

Restorative justice in school

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How should we deal with students who misbehave? We all prefer students to behave well in and out of the classroom, but they don't always do so. When rules are broken, teachers respond by punishing students or denying them privileges, because consequences misbehavior are expected. However, I believe students shouldn't have to encounter unnecessary and harsh punishment like suspension and detention without any warnings or parent involvement. Instead we should have conferences with the students to understand their view on their radical behavior. Suspension is not effective enough to attack the behavior of the student, instead it only attacks students' academics and emotions by making students believe that no one cares about them.

Suspension doesn't just jeopardize students' academics but leads to a trend of getting in trouble. There are several factors that influence students to act immature and misbehave. For example, most students don't have a role model to look up to, so they fall into a trap of not being self disciplined. Therefore it is most appropriate to have a one-on-one meeting with the student, to understand the depth of issues behind their behavior. As a student in high school I find suspension and detention unnecessary and time consuming rather than a useful method to " attack the bad behavior of students.

" Most of the students who " act up" in my school get written up for detention without any follow-ups, check-ins, or conference, while those who are suspended take advantage of it as if it's a vacation to them. Although most of the staff members are trained well to counsel students who continually misbehave by using profanity or by being tardy, that's not what happens.

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Instead most of the students are signed to stay after school and do “ school work” without any productive talk to deal with the student’s misbehavior. Many students like I would agree that detention is nothing but “ homework” time, when it should be a time where a student reflects on his or her misbehavior. This alters the overall punitive disciplinary systems and towards a restorative model which uses the practice of dialogue as a way of building community and repairing relationship. Restorative Justice builds a safe and sweet place where students are not just disciplined, but treated like young adults who are able to recognize their misbehavior through reflection.

Many teachers and deans ask: why should we coddle an 18-year old who is responsible enough to stay out of trouble? If we were interested in raising kids we would all love to work at a daycare. Shouldn’t high school be a place where students are trained to be adults? In this case most of the staff members at school confuse coddling with forgiving. As staff members in a school, teachers should strive to be role models for the younger generation. This is not a commentary to attack school administrators and teachers but to say that teachers have the power to influence students just as much as parents do. For example, my Humanities teacher never sends a student to the deans without multiple warnings. First she talks to the student to make him or her understand why he or she is wrong.

My Humanities teacher also makes sure that the student feels cared for by acknowledging his her good behavior instead of just pointing out his or her “ misbehavior” such as tardiness or sleeping in class. We need more teachers and staff members like my humanities teacher to promote a sense of humanitarian kindness—counseling to ensure that rules are followed and

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that consequences are not theoretical, and conferences to make sure that students are not defined by their misbehavior. We need to see all students as developing adults, instead of labelling them as “trouble makers” which makes them feel “uncared for”. School administrators and teachers have the power to mold our youth just as much as social media does, therefore they should use that power to shape the students into young educated, ?.