

## Specific Alternative Responses to Disciplinary Behavior Concerns: For Teachers and Administrative Staff

### Preventative Measures

- 1) Build Effective Working Relationships – the single most important variable that is within our control is in how we interact with our students
- 2) Understanding Student Perspectives – in order to build effective relationships with our students, we must try to understand where they are coming from (see handout *Understanding & Appropriately Responding to Student Perspectives*)
- 3) Positive Reinforcement for Desired Behaviors
  - a. Rule-following behaviors (e.g., on-task, working quietly, respond to redirection, etc.)
  - b. Character-based behaviors (e.g., demonstrating empathy, conflict resolution, de-escalating when upset, helping another student, etc.)
- 4) Actively Involve Students – when possible, actively involve students during lessons, particularly those students who otherwise would be off-task, distracted, and/or unmotivated to do so
- 5) Opportunities for Students to Voice Concerns
  - a. One-on-one discussion with teacher, AP, or counselor
  - b. Group-based discussions – with peers and an adult facilitator
- 6) Offering Students Cool Down Time – providing appropriate alternatives in dealing with negative feelings is important
- 7) Avoiding Power Struggles – it can be very easy to get caught up in a back-and-forth with a student, which tends to escalate the problem situation on both ends
  - a. Stay calm and collected, state directives in a calm voice tone
  - b. Keep number of words used to a minimum when redirecting behavior – reminder of expectation, potential reinforcement for appropriate behavior, and potential consequence for inappropriate behavior
- 8) Consult with Colleagues – often times, some teachers experience more success with a particular student than others, whatever the reason may be, or they may have had a similar student/behavior concern in the past. Thus, it extremely useful to speak to other staff members regarding their experiences, both successes and challenges in addressing student behaviors.
  - a. Other teachers who have the same student in their classes
  - b. Teachers on your designated team/subject
  - c. Adaptive Behavior teachers
  - d. Counselors and Assistant Principals
- 9) Practice What You Preach – it is imperative that we model the behaviors we expect from our students

\*Remember, we need to teach, model, and practice all skills with our students, not just academic content.

- How do we speak to our students?
- How do we communicate our concerns with our students?
- How do we deal with conflict in our classroom?
- What do we do when we make a mistake or say/do something that may have not been the best choice?

Attendance-related concerns (i.e., tardy, skipping, truancy, tardy sweep)

- 1) Conference with student to determine what may be the cause of such attendance concerns
  - a. Is it within the student's control?
  - b. Is it related to distance between classes?
  - c. Is it at a particular time of day or a particular class?
  - d. Reminders of expectations, needed seat time to earn class credit, access to school events/activities in relation to attendance
- 2) Develop a behavior plan/contract with student to track and reinforce class attendance
  - a. Utilize school-wide PBIS model and incentives (e.g., school cash) and determine appropriate amount earned for class attendance.
  - b. Develop a list of possible incentives with the student for which he/she can buy with school cash.
  - c. Identify a point-person for a weekly check-in with the student to review attendance data and cash in for pre-determined incentives.
- 3) Consult with campus behavior specialist and/or Psychological Services Professional regarding implementation of behavior plan.
- 4) Consult with parent/guardian if problem persists
  - a. Any possible reinforcers/consequences (earn/take away privileges, such as TV, computer, video games, etc.) that can be implemented at home to support school attendance?
  - b. Any home-related stressors that may be having an impact on school attendance/performance?
- 5) Consider DMC as a last resort as well as an alternative to out of school suspension
- 6) Submit to truancy officer if steps 1-5 have led to limited success

Passive/Internalizing Behavior Concerns (e.g., sleeping in class, work refusal, refusing to comply with directives)

- 1) School/Class-based incentives (e.g., praise, school cash, student of the month nomination) for appropriate behaviors exhibited:
  - a. Attentive
  - b. Pencil to paper
  - c. Asking appropriately for a break
  - d. Returning to work in a timely manner after break
  - e. Participating in class activity/discussion
- 2) Individualized supports
  - a. Private discussion, encouragement with student
  - b. Allowing for breaks  
Be sure to set parameters (#/class period or #/week in a specific class, duration of break, specific activities approved during break – restroom, drink of water, stand up and stretch, walk briefly around room, head down on desk, etc.)
  - c. If appearing in distress (e.g., anxious, angry, sad), consider sending student to speak with school counselor or other available staff member for support in appropriately dealing with feelings
- 3) Conference with student (in private, not in front of class)
  - a. Home, school stressors?
  - b. Getting enough sleep at home? Food?
  - c. Difficulty with academic content/material?

- 4) Consult with campus behavior specialist, AAS, and/or Psychological Services Personnel regarding additional behavior management strategies/interventions that may prove useful
- 5) Consider consulting with parent/guardian if problem persists
  - a. Any home-related stressors that may be having an impact on school performance and behaviors?
  - b. Similar behavior concerns at home?
  - c. Community-based support/services?
  - d. Medical, mental health concerns, diagnoses? Medications that may be impacting behavior?
- 6) If problems persist, consider referral to SIT Committee as well as a student review with Psychological Services Personnel

Minor Externalizing Behavior Concerns (e.g., class disruption, excessive talking, some use of profanity)

- 1) School/Class-based incentives (e.g., praise, school cash, student of the month nomination) for appropriate behaviors exhibited
  - a. Attentive
  - b. Pencil to paper
  - c. Asking appropriately for a break
  - d. Returning to work in a timely manner after break
  - e. Participating in class activity/discussion
  - f. Responding to redirection
- 2) Individualized supports
  - a. Verbal and/or visual reminders to stay on-task
  - b. Opportunity to rephrase if using inappropriate language, positive reinforcement if complies with rephrase request
  - c. Change seating
  - d. Private discussion, encouragement with student
  - e. Allowing for breaks
 

Be sure to set parameters (#/class period or #/week in a specific class, duration of break, specific activities approved during break – restroom, drink of water, stand up and stretch, walk briefly around room, head down on desk, etc.)
  - f. If appearing in distress (e.g., anxious, angry, sad), consider sending student to speak with school counselor or other available staff member for support in appropriately dealing with feelings
- 3) Teacher conference with parent/guardian and/or AP to discuss further and brainstorm strategies
- 4) If problems persist, consider developing and implementing a behavior intervention plan (consult with campus/district behavior specialists, AAS for assistance)
- 5) Consult with campus behavior specialist, AAS, and/or Psychological Services Personnel regarding additional behavior management strategies/interventions that may prove useful

Major Externalizing Behavior Concerns (e.g., threatening/intimidating language, repeated use of profanity, physically aggressive behaviors, property destruction)

- 1) Provide opportunity to regroup, de-escalate, make a better choice if visibly upset/angry
  - a. Prompt to take a break (at desk, in hallway)
  - b. Prompt to visit with school counselor or AP (as an intervention, not as discipline)
- 2) Call AP – removal from class if student is unable or unwilling to de-escalate within classroom or with teacher
- 3) AP engages in de-escalation techniques prior to discussion of situation or consequences
  - a. Allowing time to cool down, regroup
  - b. Considering brief discussion of topic unrelated to situation at hand (distraction technique)
  - c. Speaking calmly and deliberately, keeping verbalizations brief
  - d. Offering the choice of student verbalizing or writing down thoughts/feelings
  - e. Demonstrating active listening through paraphrasing and confirmation of understanding student's perspective
- 4) AP conferences with all involved parties to obtain relevant information
- 5) Conference with parent/family
  - a. Determine what situational factors (if any) may be impacting student's behavior
  - b. Review relevant community-based resources, depending on nature and severity of presenting behaviors
  - c. Problem-solve an action plan together as a team, so you have buy in and follow through with parents
- 6) Review pattern of behaviors/discipline to determine what has previously been tried if it has occurred in the past, what has worked/not worked
  - a. If NOT a persistent problem/concern, consider the following
    - i. Formal apology
    - ii. Discussion of appropriate alternatives in dealing with anger/frustration (anger management, conflict resolution, relaxation strategies, etc.)
    - iii. Community service opportunities (e.g., assist with school recycling pick-up, assign a specific number of hours to volunteer at a local organization) – this may require teaming up with various local agencies to determine which locations would be willing to provide this opportunity and/or working with the campus Community Youth
    - iv. Mediation among involved parties
    - v. Restitution (e.g., cleaning up any vandalism that occurred, picking up trash, helping custodian clean, etc.)
  - b. If IS a persistent problem/concern, consider the following
    - i. Adult mentor
    - ii. Develop a behavior plan/contract with student (consult with campus, district behavior specialists, AAS, Psych Services for assistance) – be sure to include measurable descriptors of identified behaviors, interval/duration/frequency expectations, student-identified reinforcers/incentives, and pre-determined consequences
    - iii. Identify a point-person for a weekly check-in with the student to review behavior data and turn in earned cash for pre-determined incentives
    - iv. Referral to SIT Committee
    - v. Consult with campus, district behavior specialists

vi. Student Review with Psychological Services Personnel

- 7) DMC and out of school suspension should be used as a last resort and ideally, in conjunction with above-noted alternatives, rather than in isolation.

School/District-Wide Recommendations:

- 1) Utilizing DMC as a teaching opportunity (e.g., social skills, problem-solving, conflict resolution, self-reflection, etc.)
- 2) Point person on each campus regarding restorative discipline and follow-up with at-risk students, repeat offenders, staff who work with these students, and parents of these students
- 3) Designated therapeutic/intervention classroom for general education students – a place to take a break, cool down, process through difficult situations, etc.
- 4) Creating and implementing peer mediation and/or peer courts
- 5) Transition services for those returning from suspension or ALC
  - a. Plan for success
  - b. Regular follow up with student (designated point person)