

What to do

if your child is facing
suspension or expulsion



SAFE AND CARING
SCHOOLS



What can I do if my child is facing suspension or expulsion?

The Toronto District School Board is committed to making each and every one of its schools a caring place that is safe for learning.

If your child is or is going to be suspended or expelled from his or her school, there are things you can do that may be helpful:

Find out what happened

The school should contact the parent or guardian of a student under the age of 18 who is going to be suspended or expelled. They will tell you:

- what he or she believes has happened
- why the student is being suspended or why a student may be expelled
- how long the suspension or expulsion will last.

Once you have been contacted:

- Talk to your child as soon as possible.
- Ask your child to tell you as honestly and completely as possible about what happened.
- Think about the details of what the school believes has happened.
- Think about the reason for the suspension or expulsion.
- Write down what your child tells you so that you have a record of the event details as soon as possible.
- Think about any differences between what the school believes has happened and what your child has told you.

Arrange to meet with school administrators

Once you have spoken with the school and your child, please arrange to meet with a school administrator in person. This may be a vice-principal or a principal at your child's school.

It is important to meet with the school administrator in person so that you will know for yourself:

- as much as possible about what happened
- that the student is being treated fairly
- that the student is responsible for his or her actions
- that further supports for a student are available.

The student who is facing suspension or expulsion can be at this meeting.

If English is not your first language or you or your child have difficulty hearing, you can ask to have an interpreter at the meeting.

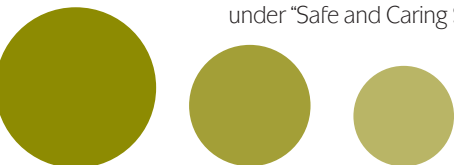
If it makes you more comfortable, you can bring someone to advocate for you at the meeting. This could be someone such as another family member, a friend, a neighbour, an agency worker or a religious advisor. Please let the school know that this person is coming with you.

It is helpful if all those at the meeting come with open minds and remain calm while discussing what happened.

How do I prepare for a meeting with the school administrator?

You can read more about when and why suspensions and expulsions are given

- in other pamphlets in the TDSB Safe and Caring Schools Series, which are available from school offices.
- on the TDSB website, www.tdsb.on.ca under "Parents" and then under "Safe and Caring Schools".



Before the meeting, write down any questions you would like answered at the meeting. Below are some things you may want to know:

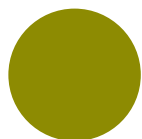
- What rule did my child break?
- How did my child know about this rule?
- What did my child do that broke this rule?
- What is usually the punishment for breaking this rule?
- Is the punishment different if the rule is broken more than once?
- Is my child getting more or less than the usual punishment? Why?
- Where was my child when this happened?
- Which teacher or other school official was in charge at the time?
- Did a teacher or school official see what happened?
- Who else saw what happened?
- Were there other students involved?
- Is a suspension or expulsion necessary?
- Has my child done anything like this before?
- Is there another way my child could make up for or correct what was done?
- What can be done to help my child to avoid this problem in the future?

You may contact the school and ask that at the meeting you see:

- a copy of your child's student record
- school records of efforts made to work with your child if he or she has had difficulties in school before the suspension or expulsion.

What if I have evidence that shows that my child should not have been suspended or expelled?

If you think there are reasons to believe and evidence that shows that your child should not have been suspended or expelled, please be sure that the school administrator is aware of this.





Ask for support.

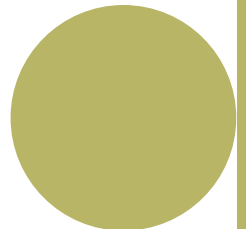
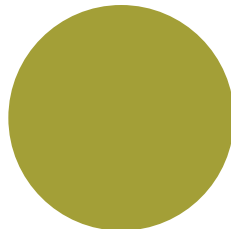
The school can give you information on ways to help support your child.

Whenever possible, if a student is to be out of school for more than one day, the school will arrange to provide homework and course work for the student.

A school can also tell you about programs that support student learning while a student is suspended or expelled.

If a student needs emotional or other social supports, the school can arrange for him or her to be seen by school support workers or refer you to other community social agencies for support. Here are some of the supports that may be available:

- school attendance counselors
- school child and youth workers
- school social workers
- school psychologists
- peer mediation
- drug counselling
- assessing for learning challenges
- anger management programs
- alternative to suspension programs
- SPES (support program for expelled students)
- tutoring programs
- social skills programs
- conflict resolution programs
- youth leadership programs
- after-school programs
- community service programs and counselling.





Is there help for parents?

Sometimes, a student's difficulties may be part of difficulties faced by the student's whole family. If this is so, you can also ask your school to recommend support groups or agencies that can help your family as well as your child.

What if I think my child has been unfairly suspended or expelled?

If, after meeting in person with the school's administrator, you feel your child has been unfairly suspended or expelled, you can ask to have your child's case reviewed.

If a student is to be suspended for more than one day, you may fill out a suspension review form or you may write your own request letter. In either case you must ask *in writing* for a review *within seven school days* of the suspension being given.

If a student is to be given a limited expulsion, the student is placed on suspension until the principal of the school can thoroughly investigate what happened and make a decision on whether or not to expel the student. This decision must happen within twenty days of the suspension being given. Once that decision is made, if you want to appeal the decision you must ask in writing for a limited expulsion appeal *within seven school days* after the principal of your child's school decides to expel your child. Again, you may fill out a form or write your own letter.

If a student is to be given a full expulsion, the student's case will be heard before a committee of the Board of Trustees. You can get details on what happens before and during expulsion hearings from your child's school office or from the TDSB's web site.

If you do not agree with a school's decision to suspend or expel, you can contact the school's superintendent of education. The superintendent's contact information is available from the school office or on the TDSB web site, www.tdsb.on.ca.

If you still do not agree with a suspension or limited expulsion after speaking with a superintendent, you can ask the superintendent to arrange a hearing before a committee of the Board of Trustees.

If you do not agree with a full expulsion decision, you cannot make any further appeal within the TDSB. You can, however, ask a TDSB safe schools administrator to refer you to the Child and Family Services Review Board. Contact the Safe Schools Office in your area, at the phone numbers on the next page, for details on how to do this.

Specific information on how to ask for a review or an appeal of a decision to suspend or expel is outlined in detail in the Safe and Caring Schools pamphlets, "*What you need to know about suspensions*" and "*What you need to know about expulsions*".



How do I get more information on suspensions and expulsions?

You can ask to speak with the principal or vice-principal or you can phone your school's superintendent. Contact information for principals, vice-principals and superintendents is available in your school office or from the TDSB web site www.tdsb.on.ca.

You can read other pamphlets in the Safe and Caring School Series. They are available in your school office, or you can download them from www.tdsb.on.ca. Select "Parents" at the top of the home page and then click on "Safe and Caring Schools" underneath.

You may also phone the Safe Schools Office in your area of the city:

Southwest: 416-393-8976

Northwest: 416-394-7393

Southeast: 416-396-5411

Northeast: 416-396-7511

Central: 416-393-8933

Please note: This pamphlet is intended for information purposes. It is not a substitute for legal advice and is subject to all applicable laws and Toronto District School Board policies. Please contact a Safe Schools Office for more details.

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