

Section 4

Responsive Services Policies & Protocols

The Importance of Policies and Protocols

A policy is a “principle or course of action chosen to guide decision making.” (Webster) A protocol is a sequence of activities taken to successfully complete a task. Counselors should always abide by their individual district and/or school policies and protocols, however, the policies and protocols in this section can provide guidance as needed. They allow for principled activity by professional school counselors as they interact with students and identify who is responsible for doing what in order to help all students succeed.

Organization of Policies & Protocols Section

The policies and protocols section is organized topically. The sequence of topics is reflected in the Section Table of Contents on the previous page. Each topic is divided into three sections:

Policy: State and Federal laws as applicable.

Discussion: related information to help you understand the topic.

Protocols: suggestions of how to complete critical activities. The protocol identifies responsibilities and activities.

Contents of Section 4

- Responsive Services Checklist
- Referral for Psychiatric or Behavioral Evaluation
- 504 Accommodation Plans
- Attendance
- Child Abuse/Neglect
- Confidentiality
- Crisis Intervention
- Discipline
- Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco
- Suicide Intervention & Prevention
- Response to School Crisis

Responsive Services Checklist

It is the counselor's responsibility to be familiar with community and district resources, policies, procedures, and crisis plans. This checklist provides a framework from which to work.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child abuse reporting
<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual harassment
<input type="checkbox"/> Drug/alcohol intervention procedure
<input type="checkbox"/> Response to death of student/staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Crisis response plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Suicide threat reporting
<input type="checkbox"/> Homicidal threat reporting
<input type="checkbox"/> Attendance interventions
<input type="checkbox"/> Functional behavioral assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual assault & violent crime |
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Community Resources*

Counselors are encouraged to add resources relative to the particular community, and to have current phone numbers easily available and kept by the phone.

Suicide	Phone: _____
Substance Abuse	Phone: _____
Office of Children's Services	Phone: _____
Mental health counselor	Phone: _____
Mental health counselor:	Phone: _____
Public health	Phone: _____
Emergency health care	Phone: _____
Safe home/shelter for children	Phone: _____
Local law enforcement	Phone: _____
State trooper	Phone: _____

* Refer to *Referrals for Psychiatric or Behavioral Evaluations*

Referrals for Psychiatric or Behavioral Evaluations or Treatment

Policy

Alaska law (14.30.171 -179.)

To read complete text, visit

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill_text.asp?hsid=SB0048A&session=24

Discussion

Alaska law (14.30.171 -179.) prohibits public schools from requiring students to take psychotropic drugs or have a psychiatric or behavioral evaluation as a condition of attendance. It also continues to state that “mental health professionals” within a school may suggest but not require a student obtain psychiatric or behavioral evaluations or treatment. It also provides verbiage for use on a school-supplied list of community resources. Many school districts in Alaska have interpreted this to mean that only school counselors or psychologists may suggest referral resources to parents. Depending upon the composition and size of a school population this requirement could impact the school counselor’s activities.

Responsibility	Activity
Counselor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="553 1205 1398 1268">1. Determine if school district has a Community Resource List. If not, find out if one can be developed.<li data-bbox="553 1278 1317 1341">2. Ensure that Community Resource List contains the following verbiage, as per AS14.30.176:<li data-bbox="553 1352 1398 1514">3. "This list is provided as a resource to you. The school neither recommends nor requires that you use this list or any of the services provided by individuals or entities on the list. It is for you to decide what services, if any, to use and from whom you wish to obtain them."

504 Accommodation Plans

Policy

Consult specific school district policy related to this topic.

Section 504 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Section 504 ensures that the child with a disability has equal access to an education. The child may receive accommodations and modifications.

Unlike the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#), Section 504 does not require the school to provide an individualized educational program (IEP) that is designed to meet the child's unique needs and provides the child with educational benefit. Under Section 504, fewer procedural safeguards are available to children with disabilities and their parents than under IDEA.

Discussion

This process is to be utilized when an employee, parent, or external service provider suspects that a student may qualify for accommodations/modifications in his/her general education program under the guidelines of Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The Principal may act as or designate a 504 Coordinator. If so designated, the Coordinator/Counselor's responsibility includes working with principals and teachers in the building to develop 504 plans. The Principal would have the ultimate responsibility for approving accommodations.

For more discussion points, see the ASCA Position Statement on Special Needs Students at: <http://schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=218>

Suggested Protocols

The following protocol may be appropriate for the referral and development of a 504 Student Accommodation Plans.

504 Accommodation Plans

Responsibility	Activity
School 504 Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain copies of all 504-related forms - Draft <i>504 Accommodation Plan</i>. - All evaluations and information leading to the suspicion that a disability exists must be attached to the form. - Schedule a 504 meeting or follows recommended actions. - Depending upon district policy, meeting participants may include a school administrator and at least one of the student's general education teachers. - Other knowledgeable persons may include school counselors, other teachers, school nurses and the student's parent(s). - In the event a parent does not choose to participate, the meeting may continue. - Invite parent/guardian to attend meeting.
School 504 Coordinator School 504 Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate the 504 meeting which consists of: - Review and discuss relevant data - Determine eligibility <li style="padding-left: 20px;">To determine eligibility, the 504 team must: - Describe the nature of the concern - Describe the basis for the determination of a disability by analyzing evaluations, data and testimony - Describe how the disability affects a major life activity - List necessary accommodations. - Obtain signatures of meeting participants on 504 form.
School 504 Coordinator	<p>For eligible students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has the 504 Plan typed and attaches a copy of the signature page. - File the original plan. <p>For ineligible students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inform the parent of the appeal process
School 504 Coordinator or Designee	<p>Make copies of the plan, and distributes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent - Each professional in the school that provides services and instruction to the student. - 504 File in school.
School 504 Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor the implementation of the 504 Student Accommodation Plan and report any difficulties or resistance administrator.
School 504 Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inform administrator of annual review dates and progress report dates - For more information about 504 Plans, visit www.wrightslaw.com/info/sec504.index.htm

Attendance

Policy

Consult specific school district policy related to this topic.

"Unless excepted by law, every child between seven and 16 years of age shall attend school at the public school in the district in which the child resides during each school term. Every parent, guardian, or other person having responsibility for or control of a child between 6 and 16 years of age shall insure that the child is not absent from attendance." (AS 14.30.010. AS = Alaska Statute).

Discussion

A student's academic success depends on consistent school attendance. School counselors are an integral part of student success, including assisting with attendance and dropout prevention. Each district or school may have protocols to document student absences and parental notification of absences.

Child Abuse/Neglect

Policy

Consult specific school district policy related to this topic.

Alaska State Law (AS 47.17.020) defines those required to report to Office of Children Services as: practitioners of the healing arts, school teachers, administrators and staff members of both public and private schools, social workers, peace officers and officers of the Department of Corrections, Administrative officers of institutions, child care providers, paid employees of domestic violence and sexual assault programs. Crisis intervention and suicide prevention programs, paid employees of organizations providing alcohol treatment, child fatality review teams, multi-disciplinary team members.

Discussion

It is the responsibility of each school to ensure that district protocols are in place. The following protocol may be appropriate for the reporting child abuse in your school or district. For more discussion points, see the ASCA Position Statement on Child Abuse/Neglect Prevention at <http://schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=194>

Responsibility	Activity
School Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any person who suspects abuse or neglect of a child is obligated by state law to make a verbal report to Office of Children’s Services (OCS). The reporter should be the person who first noted the abuse/neglect or to whom the child has disclosed the abuse/neglect. If they are not the designated reporter, the counselor can provide guidance/assistance to the person making the report, as needed. - It is essential that the reporter provide as many details as possible, including the child’s name, DOB, address, telephone number, mother’s name, abuse/neglect allegations, date(s) of incident, child’s condition, etc. Suspected abuse/neglect should be reported as soon as noted, as failure to do so may result in further harm to the child/and/or fine to the employee. It is important that school personnel unskilled in interviewing a child, should not take it upon themselves to interview the child. Doing so may result in hurting the case and could result in liability issues for the school and/or personnel.
OCS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not all calls to the OCS will result in an investigation. OCS will determine the level of need, and chose a response they deem appropriate. If the report does not result in an investigation, and school personnel believe the child is still in danger, a new report must be made. Parents are not to be notified, unless OCS approves the notification. School personnel are mandated reporters, not investigators. Reports may be made on suspicions or physical evidence.
OCS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If OCS determines that a report warrants an investigation, OCS will dispatch a Child Protective Investigator to meet with the child. The seriousness of the case dictates the time frame in which an investigation will take place. For more information about reporting Child Abuse, visit www.hss.state.ak.us/OCS/Publications/ReportingChildAbuse.pdf

Confidentiality

Policy

Consult specific school district policy related to this topic.

The Family Education and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's educational records. The law applies to all schools which receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. School counselors should be knowledgeable about this law. For more information visit www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa

Discussion

It is essential that counselors protect students' right to confidentiality both in counseling sessions and in maintaining their educational records. Permanent Record Folders are kept in locked file cabinets.

Confidentiality issues for school counselors are covered in the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors. Located in the Appendix 1 and at <http://www.schoolcounselor.org>

For more discussion points, see the ASCA Position Statement on Confidentiality at: <http://schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=198>

Protocols

Responsibility	Activity
Administrator, Counselor or Designee	- Maintains Permanent Records according to administrative directives. Teachers may review their students' folder but may not remove them from the office where files are kept. Parents may view folders. Relatives other than parents may not view folders unless they present evidence of guardianship.
Counselor	- Uses discretion when discussing students and their families with faculty and staff. Counselors are privy to information that should not be public knowledge. When outside agencies or institutions request information about students, considers the FERPA law. For example, providing a list of student names who fit a particular criteria (>1000 score on SAT) is in conflict with FERPA.

Crisis Intervention

Policy

Consult specific school district policy related to this topic.

Alaska state law (AS 14.33) requires that each school district develop and update a crisis response plan to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. In addition, each district is responsible for training all school personnel on the crisis response plan. For more information visit <http://www.securitymanagement.com/library/SB125.html>

Discussion

Every school has a Crisis Team as defined by the district's Administrator. Policies and protocols related to crisis intervention are contained in the school's Crisis Response Manual. The purpose of this team is to respond to critical events which effect the safety and well being of students and staff. Examples include, natural disasters, bomb threats, armed intruder, terrorist activities.

Administrators are responsible each year for updating information, convening a crisis team, and training staff.

The school counselor is often an active member of crisis intervention at the school level, assisting the principal in the implementation of the appropriate response to a given incident.

Protocol

Responsibility	Activity
Counselor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Serves as a proactive member of the school's Crisis Intervention Team.- Participates in professional development on crisis management issues, when offered.- Collaborates with all support staff on crisis issues.

Discipline

Policy

Consult specific school district policy related to this topic.

Discussion

Counselors are advocates for students. They are not disciplinarians. Counselors are not involved in the suspension process. They may be involved in scheduling home instruction and/or gathering assignments from teachers as well as behavioral contracts or referrals to outside agencies or other school district programs.

No information regarding suspensions should be placed in the Permanent Record Folder.

School districts develop a plan of referrals for disciplinary action linked with appropriate consequences related to the offense.

For more discussion points see the ASCA Position Statement on Discipline at <http://schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=203>

Protocols

Responsibility	Activity
Counselor	- Provides students who have behavior problems in the school with individual or group counseling to prevent them from becoming discipline problems.

Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco

Policy

Consult specific school district policy related to this topic.

Discussion

Policies and protocols relating to illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco use are contained in the school district's board policy manual.

Students, on the school grounds, who are identified as under the influence of drugs, alcohol or tobacco should be referred to the building administrator for disciplinary actions.

For more discussion points see the ASCA Position Statement on Students at Risk at <http://schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=258>

Protocols

Responsibility	Activity
Counselor	- Counsels students regarding alcohol and drug abuse. - Provides students with information on drug, alcohol and tobacco addiction.

Responding to School Crisis

Policy

Consult specific school district policy related to this topic.

Discussion

The death of a student, staff member, or community member can devastate the school community. Although each situation is unique and the grieving process must play out, an established protocol of how to handle details can ease the burden of the school staff. Try and keep routines as normal as possible. Students gain security from the predictability of routine, including attending school. Be honest with students and share with them as much information as they are developmentally able to handle.

For more discussion points, see the ASCA Position Statement on Critical Incident Response in the Schools at <http://schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=202>

Procedures

Responsibility	Activity
Administrator	- Upon notification of death of student, staff, or other key person, Administrator contacts law enforcement or other appropriate agency to verify situation and obtain police report.
Crisis Response Team (CRT)	- Crisis Response Team (CRT), usually consisting of Administrators, Counselors, and nurse meet to make specific plan for situation.
CRT	- If necessary, counselor contacts mental health agency and other schools to send outside counselors as needed. Depending on incident, substitute teachers may be needed to cover the classrooms of affected staff members. It is especially valuable to have parent volunteers visible in the halls.
CRT	- Emergency phone tree should be activated to contact all staff members of situation.
Administrator	- Administrator writes announcement, based on official police report, to be read in each classroom. CRT member or other familiar staff should read announcement in classrooms where there are substitute teachers present.
Counselor CRT	- Rooms and areas should be designated for use by students who are unable to be in regular classrooms. It is best to separate students who are truly impacted by the incident from those who are reacting to the emotions of the situation. Areas should be stocked with extra tissue and supplies to make posters and cards.

Responding to School Crisis

Responsibility	Activity
Administrator	- Staff meeting should be held before school to brief staff on situation, detail procedures for dealing with students, and assess emotions of staff. Substitute teachers should attend and be ready to be placed in classrooms as needed. Staff should be reminded to confine general classroom discussion to know facts, as presented in announcement. Speculation and dwelling on gruesome details must be avoided/
CRT Counselor	- As school begins, students who are unable to get to class should be escorted to designated area/s.
Teachers Support Staff Volunteers	- Teachers should send or have escorted students who are upset to designated areas. Classes should continue as planned, allowing for discussion as needed.
CRT Support Staff Volunteers	- CRT members, parent volunteers, outside counselors should "patrol" corridors to make sure that all affected students are identified and receive attention as needed.
Counselors Agency Counselors	- Efforts should be made to "triage" students in the designated areas. Some students need to be seen to assess for possible suicidal ideation or other critical reactions. Other students need to be with friends to process event and begin to cope. Still other students need to be heard and urged to return to class as soon as possible.
Counselors Parents	- Students who are not able to control of emotions or are reacting in disturbing manner, need to be picked up by parents. Parents need to be given information about counseling options, including Emergency Room.
Counselors CRT	- Parents should be contacted if student has strong reaction and is visibly upset, even if they calm down as the day progresses.
Counselors CRT	- Records should be kept of the names of students seen by all counselors, so that follow-up contact can be made in future weeks.
Administrator	- Letter from Administration, detailing incident and counseling options should be sent home with all students at the end of the day.
School Staff Parents	- As much as possible, business should continue as usual. Students need to know that life continues, even when the unimaginable happens.
Counselors	- To eliminate inappropriate messages, notes and cards written by students to be presented by the school should be read before they are given to the bereaved family. Students may be given opportunity to re-write message.
School Staff Parents	- In days following incident, disruptions to regular schedule should be kept to the minimum. Students who continue to struggle and are unable to function may need to be assessed by professional counselor.

Suicide Intervention and Prevention

Policy

Consult specific school district policy related to this topic.

Discussion

Suicide is a very complex issue. Just as there are many reasons why someone may consider or complete suicide, there are many possible strategies to prevent suicide. Below are listed two online resources with strategies and information regarding suicide intervention and prevention.

<http://health.hss.state.ak.us/suicideprevention/Resources/TrainingCurricula.htm>

<http://suicidehotlines.com/alaska.html>

Procedures

Responsibility	Activity
Counselor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- If the student seems to be in crisis, make sure s/he is safe and immediately contact parent and/or other mental health professional for assistance.- Other than a crisis situation: Do not presume to diagnose a student. Collaborate with other member(s) of support staff if unsure whether a student may need help with a mental health issue.- Discuss observations and concerns with parent and suggest that parent pursue evaluation at a mental health agency.- Provide parent with the name and contact numbers for several local agencies. If parent needs help with contacting the agency it is advisable that the counselor make the appointment while the parent is present.- Follow up with student regardless of outside agency involvement.