

## GUIDELINE 1: DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Policies and procedures must include definitions and terminology consistent with this ministerial directive for the purpose of providing clarity and building common understanding and consistency.

The following definitions of suspension must be used as they apply to policy and procedures. General references made to the term *suspension* shall apply to both in-school and out-of-school suspension unless otherwise noted.

**Out-of-School Suspension (OSS):** “An instance in which a student is dismissed from school for disciplinary purposes for a finite period of time when their peers are expected to be in attendance” (MEECL, *Standards for AEP*, p. 24).

**In-School Suspension (ISS):** “An instance in which a student is temporarily removed from their regular classroom(s) for at least half a school day for disciplinary purposes but remains under the direct supervision of school personnel. Direct supervision means school personnel are physically in the same location as students under their supervision” (MEECL, *Standards for AEP*, p. 25).

### Exclusionary Practices

Exclusionary discipline encompasses any type of school disciplinary action that removes or excludes a student from their usual educational setting (APA Services, Inc., 2019). Regardless of the name used or the intended purpose, exclusionary practices should be exercised with due diligence. Schools and school divisions must develop policy and procedures on the use of exclusionary practices.

Exclusionary discipline practices are referred to by various names and applied in varying degrees, dependent upon the purpose or intent (Valdebenito et al., 2018). The degree of exclusion for any reason should be commensurate with the least restrictive environment and not be punitive. Although exclusionary discipline practices might typically be viewed on a continuum of severity, educators must take caution that students are not faced with undue hardship or feelings of alienation, as they may not hold the same perception.

Examples of exclusionary practices include the following:

- withdrawal from the classroom setting for less than half a school day for disciplinary purposes but under the direct supervision of school personnel
- detention
- removal of privileges
- removal from school bus ridership

- exclusion time-out
- being sent home early
- in-school suspension
- out-of-school suspension
- expulsion
- seclusion

(Manitoba Education and Training, *Provincial Code of Conduct*, 2017; Manitoba Education, *Enhancing Proactive Supports to Minimize the Use of Seclusion*, 2021).

Within this range of exclusionary practices, suspension, expulsion, and seclusion are considered to be most restrictive.

## Expulsion

Expulsion is an extreme exclusionary discipline practice. Expulsion differs from suspension (Manitoba Education and Training, *Provincial Code of Conduct*, 2017). Although The Public Schools Act and supporting regulation (M.R. 92/2013) allow school boards to expel, the guidelines in this policy directive focus on minimizing the use of suspension due to the negative outcomes and the aim to limit, reduce, and subsequently phase out exclusionary practices. Schools and school divisions must develop policy and procedures on the use of expulsion.

## Seclusion

Seclusion is a safety response. It is never used as a punishment, consequence, disciplinary action, or a way to force compliance. Schools and school divisions must develop policy and procedures on the use of seclusion (Manitoba Education, *Enhancing Proactive Supports to Minimize the Use of Seclusion*, 2021).

## Informal Removals/Being Sent Home

The *Standards for Appropriate Educational Programming* (2022) affirms that “School division policy must identify a mandatory process to inform parents and ensure safety any time a student is sent home for disciplinary reasons” (MEECL, *Standards for AEP: Student Discipline*, p. 19).

There may be instances when a student is sent home due to behavioural disruptions for the purpose of a “reset” or “fresh start.” Although this practice may be well-intended, if a student’s day is reduced outside of the student-specific planning process, such informal removals must be documented.

According to the *Standards for Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba* (MEECL, 2022), “School divisions must provide all students with the same minimum number of hours of instruction, and document in the student-specific plan (SSP) any reduction or alternations in the school day, including a plan to return to full-time instruction” (p. 9).

When removals from the classroom and/or school form a recurring pattern, the student-specific planning process should be initiated to identify a student’s learning needs and develop, implement, and evaluate appropriate educational interventions.

## GUIDELINE 2: ENHANCING PROACTIVE AND PREVENTATIVE PRACTICES

Policies must identify preventative practices that promote positive and proactive strategies in order to limit, reduce, and phase out exclusionary practices.

In Manitoba, all schools are expected to engage in preventative practices, emphasizing positive and proactive strategies to foster student learning (Manitoba Education and Training, *Provincial Code of Conduct*, 2017; Manitoba Education, *Safe and Caring Schools: Enhancing Proactive Supports to Minimize the Use of Seclusion*, 2021;

Manitoba Education, *Towards Inclusion: Supporting Positive Behaviour in Manitoba Classrooms*, 2011). Schools and school divisions should seek a proactive approach that supports students by identifying and solving problems early.

**By establishing common values, vision, and practices, a whole-school approach “promotes a sense of belonging to the school community and builds trusting relationships” (Kidde & Alfred, as cited in Passarella, 2017).**

The department provides a model for a whole-school approach to planning for safety and belonging that is based on four perspectives that include comprehensive school health, social-ecological systems, three-tiered planning, and strengths-based practices (Manitoba Education and Training, *Safe and Caring Schools: A Whole-School Approach to Planning for Safety and Belonging*, 2017).

This model outlines a planning process based on research and evidence-based practices in planning for—and sustaining—positive, healthy, and safe schools while aligning with school planning systems already in use in Manitoba schools and school divisions.

Planning in this way helps school communities create a positive and inclusive school culture and meets the *Standards for Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba* (MEECL, 2022), which affirms, “School division policy on student discipline must incorporate a continuum of supports, including positive and preventative approaches and strategies, as well as consequences corresponding to the nature, severity, and