



Suspending students for inappropriate behavior doesn't work - and we have better options.

Exclusionary discipline

We know that harsh punishments like out-of-school suspensions disproportionately impact students of color, males, and students with disabilities. Yet many schools persist with this strategy - even though sending students home has more drawbacks than benefits.

Harms of Out-of-School Suspension

- Students miss out on a day of instruction, even if they do independent work at home.
- Disproportionate impact on parents with fewer resources, including missing work.
- Students who are already less connected and may have experienced trauma are further isolated from the school community.

Punishment, including issuing suspensions, does not...



- ✗ address the why of the behavior
- ✗ teach students how to get their needs met using appropriate behavior



Whole Child Practice: Restorative In-School Suspension
Restorative ISS provides a safe, neutral space for students to reflect on past behavior, make an action plan for future behavior, and complete missed classwork

Comparing OSS and ISS in the context of motivation & rewards

Schools suspend students as a punishment - but if they have a pleasant experience at home (e.g., watching TV all day), they may purposefully engage in behaviors to get sent home.

In-School Suspension is not fun & games. The vibe is calm & focused. RISS facilitators can add strategic motivators (breaks, time on technology) if students complete work (see the Motivation & Rewards Behavior Brief).



Benefits of Restorative ISS

- Students have the opportunity to reflect on what they did and repair harm
- Students continue their academic learning
- The school sends the message that even when students do something harmful, we are not going to push you away - we still care and we will work through this together.
- Maintain the routine of coming to school, keeping students safe

If you're suspending because...

You might try...

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We need to send a message to the victim and the aggressor about the severity of their actions

Call a family meeting with a multi-disciplinary school team; share the structure and purpose of RISS.

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We don't want the harmed student to come into contact with the aggressor

Assign a staff member to meet the aggressor at the door and escort them to the RISS room so that they do not encounter the victim.

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The student won't stay in the RISS room, and the adult in charge could be harmed by the student

Ensure that your RISS room has a small number of students. With a structure and lower ratios, plus strategic motivators (e.g., movement breaks, preferred activities) to keep them motivated during the day, you avoid students eloping.



Even if you overwhelmingly rely on In-School Suspension, some rare situations do warrant Out-of-School Suspensions, such as when law enforcement needs time to investigate if there is imminent danger before the student returns to the community (e.g., student brings a gun to school).