

## Students

### **Administrative Procedure - Protocol for Responding to Students with Social, Emotional, or Mental Health Needs**<sup>1</sup>

#### 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 needs. 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) develops and updates 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. By Dec. 30 of each year, the ICMHP must submit an annual progress report to the Governor for approval. The Student Support Committee will monitor the annual ICMHP progress report and the CMH Plan, both available at: <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/life-stages-populations/maternal-child-family-health-services/child-health/icmhp.html>. After reviewing both documents, the Student Support Committee will 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 needs 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, student assistance services, and/or a case study evaluation, 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-AP1, *Special Education Procedures Assuring the Implementation of Comprehensive Programming for Children with Disabilities*.

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<sup>1</sup> The Children's Mental Health Act, 405 ILCS 49/, requires districts to have a protocol for responding to children with social, emotional, or mental health needs, or a combination of such needs, that impact learning ability. The complexity and scope of such a protocol will vary from district to district. At minimum, the superintendent should consider including the first three sections of this sample procedure.

The Children's Mental Health Act also requires every district to have a policy for incorporating social and emotional development into the district's educational program. See sample policy 6:65, *Student Social and Emotional Development*.

## School Counseling, School Social Work, School Psychological, and School Nursing Services <sup>2</sup>

The Student Support Committee may request school counselors, school social workers, school 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 needs.

School counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and school nurses 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 <sup>3</sup>

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 five 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.)

## Erin's Law Counseling Options, Assistance, and Intervention <sup>4</sup>

The Student Support Committee shall identify District and community-based counseling options for students who are affected by sexual abuse and grooming behaviors, along with options for victims of sexual abuse to obtain assistance and intervention. Community-based options must include a Children's Advocacy Center<sup>5</sup> and sexual assault crisis center(s) that serve the District, if any.

## Article 26A Domestic or Sexual Violence and Parenting Resource Personnel <sup>6</sup>

The Student Support Committee shall assist the designated resource person (Article 26A Resource Person) for students who are parents, expectant parents, or victims of domestic or sexual violence (Article 26A Students) to identify in-school and non-school-based support service options for such students. Every two years, the Student Support Committee shall assist the Superintendent or designee, Building Principal, and Article 26A Resource Person to review all Board policies and procedures that may act as barriers to the enrollment and re-enrollment, attendance, graduation, and success in school of any Article 26A Student and to recommend any necessary updates. See administrative procedure 7:255-AP1, *Supporting Students Who are Parents, Expectant Parents, or Victims of Domestic or Sexual Violence*.

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<sup>2</sup> See sample policy 7:250, *Student Support Services*, at f/ns 4-7, for information about the roles and licensure of school support personnel, including school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and school nurses.

<sup>3</sup> Omit this section if the school does not have a psycho-educational program in place.

<sup>4</sup> Required by *Erin's Law*, 105 ILCS 5/10-23.13(b)(2), (3), and (5).

<sup>5</sup> To identify a Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) that may serve the district, see [www.childrensadvocacycentersofillinois.org/about/map](http://www.childrensadvocacycentersofillinois.org/about/map). For more information on CACs, see sample policy 5:90, *Abused and Neglected Child Reporting*, and sample administrative procedure 5:90-AP1, *Coordination with Children's Advocacy Center*.

<sup>6</sup> Required by 105 ILCS 5/26A-35, added by P.A. 102-466, a/k/a *ESS Law*, eff. 7-1-25. See sample policy 7:255, *Students Who are Parents, Expectant Parents, or Victims of Domestic or Sexual Violence*, and sample administrative procedure 7:255-AP1, *Supporting Students Who are Parents, Expectant Parents, or Victims of Domestic or Sexual Violence*.

### 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.: 105 ILCS 5/10-23.13 and 5/26A.  
405 ILCS 49/, Children's Mental Health Act.

Approved: