



In-School Suspension (ISS)

Definition

In-school suspension (ISS) is a behavior reduction technique with which a student is removed from his/her classroom and required to work in an environment with a minimum of privileges. It is a less-restrictive alternative to sending students home, and it permits better supervision of pupils while they are in suspension—somewhat like a detention hall. Adequate space and personnel to manage the suspension room limit the use of this intervention.

Things to Do

- ✓ Organize resources.
- ✓ Set up in-school suspension.
- ✓ Conduct in-school suspension.

✓ Organize resources.



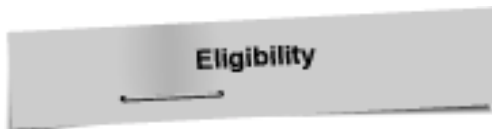
Choose an isolated location that provides ample space for the ISS program. An isolated location, such as a separate classroom, is useful in removing a problem behavior student from peers and activities that can reinforce the student.

Also, the location must have enough space to fit all students assigned to ISS. Individuals who must wait until space is available will likely continue to misbehave. They may think, "Why be good if I'm going to ISS anyway?" Consequently, ISS is most effective when used immediately after a student misbehaves.

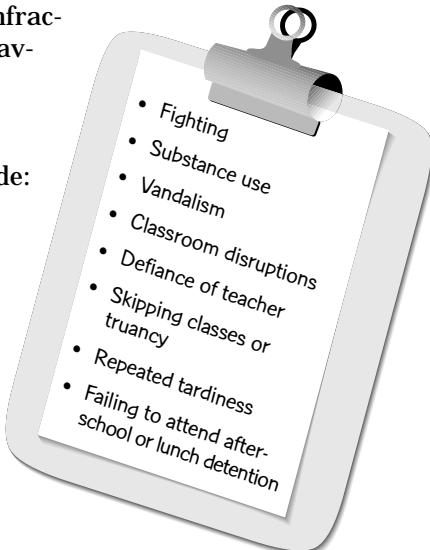


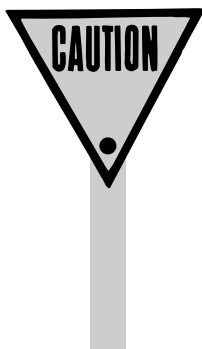
Choose staff members to supervise the program. You may decide to rotate in-staff members during their planning/preparation time. Better yet, a full-time person whose only job is to supervise the ISS room provides consistency to the program. Unfortunately, in many schools, this option is not feasible. Consider funding sources or grants that might be available to hire a full-time or several part-time supervisors.

✓ Set up in-school suspension.



Identify what infractions or misbehaviors qualify a student for ISS. Typically, these behaviors include:

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- Fighting
 - Substance use
 - Vandalism
 - Classroom disruptions
 - Defiance of teacher
 - Skipping classes or truancy
 - Repeated tardiness
 - Failing to attend after-school or lunch detention



Use caution. Avoid referring students to ISS for minor infractions, which can reduce the program's effectiveness.

A grey rectangular card with the word "Referral" in bold black text. Below the text is a horizontal line with a small vertical tick mark at the left end, indicating a space for a response.

Referral

Decide who can refer a student to ISS. Some schools stipulate that based on a teacher's request, only the school administrator can determine whether a student has earned ISS. In contrast, other schools simply require a teacher's or parent's referral to admit a student.

A grey rectangular card with the word "Duration" in bold black text. Below the text is a horizontal line with a small vertical tick mark at the left end, indicating a space for a response.

Duration

Create guidelines to determine how long students must remain in ISS. The length of stay will depend on how severely the student misbehaves. Some secondary schools range student infractions from 1 to 5 days, the average being 3 days. Of course, the severity of a certain infraction will vary from student to student. However, general guidelines are important to maintain overall consistency throughout the program.

A grey rectangular card with the words "In-House Rules" in bold black text. Below the text is a horizontal line with a small vertical tick mark at the left end, indicating a space for a response.

In-House Rules

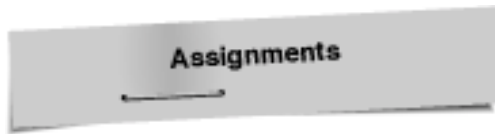
Clearly post your ISS rules. For example:

A grey rectangular poster titled "ISS Rules" pinned to a wall with a silver pushpin. The poster contains a numbered list of five rules.

ISS Rules

1. No talking to other students.
2. Raise your hand to request help.
3. No sleeping.
4. Stay in your seat.
5. Work on your school assignments.

REMEMBER: Review the rules with students before they start their ISS time. Also, consider what to do if students break the ISS rules—perhaps a parent conference, out-of-school suspension, or additional ISS time. For instance, if Anne refuses to work, stop the clock. In other words, only when Anne is on-task do you count it toward fulfilling her required time in ISS. Similarly, if Andy leaves his seat, add 5 minutes to his total time.



Arrange for students to work on class assignments while in ISS. Often, students who attend ISS are struggling academically. So it's important to not let them get further behind.

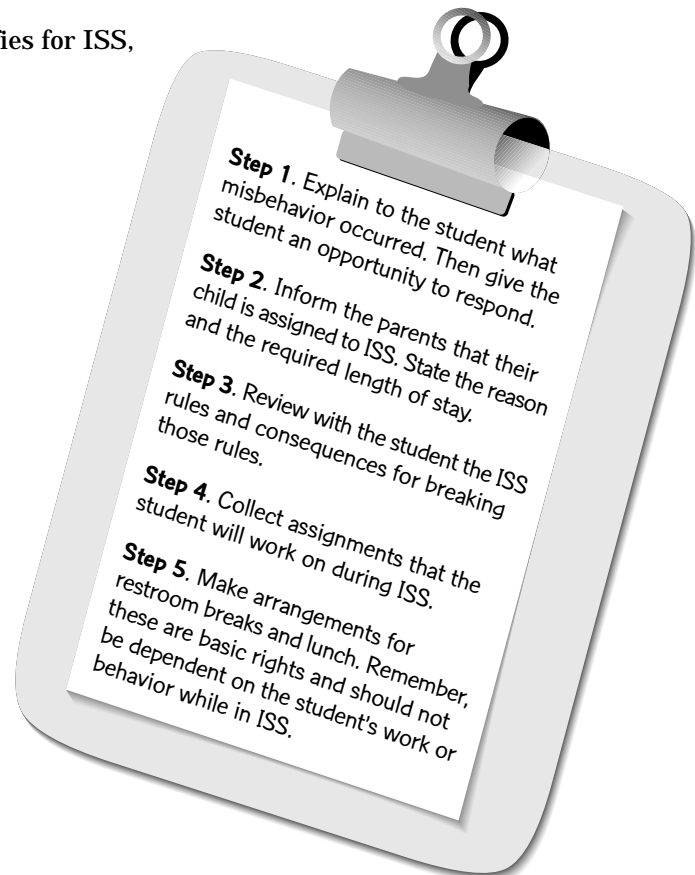
One way to get assignments to students in ISS is by notifying the office staff. In turn, they inform the student's teachers who send the assignments to the office as quickly as possible.

Better yet, let students assigned to ISS collect their own work. Simply offer an incentive, such as a time reduction, for those who bring all their class assignments to the ISS room.



Conduct in-school suspension.

When a student's misbehavior qualifies for ISS, follow these steps:



Examples

Example 1

All morning, Erik was in an irritable mood. He was slow to follow his fifth grade instructor's directions. Then during math, Erik used his pen to gouge vulgar words into the top of his desk. The instructor sent Erik with the day's assignments to ISS. The ISS supervisor reviewed the in-house rules with Erik, then assigned him a desk facing the wall. During lunch break, the instructor contacted Erik's father and explained that in addition to ISS, Erik would remain after school 30 minutes to repair the damage done to his desk.

Example 2

This was Shauna's third tardy to science class this week. Her instructor, Ms. Kopinski, asked what happened. When Shauna failed to have a valid reason for her tardiness, Ms. Kopinski filled out an ISS request form and sent it to the office. The school administrator approved the request, contacted Shauna's parents, and notified her class instructors. In turn, the instructors sent 2 day's assignments to the ISS supervisor. Shauna then reported to ISS.

Variations of the Technique

☞ When no separate rooms are available for ISS, try an office area or the student's current classroom. Use study carrels or partitions to isolate the student as much as possible. ISS works best when the student is removed from distracting or reinforcing activities.

Be aware that a student who does ISS time in the classroom where the misbehavior occurred can cause additional problems. The individual may find that it's more reinforcing to disrupt classroom instruction rather than do the ISS work. To prevent

this, arrange with a paraeducator, administrator, or another instructor to take responsibility for monitoring the student during this time.

☞ When selecting classroom carrels for ISS, consider using ones from a different grade level. For example, a sixth grader may be assigned to a carrel in a first grade classroom while a first grader is placed in a fifth grade classroom. This reduces the likelihood that the students will want to show off.

Potential Problems and Solutions

Instructors Do Not Supervise or Supply Assignments to ISS Students

From the start, all instructors need to participate in developing a school-wide ISS philosophy. Ownership in the philosophy builds support for the program. As a last resort, an administrator can decide that only instructors who supervise and support the program may use it with their students.

Students Fail to Attend In-School Suspension

A student referred to ISS the following day may decide not to show up. Instead, an individual assigned to ISS immediately after an infraction can be escorted to the location.

In-School Suspension Has a "Waiting List" to Get In

First, examine your space arrangements. More importantly, you may need to reevaluate the overall school atmosphere and discipline plan.

The Same Students Are Repeatedly Assigned to In-School Suspension

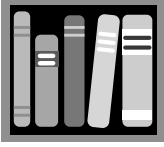
For these students, the standard ISS program may not work. Therefore, consider other techniques. For example, try combining ISS with a token economy (see *LRBI: Level I—Intervention*) or level system. Also, you might require counseling or social skills groups along with the assigned work as part of their ISS program.

Getting Ready

- 👉 Make certain a school-wide philosophy of discipline is in place. The philosophy should identify a hierarchy of consequences for dealing with problem behavior students. For an ISS program to operate effectively, there must be school-wide support for all components of the discipline plan.
- 👉 Check that an effective means of communication is established among the administration, staff, parents, and students. Good communication increases the likelihood of consistency and follow-through.
- 👉 Ensure that ISS is only one behavior reduction technique in the hierarchy. ISS should be used for infractions serious enough to warrant isolation from others. Remember, a positive atmosphere with high rates of positive reinforcement for appropriate student behavior is the best way to minimize negative behavior.
- 👉 Confirm that school and classroom rules are clearly posted. Explain and review these with students.
- 👉 Verify that students desire to remain in the classroom. If students view the classroom negatively, then ISS will fail to reduce misbehavior.

Materials and Supplies

- 👉 A location, such as a separate room or carrel, to isolate students.
- 👉 Personnel to supervise the ISS room.
- 👉 Assigned work from the student's classes.
- 👉 Posted ISS rules.



References

Cooney, S., & Adkinson, P. (1981, September). *Director of in-school alternatives to suspension*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Institute of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Rhode, G. (1996). Setting up an effective in-school suspension program. In **(editors)**, *BEST Practices*. **(city, state)**: Sopris West.