

The School Counselor and Discipline

(Adopted 1989; revised 1993, 1999, 2001, 2007, 2013, 2019)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors have specialized training and skills in promoting appropriate student behavior and preventing disruptive student behavior. School counselors are not disciplinarians but should be a resource for school personnel in developing individual and schoolwide discipline procedures. School counselors collaborate with school personnel and other stakeholders to establish policies encouraging appropriate behavior and maintaining safe schools where effective teaching and learning can take place.

The Rationale

Disruptive student behavior is one of the most serious, ongoing problems confronting school systems today (Diliberti, Jackson, & Kemp, 2017). Research suggests such behavior negatively affects classroom learning and school climate (Kremer, Flower, Huang & Vaughn, 2018). To establish and maintain safe and respectful learning environments, school systems must employ adequate mental health personnel and seek effective discipline programs with the commitment and input of all school personnel, including school counselors (Cowan, Vaillancourt, Rossen & Pollitt, 2013). To most effectively promote student achievement and development, school counselors must maintain strength-based relationships with students and, therefore, are not involved in administering discipline. The school counselor should be, by policy, designated as a neutral and resourceful consultant, mediator and student advocate.

The School Counselor's Role

School counselors promote positive student behaviors to create a safe, effective learning environment for all students. It is not the school counselor's role to mete out punishment but instead to help create effective behavior change focused on positive, healthy behaviors. Within multitiered systems of support, school counselors:

- Promote wellness and lead prevention efforts to create safe and supportive school environments
- Lead individual and small-group counseling that encourages students to make positive behavior choices and accept responsibility for their actions
- Provide school counselor curriculum and contribute to safe classrooms through appropriate classroom management strategies
- Consult with families, teachers, administrators and other school personnel to understand developmentally appropriate student behavior and promote positive student behavior
- Design and implement positive behavior and intervention support plans for individual students in collaboration with classroom teachers and other school behavior specialists
- Collaborate with school stakeholders to develop, implement and maintain a developmentally appropriate schoolwide discipline program
- Serve as a mediator for student/student, student/teacher and student/family conflicts
- Coordinate and facilitate programs (mentor, peer support, conflict resolution and anger management programs) to assist students in developing pro-social behaviors
- Provide staff development on classroom management, student behavior and discipline strategies such as trauma-sensitive approaches (Reinbergs & Fefer, 2018), restorative practices (Smith, 2017) and emotional regulation of adults and students (Bowers, Lemberger-Truelove, & Brigman, 2017)
- Keep informed of school, district and state policies related to student discipline
- Advocate for best practices for schoolwide discipline, including ensuring objective and equitable disciplinary practices

Summary

School counselors have specialized training and skills in promoting appropriate student behavior and preventing disruptive student behavior. School counselors maintain nonthreatening relationships with students to best promote student achievement and development and serve as a resource for school personnel in developing individual and schoolwide discipline procedures. School counselors should be, by policy, designated as neutral and resourceful consultants, mediators and student advocates. It is not the school counselor's role to serve as an enforcement agent for the school but rather be a significant contributor to the development of the prevention and intervention programs through which problem behaviors are managed and positive behaviors are nurtured.

References

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Resources

Intervention Central: Your source for RTI resources. Retrieved from <https://www.interventioncentral.org/>

Institute of Education Sciences. *What Works Clearinghouse*. Retrieved from: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>