



INDEFINITE SUSPENSION Information Sheet for Parents/Guardians

This information sheet is supplied as an attachment to all letters of suspension where an indefinite suspension (more than ten days) has occurred. This document is designed to answer questions that parents and/or students may have. If you require more information or clarification, please contact the office of the Director of Instruction – Student Support Services at 250-860-8888.

1. What is an indefinite suspension and who awards it?

Any suspension of more than ten school days is an indefinite suspension. School principals have the authority to indefinitely suspend students.

2. What gives the School Principals authority to award suspensions?

Authority to suspend students is based first in the British Columbia Schools Act. Locally, Board Regulation 455 - *Discipline* and Policy 170 - *District Suspension Review Committee* provide details about suspensions (these are available to view on the School District website, at any school or through the Board Office).

3. What happens once the principal decides to indefinitely suspend a student?

After making the decision to indefinitely suspend, the principal informs both the student and parent/guardian. A letter is also sent, with this document being appended to it. Students receiving an indefinite suspension must appear (along with at least one parent or guardian) before the District Suspension Review Committee (DSRC). Documentation is also sent to the Chairperson of the DSRC. The District Suspension Review Committee comprises the representative of the Superintendent of Schools (usually the Director of Instruction – Student Support Services) and a School Trustee, representing the Board of Education.

4. What about school work during the suspension?

The student's school is expected to offer work that the student can complete at home. Work is to be supplied "in a timely manner". Questions about schoolwork should be directed to your child's school, usually through the principal.

5. Can I enroll my child in another school or program?

The suspension applies to all School District No. 23 schools and programs. The student may not attend any school or program within this District unless the DSRC allows it, and this cannot occur before the DSRC hearing. The suspension does not, however, apply to independent schools or to other school districts.

6. How is the DSRC hearing arranged?

The office of the Chairperson will be in contact with you to arrange the hearing date, time and place (usually the main Board Office).

7. Who comes to the DSRC hearing?

The following are required:

- the student and at least one parent/guardian
- a school Trustee
- the Chairperson of the DSRC
- the principal or vice principal of the student's school

Others:

- parents may bring a family advocate (friend, relative, etc.)
- the DSRC may invite appropriate others (counselors, behaviour teacher, etc.)

Note:

On occasion parents have elected to have a lawyer attend; if families wish to do this, they should inform the Chairperson of the DSRC so that arrangements can be made for a Board lawyer also to attend.

8. What happens at the hearing?

Hearings are scheduled for 45 minutes. The principal briefly states the reason(s) for the suspension. The Chairperson asks the suspended student questions relevant to the decision(s) the DSRC needs to make. Anyone at the hearing may participate in asking or responding to questions. When the DSRC feels it has information sufficient to making a decision(s), the DSRC will leave the meeting, make its decision(s) and then return to the meeting and explain what its decisions are. The DSRC has the authority to implement most decisions immediately. The family will also receive a letter detailing the decision(s).

9. What if I disagree with the decision(s)?

At the conclusion of the meeting both the parent(s)/guardian(s) and student will be asked to sign a letter (and to keep a copy). This letter (a) confirms that the hearing has occurred, and (b) indicates how to appeal any decision(s) of the DSRC. Appeals go directly to the entire Board of Education. Appeals are heard at the next available in camera (confidential) meeting of the Board. Appeal procedures will be explained in detail by the DSRC Chairperson.

10. Can a suspended student return to school pending an appeal?

No. Such students remain under suspension, with work provided by the school until such time as the Board rules on an appeal.