

## What is an expulsion?

Expulsions may apply to only the student's current school or to all Lakehead Public Schools. If a student is expelled from only his or her school only, he/she will continue his/her education at another school after the suspension has expired. If the Suspension Appeals/Expulsion Committee issues an expulsion from all Lakehead Public Schools, the student may only attend the program for expelled students. Expelled students will not be permitted on any other school property, and will not be able to participate in any activities that are connected to any other schools in the Lakehead District School Board.

Unlike suspensions that last for a specific period of time, expulsions don't have a time limit. A student expelled from only his school will be assigned by the Board to another school, and he/she may only return to his/her prior school with permission. A student expelled from all board schools cannot return to school until he/she satisfies the objectives of a program for expelled students. Once the program is complete, a letter requesting readmission should be sent to the Superintendent of Education. The Board will re-admit a student if he has successfully met the program's objectives. At that time, a re-entry plan will be developed to help the student transition back into school.

## How will my child continue his/her education while on suspension/expulsion?

The Board is committed to providing suspended and expelled students with an opportunity to continue their education by providing an educational program and support to help students meet their learning goals.

Students who are suspended between six and 20 school days will be offered an Alternative Suspension Program (ASP). If the ASP is accepted, the pupil will continue with school work that is provided in conjunction with the home school classroom teachers.

Expelled students will be offered the Board's program for expelled student. Once a student chooses to attend a program for expelled students, program teachers will take over the student's educational programming.

When a student makes a commitment to attend an ASP, a Student Action Plan (SAP) will be developed. If a student on a six to 20 day suspension chooses not participate in an ASP, some sections of the SAP may still need to be completed. For students heading towards a possible expulsion, the entire Student Plan will be completed whether or not the student attends the program. The plan will be reviewed with the student and/or her parent(s)/guardian(s) at a planning meeting.



## A Parent Guide to Safe Schools Policy

# Safe Schools

## What is the Safe Schools policy?

Lakehead Public Schools' Safe Schools policy is based on the provincial Education Act and the Ontario Code of Conduct. It sets clear standards of behaviour for students, staff, parents, volunteers and any other individuals involved in public education.

This information reflects the legislated changes required by Bill 212.

## Questions?

Contact your child's Principal or Vice Principal, or call 807-625-5100, requesting information about suspensions and expulsions. You can request a copy of the policies and procedures from the school or download it from the Lakehead Public Schools's website at [www.lakeheadschoools.ca](http://www.lakeheadschoools.ca), by selecting the heading "Board" and then selecting "Policies and Procedures" in the menu.

## What is Progressive Discipline?

The Lakehead District School Board believes in and supports the concept of Progressive Discipline. Students who behave contrary to the Safe Schools policy and/or the code of conduct face a range of consequences and interventions including, but not limited to, oral reminders, review of expectations, loss of privileges, detention, community service, suspension and expulsion. In all situations, parents/guardians will be informed of the situation, and be a part of the process. Progressive discipline promotes prevention and early intervention, which are important for assisting pupils to achieve their potential and for maintaining a positive school environment. A positive school environment is effected through programs and activities that focus on building healthy relationships, character development, and civic responsibility, which encourage positive participation of the school community in the life of the school.

## What is a suspension?

A suspension is an intervention strategy of Progressive Discipline, and may be used depending on the severity and circumstances of the occurrence. All suspensions range between one and 20 school days. Suspensions between six and 20 school days are referred to as long-term suspensions. For the duration of the suspension, students are not permitted to ride the bus to school, enter the school building or come onto school property for any reason for the duration of the suspension. In addition, the student may not attend any school-related activities, functions or events, even if he/she was expected to participate in these activities.

## What activities may lead to a suspension?

Only Principals have the authority to suspend students. A Principal will consider whether to suspend a student if he/she believes that the student has engaged in any of identified activities while at school, at a school-related activity, or in any other circumstances where the activity has a negative impact on the school climate. Bullying has been added to the list of activities for which a student may be suspended and is identified as: “a dynamic of unhealthy interaction that can take many forms. It can be physical (e.g., Hitting, pushing, tripping), verbal (e.g., Name calling, mocking, or making sexist, racist, or homophobic comments), or social (e.g., Excluding others from a group, spreading gossip or rumours). It may also occur through the use of technology (e.g., Spreading rumours, images, or hurtful comments through the use of e-mail, cellphones, text messaging, Internet websites, or other technology.)” The complete list of identified activities is available on the Board's website in “The Parent's Guide to the Suspension and Expulsion Process.”

## What do Principals take into account when considering a suspension?

In some situations, students involved in the same inappropriate activity may receive different consequences. For example, one student may not get suspended and another student might be suspended as a result of the same behaviour, or one student's suspension might be longer than another student's suspension.

Principals work through a careful and thorough process when deciding whether to suspend a student and for how long. When addressing inappropriate behaviour, Principals must consider the particular student and circumstances of the incident, the nature and severity of the behaviour, its impact on the school climate, and many other factors. The Principal must consider Mitigating Factors and Other Factors; such as, “whether the activity for which the student may be or is being suspended was related to any harassment of the student because of his or her race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or to any other harassment.” A complete list of Mitigating Factors and Other Factors is available on the board's website in “The Parent's Guide to the Suspension and Expulsion Process.”

## Can suspensions be appealed?

Yes. All suspensions can be appealed to the school board. If an expulsion is not being considered, the suspension can be appealed within 10 school days of the beginning of the suspension. Your child will remain suspended until the appeal is resolved.

In order to appeal a suspension, parent(s)/guardian(s) must submit a written request to the Board's Superintendent of Education. The appeal will be heard or determined within 15 school days of receiving your notice of intention to appeal, unless the parties have agreed to an extension. The appeal will be heard by the Suspension Appeals/Expulsion Committee, which is a formal committee of the Board, consisting of Trustees who are authorized to act on behalf of the Board in disciplinary matters involving suspension appeals and expulsion hearings.

You and/or your child may be represented by legal counsel at the suspension appeal. If you wish to be represented by a lawyer, you must include that in your letter indicating your intention to appeal.

The Suspension Appeals/Expulsion Committee will consider, based on the written and oral submissions of both parties, whether the decision to suspend was reasonable under the circumstances, and will either, confirm the suspension, confirm, but shorten the duration of the suspension and amend the record, withdraw and expunge the suspension, or make another decision the committee considers appropriate.

## What activities result in a suspension that may also lead to an expulsion?

The Principal may consider recommending to the Board that a student be expelled if he/she believes that the student has engaged in any of the identified activities while at school, at a school-related activity, or in any other circumstances where the activity has a negative impact on the school climate. The complete list of identified activities is available on the Board's website in “The Parent's Guide to the Suspension and Expulsion Process.”

When a student is on a suspension pending expulsion, the principal must conduct an investigation to determine whether to recommend expelling the student. The investigation will begin promptly following the suspension. Based on this investigation, the principal may decide to recommend to the board that your child be expelled.