

Release 08:30 Apr 12 (Wed), 2023

Publication

(Online) 17:00 Apr 12 (Wed), 2023

(Paper) 17:00 Apr 12 (Wed), 2023

School violence records to be preserved up to 4 years, and reflected in college admissions

- Aggressor student's disciplinary actions in the Student Record preserved for an extended period, penalties to be imposed in college admissions
- Victim students' consent required to delete disciplinary actions
- Victim students can request to be separated from aggressor students
- School violence prevention & support center to be established in Metropolitan and Provincial Offices of Education
- Students will receive more sports and arts education, as well as social and emotional education to prevent school violence

The Korean government has adopted a new Comprehensive School Violence Eradication Plan to protect students from all forms of school violence and promote a safe and nurturing learning environment. Under the new plan, any student engaged in school violence will face strict disciplinary actions, with their records preserved in the Students' Life and Academic Record in High School (hereinafter, Student Record) for up to four years after graduation. This will be also reflected in their regular college admissions.

To protect victim students from additional harm, the separation period between the aggressor and victim students will be extended to seven days. School principals will also have greater authority to change the aggressor student's class as an emergency measure. Victim students will be able to request the separation of the aggressor student, even if legal proceedings are underway.

In the event of school violence, aggressor students will be prohibited from contacting victim students and informants, with increased disciplinary actions for violations. A dedicated support system will also be established to provide personalized psychological, medial, and legal services to victim students for their full recovery.

Furthermore, the government will initiate measures to revamp schools' response to school violence. A School Violence Prevention and Support Center will be established in Metropolitan and Provincial Offices of Education to offer integrated support for case management, victim recovery, relationship improvement, and legal services. Additional opportunities for sports and arts education, as well as social and emotional education will be offered to reduce school violence.

The government held the 19th Committee for Countermeasures against School Violence, presided over by Prime Minister Han Duk-soo.

-Date & Location: April 12, 2023 (Wed), 3:30 pm / Seoul Government Complex Building

-Attendees: Joint Chairperson (Prime Minister, Honorary Chairman of the Green Tree Foundation), government officials, experts from the private sector (19 members in total).

Since the implementation of school violence eradication measures and zero tolerance for school violence in 2012, aggressor students' disciplinary actions have been recorded and preserved in the Student Record (i.e., 5 years for elementary and middle school students, 10 years for high school students). However, the gradual ease of record preservation has led to reduced vigilance towards school violence, resulting in increased criticisms that victim students are not sufficiently protected. Indeed, the number of school violence has increased from 30,000 in 2017 to over 40,000 in 2019, and exceeded 60,000 in 2022. The current separation system has also been critiqued for its lengthy seven-week investigation process: three weeks for the school committee and four weeks for the Metropolitan and Provincial Offices of

Education's School Violence Countermeasures Committee.

To address these issues, the Comprehensive School Violence Eradication Plan has been devised with three objectives: 1) a zero tolerance principle for continuous and unilateral school violence, 2) strengthened protection measures for victim students of school violence, 3) promotion of school response capabilities and character education. The key tasks are as follows.

1. Strict Measures for School Violence

Strengthened management of student records

Strict measures will be taken against students who commit school violence, in part, to raise the awareness among all students that "school violence leads to negative consequences and disadvantages." The aggressor student will not only be imposed of strict measures such as attendance suspension, class change, and transfer, but the Student Record will be preserved for four years after graduation, with prolonged disadvantages that may affect their college admissions to graduation.

Disciplinary actions, which could be deleted through a deliberation process, such as community service, special training, attendance suspension, and class change will be reinforced. In particular, a consent from the victim student will be required to prevent administrative trials and encouraging genuine apologies from aggressor students.

In addition, the aggressor student will not be allowed to drop out of school to avoid disciplinary measures, until the deliberation committee makes a final decision. The current manual will be revised for prompt facilitation of respective measures.

Reflection of school violence measures in college admissions

Starting from the 2025 academic year, measures against school violence will also be reflected in the aggressor student's college

admissions. Individual universities will determine and announce the specific evaluation methods and criteria, having the autonomy to impose penalties in the admissions process. Starting from the 2026 academic year, all universities will reflect measures against school violence in college admissions based on a standardized guideline, “Regulations for Admissions in 2026,” developed by the Korean Council for University Education and Korean Association for Junior Colleges (August, 2023).

2. Strengthened Protection Measures for Victim Students

Improved Separation System

In Korea, the school principal immediately separates the aggressor and victim students when school violence occurs. However, the current three-day separation period has faced criticisms because it includes weekends (e.g., if separation is done on Friday, it gets lifted on Monday). To resolve this issue, the separation period is extended to “within seven days.” The school principal may also take “emergency measures for the aggressor student” to protect the victim student, which includes changing classes. The suspension of attendance may be imposed until the deliberation committee makes the final decision.

Moreover, to enhance the protection measures of victim students, they will have the right to request separation from the aggressor student, as well as to take “emergency measures.” This includes suspension of attendance or changing classes under the judgement of the school’s dedicated committee.

In the case the aggressor student disagrees with the deliberation committee’s decision, it will be notified to the victim student. He or she will have the right to make a statement and progress the administrative adjudication and litigation to prevent secondary harm. Even if the execution of the measures is suspended, the victim student will still have the right to request separation from the aggressor student.

Personalized Support

Personalized support will be offered to victim students, which will ensure victim students to receive the necessary service. A dedicated support office for victim students will be established in schools and local offices of education. They will provide victim students with personalized psychological counseling, medical, and legal services from the early stages of school violence incidents.

The number of professional support agencies, including the Wee Center, counseling and psychological support agencies, and medical facilities, will be increased from 303 in 2023 to 400 in 2024 to scale-up the accessibility for victim students. In addition, various types of recovery and protection agencies will be regularly informed to victim students through the collaboration with Youth Counseling Welfare Centers, Smile Centers, and Welfare and Mental Health agencies, etc.

Legal services and support will be offered to victim students through the Ministry of Justice's village lawyer system. If victim students from economically disadvantaged background are involved in administrative hearings, they will be given an option to appoint a public defender.

3. Strengthened Response Capability at the School Level for Teacher' s Rights

Strengthened Response Capability

In order for teachers to actively respond to school violence, "School Violence Prevention and Support Centers (tentative name)" will be established and operated in 17 Metropolitan and Provincial Offices of Education. The centers will help schools handle incidents, offering support to restore relationships between the victim and aggressor student, and provide legal services.

In particular, a Support Team for Handling Incidents, composed of School-dedicated Police Officers (SPOs) will be operated to support the incident handling process of school's dedicated committees. In addition, support teams for the victim student's recovery and relationship improvement will be formed, consisting of retired teachers, retired police officers, and professional counseling teachers, to ensure the smooth operation of relationship restoration programs for minor school violence incidents.

Furthermore, schools will handle a greater realm of minor incidents at the school level. Schools will sign a School Violence Responsibility Contract that confirms their responsibilities under the *School Violence Prevention Act*, which delineates the definition and types of school violence, nine relevant measures, as well as the school principal's emergency measures. Through the collaboration with teacher organizations and private institutions, the culture of eradicating school violence will be further encouraged.

Improved Conditions to Respond to School Violence

Better environment and conditions will be created for schools to proactively respond to school violence. First, any actions that interfere a teacher's legitimate guidance of students will be considered an infringement of education activities. In addition, if conflicts arise in school violence cases, teachers will be exempted from civil and criminal responsibilities, unless clear motives or serious negligence are apparent. The teacher healing support center will provide legal counseling and guarantee compensation liability insurance to protect the teacher's rights. New standards on alleviating the workload of teachers in charge of school violence will be established.

4. Fundamental Changes in Schools

Social, emotional well-being & arts and sports education

To prevent and eradicate school violence, students' social and emotional well-being will be supported, in addition to increased opportunities for arts and physical education. Starting in the second half of this year, pilot schools and Neulbom schools will have an option to operate mental programs, which will be proliferated across the country from 2025. Opportunities for school sports and art clubs will be expanded to enhance students' community capacity and emotional intelligence.

Prevention of Cyberbullying

A cyberbullying prevention program called "Cyverse" will be operated in schools. Through the pan-governmental working group, diversified learning materials and public outreach will promote the recognition of cyberbullying, raising the awareness among the general public. In addition, apps such as "Uhwoolim" (meaning Together in English) run by the Ministry of Education, "Cyber Outreach" (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism), "Smart Safe Dream" (Korea Communications Commission), and "Solo-bot" (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism) that can detect cyberbullying through SNS will be publicized to identify students who may be at risk of cyberbullying at an early stage.

* Cyverse (Ministry of Education) : Educational content that fosters cyberbullying prevention capabilities such as conflict management and problem-solving skills using avatars in cyber space on a meta-verse platform.

** (Relevant Ministry) Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science and ICT, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, Korea Communications Commission, National Police Agency (Relevant Institutions) Korea Education and Research Information Service, Korea

Youth Counseling & Welfare Institute, Game Culture Foundation

Prime Minister Han Duk-soo addressed, “Due to benevolent condescension towards school violence, victim students have not been protected properly, and schools have not fully responded to the incidents.” He noted the need for vigilance against school violence, and empowering teachers to eradicate school violence.

The Korean government is committed to eradicating school violence through the pan-governmental and societal cooperation. School violence, in fact, violates students’ fundamental right to receive education. Through the Comprehensive School Violation Eradication Plan, the government will spare no efforts to providing our students with a school without school violence, where they feel safe and nurtured.

Contact Point	Office for Government Policy Coordination Education, Culture, and Gender Equality Policy Division	Director	Jung Ah-reum (044-200-2321)
		Deputy Director	Yoon Hyun-jung (044-200-2323)
	Ministry of Education School Life and Culture Division	Director	Moon Jin-chul (044-203-6972)
		Deputy Director	Kim Young-gwon (044-203-6978)
	Ministry of Science and ICT Digital Policy Division	Director	Lee Sung-hoon (044-202-6150)
		Deputy Director	Lee Sang-min (044-202-6152)
	Ministry of Justice Youth Criminal Prevision Team	Director	Cho Yun-ho (02-2110-3920)
		Chief	Kang Ji-won (02-2110-3915)
	Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism Innovation and Planning Division	Director	Ha Yoon-jin (044-203-2211)
		Deputy Director	Bae Sung-hwan (044-203-2393)
	Ministry of Health and Welfare Mental Health	Director	Kim Seung-il (044-202-3870)
		Deputy Director	Kim Joon-bum (044-202-3872)

	Management Division		
	Ministry of Gender Equality Youth Independence Support Division	Director	Nam Sang-hee (02-2100-6271)
		Deputy Director	Park Yoon-ju (02-2100-6275)
	Korea Communications Commission Internet Users Policy Division	Director	Choi Yoon-jung (02-2110-1520)
		Deputy Director	Lee Byung-su (02-2110-1526)
	National Police Agency Children & Youth Division	Director	Lee Young-woo (02-3150-2048)
		Chief	Lim Hee-jin (02-3150-2148)

