Was the student **suspended**?

If any of the following things happen to you, you’ve been suspended:

- School staff says you can’t come to school
- School staff sends you home or has your parent/guardian pick you up early.
- The school keeps you out of class (such as in the principal’s office or another room in the school) for more than half the school day.

Is the student enrolled in **Boston Public Schools**?

Which **grade**?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K – 2<strong>nd</strong> GRADERS</th>
<th>3<strong>rd</strong> – 5<strong>th</strong> GRADERS</th>
<th>6<strong>th</strong> – 12<strong>th</strong> GRADERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>May not be suspended</strong></td>
<td><strong>May not be suspended, except in cases of:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Go to next step</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assault</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Possession of dangerous weapon/substance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Sexual misconduct</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Civil rights violations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Repeated bullying</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Did the student’s parent or guardian receive a letter including the following information **before** the student was suspended?*

- Length of possible suspension
- Reason for suspension
- Information regarding a suspension hearing

**YES**

If received letter meeting above requirements, go to next step on back page.

**NO**

If the parent/guardian did not receive a letter including the above information, call Greater Boston Legal Services or the EdLaw Project.

*Most of the time, the school must give you a letter and hold a hearing before the suspension. But if the student is accused of possessing weapons or drugs; assaulting staff; or having been very disruptive or dangerous, the school may be able to send the student home first and then hold a hearing. If you have questions, call GBLS or the EdLaw Project.
5 Did the school schedule a suspension hearing?
- Were you given the right to have witnesses support your side of the story?
- Were you permitted to bring evidence to the hearing?
- Were you permitted to have an attorney or other advocate present with you at the hearing?
- Were you permitted to ask questions of all of the witnesses who testified at the hearing, including witnesses supporting the school's position?
- If the suspension qualified as a long-term suspension, was the hearing recorded?

**YES**
If the hearing met the above requirements, go to next step.

**NO**
If the hearing did not meet the above requirements, call GBLS or the EdLaw Project.

6 Did you receive a letter documenting the outcome of the hearing within 5 days after the hearing? The letter should include:
- The nature of the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and a list of the participants at the hearing;
- Key facts and conclusions;
- Length and dates of the suspension;
- Notice of the right to appeal if the suspension is longer than 10 days when combined with all prior suspensions during the current school year;
- If this suspension is greater than 10 days when combined with all prior suspensions during the current school year, did the school attempt alternative discipline prior to suspension?

**YES**
If yes, go to next step.

**NO**
If the parent/guardian did not receive a letter including the above information, call GBLS or the EdLaw Project.

7 Do you disagree with the outcome of the hearing as documented in the letter received after the hearing?
If yes, you have the right to appeal a long-term suspension (a long-term suspension is any suspension that brings the student to 11 days or more suspended from school during the current school year, even if those days out of school did not happen all together). Depending on the school district, you may have the right to appeal a short-term suspension (10 days or fewer suspended during the current school year). Call GBLS or the EdLaw Project for additional resources and to discuss the possibility of assistance with your appeal.
School Discipline in Boston Has Changed!

In Boston Public Schools:

1. Students in grades K–2 cannot be suspended.

2. Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, students in grades 3–5 can ONLY be suspended if they have:
   - Assaulted another student or educational staff AND the principal thinks that the student is a danger if they remain in school.
   - Possessed a weapon or drugs on school grounds.
   - Engaged in sexual misconduct.
   - Violated another’s civil rights.
   - Repeatedly bullied another person.

3. Schools must engage in professional development for all educational staff to increase the use of alternative discipline methods that don’t keep students out of school. This professional development training must also emphasize the impact of school exclusion (suspensions and expulsions), particularly on students of color and students with disabilities.

Do you think your school discipline rights, or the rights of your child, have been violated?

Contact Greater Boston Legal Services at suspensions@gbls.org or 617-855-9560.

Created in partnership with Greater Boston Legal Services and the EdLaw Project.

For legal help, call:
GBLS: 617–855–9560

Boston Student Rights App
www.bostonstudentrights.org