*Safe Communities ~ Safe Schools*

# FACT SHEET

FS-SC03                                                                                                           2000

# Safe Communities ~ Safe Schools
# Discipline Codes

A good school climate is safe and welcoming and demonstrates a fair and consistently enforced school discipline system. Firm, fair and consistent discipline is fundamental to making school campuses safe and secure. The climate of the school reflects how campus rules are determined, expressed, understood and enforced. Therefore, it's important to establish policies and codes for behavior and discipline that contribute to a positive school climate.

The rules that are implemented should serve an intended purpose. The number of rules isn't as important as the intent and the need to implement a rule that addresses the concerns of the school community. There should be a reason for each rule and rules should not be harsh. In an effort to develop a behavior or discipline code that contributes to a positive school climate, several elements of effective codes should be considered:

- Simple and clearly written
- Supports the educational mission of the district
- Consistent with local, state, and federal laws
- Identifies critical goals and standards
- Serves as guideline for action
- Reflects good education practice
- Appropriate penalties given for discipline code violations
- Rules fairly and consistently applied to all students
- Problems are recognized and resolved promptly
- Distributed and discussed with students and staff
- School staff recognizes difference between school discipline incidents and legal criminal violations
- Parents acknowledge student behavioral expectations and school discipline procedures
- Practical, enforceable and economical
- Provides alternatives to referrals, suspension and expulsion
- Reviewed on regular basis with input from planning team and/or school community

Discipline encourages learning, responsibility and self control. Well-designed codes and policies are important in establishing a behavior standard and a common understanding. The content of the discipline code determines whether the approach is comprehensive. Some content issues to consider are:

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| Alcohol and Drugs | Explosive Devices | Suspension |
| Alternative Programs or Schools | Expulsion | Student Photo ID System |
| Arson | Extortion / Robbery | Tardiness |
| Bus Safety | Fighting | Theft |
| Closed Campus | Forgery | Unexcused Absence |
| Cutting Classes | Physical Assault | Verbal Abuse |
| Defiance of School Personnel t | Profanity and Obscene Behavior | Weapons |
| Disorderly Conduct | Property Destruction / Defacement | |
| Dress Code | Smoking / Tobacco Possession | |

**References:**

San Leandro Unified School District. Guidelines for Student Behavior. San Leandro, CA: San Leandro Unified School District.

National School Safety Center. (1990). School Safety Check Book. Malibu, CA: Pepperdine University Press.

Stephens, R.D. (1995). Safe Schools: A Handbook for Violence Prevention. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service.