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SECTION 700 – Educational Program

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE: GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES

PROCEDURE CODE:	*712 AP 001*
Policy Reference: 712 – Counselling Services	

BACKGROUND

Guidance and counselling services are available to students as an integral part of a continuum of supports and services. Counsellors work collectively with students, parents/guardians and the school learning team to support the educational, personal, social and career needs of students.

DEFINITIONS

Guidance is a process that is both individual and group oriented. It includes self-awareness, identification and development of positive relations supportive of goal achievement, educational and career planning, making decisions, setting goals and problem solving. In schools in this province, these topics are also included in Health and Career and Life Management curricula.

Counselling assists individuals with personal, social, educational or career goals. Counselling activities may involve the expertise of a School Counsellor or Family School Liaison Worker with specialized skills to address concerns that impact student learning. For longer term or more in-depth counselling, students may be referred to outside agencies.

PROCEDURES

1. Guidance and counselling services are a joint responsibility involving all staff, and are provided by schools to address identified needs through the following service areas:

   1.1. Educational/Career – services may include:

      1.1.1. Assist student program planning and course selection
      1.1.2. Providing post-secondary information
      1.1.3. Providing programming support to all students
      1.1.4. Providing information about career possibilities and work trends

1.1.5. Creating structures that support opportunities for students to connect educational and career plans to abilities, achievements, interests, values, attitudes and goals

1.1.6. Developing student job search skills and strength-based resume development

1.1.7. Providing students with information regarding scholarships

1.1.8. Providing supports with transitions from school to school, school to work, or school to additional education and training

1.1.9. Bridging staff, student and community relations that contribute to the larger societal context

1.2. Personal/Social Emotional – services may include:

1.2.1. Providing students with services which help develop solution focused problem-solving skills

1.2.2. Assisting students to develop coping, advocacy, and resiliency skills for managing a variety of life situations

1.2.3. Implementing structures, strategies and supports that contribute to a safe and caring and environment for all students

1.2.4. Referring students to appropriate personal/social service agencies

2. A continuum of supports is provided in guidance and counselling services:

2.1 Preventative Services (Universal Supports) – consist of proactive activities that help all students plan, monitor and manage their own learning to help ensure success in their personal and career development.

2.2 Developmental Guidance (Universal Supports) – instruction consists of structured developmental experiences presented systematically through classroom and group activities.

2.3 Responsive Services (Targeted and Individualized Supports) – consist of activities to meet the immediate needs and concerns of students via counselling, consultation, referral or information.

2.4 School-Community Services – include contributing to the larger societal context and developing school-community partnerships.

Both the preventative and developmental approaches attempt to prepare individuals for a variety of life situations by sharing information and discussing issues. Responsive services are intended to help students cope effectively with a situation or a series of difficulties.

3. Responsibility for Guidance and Counselling

Successful provision of guidance and counselling services is based on a team approach. The individual student and all those providing support should be involved in the process. Roles of those commonly involved in a student's support network are outlined below.

3.1 Teachers

Teachers work with individual students on a daily basis. This relationship makes them key members of the guidance and counselling team. Teachers are sensitive to the developmental needs of students and can accommodate them by:

3.1.1 Listening and responding to student concerns and identified needs

3.1.2 Encouraging advocacy and communication skills

3.1.3 Adapting teaching methods/instruction to different learning styles and needs

3.1.4 Consulting with parents and the school-based counselling team as well as other related professionals or natural supporters to reach a mutual understanding of individual student behaviour and needs

3.1.5 Referring students to counselling services as required

3.1.6 Supporting students in conversations about career plans and learning goals

3.2 The Administrative Team

The Administrative Team is responsible for:

3.2.1 Organizing and coordinating school guidance and counselling services

3.2.2 Assisting in establishing long and short-term goals for school programs and individual students through programming plans

3.2.3 Helping to monitor and evaluate services provided by the counselling team as appropriate

3.2.4 Allocating resources to satisfy Guidance and Counselling program standards through the *Standards of Practice for Comprehensive School Guidance and Counselling Program and Services as developed by Alberta Education (January, 1997)* and through a consultative staffing process each year.

3.3 School Counsellors

School Counsellors are members of the school-based counselling team. They are primarily responsible for providing educational and career guidance and counselling that contribute to a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours. This is accomplished through the provision of universal and targeted approaches and supports that are personal and social in nature.

3.3.1 School Counsellors can be consulted for support, information, prevention and universal services.

3.3.2 In grades 10 to 12 schools, School Counsellors also serve as resource persons or consultants to staff, parents and the community.

3.3.3 School Counsellors provide educational and career guidance and counselling. Where a school is using the model with a guidance counsellor, the ratio for students-to-counsellor is reasonable in order for the professional school counsellor to provide a central role in the development,

implementation, coordination, and evaluation of the comprehensive school guidance and counselling program are achieved.

3.3.4 School Counsellors contribute and provide leadership to the school team by ensuring the provision of universal and targeted approaches and supports to support the social-emotional well-being of students.

3.4 Family School Liaison Workers

Family School Liaison Workers are members of the school-based counselling team and provide universal and targeted supports as well as confidential individual and family support of a personal/social nature through a variety of means such as counselling, referrals and coordinating service delivery.

3.4.1 The Family School Liaison Worker can be consulted for support, information, prevention and/or early intervention.

3.4.2 The Family School Liaison Worker assumes an integral role on the school-based Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) team in the provision of assessment and responsive services related to critical incident stress.

3.4.3 The Family School Liaison Worker holds caseloads and provides individualized short term therapeutic intervention for students.

3.4.4 The Family School Liaison Worker bridges students and families requiring individualized supports to the appropriate outside agencies and supports.

3.5 Classroom Support Teachers

Classroom Support Teachers are members of the school-based team and play an important coordinating role as part of the school team.

3.5.1 Classroom Support Teachers work with the school counselling team and administrators to ensure a continuum of supports and services that result in improved student outcomes.

3.6 Success Coaches

Success Coaches are members of the school-based team and assist in the design and implementation of individual, group and school programs that focus on personal and social growth and behavioural change. These professionals assume a role as a school-based team member primarily in the provision of preventative and developmental services through activities such as mentoring, supported problem solving, and intentional development of positive relationships.

3.7 Parents / Guardians

Parents can assist in the guidance and counselling of their children by becoming involved in and supporting school efforts, as well as by establishing open lines of communication with their children and the school. Parents can also:

3.7.1 Serve as role models in educational and career areas

3.7.2 Act as guest speakers during school career days

3.7.3 Provide feedback on the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling services in the local school

3.8 Community Partnering Agencies

School Counsellors consult with and refer clients to a variety of social agencies within the community. These agencies may be accessed when longer term or more intensive counselling services are required. Referrals or connections may be made to service clubs, recreational organizations, and other community groups who can provide direct services. These team members:

3.8.1 Provide school resources

3.8.2 Serve as mentors

3.8.3 Provide locations for work experience programs

3.9 The Student

Children begin to seek independence at a very early age. The level of independence they acquire is in direct proportion to the level of responsibility they accept. Guidance and counselling services provided in the school, home and community help students assume increasing responsibilities for educational, personal or social, and career outcomes. The ultimate aim of all of these services is to develop in each student a sense of purpose in life, self-advocacy and the capability to achieve individual goals.

4. Counsellor Qualifications

School Counsellors must be certified to teach in Alberta. The preferred level of training is a master's degree in a counselling psychology or a related discipline. School Counsellors should be trained in:

- Suicide Prevention
- Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA)

These qualifications will need to be maintained while acting in a counselling position thus requiring recertification every 2-3 years.

5. Confidentiality

School Counsellors and other school personnel providing guidance and counselling services are to respect the confidentiality of information received in accordance with professional ethics and the law.

REFERENCES

Comprehensive School Guidance and Counselling Programs and Services

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