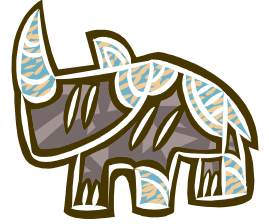


“Opting Out”



Opting Out is when a student requests to sit outside of the learning environment for a lesson “period.” The purpose of Opting Out is to **1)** honor student responsibility **2)** assist a student with a more successful learning environment.

Some Basics about Opting-Out

- Opting Out looks like Step 1, because the student is sitting away from the current academic environment.
- A student may choose to Opt Out at any time during a lesson.
- A student earns full Points while Opting Out.
- Opting Out lasts as long as the rest of the lesson.
- Like Step 1, a teacher asks the student if he/she is ready to return.
- Opting Out is intended to be a temporary and infrequently used “assignment.”
- Teachers make every effort to help and encourage a student to participate, but freely allow a student to Opt Out.
- Opting Out is not to become a pattern and can be noted as a formal accommodation preceding CARE Team referral.

Opting Out is often not well understood and frequently elicits concern from teachers, as they see the potential for students to habitually Opt Out of lessons throughout the year. **The following is a list of list of the most-commonly asked questions about Opting Out, followed by their clarification.**

1) Isn't Opting Out just another form of Step 1?

No. Opting Out looks the same, but a student asks to Opt Out and is there for the remainder of the period. Step 1 is "requested" through an interfering behavior and the student is approached by the teacher in less than 5 minutes to find out if he/she needs more time.

2) Doesn't a student have to Opt Out before a lesson begins?

A student can ask to Opt Out at any time. We would want to encourage students to participate for as much of the lesson as they feel able. If we limit the window of opportunity then students do not have the opportunity to try activities before asking to Opt Out. Often they discover that they are quite capable of doing the activity and enjoy it.

3) When do teachers refuse a student wanting to Opt Out?

We always say "yes" if a student asks to Opt Out. If we say "no" they have other ways to get out of the activity that are either covert or overt. With opting out, a teacher has knowledge that a student is struggling and can begin to work with them on it. Additionally, they are able to find out this information without the class being disturbed by a student who is overtly trying to avoid the task at hand.

4) How can a student earn full Points when they're Opting Out?

Points are earned by doing what's expected the best you can. If a student asks to Opt Out they are saying, "The best I can do right now is to sit away from the current activity." When the teacher gives permission, the expectations have changed. Therefore, the student who is Opting Out is doing what's expected the best she/he can. We appreciate that a student has taken charge of their behavior and cares about earning Points, even if they aren't earning a grade. Again, the teacher has the opportunity to talk with the student and find out why they feel they can't handle that activity.

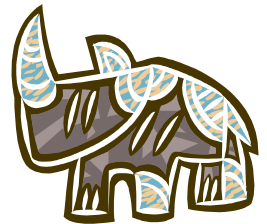
5) Should a certain number of Opt-Outs be followed with a Step 4?

Never. It would be appropriate to let the student know that the second opt-out within a short period will require a communication with the parent.

"Mom/Dad, just needed to let you know that your child has chosen to Opt Out a couple of times within the last few days. I talked with your child to see how I could help, but they didn't have anything to say. Is there something that you can tell me so I can help your child be successful academically or something I can do to support what you are doing for child?"

6) Do you have to keep track of the number of Opt-Outs?

Possibly. Opting Out can be noted as a formal intervention for a student. You may want to note that a student has Opted Out if you think this student may need to be referred to CARE Team. However, without a specific reason to document, it's not necessary to keep track. Just a mental note to oneself is sufficient.



7) How can you just allow students to Opt Out?

When a student chooses to be successful through Opting Out it allows you to be a responsive teacher. It doesn't mean you're letting the student "get away" with anything, and it doesn't mean you don't care. At the moment the student Opt Out, the teacher's focus is on teaching and the other students, where it should be. The teacher appreciates that a student wants to manage their behavior by asking to Opt Out and also appreciates their actions to bring their personal concern for learning to the forefront. After Opting Out, the teacher can begin to explore the reasons at a time convenient for the teacher and private for the student. For example...

"Juanita, could you stay back for a few minutes. I'll give you a pass to Library." The class goes to Library. "Juanita, why did you Opt Out during Writing? Is there something I can help you with?"

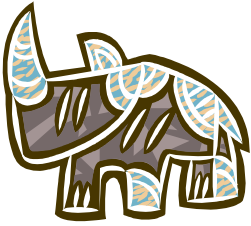
8) How long does a student remain Opting Out? How do they return?

For the remainder of the period. Right before Points the teacher privately asks the student if they are ready to return to the class activities, just like Step 1.

9) Are parents notified after one Opt-Out?

That's not usually necessary unless it's something that the teacher and parents have been working on. Good communication is important at any level of intervention.

10) Won't Opting Out be abused by students?



Thirty years of MYD implementation in hundreds of schools says, NO. There are students who will try it out just to see what it's like or to determine if it's really an option. However, they find that it's boring if they don't really have the emotional or academic need to Opt Out. If a teacher has several students Opt Out during class, then the teacher needs to review his/her objectives, expectations, and consistency. By Opting Out, students are letting the teacher know something isn't working for them.

MYD Trainer, Cheryl Brown says,

*“Occasionally, and this has happened to me, the students decide to "revolt" and **all** ask to Opt Out. I individually granted them permission and then caught up on paperwork. (Was that a gift of time!) At the end of the period, I asked each of them privately if they were ready to return to class and all were. There was not a repeat performance.”*

*Thanks to
Jefferson Elementary, Everett WA, March 2009*