



**Protocol**

**Time Out, Suspension and Expulsion**

**The International Waldorf School The Hague**



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## 1. Introduction

The Primary Education Act (or WPO in Dutch, Wet op het Primair Onderwijs) defines the rules for student expulsion in article 40.1, 5 and 6. The General Administrative Law Act also applies to the rules of student expulsion.

Suspending or removing a pupil from a school is an extreme measure that is subject to strict conditions by the legislator. Within the International Waldorf School The Hague, the decision for removal and suspension rests with the Executive Board.

## 2. Definitions

### Time-out:

A time-out is a brief interruption during the lesson when the student is given a moment to settle down-- with another teacher or in a separate room. After a cooling off period or a talk with the teacher, the child is allowed to return to the class. After school or at another appropriate moment, the student can be given a reminder, in a positive manner, to avoid repeating negative behaviour.

Students are not to be sent home as a part of the time-out. If necessary, the teacher may contact the parents to notify them and explain the cause of the time out.

### Suspension:

A serious incident can lead to a suspension. Suspension does not fall under the Primary Education Act. In primary education, the advice is therefore to follow the following general rule of thumb; whomever is authorized to do more (i.e., expulsion), is also authorized to do less (i.e., suspension). This also means that the same procedures and due processes are required for both expulsion and suspension. A suspension can be imposed for a maximum of five days.

After a decision is made to suspend a student, the parents are sent a letter in which they are invited to a meeting including the child and the director of the school. The child is confronted and asked about his/her behaviour and its consequences. Depending on the nature of the incident, appropriate regulations will be applied. In principle, the pupil should be admitted to school again. The suspension actually lasts longer than the maximum duration permitted, as consultations about the possible removal of the student are ongoing.

A suspension will therefore last as long as the time it takes to reach a decision on possible removal. The measure is used, for example, as a cooling-off period when the mood has become heated at school (e.g., after fights between students or aggressive behaviour). When an incident is repeated, a contract is made, indicating the intent of the child to change his/her



behaviour and attitude. This contract is then signed by the parents/guardians, the student and the school management.

### **Expulsion**

An expulsion is only applied in extreme cases and is only applied by the competent authority. This includes, for example, a (repeated) serious violation of the safety of staff and pupils in the school, a serious disturbance of the order and peace, or serious misconduct. Causes for expulsions are multiple suspensions and breach of student contract (see previous paragraph, under Suspensions). Repeated serious misconduct on the part of one of the parents can also ultimately be a reason for removing the pupil. If parents seriously threaten or intimidate the school, the student may be expelled. In this case, it is recommended to apply, for example, a written warning or a (temporary) denial of access to the school. The last resort is expulsion. If expulsion is considered, the formal procedure is followed as described in Article 40 of the Primary Education Act.

Time-outs, suspensions and expulsions are all recorded in the Incidents Registration. The management conducts a yearly analysis of all incidents and they are discussed during management/director meetings. Based on these discussions, proposals are made to improve safety and reduce the number of incidents. The proposals are then incorporated in the school plans or, if necessary, put directly into practice at the International Waldorf School The Hague.

### **Serious incident**

A serious incident is one that goes against the school rules and culture and challenges the safety of pupils and/or employees. A serious incident affects not only the safety of those concerned, but also the safety of others. In a serious incident it is possible that a student has a different perception of safety than the person concerned. We also regard frequent repetition of minor incidents within a limited period as a serious incident. Small incidents disrupt the educational process. Many disruptions in a short period of time have a great impact on the overall feeling of safety in the group.

## **3. Explanation and Rules**

### **Time-out Procedure**

- When a student is involved in a serious incident, he/she is removed from the class. A teacher or Learning Support Coordinator has a conversation with the student about the



incident. If there are other involved teachers, they will also be included in the conversation.

- Based on the conversation, those involved will decide if a time-out is appropriate or if the student can return to class.
- If neither a time-out nor a return to the class is possible, the teacher must contact the school management.
- The management of the school assesses which follow-up options there are and will consult with the board to determine whether a suspension is appropriate. The board will make a decision based on the management's assessment.

**Examples of possible causes for a suspension:**

- Threats from parents or guardians
- Repetitive disruptions in the class
- Theft/robbery or extortion
- Threatening behaviour
- Violence (physical or psychological)

**Applicable rules for the examples above:**

- The management can, at the request of the director, suspend the child for a period of one-week (five school days) maximum.
- Written notification of the suspension is then sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student, Inspector and the Compulsory Education Officer. The letter of suspension is saved in the student's records.
- The parent(s)/guardian(s), along with the child, are invited to the school for a meeting with the director.
- When the suspension lasts more than one day, the student will receive homework assignments to complete before he/she returns to school.
- After the suspension period and the meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s), the student is allowed (sometimes under defined conditions) to return to school. By then the student would have received a plan, agreement, or contract with an explanation of conditions of his/her return. These would be signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s), child, and director, and saved in the child's records. The parent(s)/guardian(s) are sent a copy.
- A child can be suspended multiple times if/when there is a new incident.
- The terms of the suspension are documented in the incident report.
- Within six weeks of the date of the suspension, the recipient of the suspension may submit a written objection to contest the suspension to the management of the International Waldorf School The Hague.
- The management will respond with a decision within four weeks of the objection.



- Within four weeks after the date from the date of the objection, the Executive Board must make a decision. In the event that the decision lasts longer than the one-week maximum suspension, the child can be denied access to the school. This is an exception to the rule restricting the one-week suspension duration. In the time beyond the week, during the handling of the objection against the decision to expel, assignments will be given to the child to do at home.
- If after following the procedure described above, the parents do not accept the decision, they may contact the external complaint commission of the VBS. They must then follow the same complaint procedure as described in the complaint regulations of the International Waldorf School The Hague

#### **Transition to Expulsion**

- After a student has been repeatedly suspended and there has been discussion regarding the child's behaviour, he/she is suspended until the decision is made to expel.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed as quickly as possible regarding the intended suspension.
- The director has a meeting with the parties involved (e.g., Teacher and student) to explain the reasoning for possible expulsion. The conversation is recorded and saved in the student's file.
- The management advises the director about the proposed measure.
- Parents are invited for a meeting within five days after a decision has been made about the advised measure. Parents are informed in writing about the school's intention to expel. In the meeting they are given the opportunity to react and to share their perspective about what has happened and the possible consequences. This conversation is also recorded for the students' files. Unless there are new viewpoints that prove a reason not to proceed with expulsion, the decision will be confirmed and sent in writing (ideally by registered mail) to the parents.
- The school helps the parents search for a suitable alternative school (within the framework of legislation and regulations) for the student.
- An IWSTH representative will make their best-efforts with the search. Efforts must be demonstrable. As soon as another school has been found willing to accept the removed pupil or after eight weeks, the best-efforts obligation will lapse.
- Reasoning for the expulsion is confirmed in a written letter sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s), Compulsory Education Officer, and Inspector. The letter is saved in the student's records.
- The letter includes that an objection can be submitted within six weeks of the date.



- When reconsidering the objection, the parent/child is given the opportunity to state their case. During this phase, the student may be denied access to the school.
- The inspector and Compulsory Education Officer are updated in writing regarding the definitive decision to suspend. Parents can request mediation from the inspector.
- **All the steps that are taken are to be recorded in the student's file**
- **A student can only be officially suspended after consultation with the inspector.**

#### **Re-bound Provision**

This is a provision for students with serious behavioural problems. In this situation, a student will temporarily seek supervision in another school with small classes specialized in dysfunctional behaviour. Once the child has reformed his/her behaviour, he/she may return to the International Waldorf School The Hague. This option is, unfortunately, not offered in all areas of the country.

#### **Compulsory Education Officer**

While the school is not obligated to, the school will inform the Compulsory Education Officer.

#### **4. Parental Refusal to Cooperate**

If the parents do not want to cooperate in finding an alternative school for their child and the aforementioned procedure has been completed, the following actions must be taken:

- Compulsory Education Officer is notified
- If necessary, the case is reported to the Advice and Reporting Centre for Child Abuse.
- Acknowledgement that the school has come to a standstill with the case.