

DVSEC

POLICY Z:01 DISCIPLINE CODE

The following procedures should be exercised in dealing with disruptive students. A disruptive student is one whose immediate behavior jeopardizes the general welfare of staff and students and/or grossly interferes with the educational process of the school.

1. Remind students of their actions. It is possible and often times probable that students, when upset, will elicit inappropriate actions and/or remarks. Make them aware that they may be excessively loud, blatantly defiant and on the verge of creating a major disturbance.
2. If the student persists, given the nature of the incident, reassure the student that whatever has caused the dilemma, it can be resolved with a cool, calm and collected attitude.
3. Refrain from making intimidating and/or condescending remarks which may result in an unnecessary confrontation.
4. If possible and absolutely necessary, reenact the situation leading up to the dilemma. In doing so, you are providing a concrete image of what has transpired as well as providing counseling, which hopefully, will prove beneficial in solving the problem.
5. Your patience in dealing with discipline problems is paramount. Bear in mind that our students tend to overreact and exaggerate what has actually occurred. Your calm demeanor may prevent a major disturbance.
6. In the event of a physical altercation, male staff member(s) will intervene judiciously, while female staff member(s) will escort uninvolved students to another location apart from the occurrence.
7. Once a disruptive incident has occurred, the principal shall be notified immediately. the principal is solely responsible for notifying those parties (i.e., parents, guardians, CST members, transportation personnel, etc.) of imposed student consequences.
8. Incident reports depicting the disruptive action will be written and submitted to the principal no later than the following school day.
9. Bear in mind that the aforementioned rules provide a parameter within which to proceed. It is the discretion and professional responsibility of each staff member to determine when an action becomes disruptive and consequently requires intervention.

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10. Teachers are responsible for establishing a behavioral precedent within their respective classrooms. Classroom/Program Aides will assist accordingly.
11. All staff are responsible for employing appropriate disciplinary intervention in all school related activities.

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POLICY Z:02 DEFINITION OF A CRISIS

The way we define a crisis may help us react to and deal with student's crises in a helpful way. Since you are interested in practical guidelines, this handout and the following one will outline the "so what" of our definition and description of a crisis.

DEFINITION OF A CRISIS

A crisis is a situation that calls for a response that the person does not have or feels that he does not have. It occurs when the person no longer has or has never learned affective, rational and constructive ways of dealing with a particular situation.

The definition has two important features:

1. There is nothing about abnormality or illness in it.
2. A crisis does not occur simply because of some situation or event or simply because of some weakness in the person.

Instead crises occur because the demands of this particular situation and person that produces a crisis. It is the match between a particular situation and person that produces a crisis.

SO WHAT

What does this mean for me when I'm dealing with this situation?

Our first task in responding to someone in a crisis is to provide understanding, structure and a calming influence. We can do this better if we understand that crises are normal, not signs of illness.

People who are having a crisis may be upset (angry, scared) when they can't deal with something. So you must help them feel less upset about having a crisis.

Our second task in responding to someone in crisis is to find out why this is a crisis for this person (access).

This means we can look for the cause of the crisis in both the person and the situation.

What is about the person that might account for his/her not handling the situation?

e.g. physically: tired or run down
 sick
 intoxicated

mentally: overloaded—too many things
 happening at once
 down or demoralized never learned
 how to deal with this event

What is it about the situation that is producing the crisis?

e.g. no supports available (friends, family, agencies)

Doesn't know how to use supports

other person(s) causing stress or blocking his response

One of our last tasks in responding to the crisis is finding a solution. We now can try for changes in the person, the situation or both

e.g. teach him another way of dealing with the event

connecting him with some support, transportation, agency, etc.

removing some stress in the environment—other person

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POLICY Z:03 CRISIS INTERVENTION

- A. Basic Principles of De-Escalation
1. Staff must always do all it can to avoid confrontations.
 2. Staff members must actively learn what things upset individuals in their care.
 3. There are two critical classes of stimuli in confrontational situations:
 - a. Those that can increase agitation and/or elicit aggressive behavior.
 - b. Those that have a calming influence on an agitated individual.
 4. Staff feelings, projected in behavior, include both classes of stimuli and staff must learn to exhibit behavior which is consistent with the goal of calming the agitated person.
- B. Appropriate staff behavior changes as a function of the level of agitation displayed by an individual. There are four basic levels and appropriate behavior for each.
1. Individual is showing no signs of agitation—appears “normal” for his/her.
 - a. Staff treats individual firmly but fairly.
 - b. Staff practices principles of detecting causes of agitated behavior.
 - c. Learn the early signs that an individual may be coming agitated.
 2. Individual shows first signs of being agitated—exhibits non-compliance, stubbornness, loud or angry responses, etc.
 - a. Approach calmly.
 - b. Speak in voice lowered in volume and pitch.
 - c. Invite the individual to sit with you.
 - d. Show concern in what is said and how it is said.
 - e. Resolve any problem if possible; if not, remain with and talking to the individual.
 - f. Remain relaxed and calm—do not allow yourself to get tense or angry.
 3. Individual very agitated—some angry or aggressive behavior exhibited, such as throwing objects, pushing any person seeking help, loud or abusive language, etc.
 - a. Speak in a calm and relaxed voice, with low tone.
 - b. Show as little affect as possible.
 - c. Be matter-of-fact and polite, but respectful and not patronizing.
 - d. Keep body relaxed.
 - e. Do not disagree, argue, command, or make demands.
 - f. Acknowledge how individual feels rather than what is said.
 - g. Stand slightly to right of face-to-face, just out of person’s arm reach.
 - h. Do not “corner” the person by placing yourself in a position where the individual must move

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- toward you to escape from you.
- i. Do not turn your back on the person to walk away.
 - j. Do all you can to keep a calm interchange going and use time to your advantage.
 - k. If necessary, allow the person to escape and follow at distance sufficient to keep track of where he/she goes.
4. After an incident, when the agitation is receding—the person is “calming” down.
- a. Remain with the person until all signs of danger are gone.
 - b. Try to get the person involved in some activity before leaving.
 - c. Do not punish the individual for becoming agitated.

Borrowed from: Principles and Techniques for Working and Agitated Individuals
(Illinois DHM/DD and IIDD).

Institutional Abuse Project, NJ DYFS

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POLICY Z:04 CRISIS INTERVENTION INFORMATION AND STAFF PROCEDURES

1. Isolating the student from the problem situation, i.e., going around the corner, out into the hall, into the kitchen, etc. The purpose of this is essentially to decrease the amount of stimulation, distraction, or stress the student must deal with. **Isolate**

2. Explore student's point of view; i.e., really listening to the student's view of what has occurred, including the student's concerns in the situation, the goals of his choices, his feelings, etc. Important is a sense of did the student think his/her choices were good. Care must be taken to not interrupt, judge, or disagree. "WHY DID THAT JUST HAPPEN?" Is a good way to get a student's perception of the episode. **Explore**

3. Share your views of what happened; i.e., make sure this happens only after student has shared his point of view. Your sense of what your expectations are is important. **Share**

4. Develop a view of how the situation is like others in the student's life, i.e., frame the problem as a choice that needs to be made when the student has a particular feeling or want. Frustration, disappointment, hurt, loneliness, etc. More often than not, anger is not an adequate label. **Connect**

5. Develop alternative behaviors and plan for their being tried; i.e., help student think of different choices he/she could have made. Place a high value on the ideas coming from the student. Resist making suggestions or giving directions. Conclude with the student having a clear sense of what he/she should do. **Alternatives**

6. Develop roles in the plan; i.e., plan on how and when student will do the behavior decided upon. Be aware of needs for support, reinforcement, etc. Give yourself a role. **Plan**

7. Return student to program; i.e, go back to where problem occurred. Deal with any consequences or clean-up and then have student rejoin group. **Enter**

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POLICY Z:05 CRISIS INTERVENTION DOs AND DON'Ts

DO

Appear calm and relaxed

Encourage the child to verbalize his fears and problems

Keep the pitch and volume of your voice down

Feel comfortable with the fact that you are in control of the situation

GET HELP—whenever there is even a chance of a crisis

Talk with the child

Be matter-of-fact if child becomes agitated

Stay close to the child and attend to him/her

Be patient and don't give up
Continue with a matter-of-fact attitude; assume a poker face

DON'T

Don't appear afraid or unsure

Don't appear bossy, arrogant or uncaring

Don't raise your voice

Don't appear to expect an attack or you will have one

Don't use security guards prematurely (may cause further panic)

Don't give commands

Don't make threats

Don't turn your back or leave

Don't argue or disagree
Don't display any emotion of any kind

If a child's agitation increases to the verge of attack:

Attempt to isolate child or remove other children from area

Always leave the child an avenue of escape and allow him/her to escape if attempted (keep an eye on him/her)

Learn how to relax your muscles and keep them under control

Remain seated as long as child does

Stay near him/her about one arm's length, stand to side

Rest your eyes on his chest and eyes

Don't be frightened by suddenly invading a child's personal space

Don't corner child physically or psychologically

Don't tense your muscles

Don't get up before child

Don't give up and don't move away

Don't maintain continuous eye contact