

505.03 Suspension of Students

Friday, August 11, 2023

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF STUDENTS

The authority to suspend for a "short term" and to propose an "extended term" suspension and/or expulsion is delegated to the principal or his or her designee. A short-term suspension shall mean the exclusion of a student from school attendance for a period not to exceed five school days. A long-term suspension means the exclusion of a student from school attendance for a period exceeding five school days but less than twenty school days.

The provisions of this section apply to all pupils enrolled in the school district. When considering possible courses of action for special education students in regard to alleged violations of school rules, policies, and regulations, procedural due process rights guaranteed under applicable Federal and State statutes are applicable. The school district is obligated to see that every special education student is provided an appropriate educational program without cost to the parent. Conversely, schools are not required to maintain pupils who are a danger to themselves or others in regular attendance centers.

Suspension from classes or school will not be carried out unless the student while subject to school authority:

1. uses violence, force, threat or intimidation in a manner causing substantial interference with school purposes; or
2. causes or attempts to cause substantial damage to school or private property or steals or attempts to steal school or private property of substantial value; or
3. causes or attempts to cause physical injury to another person except in self-defense; or threatens or intimidates any student for the purpose or intent of obtaining something of value from the student; or
4. possesses or transmits any firearm, knife, explosive or other dangerous object that is ordinarily considered a weapon; or

5. engages in the unlawful possession, selling, dispensing, or use of a controlled substance or an imitation controlled substance, as defined in section 28-401, a substance represented to be a controlled substance, or alcoholic liquor as defined in section 53-103 or being under the influence of a controlled substance or alcoholic liquor; or
6. commits public indecency as defined in Nebraska statute 28-806 if that student is at least twelve years of age but less than nineteen years of age; or
7. commits or attempts to commit sexual assault against any person if a complaint has been filed by a prosecutor alleging the incident as required in Nebraska statute 79- 267.8; or
8. engages in bullying as defined in section 79-2,137; or
9. engages in any other illegal activity which constitutes a danger to other students or interferes with school purposes; or
10. repeatedly violates the policies, rules and standards of student conduct established by the district. File 505.03 Page 2 of 5 A given suspension will be for a period of time not to exceed 5 school days.

A student will be informed of the charges against him or her and, if the student denies them, an explanation of the evidence will be given and the student will be given an opportunity to refute the charges. No time delay is necessary between the time a pupil is notified of the charges and the time of the hearing before the principal.

Guidelines to ensure that students are afforded due process during a suspension or proposed suspension from school will be developed. The procedural rules, regulations and guidelines will be approved by the Board of Education and made known to students, parents and school staff.

Administrative procedures complying with the Student Discipline Act shall also be in place to ensure due process to the student should the principal decide to administer a long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment.

Emergency Exclusion: Any student may be excluded from school in the following circumstances:

1) If the student has a dangerous communicable disease transmissible through normal school contacts and poses an imminent threat to the health or safety of the school community; or

2) If the student's conduct presents a clear threat to the physical safety of himself, herself, or others, or is so extremely disruptive as to make temporary removal necessary to preserve the rights of other students to pursue an education.

Such an emergency exclusion shall be based upon a clear factual situation warranting it and shall last not longer than is necessary to avoid the dangers described above.

If the emergency exclusion will be for five days or less, the procedures for a short-term suspension shall be followed. If the superintendent or his or her designee determines that such emergency exclusion shall extend beyond five days, a hearing will be held and a final determination made within ten school days after the initial date of exclusion. Such procedure shall substantially comply with the procedures set forth in state statutes 79-266 to 287 for a long-term suspension or expulsion and be modified only to the extent necessary to accomplish the hearing and determination within this shorter time period.

The principal should make a reasonable effort to contact the parent(s) or guardian(s) of a suspended student by telephone or to communicate to them directly regarding the specific act(s) for which the suspension is ordered and the length of the suspension. If personal contact cannot be made then a notice will be mailed to parents within 24 hours stating the specific act(s) for which the suspension is ordered and the length of the suspension.

All records and documentation regarding suspension will be destroyed within three years of the student's continuous absence from school. No information regarding a suspension will be communicated to any person not directly involved in the disciplinary proceedings. File 505.03 Page 3 of 5

The right of appeal to the Board of Education in cases involving student suspension described in this policy does not extend to a suspension from a student extracurricular activities program or other disciplinary action affecting participation in an extracurricular activities program.

For the purposes of this policy and as defined in the Student Discipline Act, expulsion shall mean exclusion from attendance in all schools within the district for a period of time as defined in Nebraska statute 79-283.

Students may be expelled for violations of board policy, school rules or the law. It shall be within the discretion of the administrator to discipline a student by using an expulsion for a single offense or for a series of offenses depending on the nature of the offense and the circumstances surrounding the offense.

The superintendent will develop procedural rules, regulations and guidelines governing expulsions. These shall be approved by the Board of Education and made known to students, parents and school staff. The principal shall keep records of all expulsions.

All cases of expulsion shall be preceded by short-term suspension and its related procedures or by the condition of emergency exclusion which applies only when a student (a) has a dangerous communicable disease transmissible through normal school contacts and poses an immediate threat to the health and safety of the school community; or (b) exhibits conduct which presents a clear threat to the physical safety of himself/herself or others, or is so extremely disruptive as to make temporary removal necessary to preserve the rights of other students to pursue an education.

When a student is expelled, the student shall be provided with:

1. Notice of the standard of conduct allegedly violated, acts the student is alleged to have committed and a summary of the evidence to be presented against the student;
2. The penalty, if any, which the principal has recommended in the charge and any other penalty to which the student may be subject;
3. A statement that the student has a right to a hearing, upon request, on the specified charges;
4. A description of the hearing procedures, along with procedures for appealing any decision rendered at the hearing;
5. A statement the principal, legal counsel for the school, the student, the student's parent or representative or guardian has the right;

A. to examine the student's academic and disciplinary records and any affidavits to be used at the hearing concerning the alleged misconduct and;

B. to know the identity of the witnesses to appear at the hearing and the substance of their testimony; File 505.03 Page 4 of 5

6. A form on which the student or the student's parent/guardian may request a hearing.

Violations of Law Relating to Suspensions or Expulsions

1. Student violations or suspected violations of Nebraska law will be reported to law enforcement as soon as possible. Conduct to be reported for law enforcement referral includes conduct that may constitute a felony, conduct which may constitute a threat to the safety or well-being of students or others in school programs and activities, and conduct that the legal system is better equipped to address than school officials. Student violations of school policy that are not apparent violations of law will be addressed by school administrators without reporting them to law enforcement. Administrators should consider the student's maturity, and known behavioral, emotional or mental disorders, if applicable. It will be the responsibility of the referring administrator to contact the student's parent that a referral to legal authorities has been or will be made, if applicable.

On or before August 1 the school board will annually review the reporting guidelines above with the County Attorney. These shall be distributed to all parents and guardians and their students at the beginning of each school year, or at the time of enrollment if during the school year. The guidelines shall also be posted conspicuously in each school during the school year.

2. Except in instances of suspected child abuse, when a principal or designee releases a minor student to a law enforcement officer for the purpose of removing the minor from the school premises, immediate steps shall be taken to notify the parent, guardian, or other relative having control of the minor about the minor's release to the officer and about the place to which the minor is reportedly being taken. In cases of suspected child abuse, the principal or designee will provide the law enforcement officer with the address and telephone number of the minor's parents or guardian.

Supplemental to these procedures, a special education student must be provided with additional procedures. A determination should be made of whether the student is actually guilty of the misconduct. A staffing team should determine whether the student's behavior is caused by the student's disability and whether the conduct is the result of inappropriate placement. Discussions and conclusions of this meeting should be recorded.

If the special education student's conduct is not caused by the disability, the student may be expelled or suspended for a long-term period following written notice to the parent and pursuant to the school district's expulsion hearing procedures. If the misconduct is caused by the disability and a change in placement is recommended, the change must be made pursuant to the placement procedures used by the school district.