

5 Things to Know about the Updated Discipline Rules

1. Why the Rules Were Revised

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) set out to revise the rules on discipline to provide immediate clarification and support for school districts as educators navigate discipline procedures. Some of the previous rules were overly prescriptive. The process aimed to ensure that the final regulations are equitable, clearly understood, and effectively implemented across all K–12 public schools in the state.

The revised rules take effect on July 11, 2025.

2. Clarified Definitions and Guidance

The revised rules now include:

- A clearer definition of *classroom exclusion*.
- Definitions for *discretionary* and *non-discretionary* discipline.
- Guidance on the appropriate use of various disciplinary actions.

Additionally, the term “emergency expulsion” has been replaced with “emergency removal” to align with Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.600.495.

This change reflects a shift in language that emphasizes temporary removal for safety while preserving due process protections.

3. Focus on Equity and Reducing Disproportionality

A key emphasis of the revised rules is reducing disproportionality in discipline—particularly for students of color and students with disabilities. Schools are now required to:

- Use culturally responsive strategies.
- Monitor discipline data for fairness.

The rules also reinforce the importance of local school board policymaking in guiding and sustaining equitable discipline practices.

4. Elevating Student and Family Voice and Reengagement

The updated rules strengthen the voice and protection of students and families in the discipline process. Schools must:



- Clearly notify parents or guardians of disciplinary actions.
- Explain students' rights.
- Offer meaningful opportunities for families to appeal decisions or participate in reengagement meetings.

These changes aim to keep students connected to learning and foster inclusive school communities.

5. Alignment with Educational Standards and What's Next

The revised discipline rules refer to relevant Revised Code of Washington (RCW) statutes that pertain to professional standards for educator certification and renewal, the Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP), and the Cultural Competency, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CCDEI) Standards. These references were added to support alignment with these important educational frameworks.

These frameworks emphasize evidence-based strategies and professional judgment to create respectful, responsive classrooms.

What's Next?

School districts and school boards need to review and revise district policies and procedures to ensure all staff collaborate in consistent enforcement of student behavior expectations both schoolwide and within individual classrooms.

Need Help?

- If you have questions about the updated rules and process taken to update them, please contact the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- If you have questions about policy revisions, contact the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA).
- If you have questions about implementation, contact the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP), the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA), or the Washington Education Association (WEA).