

Stand-downs

In the MOE Bulletin for School Leaders, there is a reminder about school's obligations in relation to Stand-downs and Suspensions. The article states, "The Education (stand-down, suspension, exclusion, and expulsion) Rules 1999 make it clear that

if – in relation to a disciplinary matter – a principal thinks a few days out of school will do a student good, then they can only use a stand-down or suspension to achieve this. "

The Act does not use the terminology "will do a student good" (as far as I am aware). The Act does state the following:

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The principal of a State school may stand-down or suspend a student if satisfied on reasonable grounds that—

(a)

the student's gross misconduct or continual disobedience is a harmful or dangerous example to other students at the school; or

(b)

because of the student's behaviour, it is likely that the student, or other students at the school, will be seriously harmed if the student is not stood-down or suspended.

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Many Principals will agree that a Stand-down often does not provide a punitive outcome - many children see a Stand-down as a holiday - certainly not "doing a student good". So, what does a Stand-down achieve?

1. The safety and well-being of other pupils.
2. Act as a deterrent for other pupils, showing that certain behaviours will not be tolerated.
3. Parents and children need to know that there are certain behaviours that are unacceptable.
4. Parents and children need to know that the school is acting to ensure the best possible learning environment for their children.
5. The pupil suspended must realise the seriousness of the behaviour.
6. The family of the pupil suspended must realise the seriousness of the behaviour.
7. Time out for the teacher is sometimes required.
8. MOE and other support agencies must realise the extent of the behavioural problems at our school, and assist with resourcing (funding and human).
9. Staff need to know they are receiving the support of school management.