



## Responses to Common Student Move: Denial

**Help Me Help You:** Remind them that you are on their side. Always. Let them know that you really want to help them figure this out, but you can't help them if they are not being honest with you.

**Lay Out the Evidence:** If you know this student did the thing, lay out all of the reasons you know this. If it was reported by another educator, ask why they would lie about something like this. It is a good idea to start with something like, "I'm confused, because I was told or I saw this behavior and you are telling me something different. Help me understand."

**Take Your Time:** This is a good time to allow students to think it through. Saying something like, "It is clear you need some time to consider how to best tell me what is going on. I'm going to leave you here to think about what you want to tell me. While you are thinking, remember that we all make mistakes, and the only way forward is to be honest and take responsibility." This is also a good time to indicate that in some way you are going to gather some additional evidence. For example, "I'm going to go check with Ms. Julie, because what you are telling me and what she told me are different."

**Give an Out:** Students are now struggling with the fact that they told you a lie on top of whatever the behavior is. Saying something like, "I can understand why you might have been nervous about being honest with me. It takes a lot of courage to admit when you have made a mistake. When we talk to your parents about this, I want to be able to say that you took responsibility. I am giving you another opportunity to be completely honest."

**Lay Out the Consequences:** When a student is not being honest, explain the consequences for the dishonesty that will be in addition to what the consequences may be for the original infraction. Explain that any time spent on additional investigation and the lack of integrity will be taken into account when determining next steps. You might say, "Well, it seems like I have more investigating to do. I am going to talk to all of the other witnesses involved. This will take me a lot of time, and that's okay *if* you are telling the truth. It's really important for you to know if the results of my investigation indicate that you are not being honest with me, there will be additional consequences. Before I do that, I want to give you another opportunity to tell the whole truth now."