

Forms And Methods Of Organizing Social And Pedagogical Work With Students With Deviant Behavior

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Abstract: This article examines the forms and methods of organizing social and pedagogical work with students who display deviant behavior in school settings. The study aims to systematize effective approaches for prevention, support, correction, and reintegration by interpreting deviant behavior not as a fixed personal label but as a dynamic result of individual, family, school, and community risk factors. The article is grounded in a theoretical and analytical review of research on school behavior, school connectedness, family-centered intervention, school social work, mentoring, and school-wide prevention. The analysis shows that effective work with such students should be organized as a multilevel system that combines individual casework, small-group developmental work, family-school collaboration, restorative and supportive school climate practices, and interagency cooperation with health and social services. The findings also indicate that purely punitive or segregating responses are generally less effective than coordinated preventive and corrective models built on trust, monitoring, structured support, and meaningful student participation. Particular attention is given to the risks of stigmatization and deviant peer contagion when high-risk youth are grouped without strong adult guidance. The article concludes that social and pedagogical work with students with deviant behavior is most effective when it is individualized, continuous, preventive, family-inclusive, and embedded in a safe school environment that strengthens belonging, responsibility, and prosocial development.

Keywords: Deviant behavior, students, social and pedagogical work, school social work, prevention, intervention, school connectedness, mentoring, family-school partnership, restorative practices.

Introduction: In educational research and practice, deviant behavior is usually understood not simply as any unusual conduct but as stable or repeated forms of behavior that violate accepted school, social, or legal norms and interfere with the student's own development or the well-being of others. In school settings, this may include chronic aggression, bullying, truancy, substance-related behavior, vandalism, oppositional conduct, persistent classroom disruption, and other antisocial or high-risk patterns. At the same time, recent scholarship warns against reducing the phenomenon to a fixed personal defect, because student behavior is shaped by school climate, peer relations, family functioning, socioeconomic pressure, trauma exposure, and the ways institutions define and respond to misconduct.

The social and pedagogical approach is important

precisely because it treats deviant behavior as a multidimensional educational and social problem rather than only a disciplinary issue. UNESCO's recent guidance on safe learning environments emphasizes that effective responses to violence and behavioral problems require a holistic approach involving education staff, families, social services, and other sectors. Similarly, WHO highlights that timely support and enabling environments are critical for young people's mental and behavioral well-being. This means that the organization of work with students who exhibit deviant behavior should combine pedagogical influence, psychosocial support, socialization mechanisms, and coordinated protection rather than rely on punishment alone.

The relevance of the topic is reinforced by the scale of school-related behavioral and emotional risks. UNESCO

reports that school violence and bullying affect a substantial proportion of children and adolescents worldwide and that weak reporting systems, poor coordination, and limited support services reduce the effectiveness of educational responses. Evidence from the CDC also shows that students who feel connected to school are less likely to experience a range of health and behavioral risks. These findings suggest that the problem of deviant behavior should be approached not only through control of misconduct but also through the strengthening of school attachment, prosocial relationships, and early support systems.

The purpose of this article is to identify and analyze the main forms and methods of organizing social and pedagogical work with students with deviant behavior. The central argument is that the most effective model is multilevel: it includes individualized work with the student, developmental and corrective work in small groups, sustained cooperation with the family, school-wide preventive and restorative practices, and referral networks that connect education with social and mental health services.

This article is based on a theoretical and analytical review of scholarly and institutional sources on deviant behavior in school settings, school social work, behavior intervention, family-centered prevention, mentoring, and school connectedness. The analysis included peer-reviewed studies, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and international policy materials that address both preventive and corrective dimensions of work with at-risk youth. Sources were selected for their relevance to school-aged learners and for their usefulness in identifying organizational forms and practical methods rather than only general theories of deviance.

The conceptual framework of the article treats social and pedagogical work as an integrated educational process carried out by teachers, school psychologists, social pedagogues, social workers, administrators, families, and community partners. The analysis focused on five interrelated domains: individual support, group work, family-school cooperation, school climate and universal prevention, and interagency coordination. In addition, the review considered evidence on risks associated with ineffective organization, including stigmatization and deviant peer contagion.

The first major result of the analysis is that social and pedagogical work with students with deviant behavior should begin with early identification and individualized assessment rather than with generalized punishment. Research on psychological and pedagogical support for adolescents with deviant behavior emphasizes diagnostic, developmental,

corrective, consultative, and preventive components as parts of one continuous support system. In practice, this means that individual work should start from a careful study of the student's behavioral pattern, family context, school history, peer relations, motivational profile, and possible exposure to trauma, neglect, or social exclusion. A student who skips classes because of family instability needs a different intervention from one whose behavior is rooted primarily in peer influence or untreated emotional problems.

Within this individual form of work, the most important methods are trust-based counseling, motivational interviewing elements, goal-setting, behavioral contracting, case management, reflective conversations, and regular monitoring of progress. Individual counseling is not simply conversation; it serves as a tool for helping the student recognize behavioral triggers, evaluate consequences, and practice self-regulation. Case management is especially important when the student's problems cut across school, family, and community domains, because someone in the school system must coordinate communication, referrals, attendance follow-up, and supportive accountability. The literature on school social work shows that interventions are more effective when they help children and adolescents improve problem-solving, peer relations, and intrapersonal functioning rather than merely suppress visible symptoms.

The second important result is that small-group work can be effective, but only when it is carefully structured around prosocial goals and strong adult facilitation. Group forms may include social skills training, conflict-resolution practice, emotional regulation sessions, peer mediation, restorative circles, and thematic developmental groups for attendance, self-control, or communication. Meta-analytic evidence on school-based interventions for aggressive and disruptive behavior indicates that school-based programs can produce positive effects, especially when they include structured skill development and competent implementation. However, research on deviant peer contagion warns that simply placing high-risk youth together can increase antisocial behavior if the group becomes a site of mutual reinforcement. This means that group work is not inherently beneficial; its effectiveness depends on composition, adult leadership, norms, and purpose.

This finding has direct organizational implications. Group work should not be used as a convenient container for "problem students." It should be used as a developmental method built on clear rules, short cycles, active participation, and positive modeling.

Activities that teach communication, empathy, perspective-taking, anger management, and cooperative problem solving are more defensible than loosely supervised peer grouping. When restorative approaches are applied, they are most useful not as symbolic ceremonies but as guided processes that help students understand harm, responsibility, repair, and reintegration into the school community. In this sense, the group form works best when it serves social learning and accountability at the same time.

A third major result is the decisive role of family-school partnership. Multiple sources reviewed in this study converge on the conclusion that deviant behavior cannot be addressed effectively if the school works in isolation. Family-centered school interventions, including the Family Check-Up model, have been associated with reductions in antisocial behavior and better adjustment among at-risk youth. Other research also points to the family as a central institution in prevention and correction, especially when school and family actions reinforce one another rather than send contradictory messages. Therefore, one of the core forms of social and pedagogical work must be organized cooperation with parents or caregivers.

The main methods within this family-centered form include regular home-school communication, joint problem analysis, parent consultations, psychoeducational guidance, support for consistent behavioral expectations, and referral to external services where necessary. In more complex cases, the school may need to help the family connect with mental health providers, child protection structures, or community assistance programs. Effective family work is not limited to notifying parents about misconduct; it involves building shared responsibility for change. When parents are contacted only in moments of crisis, trust declines. When they are engaged as partners in setting routines, monitoring attendance, strengthening supervision, and acknowledging progress, the probability of sustainable improvement increases.

A fourth result concerns whole-school forms of work. The evidence strongly suggests that social and pedagogical work with deviant behavior is most successful when embedded in a safe and inclusive school climate rather than delivered only as a targeted response after problems escalate. UNESCO's safe learning environment framework and CDC findings on school connectedness both indicate that supportive school environments reduce risk exposure and improve well-being. Students who feel respected, noticed, and connected at school are less likely to engage in violence, substance use, and other harmful behaviors. This shifts the focus from isolated correction to preventive organization of the educational

environment.

In practical terms, whole-school methods include predictable rules, fair and non-humiliating discipline, positive behavior support, teacher training in de-escalation and relationship building, confidential reporting pathways, anti-bullying procedures, classroom management that promotes participation, and consistent adult responses across settings. These methods are pedagogical because they teach norms through experience, and social because they shape the student's sense of belonging and legitimacy within the school order. Evidence reviewed by Wilson and Lipsey shows positive overall effects for school-based interventions targeting aggressive and disruptive behavior, with classroom-level and school-level strategies playing important roles. This means that the school climate itself must be treated as a form of intervention.

A fifth result is that mentoring and transitional support are especially useful for students at elevated risk of exclusion, dropout, or chronic misconduct. A Campbell review of mentoring interventions notes that mentoring is widely used to prevent and remediate delinquent behavior, school failure, aggression, and related risks. Research on school-based transitional support programs for alternative school youth also indicates that structured support can improve attitudes and behavior patterns. For socially vulnerable students, the presence of a stable adult relationship may be one of the most powerful protective factors.

The mentoring form is most effective when it is not romanticized. It requires adult consistency, clearly defined goals, appropriate boundaries, and integration with the school's broader support system. Its methods include regular meetings, academic and behavioral check-ins, modeling of social problem solving, guided participation in school life, and support during high-risk transitions such as return after suspension, transfer to a new school environment, or re-entry after crisis. Mentoring should not substitute for professional help when psychiatric or trauma-related needs are present, but it can stabilize the student's social position and enhance engagement with other supports.

The sixth result concerns interagency and community-based organization. School staff alone cannot fully address serious deviant behavior when it is linked to violence exposure, severe family dysfunction, substance use, homelessness, mental health disorders, or juvenile justice involvement. UNESCO explicitly points to weak coordination between education, health, child protection, and social services as a barrier to effective response. WHO likewise stresses the importance of timely care and enabling systems for

young people. Consequently, social and pedagogical work should include referral pathways, multidisciplinary meetings, crisis protocols, and cooperation with community resources.

In organizational terms, this means that schools need a network logic rather than a closed institutional logic. The pedagogical role of the school remains central, but it must be connected to assessment, therapy, family assistance, protection, and rehabilitation when needed. This also reduces the common error of interpreting all behavioral difficulties as mere disobedience. Some students require educational correction; others need mental health care, trauma-informed support, or social protection alongside pedagogical influence. Effective organization depends on distinguishing these needs while keeping the student inside a coherent support system whenever possible.

The findings support a broad conclusion: the most productive forms and methods of social and pedagogical work are those that combine prevention, correction, and inclusion rather than relying on exclusion or punishment. Students with deviant behavior do need limits and consequences, but consequences alone do not teach regulation, belonging, or accountability. The literature consistently favors approaches that strengthen school connectedness, prosocial competence, family participation, and coordinated support. This does not mean that sanctions are never needed; it means they should be embedded in an educational process that gives the student a real path back into the social life of the school.

A second implication is that organizational form matters as much as method. The same method can help or harm depending on how it is arranged. Group work may support skill growth, but poorly designed grouping may intensify deviant peer influence. Parent contact may become productive partnership, or it may deteriorate into blame and resistance. Classroom management may create structure, or it may produce humiliation and alienation. Therefore, the organization of social and pedagogical work should follow several principles simultaneously: individualization, continuity, confidentiality, non-stigmatization, developmental orientation, and collaboration among adults around the student.

A third implication concerns the role of school culture. Schools often treat deviant behavior as a matter of control over a small subgroup, but the evidence reviewed here suggests that behavior is also shaped by the broader environment in which rules are enforced, relationships are built, and support is made available. A

school that is orderly but emotionally cold may suppress some symptoms while deepening alienation. A school that is caring but inconsistent may unintentionally reinforce manipulation or boundary-testing. Social and pedagogical work is strongest when structure and support are held together: students understand limits, but they also experience fairness, recognition, and opportunities for repair.

Finally, the article highlights the importance of replacing a purely deficit-based view with a developmental one. Many students with deviant behavior are also students with unmet relational, emotional, or social needs. The aim of social and pedagogical work is not only to stop harmful conduct but to build the conditions under which prosocial behavior becomes realistic and meaningful. That requires patient organization, not episodic reaction; cooperation, not institutional isolation; and educational influence that is firm without being degrading.

Social and pedagogical work with students with deviant behavior should be organized as a multilevel, coordinated, and preventive system. The most effective forms include individual support and case management, carefully structured small-group work, sustained family-school partnership, whole-school climate and connectedness strategies, mentoring, and interagency cooperation. The most effective methods are those that combine assessment, counseling, monitoring, social skills development, restorative accountability, parent guidance, and coordinated referral.

The central practical conclusion is that deviant behavior should not be answered only with punishment or isolation. Educational institutions achieve better results when they organize support around the student's developmental needs, maintain firm but fair boundaries, avoid stigmatizing labels, and build an environment in which belonging, responsibility, and behavior change are all possible. In this sense, the organization of social and pedagogical work is not an auxiliary task in school life; it is one of the key indicators of whether education functions as a humanizing and socially responsible institution.

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