

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL STAFF

If possible, choose an isolated, separate classroom that has ample space. The idea is to separate a student from peers and activities that can reinforce misbehaviors. The room must have enough space to accommodate all the students that are typically sent to ISS. Students who have to wait until space is available are more likely to continue their problem behavior or initiate new ones.

Identify teachers to supervise students in the ISS room and formulate a schedule. Some schools rotate teachers during their planning time. Increased consistency will result if the school can assign a teacher full-time to the ISS room, although this may not always be feasible. Rather than being a stern taskmaster, the best role for this person is that of supportive resource person.

Meet with representatives of all relevant constituencies to decide which problem behaviors that will "earn" an ISS. Some (but not many) schools address this issue in their student discipline handbooks or codes of conduct. Avoid referring students to ISS for mild misbehaviors.

Decide who will have the authority to refer students to ISS. Some schools reserve that function for a school administrator after receiving a recommendation from a teacher; others assign that authority directly to the teacher.

Develop guidelines that specify how long students must remain in ISS; typically, longer durations are assigned for more severe problem behaviors. It is important to permit some flexibility to accommodate the individual situations of particular students. General guidelines, however, facilitate consistency in the overall implementation of the program.

Develop a procedure to insure that the ISS supervisor knows the proper academic assignment and has available the appropriate academic materials for any student referred to ISS *prior to or simultaneous with* the student's arrival at the ISS room. Securing assignments and materials from different teachers using different curricula can be a major challenge. It can be essential for success, however, since there is a high probability that students who are referred to ISS are struggling academically. As a result, it is very important that the extended time away from their regular academic classroom does not cause them to get farther behind. Some schools offer an incentive, such as time reduction in ISS, to any student who collects and brings all class assignments and materials to the ISS room.

Distribute and post the "rules of engagement" that are in effect when students are in an ISS period. For example: (1) Quiet at all times unless given permission to talk, (2) Stay in your seat, (3) Work on your school assignments, (4) Raise your hand to request assistance and wait to be acknowledged, (5) No sleeping.

Decide on the courses of action when students break any of the rules, such as a parent conference or additional ISS time.

Make arrangements for restroom and lunch breaks. These are basic student rights and cannot be made contingent on the amount of work he has completed or his behavior while he is in ISS.

When a student exhibits a problem behavior that warrants ISS, identify the problem behavior to the student and give him a real opportunity to explain what happened. Avoid lecturing or arguing with him.

If possible, contact the student's parents to inform them about their child's stay in ISS, the nature of the problem behavior, and the length of the stay.

Before an ISS period begins, review the ISS rules and the consequences for breaking them with the student.

Monitor the student's academic performance and social behavior while in ISS.

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Additional Sources:

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Stage, S. (1997). A preliminary investigation of the relationship between in-school suspension and the disruptive classroom behavior of students with behavioral disorders. *Behavioral Disorders, 23(1), 57-76*.

<http://www.disciplineassociates.com/tip10.htm>: Making ISS More Effective

http://www.education-world.com/a_admin/admin/admin329.shtml: ISS As a Learning Tool