
Introduction to the Guide

This guide for principals and other school leaders is one of three guides comprising a comprehensive approach to restorative school discipline for elementary, middle, and high schools. Each guide is

- *Evidence based*—drawing on the latest research in education and psychology on effective strategies for educative discipline in classrooms and schools
- *Inclusive*—schoolwide strategies that accommodate different behavior-support needs to ensure emotionally safe and secure learning environments that do not exclude children and youth
- *Restorative*—incorporating approaches that focus on making things right, not on retribution for things that have gone wrong
- *Practical*—disciplinary frameworks and intervention approaches that are doable in typical middle, junior high, and high schools with the kinds of resources and personnel generally available
- *Contextual*—socially valid principles and practices that fit comfortably in regular schools and typical classrooms and that reflect community values about how children and youth should be treated
- *Culturally responsive*—educationally meaningful guidelines for culturally responsive policy and practice in linguistically and culturally diverse school communities
- *User friendly*—presented in a succinct format respectful of the multiple responsibilities, busy schedules, and existing capabilities of educational personnel, incorporating theoretical constructs, references, and intervention descriptions directly relevant to each person’s role in educative discipline. These recommendations are designed to fit within the realities of your individual school and school population.

PRACTICE OUTCOMES

This guide includes the information needed to develop the following outcomes for practice by principals and other school leaders:

1. *Establish a restorative discipline school community*—ensuring that the underlying values and driving forces of your school community are positive relationships, where every member of that community feels a sense of belonging, is valued, and accepts responsibility for the well-being of others.
2. *Agree on behavior expectations for the school community*—applied to children and adults in all school settings including classrooms, walkways, stairs, restrooms, cafeteria, assembly, library, gym/intramural sports facilities, school bus, and outdoor areas surrounding the school.
3. *Describe components of effective behavioral interventions*—understanding the framework for interventions to address challenging behavior in students in a positive way, based on current research relevant to schools.
4. *Support teams and networks*—facilitate planning by school personnel, families, and behavioral consultants working together to support students, with clear lines of communication and cooperation with other child and youth services such as mental health and social welfare services.
5. *Establish schoolwide restorative discipline policy*—fair, transparent, and ethical school rules and behavior consequences communicated across school personnel, families, and students. This includes threat assessment and a standard response protocol for school safety.
6. *Implement restorative practices and in-school suspension systems*—systems that provide ongoing support for a school policy of inclusion and that ensure that challenges and conflict are addressed without exclusion, retribution, and/or loss of mutual respect.
7. *Evaluate professional development issues for staff*—assessing for all personnel the skills and understandings needed to promote restorative discipline, culturally responsive practices, socioemotional support, and high expectations for learning and behavior.
8. *Sustainability and continuous improvement*—ongoing review and renewal processes to update evidence-based approaches and ensure that policy and practices align with current knowledge about effective schools.