

## Teachers Could Deny Privileges to modify Behavior



Q. Recently my son was denied permission to attend a class field trip because

of his behavior. I didn't think that it was fair to make him stay at school and miss the

trip, so I kept him at home. Does a school have the right to refuse to take children on

field trips as punishment for behavioral issues? Angry Mom

A. Yes, according to the current School Law, 30<sup>th</sup> Edition text p.466, administrators and

teachers have the right to deny students participation in field trips, interscholastic

sports, and other activities, when behavior is an issue and suspension is not

deemed necessary. Having said that, I personally do not like to see children miss

educational field trips that they will probably not have the chance to attend

again. When it comes to behavior, I prefer to see the school psychologist become

involved and set up a behavior modification plan that the classroom teacher and

parents are trained to implement. The psychologist can also observe the child's

behavior and recommend any outside assistance if needed. I would suggest that you

talk to the classroom teacher ahead of time and ask him/ her what his/her policy is

regarding behavior and field trips. Volunteer to attend the field trip with your child.

Also ask him/her what other strategies could be used instead of missing trips and

other fun activities. Let him/her know that you are willing to work with him/her and

follow the steps in the behavior modification plan if one is created.

Teachers work hard to meet the New York State standards and to teach their

students what they need to know. When there are behavior problems, teachers have

to stop teaching to address them.

### **Complete the Free Lunch Form to Help your School District**

Q. My district continuously sends home 'free lunch' application forms. Every year

they harass parents to fill out these forms. I know that I do not qualify for

free lunch. Why do they ask all parents to fill out these forms?

A. The free or reduced lunch program is for parents who can demonstrate that their children are eligible to receive it based on their total household income. Children who receive Food Stamps, Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) are all eligible for free or significantly reduced breakfast and lunch. Other households are eligible depending on their income and number of persons in the household. Foster children may also be eligible. Children with special needs whose disability interferes with their ability to participate in regular food service programs without some modification, may also apply for special meals or substitutions. A doctor's note will be required. The information in the lunch forms are kept strictly confidential.

The reason districts want as many families as possible to complete the lunch forms, even if

families are not eligible, is because the information provided is used for the

allocation of funds to federal programs such as Title I and National Assessment of

the Education Process (NAEP), State Health or State Education Programs, and for

Federal, State, or local means tested nutrition programs. Districts have to prove that

they are in need of and entitled to these federal funds used to provide programs and

improve instruction for students. It is in parents' best interest to complete

these forms so that their children's schools can receive the federal funds needed to

implement and provide enriching programs to meet the needs of all children

attending that district. Also some families think that they are not eligible and they

are. You can obtain lunch forms and guidelines to see if you qualify from the

central registration office in your district.

## **Homework Helps your Child do Better in School**

Q. My son entered 4<sup>th</sup> grade this school year and he has so much homework already. It

takes him hours to complete his homework and he gets tired while I get frustrated.

Why do teachers give so much homework and is homework really necessary?

Who should I talk to about the volume of homework? Frustrated Parent

A. You are not alone in this dilemma. When parents get home from work, the last

thing they want to do is hours of homework with their children especially if a

child is having difficulty with a particular subject. First let's discuss the purpose of

homework and its benefits. An article entitled *Helping Your Child With*

□□□□□□ *Homework* by Nancy Paulu from KidSource.com, provides the

following reasons why teachers give homework. Homework can help children:

- Review and practice what they've learned;
- Get ready for the next day's class;
- Learn to use resources, such as libraries, reference materials and encyclopedias; and
- Explore subjects more fully than time permits in the classroom.

Homework helps your child do better in school when assignments are meaningful,

are completed successfully, and are returned with constructive comments from the

teacher. An assignment should have a specific purpose, come with clear

instructions, be fairly matched to the child's abilities, and designed to help develop

a student's knowledge and skills. Teachers often use homework as a way of

observing whether students have grasped a concept or not. Then he/she knows

whether he/she needs to review further or can move on to a new concept.

So how much homework should a student receive? Many educators believe that

homework is most effective for the majority of children in 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

when it does not exceed 20 minutes each school day. From 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade,

many educators recommend from 20 to 40 minutes a school day for most students.

For students in 7<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grades, generally, up to 2 hours a school day is

considered suitable.

Of course some children can handle more and others struggle to keep up. Parents

have to judge whether their child is the only child who is taking a long time to

complete tasks or is mainly one subject that takes so long. If your son is

struggling in only one subject, ask that teacher for extra help or consider a tutor. If

he is struggling in all subjects, ask the teacher if he is having difficulty in his classes

also. If he is doing well in class but not in homework, it is probable that he is tired

and getting to bed late after doing homework. This can become a bad cycle.

Observe whether your son can do the work but he is wasting time (watching TV,

going to the bathroom etc.). Give him specific times when you expect homework to

begin and to be completed. Reward him when he meets the goal. If you still

believe that there is just too much homework, you need to make an appointment and

Speak to his teacher. If your concerns are not appreciated, you may have to speak with the principal.

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