

WHY SHOULD SCHOOLS MOVE AWAY FROM PUNITIVE RESPONSES?



1 Punitive responses involve forcing compliance through fear rather than **increasing students' capacity and competences to think critically** about the implications of their behaviour (for themselves and others) and make better decisions.¹

2 Punitive responses shut down conversations by focusing only on the specific behaviour and context, rather than **engaging students in a meaningful dialogue** in which they can express their ideas, feelings and reasons for their behaviour.²

3 Punitive responses involve controlling a specific behaviour by asserting the power of authority and focusing on the preservation of order, rather than **building and supporting students' agency** to learn from experience (including mistakes) and function as human agents.³

5 Punitive responses tend to be disproportionately applied to those who already face marginalization based on their race, socio-economic status, or other factors.⁵

4 Punitive responses are likely to alienate students by promoting a particular behaviour and encouraging students to fit in to the existing world rather than **equipping them with tools necessary for participation** in the world and giving them "the opportunity to show who they are and who they want to be."⁴

¹ Russell J. Skiba, Reece L. Peterson, and Tara Williams, "Office Referrals and Suspension: Disciplinary Intervention in Middle Schools," *Education and Treatment of Children* 20, (1997): 295–315; Jonathan Cohen, "Social, Emotional, Ethical, and Academic Education: Creating a Climate for Learning, Participation in Democracy, and Well-Being," *Harvard Educational Review* 76, (2006): 201–37; Steven H. Appelbaum, Michael Bregman, and Peter Moroz, "Fear as a Strategy: Effects and Impact within the Organization," *Journal of European Industrial Training* 22, (1998): 113–27.

² Cohen, "Social, Emotional, Ethical, and Academic Education"; Ann Margaret Sharp and Philip Cam, "The Other Dimension of Caring Thinking (with a New Commentary by Phillip Cam)," *Journal of Philosophy in Schools* 1, (2014): 15–21.

³ Russell J. Skiba and Reece Peterson, "The Dark Side of Zero Tolerance: Can Punishment Lead to Safe Schools?," *The Phi Delta Kappan* 80, (1999): 372–76, 381–82.

⁴ Gert Biesta, *Beyond Learning: Democratic Education for a Human Future*, Interventions: Education, Philosophy & Culture (London: Routledge, 2006).

⁵ Skiba and Peterson, "The Dark Side of Zero Tolerance: Can Punishment Lead to Safe Schools?"; Irwin A Hyman and Donna C Perone, "The Other Side of School Violence: Educator Policies and Practices That May Contribute to Student Misbehavior," *Journal of School Psychology* 36, (1998): 7–27.

