

Cook County Public School

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO DISCIPLINE TRIBUNALS



My child has been suspended pending a discipline tribunal....

Why?

Every student is expected to follow rules and regulations of the school system, county, state, and nation. Students are taught about their responsibilities as good citizens many times throughout their school careers. Also, each year you and your child are asked to read and sign the current version of the *Student Conduct Behavior Code*. Student disciplinary tribunals are conducted when the school believes a student has violated the *Code* and a long term suspension or expulsion should be considered.

How does this begin?

When a major rule or cumulative offenses occur involving your child, the principal (or assistant principal) schedules a discipline tribunal through the Central Office. The principal or assistant principal will attempt to contact you to discuss the incident, and make you aware of the date and time of the tribunal. Shortly after that, the school will mail a packet of information to you including the following:

- Notice of suspension and charges
- Date, time, and location of the tribunal
- Procedures for conducting the tribunal including your rights involving the hearing

Suspension days pending the tribunal?

Your student will be suspended from school until the time of the tribunal (normally 7-10 school days) and will not be allowed on any Cook County Public Schools' campuses or allowed to attend any Cook County Public Schools' events. Your student's grades will be frozen at the time of suspension.

What if I don't agree with the initial suspension?

Georgia state law affords the principal the authority to suspend a student for up to ten school days. If you disagree with the initial suspension pending panel, you should discuss your concerns or perspective with the principal or superintendent.

Why a tribunal?

According to state law, the local school principal can only suspend a student for up to ten days. However, some offenses warrant suspension of longer than ten days. Only the Cook County Board of Education (CCBOE) can issue a suspension of greater than ten days. As such, the tribunal scheduled for your child will be heard by a hearing officer (on behalf of CCBOE) who will decide the appropriate consequence for the rule violation(s). If your student is found in violation of the rule(s) at the discipline tribunal, you will be informed of the length of suspension at that time. Also, after the hearing, you will receive a letter from the Cook County Board of Education informing you of the decision.

Who attends the tribunal?

The principal and/or assistant principal from your child's school will attend the tribunal. The school resource officer (SRO) may also attend. Additionally, the school may bring witnesses to testify. It is important that both you and your child attend the hearing so that your child has an opportunity to provide his or her version of the incident. You are allowed to have witnesses come and testify on your child's behalf. You are also allowed to have an attorney if you choose. However, if you do wish to bring an attorney, you must let the Cook County Board of Education know 24 hours prior to the date of the discipline tribunal in order for the school system to schedule an attorney to be present on its behalf.

Consequences?

Tribunal officers have a wide range of consequences available to them such as restitution, in-school suspension and additional days of out of-school suspension. Tribunal officers also have the authority to expel your child.

What if I disagree with the decision?

If you do not agree with the tribunal officer's decision, you may appeal to the CCBOE in writing within 20 calendar days of the tribunal. Information regarding your right to appeal will be included in the decision letter.

Further Questions

If you have further questions, please contact the Cook County Board of Education at **(229) 896-2294**.