

A time for conference participants to meet again and determine whether or not the goals have been achieved is also set.

At the review, if it is agreed that the goals have been met re-entry is planned. If not, the exclusion may be extended.

## Concerns and appeals

You can find out more about the processes for suspension and exclusion by:

- making an appointment with the principal
- contacting your local DECD Regional office.

There is no formal appeal rights associated with suspension from school because the purpose of the process is to negotiate a satisfactory outcome for all parties concerned at the suspension conference.

The appeal process for exclusion is outlined at the pre-exclusion conference.

The student, the parents or caregivers or someone acting at their request may challenge any action perceived as unjust by contacting the Regional director of education.

**Don't know which Region your school is in?** Ask the school or phone 8226 1000 or go to

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/locs/> > Locate A-Z

Listing on the left side of the page for regional office contact details.

## Myths and misunderstandings

### This will wreck their career options.

The fact that a student was at some time suspended or excluded is not recorded in any report for school leavers prepared for potential employers. The information is only recorded in the student's confidential school file. This file is available for the student and their parents or caregivers to view. Clearly though, if a student's behaviour is preventing them focusing on their learning, then it may also affect their future options.

### It's a holiday, they like it.

Most students do not enjoy being suspended or excluded and miss being with their friends at school. Part of the

exclusion process is achieving the agreed-upon goals. It is not free time unless the family uses it as such. Rather, it is an opportunity for the student, their family, and the school to take stock and make changes that will support the student to be a successful learner.

## The School discipline policy

Schools strive to provide a safe, caring, orderly and productive environment for learning. Behaviour which respects the rights of all students to learn and teachers to teach is fundamental to all students' success at school. Suspension and exclusion procedures are designed to help students change their irresponsible behaviour while protecting the rights of the wider school community. These procedures are one aspect of the implementation of the DECD *School discipline policy*.

The School discipline policy requires schools to:

- focus on providing opportunities and support for students to experience success
- develop in students an acceptance of responsibility for their own behaviour
- work with staff, parents or caregivers and students to create learning communities which support the rights of all students to learn and all teachers to teach
- develop a behaviour code in partnership with its community. A behaviour code is a statement of a school community's values and expectations relating to student behaviour and the school's management of student behaviour.

### Have you seen the school's behaviour code?

If not, you can ask for a copy at the school.

### The whole DECD School discipline policy can be viewed at:

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/SchoolDisciplinePolicy.pdf>

or you can ask for a copy at the school. For further information relating to your child's behaviour, please work with staff at the school.

# Suspension & exclusion



## Information for parents and caregivers

- What are suspension and exclusion?
- Why are students suspended or excluded?
- What happens when students are suspended or excluded?
- Myths and misunderstandings about suspension and exclusion

## What is suspension?

Suspension from school means that the student does not attend school for a period of time ranging from one to five school days.

Suspension from school is intended to:

- provide support for the student and the school through a problem-solving conference
- protect the learning and safety rights of other members of the school community
- signal to the community that the student's behaviour is not acceptable within the school community.

The length of a suspension, between one and five days, is determined by the principal and depends on the severity or frequency of the irresponsible behaviour.

## What is exclusion?

Exclusion from a school means that the student does not attend that school for either:

- a set period of time ranging from four to ten weeks OR
- for the remainder of a term or, for students over 16, the remainder of the semester.

Exclusion from school is intended to:

- enable the student to achieve certain goals related to increasing responsible behaviour and improving learning
- signal that the student's irresponsible behaviour is not acceptable and cannot be managed within that school community without interfering with the rights of others to education and safety.

The length of exclusion is determined by the principal and depends on the severity or frequency of the irresponsible behaviour and the time deemed necessary to achieve specific behavioural changes.

## Why are students suspended or excluded?

Suspension or Exclusion from school are appropriate responses when the principal believes on reasonable grounds that:

- the student has threatened or perpetrated violence
- the student has acted in a manner which threatens the good order of the school by persistently refusing to follow the school's behaviour code
- the student has acted in a manner which threatens the safety or wellbeing of a student, member of staff or other person through sexual or racist harassment, verbal abuse, bullying or any other means
- the student has acted illegally
- the student is interfering with the rights of other students to learn and of teachers to teach.

Students may also be suspended when the principal believes on reasonable grounds that:

- the student shows persistent and willful inattention or indifference to school work.

## What happens when a student is suspended?

During the period of the suspension, a suspension conference is held. The conference includes:

- the student
- the principal or representative eg deputy
- parents or caregivers

It may also include:

- a family support provider invited by the parents (e.g. extended family member, social worker from Families SA or a non-government group such as Anglicare, or disabilities advocate)
- other involved school staff (e.g. counsellor, class teacher, Aboriginal Education Worker, Special Education teacher)
- other people who may contribute (e.g. Regional service providers, interpreters)

At the conference, a student development plan is negotiated. This plan includes:

- behavioural and learning goals which need to be achieved
- support already in place and any further support the student needs to achieve these goals
- a process for monitoring the student's achievement of goals
- consequences of responsible and irresponsible behaviours in the future
- responsibilities of the school, the student and parents or caregivers.

The conference also considers how and when the student will return to school and class.

If the suspension conference cannot take place during the suspension period, the student returns to school at the end of the set time but works on an alternative timetable until the conference can occur.

## What happens when a student is excluded?

The principal gives a Notice of Intention to Exclude which suspends the students for up to five days. During this period a pre-exclusion conference is held. It includes the same participants as a suspension conference. If the student is under 16, an inter-agency behaviour support coordinator from the local Regional education office will also be invited.

Information from all parties, the learning and behaviour goals and exclusion process for the student are considered at the conference. The principal then determines whether or not to go ahead with the exclusion. If not, the student will return to school as for a suspension.

If the exclusion is to go ahead:

- the goals and duration are finalised
- the appeal process is outlined
- the location is determined for students under 16: they may be excluded to another school, a learning centre or an Open Access program or an alternative program.