

Our goal is to make each referred student's first encounter with the juvenile justice system their last.



## SCHOOL OFFENSE DIVERSION PROGRAM

The School Offense Diversion Program at the Delaware Center for Justice, Inc. is funded through the State of Delaware and governed by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Since 2004, when SoDP was implemented in New Castle County to provide relief to Family Court, the breadth and depth of our work has evolved into a more holistic collaborative that's comprehensive in its approach yet specific to our students and the institutions that serve them. While each situation is unique, we want our students and our schools – those most impacted by the school discipline experience – to benefit as the result of our work.

Life is all about choices.

The School Offense Diversion Program has been developed to help you grow through this experience and identify lessons learned so that you can make better choices in the future.

The responsibility is yours to take.



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## Delaware Center for Justice Incorporated



## SCHOOL OFFENSE DIVERSION PROGRAM

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## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Once determined to be eligible, middle- and high-school students from New Castle County, along with their parent(s) or guardian(s), meet with SoDP staff and identify appropriate steps to take that address behaviors that led to an in-school incident which prompted their referral to the program.

DCJ's SoDP is an alternative to the juvenile court process and punitive disciplinary approaches – a space for mediation with students to talk through and understand the nature of the incident and to validate their experience.

Students stay in the program for an average of 2 months and are followed by program staff. Regular contact is maintained with the student, parents or guardians, school administrators, and others who may be involved with the student until they successfully complete the program.

### Students are expected to ~

- ✓ Attend school regularly and perform as expected and show a willingness to achieve good grades and improve relationships.
- ✓ Write a self-reflective essay and/or a letter from the future and/or as a youth advocate about their school discipline experience.
- ✓ Pay it forward, learning and serving in a volunteer capacity – if able and willing.
- ✓ Complete a relevant reading and reflecting assignment.
- ✓ Discuss practices and complete assignments that boost their assets, increase their capacity to problem-solve, and acknowledge and express gratitude.
- ✓ If referred, work with a professional on healthy communication and impulse control and other important issues essential to adolescent growth.
- ✓ If referred, participate in an alcohol and/or drug evaluation, and enter substance abuse counseling and/or treatment, including random drug tests, if indicated by the evaluation.
- ✓ Remain arrest-free while completing the program.

### Parents or guardians are expected to ~

- ✓ Do their best to support their child's participation and completion of the program.
- ✓ Monitor their child's school attendance and school grades and school discipline.
- ✓ If referred, participate in family counseling.

We work with youth arrested as a result of their school discipline experience. Our work is focused on their academic progress and personal conduct so that they stay in school, stay out of trouble, and graduate.

We begin our work as partners in conversation with a way of being that validates their experience.

It is our intention that referred students learn to skillfully and mindfully resolve problems and sustain healthy relationships so that what may have been their first experience with the juvenile justice system is their last.