Dealing with Problem Employees: The Basics of Progressive Discipline

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Ideas@Work education sessions are intended to inspire and encourage innovation in school nutrition through peer-to-peer learning and engagement.
Affiliation or Financial Disclosure

• Courtney Morabito, MBA, DTR, SNS
• Cincinnati Public Schools
• Nutrition Chair for Ohio SNA
• Nothing to disclose
A Bit About Our District

• **38,500 Students in 65 Schools:**
  - 82% free and reduced ... 76.2% ethnic minority ... 100+ different languages

• **School Lunch:**
  - 49 Schools in CEP
  - Participation: 84% Elementary ... 68% Secondary
  - Lunch Prices: $1.75 Elementary ... $2.00 Secondary ... No Reduced Category

• **School Breakfast:**
  - Provision 2 Breakfast in All Schools
  - Reimbursable Vending Machines in all 14 secondary schools
  - BIC, Grab ‘n’ Go, and/or Breakfast After First Bell in 35 elementary schools
  - Breakfast Participation: 68% Elementary ... 36% Secondary

• **Other Programs:**
  - Summer Food Service Program at 108 sites
  - Farm to School Initiatives including 17 school gardens
  - Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program at 39 schools
  - Afterschool Snack Program at 38 schools
  - Garden Salad Bars in every school, every day
The Big Idea

• Progressive Discipline

• Employee problems are in every workplace
  • *Results will vary based on how you choose to handle it.*
Organizing Staff Responsibility

**Top-Down Reporting**

- Establishing roles in the department and kitchens
  - Various titles help lay boundaries and line for direct reports
  - Those in charge of the kitchen should be responsible for helping correct errors before they become problems
  - They should also documenting problems while still being a team player
    - No “Power Trips” here!
Monitor Staff Performance

• SMART Goals
  • **S**pecific
  • **M**easurable
  • **A**ttainable
  • **R**elevant
  • **T**ime-bound

**VS.**

• Behavioral Goals
  • Should always be accomplished (i.e. customer service, team work)
Open Door Policy

Make Yourself Available

• You can’t be everywhere at once, but you should always make time
• Be a good listener (even after hours)
  • Be approachable yet firm- let staff know they can come to you with problems/questions, but establish ACCOUNTABILITY
    • First question: What did you do to address the problem and how did it work?
    • Second question: How can I help you solve the problem?
Consistency is Key

Path of Documentation

• What works for us may not work for you, BUT...
  • First Step: Progressive Counseling should be *progressive*- communicate!
  • Second step: formal write up
  • Third Step: formal follow up
  • Final Step: will discuss shortly
More about a Write Up

It should be...

• Prompt
• Specific about the offense
• Factual
  • avoid opinions and personal bias
• Inclusive
• Expected
Determining what’s Appropriate

It Depends!

...on

• The severity of the issue
• Ask: how was this situation documented last time?
Performance Improvement Plans

If nothing else works...

- Reach out to Human Resources
- Performance Improvement Plans (PIP)
- The Elephant in the Room: Is this job for you?
Questions and Sharing
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Thank you!
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