



"A CommUNITY Partnership
Toward Educational Excellence"

School District of Indian River County

Indian River County Public Schools annually publishes a *Positive Climate & Discipline Code of Student Conduct*. The *Positive Climate & Discipline Code of Student Conduct* is provided to help students and parents understand School Board rules for student behavior.

To obtain a copy of the *Positive Climate & Discipline Code of Student Conduct*, please contact the School Principal, visit the Indian River County Public Schools website (www.indianriverschools.org), or you may contact Student Services Department at the following address:

School District of Indian River County
6500 -57th Street, Vero Beach, FL 32967
Vero Beach, FL 32960

For more information contact:

Dr. Lillian Torres-Martinez Executive
Executive Director of Student Services and
Exceptional Student Education
772-564-5944

School District of Indian River County
6500-57th Street
Vero Beach, FL 32967
Phone: 772-564-3000
Fax: 772-569-0424
www.indianriverschools.org

SUSPENSION EXPULSION REVIEW TEAM

BOARD MEMBERS

Laura Zorc, Chair
Tiffany M. Justice, Vice Chair
Teri Barenborg
Jacqueline Rosario
Dr. Mara Schiff

Dr. Mark J. Rendell
SUPERINTENDENT

**School District of Indian River County's SERT -
Suspension Expulsion Review Team Questions
& Answers for Parents/Guardians**

Q What is SERT?

A The Suspension/Expulsion Review Team (SERT) is a district level support team that reviews serious violations of the *Positive Climate & Discipline Code of Student Conduct* that resulted in recommendations for expulsion. SERT also reviews all referrals to the Alternative program, students returning from Department of Juvenile Justice programs, students who have been processed for off-campus felonies, and students entering the school district from other alternative programs.

Q Who is on the SERT and when does the team meet?

A SERT is composed of district and school-based administrators as well as student services personnel (psychologist, social worker, ESE program specialist) that thoroughly review each student's case, prepare written reports, and work with schools and families to provide information and support throughout the expulsion process.

Q What process does a SERT expulsion case follow?

- A
1. When a student commits a serious *Positive Climate & Discipline Code of Student Conduct* violation, the principal or designee notifies the parent of suspension and the possibility of expulsion.
 2. If expulsion is the recommendation, the principal/school administrator notifies the parent/guardian and the Office of Student Services, of this recommendation in writing. The administrator prepares an expulsion packet and sends it to the Office of Student Assignment.
 3. The Executive Director of Student Services & ESE chairs the SERT meeting. The school administrator attends the meeting and presents the school information. SERT reviews all information and makes a recommendation regarding an alternative placement or to proceed with expulsion or return to school. SERT members may compile reports regarding reports detailing student history at school, home, and any agency involvement– decisions are made on evidence presented and in accordance with school district policies and procedures.
 4. Following the meeting parents/guardians will be notified by phone of the outcome.
 5. The superintendent's office designee notifies the parent of expulsion proceedings if warranted.
 6. If expulsion proceeds, a hearing is held with an impartial hearing officer. The student, parent and the school administration provide testimony. After hearing both sides, the hearing officer will recommend to the superintendent alternative placement or recommend expulsion or return to school. The superintendent makes his recommendation to the School Board, which has the final authority to expel.

Q Must the SERT process be followed every time a student is recommended for expulsion?

A Yes. Expulsion is the most severe penalty a School Board can administer to a student. It is extremely important to fully examine each case carefully by an independent team since depriving a student's education for a long period of time can seriously impact his/her life.

Q What process does a SERT Alternative case follow?

- A
1. When a student commits a serious Positive Climate & Discipline Code of Student Conduct violation, the principal or designee notifies the parent of suspension and the possibility of Alternative Placement.
 2. If Alternative Placement is the recommendation, the principal/school administrator notifies the parent/guardian, of this recommendation in writing. The administrator prepares a packet and sends it to the Office of Student Assignment
 3. The Executive Director of Student Services & ESE chairs the SERT meeting. The school administrator attends the meeting and presents the school information. SERT reviews all information and makes a recommendation to the school regarding an alternative placement or return to school.
 4. Following the meeting parents/guardians will be notified by phone of the outcome, by school administrator.

Q Are there other options besides expulsion for zero tolerance infractions?

A Yes. Although a principal may recommend expulsion for zero tolerance infractions, the district may be able to assist with alternative placements on occasion or recommend programs in lieu of expulsion. Such interventions are case specific.

Q What are the timelines for the expulsion/SERT process?

A As soon as the infraction occurs, the administrator completes the expulsion packet. The SERT process is usually completed in two weeks and, if the Superintendent supports an expulsion recommendation, it will go before a hearing officer at the first available date. If the student is eligible for ESE, the process may vary according to IEP requirements. Students must receive DAPE while undergoing the process and after Expulsion.

Q If expulsion is recommended, when and where are expulsion hearings held?

A Expulsion hearings will be scheduled after SERT makes its final recommendation. If the superintendent concurs with SERT's recommendation, a hearing date will be scheduled. Student recommended for expulsion go before School Board who makes final expulsion decision.

