



SCHOOL RULES, DISCIPLINE, AND BEHAVIOR

School leaders set rules to support learning and keep children safe. You can find these rules in the school's **Code of Conduct** or **Student Handbook**. These rules are sometimes called expectations.

Schools expect students to be respectful, stay in certain places, and do their class work. Schools have rules against fighting, profanity, threats, bullying, weapons, and drugs.

Sometimes children get in trouble for behavior that happens away from the school.

Why do children break school rules?

Students break rules for many reasons. Some children may act out or break rules when they have

- Experienced trauma
- Mental health or emotional challenges
- Learning disabilities
- Language or communication impairments
- Other health impairments

Please see our other guides for more information about [Learning Disabilities](#), [Physical and Mental Disabilities](#), [Trauma](#), [Mental Health Challenges](#), [Language Impairments](#).

How do schools avoid discipline problems?

Schools should teach expectations and reward positive behavior. Schools should train their staff to help children feel safe and supported. Schools that provide the right services to students with disabilities and other challenges will have fewer discipline issues. Schools should also keep their buildings clean, well-maintained, and safe.

Schools where students feel safe and supported have a positive **School Climate**. There is more information in our school climate guide.

What do schools do when children break the rules?

Schools often punish children who break the rules. Schools may take away certain student privileges. They may require children to do extra school work, go to detention, or go to separate classrooms for in-school suspension. In-school suspension is called ISS.



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Sometimes children make it difficult for other students to learn. Sometimes children also cause danger when they fight or bring weapons or drugs to school. In these cases, a school may want to remove a child from school. A school calls this punishment expulsion, OSS, or out-of-school suspension. Find out more in our guide on [Expulsion, Out-of-School Suspension, or OSS](#).

Punishments should be explained in the school's code of conduct or student handbook.