

Students

Administrative Procedure - Protocol for Responding to Students with Social, Emotional, or Mental Health Problems

Student Support Committee

Each Building Principal shall annually appoint a building-level Student Support Committee that shall have the tasks described in this Administrative Procedure. Committee members must be school staff members who are qualified by professional licensing or experience to address issues concerning students who may have social, emotional, or mental health problems. As needed on a case-by-case basis, the Student Support Committee may request the involvement of the Building Principal, relevant teachers, and the parents/guardians. Records produced and shared among Committee members may be subject to laws governing student records. Confidential information given by a student to a therapist is governed by the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Confidentiality Act, 740 ILCS 110/.

Children's Mental Health Partnership's Plan and Annual Progress Reports

The Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership (ICMHP) monitors the implementation of its statewide Children's Mental Health Plan (CMH Plan). The CMH Plan is a statewide strategic blueprint or "roadmap" to promote and improve the children's mental health system and covers a range of recommendations and strategies necessary to reforming the children's mental health system in Illinois. Every year, the ICMHP must submit an annual progress report to the Governor for approval. The Student Support Committee will monitor the annual CMH Plan (available at www.ivpa.org/childrensmhtf/) and decide how to implement its recommendations and strategies as appropriate within the resources available in the District.

Referrals

Staff members should refer a student suspected of having social, emotional, or mental health problems to the building-level Student Support Committee. The Student Support Committee will review information about a referred student, including prior interventions, and suggest appropriate steps for referral and follow-up. The Student Support Committee may offer strategies to a referred student's classroom teachers and parents/guardians about ways they can manage, address, and/or enhance the student's social and emotional development and mental health. In addition, the Student Support Committee may recommend coordinated educational, social work, school counseling, and/or student assistance services within the school as well as referrals to outside agencies.

Referrals under this procedure are unrelated to the special education evaluation process and do not trigger the District's timeline for evaluations. However, the use of these procedures shall not circumvent the special education process. See Administrative Procedure 6:120-AP, *Special Education Procedures Assuring the Implementation of Comprehensive Programming for Children with Disabilities*.

School Counseling, Social Work, and Psychological Services

The Student Support Committee may request school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and school nurses to provide support and consultation to teachers and school staff about strategies to promote the social and emotional development and mental health of all students. They may also be requested to provide screening and early detection approaches to identify students with social, emotional, and mental health problems.

Written permission from the parent/guardian is required for any on-going social work and psychological services. "On-going" is defined as more than 5 contacts in which the student received these services. Written consent may be obtained through an IEP or other designated form. That consent does not entitle parents/guardians to know the contents of all that is discussed. School counselors, social workers, and psychologists will inform parents/guardians of all issues that pose a health and/or safety risk; they will inform the Building Principal of any health or safety risks that are present in the school.

Psycho-Educational Groups

As appropriate, the Student Support Committee may recommend that a student participate in a variety of psycho-educational groups. These groups are typically led by school counselors, social workers, or psychologists, but are not structured as therapeutic services. Groups are designed to help students better understand issues and develop strategies to manage issues of concern to them that may, if not addressed, interfere significantly with the students' educational progress or school adjustment. Groups have a written curriculum that guides discussion over a set period of time, generally 5 weeks. A student may participate in a group without parent/guardian permission for one such time period; subsequent enrollment in the same group requires parent/guardian permission.

Students in a group who present significant concern and for whom therapeutic services must be considered will be referred to the social workers, psychologists, or school counselors for individual consultation. (See above description of these services.)

School and Community Linkages

When possible, the Student Support Committee shall seek to establish linkages and partnerships with diverse community organizations with the goal of providing a coordinated, collaborative early intervention social and emotional development and mental health support system for students that is integrated with community mental health agencies and organizations and other child-serving agencies and systems.

LEGAL REF.: Children's Mental Health Act of 2003, 405 ILCS 49/.