



Guidelines For Referral For School Psychological Consultation

Teachers and parents are often uncertain as to how to access psychological services within the school system. The following process is suggested to facilitate referrals for school psychological services, and to ensure that the most appropriate service is provided to those requesting the assistance of the school psychologist. It should be noted that there are two levels of referral possible, for consultation and for student-centered services; however, the entry point to any service provided by school psychologists is the referral for consultation. Thereafter, the decision regarding the most appropriate service to be provided rests with the psychologist.

School psychologists are guided by professional ethics and utilize only research-based interventions in the services they provide to schools. Although the specific service offered will be determined by the need, as assessed by the psychologist, the following two principles will be adhered to in all school psychological involvements.

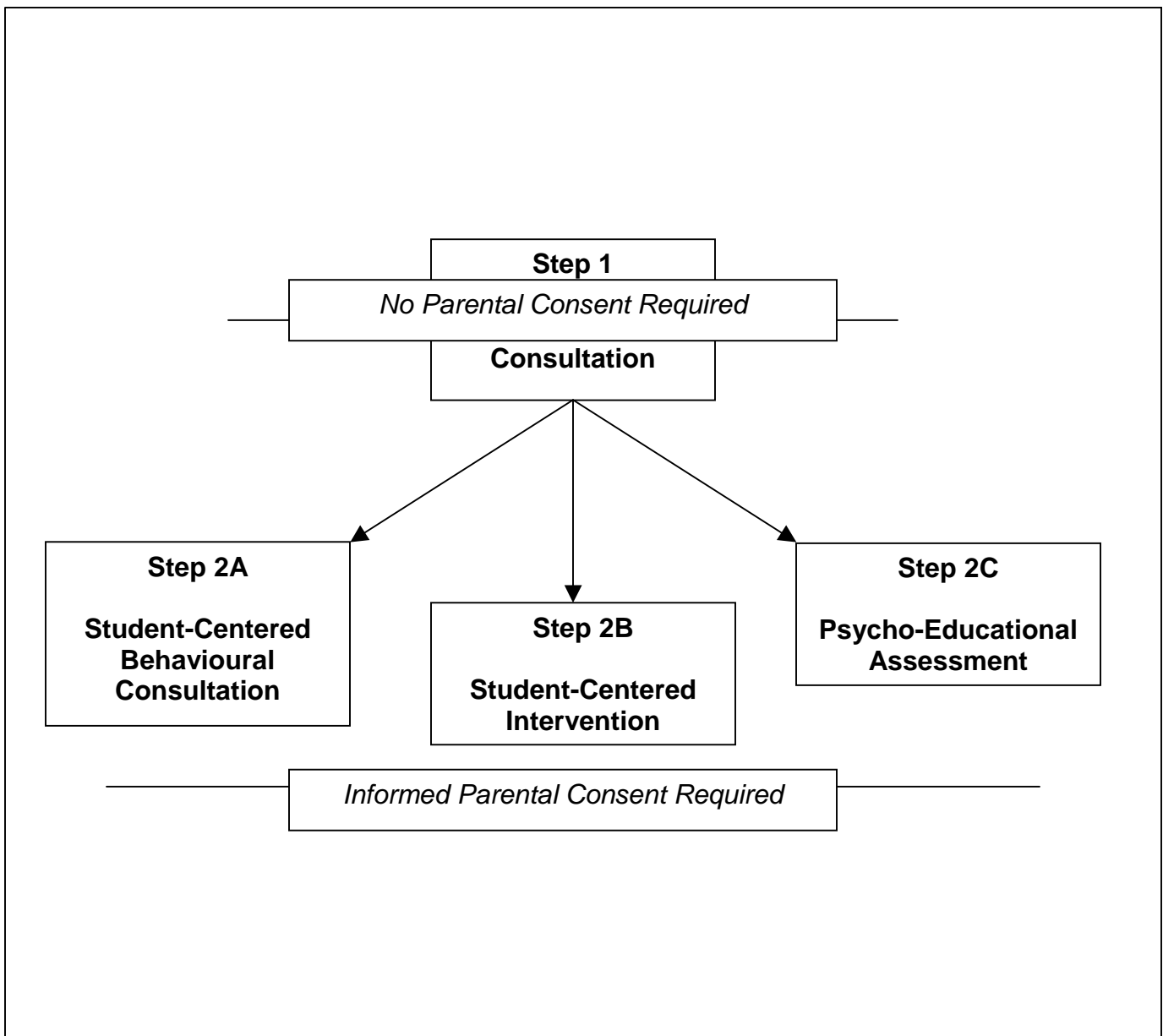
*** Documentation**

In the course of working with schools and other professionals and parents, school psychologists will likely be engaged informally in telephone or face-to-face conversations about a student. It is important to remember that all contacts will be documented in writing and filed for future reference.

*** Informed Parental Consent**

Beyond Step 1, good professional practice requires that school psychologists obtain "informed parental consent" for any activities undertaken by the psychologist. Informed consent details the specific types of interventions planned to be carried out, to whom and how it is intended that information will be communicated, and to what use the data will be put. (See attached recommended model format for informed consent.)

Recommended Referral Model for School Psychological Services



Step 1:

Guidelines for Referral Procedures:

Teacher- Centered Instructional Consultation

Teachers have a right and a responsibility to consult with professionals in the system to help provide the best learning environment for all students in the classroom. Entry to the consultation process may be the school-based team or a case conference. School psychologists serve the total school system. As such, they provide consultation services to school-based teams, and upon request of the school-based team, to individual teachers, para-professionals or school staffs who are experiencing difficulty. All interventions undertaken as a result of a request for consultation must be documented. No parental consent is required at this point; however, it is always advisable to involve parents as early as possible in the problem-solving process. In Step 1, the psychologist is serving in the role as resource person to the school teams.

The purpose of this level of school psychology consultation is to help the teacher with behaviour management of the class and/or individual students. This level of consultation **does not involve** making any kind of diagnosis as to what type of behavioural, emotional or developmental disorder the child might have but looks only at observable behaviour. The psychologist may assist or advise the teacher/team with methods of observing students or in using teacher-made tools which lead to a better understanding of behaviour and how to manage it in the classroom. Supportive services that can be accessed through the instructional consultation process include:

- Classroom observations
 - Teacher and para-professional coaching
 - Staff in-service education
 - Facilitation of functional behavioural assessments
 - Feedback and discussion with the teacher and the school-based team and others (eg, parents) as required
- If the consultation is group or school-related, a report of actions taken should be filed within the school Student Services file(s) (ie, school-team minutes).
 - If the report is student-specific, a report should be filed in the Student Services file under the child's name (ie, case conference notes).

NOTE: See sample Referral for Consultation form at the end of Guidelines.

Step 2:

Guidelines for Referral Procedures:

Student-Centered Consultation

- Consent – **Informed** parental consent is required for any psychological assessment or direct intervention such as counselling. All consultations at this level require **informed parental consent**.
- Referral procedures – may differ by district, depending on resources and regional practice, but referrals:
 - **Must** follow a consultation with the school psychologist, either directly, or at a school-based team meeting or case conference
 - **Do require a written referral**
- Intervention type - The decision to do a psychological assessment (behaviour or learning) or to engage in direct intervention (counselling) **rests with the school psychologist**.
- Reporting procedures – Schools have a right to the psychological assessment report. Parents have a right to the psychological assessment report. Initial sharing and interpretation of the report should be in the presence of the school psychologist.
 - Psychological assessment reports should be housed in the resource file at the school and in the Student Services file at District office, with a notation on the cumulative record indicating that such a report exists.
 - Reports should contain a preamble which explains that **the results of the assessment are valid for a period of two years** and after that timeframe should be viewed only as historical information.
 - District office copies of psychological assessment reports should be kept in perpetuity.

Step 2 - A:

***** Note: A report will be written by the psychologist for any student-centered consultation, intervention, or assessment.**

Guidelines for Referral Procedures:

Student-centered Behavioural Consultation

In the process of the Teacher-centered Instructional Consultation, the school psychologist may determine that the focus of the intervention needs to be on an individual student. The purpose of this level of school psychology consultation is to look at an individual student's behaviour in depth in order to formulate a more specific/individualized program for that child in the classroom. Within this process, the psychologist may determine a diagnostic hypothesis as to what type of behavioural, emotional or developmental disorder appears to explain the behaviour, and, as a result, may advise and/or facilitate support from community groups (such as parenting courses or local associations dedicated to assisting parents with the special needs of their child) **or** assist with a referral to an appropriate community agency (such as Mental Health, Family and Community Services, Physicians, Psychiatrists, etc). Activities the psychologist may choose to complete at this level might include participation in or coordination of:

- Behavioural observations
- Functional behavioural assessments
- Clinical interviews
- Behavioural checklists
- File review
- Self-report checklists
- Projective Testing

Note: If at any point, parental permission for intervention is rescinded, the psychologist will engage only in school-based consultation (Step 1).

Step 2 - B:

Guidelines For Referral Procedures:

Student-centered Intervention

In addition to assessment and planning for a student, there may be individual interventions required to aid his or her performance in school. Among these interventions might be:

- Individual counselling
 - Group counselling
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Step 2 - C:

Guidelines For Referral Procedures:

Psycho-Educational Assessment

The psychologist may determine that more information is needed to better understand and plan for student learning. In this case, the psychologist decides to complete a psycho-educational assessment, which may include:

- Assessment of intelligence, development, perceptual processing, academic skill mastery, learning strengths and weaknesses

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Sample Referral for Consultation**
- **Model Informed Parental Consent**

**Referral for Consultation
School Psychological Services**

School: _____

Date: _____

**Reason for
Referral:** _____

Other Services Involved: (currently or in the past – please indicate when):

Actions Taken by the School to Date: _____

Referring Teacher _____

Principal _____

SCHOOL DISTRICT _____

SCHOOL: _____

DATE: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The attached form (Parent/Guardian Consent) is being sent to you to obtain permission for your child to receive consultative, intervention or assessment services from School Psychological Services. The areas checked below indicate the specific services being requested. Through information received in consultation with your child's school, it is felt that these interventions would be helpful in planning an appropriate educational program for your child. The specific reason the school is requesting this support service is stated below:

Student-Centered Behavioural Consultation:

- May include behavioural observation, behaviour checklists, functional behaviour assessments, clinical interviews, file review, self-report checklists, projective testing

Student-Centered Intervention:

- Individual counselling focusing on _____
- Group counselling focusing on _____
- Other _____

Psycho-Educational Assessment:

- Psycho-educational assessment of intelligence, development, perceptual processing, learning strengths and weaknesses.

As a parent you have the right to be informed of the results of any psychological assessment, consultation or intervention. Parents have a right to receive copies of any psychological reports. Following any student centered consultation or assessment, you will be invited to a case conference where the results will be discussed. Other parties at this case conference may include the principal, teachers, teacher assistants and other professionals, depending on who is working with your child. If you wish to discuss the matter of the consent form or the assessment, please call your school principal.

Any reports of individual consultations, interventions or assessments are kept on file at the School District Office and in a file at the school. These reports may only be accessed by school personnel working with the student and will not be released to any agency or person outside of the school district without the parent's written permission.

Principal: _____ Telephone: _____

School Psychological Services Telephone: _____

SCHOOL DISTRICT _____

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT

School Psychological Assessment/Intervention

I _____

(Parent/Guardian)

do hereby freely authorize School District _____ Psychological Services to provide the services checked above to my child

_____.

(Name of Child)

Parental permission for a student-centered behaviour consultation, intervention or psycho-educational assessment is valid for one year from the date of signature. I understand that I have a right to cancel my consent at any time.

DATE: _____ SIGNED: _____
Parent/Guardian