

# Supporting Students Returning to School from a Correctional Facility

## A Guide for School Staff



## Supporting Students in Transition: Understanding Growth & Change

### A MESSAGE TO SCHOOL STAFF

When a student returns to our school community after time in a correctional facility, it's essential to recognize that they may have undergone significant positive changes. This guide helps explain the transformation many students experience and how we can support their continued growth. Research shows that with proper support, these students can achieve remarkable success. Studies indicate that juveniles who receive comprehensive educational services during placement are up to 41% more likely to complete high school than those who don't.

## Understanding the Impact of Structure & Support

During their time away, students often benefit from:

- Consistent daily routines and clear expectations
- Regular, nutritious meals that support physical and mental well-being
- Access to uninterrupted education and academic support
- Clean clothing and stable living conditions
- Distance from substances that may have impacted their previous choices
- Mental health support and counseling services
- Opportunity for self-reflection and personal growth



**RESEARCH DEMONSTRATES THAT STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATE IN STRUCTURED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS WHILE IN FACILITIES:**

- Show an average increase of 2 grade levels in reading and math within 6-8 months
- Are 13% more likely to secure employment after release
- Have a 46% lower chance of returning to the juvenile justice system



**STUDIES SHOW THAT STUDENTS WHO MAINTAIN THESE POSITIVE CHANGES FOR THE FIRST SIX MONTHS AFTER RETURN HAVE:**

- 68% higher graduation rate than their peers without support
- 73% chance of remaining substance-free
- 58% increase in positive peer relationships

## Signs of Positive Change

**YOU MAY NOTICE:**

- Improved focus and engagement in classroom activities
- Better self-regulation and emotional management
- Clearer communication with peers and staff
- Enhanced academic skills and knowledge
- More defined future goals and aspirations
- Interest in positive extracurricular activities
- Desire to maintain healthy relationships

## How to Support Continued Success

**DO:**

- Acknowledge and reinforce positive changes you observe
- Maintain high expectations while providing appropriate support
- Create opportunities for leadership and positive contribution
- Connect students with mentoring and counseling resources
- Collaborate with families to ensure consistent support
- Help students develop and work toward academic and personal goals
- Facilitate positive peer relationships and social integration

**AVOID:**

- Making assumptions based on past behavior
- Discussing their time away without their initiative
- Treating them differently from other students
- Lowering academic or behavioral expectations
- Sharing their personal history with others without permission



## Build on Progress

### MANY STUDENTS RETURN WITH:

- New coping strategies
- Improved study habits
- Clearer thinking and decision-making skills
- Stronger self-awareness
- Renewed interest in education
- Desire to maintain positive changes



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### DATA SHOWS THAT STUDENTS WHO SUCCESSFULLY REINTEGRATE:

- Have an 82% chance of completing the current school year
- Show a 65% improvement in attendance compared to pre-placement
- Demonstrate a 47% increase in positive classroom participation

## Resources & Support

### CONSIDER CONNECTING STUDENTS WITH:

- School counseling services
- Academic support programs
- Positive afterschool activities
- Peer mentoring opportunities
- Career planning resources
- Community support services

## Remember

Every student deserves the opportunity for a fresh start. By recognizing and supporting their growth, we help create an environment where continued positive change is possible. Research consistently shows that the first 90 days after return are crucial – students who receive comprehensive support during this period are 3 times more likely to achieve long-term success.