



## TIP SHEET FOR PARENTS

### *Long-term Suspension and Expulsion*

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While the juvenile delinquency rate has been decreasing, the frequent use of suspensions and expulsions in today's school systems result in higher drop-out rates and, consequently, student involvement in the juvenile justice system—particularly students of color or those who have special needs. This tip sheet explains what needs to happen when your child is facing an out of school suspension of 10 days or more or an expulsion.

**Tip 1: Become familiar with the school's Student Handbook.** These handbooks are usually found on your school's or district's website. The behaviors that result in disciplinary actions and the consequences are outlined in the handbook. Students are disciplined for a variety of reasons. The majority of disciplinary actions are for minor offenses, such as talking back, dress code violation. More serious offenses, such as weapons on campus, occur far less frequently. (Weapons and assaults on teachers and administration almost always result in expulsion.)

**Tip 2: Try to remain calm and polite when dealing with school officials.** Yelling, screaming, and declaring your child's innocence is not helpful. You will have the opportunity to present your side. If your child is facing long-term suspension (10 days or more out of school) or expulsion, state law requires that a hearing be held. The hearing is sometimes called a tribunal.

**Tip 3: Once you are notified that your child may be suspended or expelled.** Talk to your child and any witnesses who saw what happened. Write down what you learn and ask the witnesses to write down what they saw. Obtain a copy of the school's report about what happened and how long they plan to suspend.

**Tip 4: Schedule a meeting to discuss other possible ways to deal with your child's behavior if out of school suspension is proposed.** For example, ask for: Saturday School, behavior contract, counseling, anger management classes, volunteer work, in school suspension, etc. **Anything but removal from the school.**

**Tip 5: Ask if the school has any discretion in whether to expel your child.** If expulsion is mandated, consult an attorney if possible. Expulsion is a serious consequence. If the school has discretion, you may be able to influence the outcome. Long-term suspension and expulsion require a formal disciplinary hearing. The hearing must be held no later than 10 school days after the start of the school suspension. **That is the law.**

**Tip 6: Ask the school for your child's school assignments if you are waiting for a hearing.**

**Tip 7: If your child has a suspected learning disability, let the school know as quickly as possible and request in writing that your child be tested.**

**Tip 8:** If the school decides to proceed, you **should** receive written notice of the hearing telling you when and where the hearing will be held and why the school intends to expel or suspend your child. If possible, consult a lawyer. Be sure to notify the school immediately if you have legal representation.

**Tip 9: For assistance with school suspensions and expulsion matters contact:** Georgia Legal Services (404) 206-5175; Parent to Parent of Georgia (770) 458-4091; NAACP (404)577-8977; AVLF (404) 521-521-0790; Gwinnett SToPP <https://www.gwinnettstopp.org/about-us/contact-us/>; Georgia Coalition for Equity in Education [leslie@lipsonadvocacy.com](mailto:leslie@lipsonadvocacy.com); or the GA Appleseed toolkit. <https://gaappleseed.org/initiatives/toolkit>

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<https://www.emiganetwork.org/breaking-the-preschool-to-prison-pipeline>

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