



Behavior Brief:

Why we refrain from calling caregivers in challenging moments



We believe that effective responses to behavior:

- ✓ Prioritize students' and adults' physical and emotional safety.
- ✓ Maintain and build students' relational connection to adults at school.

We do NOT rely on families to punish children for behavior at school.

Most behaviors can and should be addressed by school staff. This builds trust and relationship between adults at school and children, reinforcing for children that they are loved no matter what and that teachers are equipped with the tools and ability to remain calm in moments of students' strong emotions. While you should not call (or threaten to call) caregivers in order to coerce desirable behaviors, there are times when it is appropriate to call a caregiver for more context on the child's circumstances, or to partner in de-escalating the child through co-regulation. And, you should keep caregivers informed about school-based restorative consequences, such as Structured Recess or Restorative ISS, so that you can partner to build the skills the child needs.

The use of coercive procedures like calling home can lead students to act out of fear or avoidance. The threat of punishment from a family member (whether real or perceived) can move a student into a heightened state and promote the opposite effects of attempting to de-escalate a student.

Children must feel safe and connected in order to learn.

Children must also feel safe & connected in order for consequences to work, since consequences are opportunities to learn appropriate behavior. Students learn when the consequence is immediate, related to the behavior, and used in a supportive environment. Punishment often creates shame and negative feelings, rather than teaching children appropriate ways to get their needs met.

Whole Child Practice: Proactive Relationship-Building

Build relationships with families through positive communication first - and then you can work together to support children's behavior.



Whole Child Practice: De-Escalation

Specific strategies for responding to challenging behavior in the moment which support children to regulate their bodies, relate to others, and return to learning