



# Turtle River School Division - Administrative Procedure

## Section D – Student Services

### Suspension

The purpose of this suspension procedure is to promote safe and caring school environments by minimizing the use of suspensions and emphasizing proactive supports for students' well-being and academic success. Turtle River School Division bases this procedure on the Manitoba document "*Safe and Caring Schools: A Procedure Directive Enhancing Proactive Supports to Minimize the Use of Suspension*". Our goal is to create a positive school culture that prioritizes prevention and intervention over punitive measures.

This procedure applies to all students enrolled in Turtle River School Division, teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, and any other stakeholders involved in the school communities.

Suspension should be considered as a last resort and utilized only when necessary to ensure the safety of students and staff, or to address behaviour that significantly disrupts the learning environment. The focus of this procedure is on implementing proactive strategies to prevent behavioural issues and to provide appropriate supports for students to address their needs.

#### **Guiding Principles:**

##### **1. Proactive Prevention**

The school will implement proactive measures to create a positive and inclusive climate, including promoting respect, empathy, and understanding among students and staff.

##### **2. Positive Behaviour Support**

The school will emphasize positive behaviour support strategies, such as teaching and reinforcing expected behaviours, rather than relying solely on punitive measures.

##### **3. Individualized Support**

Recognizing that each student is unique, the school will provide individualized support to address the underlying causes of challenging behaviours and promotes positive development.

##### **4. Restorative Practices**

When conflicts arise, the school will utilize restorative practices to repair harm, build relationships, and foster accountability.

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#### 5. Collaboration and Communication

The school will encourage collaboration and communication among students, staff, parents/guardians, and community partners to address behavioural concerns and implement effective interventions.

#### Suspension Procedures

Turtle River School Division recognizes the importance of regular school attendance for students to effectively acquire the education needed to navigate today's complex world. It recognizes the disruptive nature of any interruptions to attendance and emphasizes the role of students in maintaining a conducive learning environment. Additionally, it acknowledges that in certain circumstances, such as when a student's actions are detrimental to the school community or violate the school's code of conduct, an out-of-school suspension may be warranted as a means to address the situation and uphold the welfare of both students and staff.

##### 1. Progressive Discipline

Before considering suspension, the school will utilize progressive discipline approaches, such as warnings, conferences, and behaviour contracts, to address behaviour issues.

##### 2. Assessment and Support

When a student's behaviour poses a concern, the school will conduct a thorough assessment to understand the underlying factors contributing to the behaviour. Based on the assessment, appropriate supports and interventions will be implemented to address the student's needs.

##### 3. Consideration of Alternatives

Before issuing a suspension, the school will consider alternative consequences and interventions, such as counseling, mediation, or restorative circles.

##### 4. Notification and Consultation

If suspension is deemed necessary, the principal will notify the student's parent/guardian promptly and provide an opportunity for consultation to discuss the reasons for the suspension and the potential supports for the student. All suspensions must be reported to the parents and superintendent in writing, within twenty-four hours. The letter shall contain:

- Duration, beginning and ending dates of the suspension
- A description of the conduct for which the student was suspended
- Terms of re-admission and details of a re-entry meeting

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##### 5. Re-Integration and Follow-Up

After serving the suspension, the school will facilitate the re-integration of the student into the school community and provide ongoing support to ensure their success and continued positive behaviour.

The principal of any school may suspend a student for a maximum period of five days. Upon review, the superintendent may extend a suspension for up to thirty days for a student who persists in conduct which is deemed injurious to the welfare of the school.

If a student is suspended for a fourth time, the student and his parents/guardians shall meet with the principal, and the superintendent. The superintendent shall set the conditions for the student's return to school.

If a student is suspended for a fifth time, the student and his parents must meet with the Turtle River School Division Board of Trustees. The board's decision will be final. If the superintendent recommends expulsion of a student, the Board of trustees will be notified at the next scheduled board meeting

Turtle River School Division is legally obligated to offer and arrange alternative appropriate programming support to a student who has been suspended from school for more than five days.

##### **Suspension of Bus Riding Privileges**

Principals of schools within Turtle River School Division have the authority to suspend a student's bus riding privileges when the student's behaviour on or near the bus is unacceptable, and/or the student's behaviour poses a risk to the safety and welfare of themselves or others.

The suspension of a student from riding a school bus can be implemented independently from the student's attendance at school.

Suspension authority shall be:

##### **The principal:**

The principal may suspend a student from riding a school bus for a maximum of 5 days.

##### **The superintendent**

The superintendent may support or deny the principal's recommendation for a student's suspension beyond the 5 day limit. However, the superintendent cannot approve a suspension exceeding thirty days.

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#### Expulsion

In accordance with the Public Schools Act, Turtle River School Division may expel a student from attending all schools in the division. It requires an official motion by the board to remove the student from attending school for a semester or an entire school year.

When an expulsion is considered, the following must occur:

1. The expulsion has been recommended by the principal and supported by the superintendent.
2. The student and his parents/guardians are notified in writing of
  - a. The recommendation of the principal and superintendent
  - b. The right of the student and his parents/guardians to make a presentation at a hearing with the board.
  - c. The date, time, and location of this hearing.
3. The principal is requested to appear at this hearing.
4. The decision of the board for expulsion will be made by a board motion during a regular board meeting and the student and his parents/guardians will be notified of the decision by registered mail.

#### Appeal of Disciplinary Issues

In accordance with the Public Schools Act, parents/guardians may make representation to the Turtle River Board of Trustees about extended suspensions or expulsions. The board may confirm the suspension/expulsion, modify it, or reinstate the student, if applicable.

The appeal process outlined by the Turtle River School Division provides a structured framework for parents/guardians to address disciplinary actions taken against their child.

- **Representation to the Board of Trustees.**

Parents/guardians have the right to make representations to the Turtle River Board of Trustees regarding extended suspensions or expulsions. The board has the authority to confirm, modify, or reinstate the suspension or expulsion.

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- **Appeal of Suspensions up to Five Days**  
If the suspension imposed by the principal is for up to five days, parents/guardians may appeal the decision to the superintendent.
- **Appeal of Suspensions Exceeding Five Days**  
For suspensions exceeding five days, the appeal process involves first appealing to the superintendent. If unsatisfied with the superintendent’s decision, parents/guardians may further appeal to the secretary-treasurer to be included in the agenda of the next scheduled board meeting.
- **Representation and Legal Counsel**  
Parents/guardians and the suspended student have the right to attend the board meeting as a delegation. They may also be represented by legal counsel during the appeal process.
- **Duration of Suspension**  
The student is required to remain out of school for the duration of the suspension or until the appeal process is completed.

This appeals process ensures that parents/guardians have avenues to address disciplinary actions taken against their child and provides opportunities for a fair and thorough review of the situation by the school administration and the board of trustees.

#### Review and Evaluation

This procedure will be reviewed annually by Turtle River School Division to assess its effectiveness in promoting safe and caring school environments and minimizing the use of suspensions. Feedback from the stakeholders will be solicited and used to inform revisions and improvements to the procedure, as needed.

Adherence to this procedure is essential to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for all students. By prioritizing proactive supports and interventions, we can foster positive behaviour,

#### Alternative Approaches

<https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/suspension/index.html>

When designing alternative learning experiences to improve behaviour and enhance engagement, Unger (2018)\* proposes the following principles and ingredients:

#### Principles

- Make resources available and accessible
- Material should be meaningful to the participant in a specific context at a given point in time.

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- Employ a multi-systemic approach.
- Coordinate programs making for ease of navigation for those utilizing services.
- Provide continuity of support.
- Offer support in ways that are culturally significant to students' values, beliefs, and customs.
- Share responsibility for solutions with caregivers, service providers, educators, community members, and children/youth.

#### Key Ingredients:

- Build relationships.
- Encourage powerful identities.
- Provide opportunities for power and control.
- Promote social justice.
- Improve access to basic needs.
- Develop a sense of belonging, responsibility for others, spirituality, and life purpose.
- Encourage a sense of culture and historical roots.

Rather than employing a suspension, one or more of the following supportive strategies may be used and the situation reframed as a learning opportunity, thereby fulfilling a need the student has identified through their behaviour:

- In-school community service
- Restorative practice such as peace/community circle
- Behaviour contract
- Group brainstorming among student, school staff, and parents/guardians, and/or extended family
- Referral to counsellor, social worker, occupational therapist, or other critical supports.

\*Ungar, M. (2018). *What works: A manual for designing programs that build resilience*

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