. Code 1981-1983
Ed. Code 212.5
Ed. Code 233
Ed. Code 32260-32262
Ed. Code 35145
Ed. Code 35146
Ed. Code 35291
Ed. Code 35291.5
Ed. Code 48645.5
Ed. Code 48660-48666
Ed. Code 48853-48853.5
Ed. Code 48900-48927
Ed. Code 48950
Ed. Code 48980
Ed. Code 49073-49079
Ed. Code 52052
Ed. Code 52059.5-52077
Ed. Code 64000-64001
Ed. Code 8489-8489.1
Gov. Code 11455.20
Gov. Code 54950-54963
H&S Code 11014.5
H&S Code 11053-11059
Lab. Code 230.7
Pen. Code 240
Pen. Code 241.2
Pen. Code 242
Pen. Code 243.2
Pen. Code 243.4
Pen. Code 245
Pen. Code 245.6
Pen. Code 261
Pen. Code 266c
Pen. Code 286
Pen. Code 287
Pen. Code 288
Pen. Code 289
Pen. Code 31
Pen. Code 417.27
Pen. Code 422.55

Description

[Enrollment of students in community school](#)
[Sexual harassment](#)
[Hate violence](#)
[Interagency School Safety Demonstration Act of 1985](#)
[Open board meetings](#)
[Closed sessions regarding suspensions](#)
[Rules for government and discipline of schools](#)
[Rules and procedures on school discipline](#)
[Former juvenile court school students; enrollment](#)
[Community day schools](#)
[Foster youth](#)
[Suspension and expulsion](#)
[Speech and other communication](#)
[Parent/Guardian notifications](#)
[Privacy of student records](#)
[Numerically significant student subgroups](#)
[Local control and accountability plan](#)
[Consolidated application](#)
[Prohibition against expulsion of preschool student](#)
[Informal hearing procedures](#)
[The Ralph M. Brown Act](#)
[Drug paraphernalia](#)
[Controlled substances; standards and schedules](#)
[Employee time off to appear in school on behalf of a child](#)
[Assault defined](#)
[Assault fines](#)
[Battery defined](#)
[Battery on school property](#)
[Sexual battery](#)
[Assault with deadly weapon](#)
[Hazing](#)
[Rape defined](#)
[Unlawful sexual intercourse](#)
[Sodomy defined](#)
[Oral Copulation](#)
[Lewd or lascivious acts with child under age 14](#)
[Penetration of genital or anal openings](#)
[Principal of a crime; defined](#)
[Laser pointers](#)
[Definition of hate crime](#)

State References

Pen. Code 422.6
 Pen. Code 422.7
 Pen. Code 422.75
 Pen. Code 626.10
 Pen. Code 626.2
 Pen. Code 626.9
 Pen. Code 868.5
 W&I Code 224.1
 W&I Code 729.6

Description

[Crimes; harassment](#)
[Aggravating factors for punishment](#)
[Enhanced penalties for hate crimes](#)
[Dirks, daggers, knives, razors, or stun guns](#)
[Entry upon campus after written notice of suspension or dismissal without permission](#)
[Gun-Free School Zone Act of 1995](#)
[Supporting person; attendance during testimony of witness](#)
[Indian child; definition](#)
[Counseling](#)

Federal References

18 USC 921
 20 USC 1415(K)
 20 USC 7961
 42 USC 11431-11435

Description

Definitions; firearms and ammunition
 Students with disabilities; placement in alternative educational setting
 Gun-Free Schools Act
 Education of homeless children and youths

Management Resources References

Attorney General Opinion
 Attorney General Opinion
 Attorney General Opinion
 Attorney General Opinion

 Court Decision

 Court Decision

 Court Decision
 Court Decision
 Court Decision
 Court Decision

 U.S. DOE & U.S. DOJ Civil Rights Divisions Pub

 U.S. DOE Publication

 U.S. DOE Publication

 Website
 Website
 Website
 Website
 Website
 Website

Description

80 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 348 (1997)
 80 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 85 (1997)
 80 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 91 (1997)
 84 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 146 (2001)

 Board of Education of Sacramento City Unified School District v. Sacramento County Board of Education and Kenneth H. (2001) 85 Cal.App.4th 1321

 Fremont Union High School District v. Santa Clara County Board (1991) 235 Cal. App. 3d 1182

 Garcia v. Los Angeles Board of Education (1981) 123 Cal. App. 3d 807
 John A. v. San Bernardino School District (1982) 33 Cal. 3d 301
 T.H. v. San Diego Unified School District (2004) 122 Cal. App. 4th 1267
 Woodbury v. Dempsey (2003) 108 Cal. App. 4th 421

[Resource on Confronting Racial Discrimination in Student Discipline, May 2023](#)
[School Climate and Student Discipline Resources](#)
[Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive, and Fair School Climates, March 2023](#)
[CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services](#)
[U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students](#)
[California Attorney General's Office](#)
[California Department of Education](#)
[CSBA](#)
[U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights](#)

Cross References**Description**

0450	Comprehensive Safety Plan
0450	Comprehensive Safety Plan
0460	Local Control And Accountability Plan
0460	Local Control And Accountability Plan
1114	District-Sponsored Social Media
1114	District-Sponsored Social Media
1312.3	Uniform Complaint Procedures
1312.3	Uniform Complaint Procedures
1312.3-E(1)	Uniform Complaint Procedures
1312.3-E(2)	Uniform Complaint Procedures
1313	Civility
3513.3	Tobacco-Free Schools
3513.3	Tobacco-Free Schools
3513.4	Drug And Alcohol Free Schools
3515	Campus Security
3515	Campus Security
3515.21	Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones)
3515.3	District Police/Security Department
3515.3	District Police/Security Department
3515.31	School Resource Officers
3515.4	Recovery For Property Loss Or Damage
3515.4	Recovery For Property Loss Or Damage
3516.2	Bomb Threats
4158	Employee Security
4158	Employee Security
4258	Employee Security
4258	Employee Security
4358	Employee Security
4358	Employee Security
5000	Concepts And Roles
5112.1	Exemptions From Attendance
5112.1	Exemptions From Attendance
5112.5	Open/Closed Campus
5113	Absences And Excuses
5113	Absences And Excuses
5113.1	Chronic Absence And Truancy
5113.1	Chronic Absence And Truancy
5113.11	Attendance Supervision
5116.2	Involuntary Student Transfers
5117	Interdistrict Attendance

Cross References**Description**

5117	Interdistrict Attendance
5119	Students Expelled From Other Districts
5125	Student Records
5125	Student Records
5125.2	Withholding Grades, Diploma Or Transcripts
5131	Conduct
5131.1	Bus Conduct
5131.1	Bus Conduct
5131.2	Bullying
5131.2	Bullying
5131.4	Student Disturbances
5131.4	Student Disturbances
5131.5	Vandalism And Graffiti
5131.6	Alcohol And Other Drugs
5131.6	Alcohol And Other Drugs
5131.62	Tobacco
5131.62	Tobacco
5131.63	Steroids
5131.63	Steroids
5131.7	Weapons And Dangerous Instruments
5131.7	Weapons And Dangerous Instruments
5137	Positive School Climate
5138	Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation
5142	Safety
5142	Safety
5144	Discipline
5144	Discipline
5144.2	Suspension And Expulsion/Due Process (Students With Disabilities)
5144.4	Required Parental Attendance
5144.4	Required Parental Attendance
5145.12	Search And Seizure
5145.12	Search And Seizure
5145.2	Freedom Of Speech/Expression
5145.2	Freedom Of Speech/Expression
5145.3	Nondiscrimination/Harassment
5145.3	Nondiscrimination/Harassment
5145.6	Parent/Guardian Notifications
5145.6-E(1)	Parent/Guardian Notifications
5145.7	Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment
5145.7	Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment

Cross References**Description**

5145.71	Title IX Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment Complaint Procedures
5145.71-E(1)	Title IX Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment Complaint Procedures
5145.9	Hate-Motivated Behavior
5148.3	Preschool/Early Childhood Education
5148.3	Preschool/Early Childhood Education
6145	Extracurricular And Cocurricular Activities
6145	Extracurricular And Cocurricular Activities
6145.2	Athletic Competition
6145.2	Athletic Competition
6145.5	Student Organizations And Equal Access
6145.5	Student Organizations And Equal Access
6145.8	Assemblies And Special Events
6153	School-Sponsored Trips
6153	School-Sponsored Trips
6154	Homework/Makeup Work
6158	Independent Study
6158	Independent Study
6161.2	Damaged Or Lost Instructional Materials
6163.4	Student Use Of Technology
6163.4-E(1)	Student Use Of Technology
6164.6	Identification And Education Under Section 504
6164.6	Identification And Education Under Section 504
6173	Education For Homeless Children
6173	Education For Homeless Children
6173-E(1)	Education For Homeless Children
6173-E(2)	Education For Homeless Children
6173.1	Education For Foster Youth
6173.1	Education For Foster Youth
6173.4	Education For American Indian Students
6184	Continuation Education
6184	Continuation Education
6185	Community Day School
6185	Community Day School
9000	Role Of The Board
9321	Closed Session
9321-E(1)	Closed Session
9321-E(2)	Closed Session
9322	Agenda/Meeting Materials