
ST. COLETTA DISCIPLINE POLICY **REV: September 2023**

St. Coletta School serves students with significant disabilities, which may include students that present with behavior challenges. All students are managed on an individual basis to determine the level of supports and/or consequences required to address severe behaviors that may disrupt the classroom environment or put themselves and/or others at risk of harm. While a majority of behaviors are able to be addressed through the use of positive behavior supports, there are instances when alternate consequences, such as suspension, are deemed necessary.

PROCEDURE

Positive Behavior Supports

It is the philosophy of St. Coletta School to foster productive student behavior. Toward this goal, staff are expected to provide: clear rules for student conduct; collegiality among staff members; a pervasive caring for students; effective instruction; and a focus on providing positive reinforcement and options for students.

Effective methods for responding to disruptive student behavior include:

- *Using positive redirection and reinforcement whenever appropriate.
- *Developing positive personal relationships with students that indicate high teacher expectations and respect for students.
- *Closely monitoring performance and behavior.
- *Using brief, non-disruptive interventions.
- *Handling conflicts calmly and avoiding engaging in power struggles.
- *Clarifying students' choices so that options are clear and students are responsible for the consequences of their choices.
- *Using effective listening skills to help students identify problems and gain insight.

When students exhibit serious behavioral difficulties such as aggression, self-injury, significant property destruction and elopement (running away), a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP) may need to be developed. The development process should include the multidisciplinary team involved with the student and the following six steps:

- *Attempt to determine the function(s) of the behavior through an FBA;
- *Focus on one or two specific student behaviors that need to change in order for the student to have a successful school experience;
- *Determine specific interventions to bring about these changes;
- *Assign responsibility to staff for implementing each intervention;
- *Determine the data to be collected to test the effectiveness of the intervention; and,
- *Review the program at a minimum annually, or as determined by the IEP team.

Copies of the FBA and BIP are discussed with and given to parents/guardians and affected staff. A copy is placed in the student's record.

St. Coletta staff members are trained in the Mandt System. All staff receive training in the Relational Section (Building Healthy Relationships, Communication, and Conflict Resolution). Depending on the specific needs of the school program, selected staff members receive training in the Conceptual and Technical Sections (Medical Risks of Restraint, Assisting and Supporting, Separating and Restraining.) Only staff members trained in the Conceptual and Technical level are allowed to intervene using this system. The Mandt System teaches a graded system of interventions, beginning with non-physical options and gradually moving towards physical options.. Physical intervention is used only as a matter of last resort when someone is a danger to themselves or others and the attempted non-physical interventions have not been successful. Parents must be notified if a restraint is utilized and a behavior plan must be developed.

There are Quiet Rooms at St. Coletta that are available for students to use if they need to calm themselves. These rooms are unlocked and students are never left alone. Use of the Quiet Room requires that an administrator be notified, an incident report be written and the parent notified and provided a copy of the incident report. St. Coletta policy prohibits the use of mechanical and chemical restraints.

The St. Coletta School Behavior Management Plan **strictly prohibits:**

- Deprivation of drinking water or food necessary to meet daily nutritional needs.
- Denial of the use of toilet facilities.
- Any action humiliating, degrading or abusive.
- Deprivation of health care including counseling.
- Intrusive aversive therapy.
- Use of mechanical restraints, chemical restraints, or seclusion.

Corporal punishment will never be administered by any staff person. If abuse or neglect is suspected, the school will contact Child Protective Services (CPS). Before CPS comes, a parent/guardian must be notified. If the parent/guardian objects, the child will not be interviewed. This does not apply if the parent/guardian is the suspect. In such a case, CPS may interview the child without consent from the parent or guardian.

If warranted, the school may elect to implement daily student searches as a part of an individualized plan with coordination between home and school. Searches are completed upon arrival to school and can include school staff or student search of backpacks, as well as asking students to empty pockets prior to entering the classroom.

Student Suspension/Disciplinary Unenrollment/Emergency Removal

While St. Coletta School is dedicated to serving students with challenging behaviors by providing intensive behavior supports, there may be incidents where suspension is deemed necessary. All cases are determined on a student by student basis and take into consideration their specific circumstances such as cognitive skill level and social awareness. In some situations suspension/disciplinary unenrollment is deemed necessary if the safety of others or the student involved is put at risk. Dependent on the seriousness of the offense and/or danger to others, outside authorities may also be contacted and the Public Charter School Board notified.

St. Coletta School employs the following levels of suspension:

Level I:

In School Disciplinary Action: disciplinary actions to include exclusion from school common areas and required participation in conflict resolution or peer mediation sessions, or similar actions of short duration that do not result in the student's loss of academic instruction time.

OR

In-House suspension: When a student continues to attend school with provisions made to their program that includes 1:1 supervision and suspension of all community outings. Instruction and related services will be conducted in a designated environment separate from the student's classroom.

Level II:

Short Term Out of school suspension: When a student is to remain home for the duration of the suspension to exceed no more than 5 school days. Students in KG through grade 5 cannot be suspended for a period greater than 5 days.

Level III:

Long Term Suspension/ Disciplinary Unenrollment/Emergency Removal: When a student is suspended out of school for a period of 6 consecutive school days or more (for students in grades

6 through 12 only). Students cannot be suspended for more than 10 consecutive days.

This level of suspension is reported to appropriate school jurisdictions and, by the 10th day of suspension or if a disciplinary unenrollment has been recommended, a manifestation determination meeting must be held to determine the relationship of the behavior to the disability of the student, update or create behavior plans/functional behavior assessments and possibly determine an alternate placement.

Behaviors Resulting in Suspension include but are not limited to:

Level I:

- *Fighting
- *Stealing
- *Smoking
- *Intentionally destroying school property
- *Threatening others with bodily harm
- *Running away from staff in the community

Level II:

- *Drugs on premises
- *Alcohol on premises
- *Possession of a dangerous object
- *Causing bodily harm to others

Level III:

- *Possession of weapons
- *Significant aggressive/destructive behavior posing an immediate threat of severe injury to others and/or self

In accordance with the Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018, no student in grades kindergarten through 5 shall be subject to an out-of school suspension or disciplinary unenrollment, unless a school administrator determines that the student has willfully caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause bodily injury or emotional distress, to another person.

Process for Notification of Suspension:

Once an infraction has been reported, the student(s) will meet with a school administrator to discuss their side of the incident. Incident reports will be written and submitted to the school administrator by witnesses of the incident.

In the event of a suspension/disciplinary unenrollment recommendation, parents/guardians will be informed immediately via telephone call (see also **Long Term Suspension Due Process Procedures** below). If parents/guardians are unable to be contacted, the student will be sent home with a letter of suspension/disciplinary unenrollment to be signed with a request that the letter be signed and returned. Parents/guardians and/or students, if they are 18 and their own guardian, will also be notified via certified mail and phone of this decision (preferably immediately as noted above), but no later than within 24 hours of the suspension/disciplinary unenrollment. In the case of a short term suspension, parents/guardians or students who are their own guardians will be extended the opportunity to meet with school administrators and can request to appeal the short-term suspension decision. The request for an appeal or a hearing can be made to the Principal or an Assistant Principal. This appeal will be reviewed by the school's discipline committee.

Long Term Suspension Due Process Procedure

If a suspension equaling more than six consecutive or cumulative days over the school year occurs, or an disciplinary unenrollment is recommended, then, according to the *Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act (IDEIA)*, a Manifest Determination and placement review IEP

meeting must be held. In addition, all disciplinary unenrollment recommendations must be made by the Principal or in their absence, appropriate designee (Assistant Principal) and communicated as required to the St. Coletta Public Charter School Board. A Manifest Determination Meeting, per DCPS and other jurisdictional regulations, will be scheduled within ten days. Further steps taken will be determined by the IEP team at the Manifestation Determination meeting. Parents and/or students also have the right to have an advocate or attorney present at any Disciplinary Unenrollment/Emergency Removal hearing or meeting.

The St. Coletta Public Charter School Board reviews all suspensions at each board meeting and can make recommendations regarding policy. Suspensions extending beyond 5 school days and disciplinary unenrollments are also required to be reported to the DC Public Charter School Board. Parents and/or students have the right to appeal any decision to the school's discipline committee or the St. Coletta Public Charter School Board. Disciplinary Unenrollment/Emergency Removal recommendations will be reported immediately to the St. Coletta Special Education Public Charter School Board chairperson and the CEO of St. Coletta of Greater Washington.