

INSTRUCTION

Guidance and Counseling Policy

A. Notification

1. Annually, the School Division shall provide written notification to parents/legal guardians and adult students about the academic, career, and personal/social guidance and counseling programs ~~which are~~ available. The notification shall include the purpose and general description of the program, information regarding ways parents/legal guardians may review materials to be used in guidance and counseling programs at the student's school, and information about the procedures by which parents/legal guardians and adult students may limit participation in such programs.
2. In addition, at the beginning of each school year, the local school shall provide written notification of an overview of its program, including a brief description of the guidance services and the counseling services that may be offered during the school year.
3. Guidance and counseling materials shall be made available at each school for review by any interested person.

B. Participation

No student shall be required to participate in any guidance and counseling program to which the minor student's parents/legal guardians or the adult student object. However, parental consent shall not be required for short duration counseling

needed to maintain order and discipline, or for those situations which may require the immediate attention of the counselor.

C. Techniques

1. School counselors shall not use techniques which are inappropriate to the school setting. Examples of these techniques include, but are not limited to, hypnosis, progressive relaxation and guided imagery and/or visualization, or other psychotherapeutic techniques that are normally employed in medical or clinical settings and focus on mental illness or psychopathology.

2. School counselors shall not use techniques which are beyond the scope of the school counselor's professional certification.

D. Confidentiality

Any information and records of personal/social counseling shall be kept confidential and separate from a student's educational records and not disclosed to third parties without prior consent of the parents/legal guardians of a minor student or prior consent of the adult student or as otherwise provided by laws. The School Division does not authorize the release of information concerning student discipline and/or criminal records.

E. Personal/Social

1. Classroom Guidance

No counseling techniques shall be used in the classroom guidance program that are not described in the annual notification provided or that require students to disclose sensitive or personal information.

A student may be withdrawn from classroom guidance at any time. This request must be in writing from the minor student's parents/legal guardians or from the adult student.

2. Individual Counseling

a. Counselors are able to meet with students without written parental consent to discuss incidental or normal developmental concerns and to assess a situation for possible recommendation for non-school related counseling. School counselors are not trained to provide therapy. They will work in collaboration with families to find therapists at the family's expense.

b. Except with regard to adult students, parents/legal guardians must be informed and given an opportunity to object before counseling services pertaining to gender or gender identity are given.

c. A student may be withdrawn from individual counseling at any time. This request must be in writing from the minor student's parents/legal guardians or the adult student.

3. Group Counseling

a. Each school shall require informed written consent from the parents/legal guardians of a minor student or from an adult student prior to a student's participation in group counseling activities. Notification shall include the following:

a. 1) Purpose and goals of the group counseling

b. 2) Estimated frequency of sessions and duration

c. 3) A statement that all materials and supplemental media used in whole or part shall be available for review.

b. A student may be withdrawn from structured ongoing group counseling at any time. This request must be in writing from the minor student's parents/legal guardians or the adult student.

F. Advisory Council

Each school shall have an Advisory Council consisting of parents, teachers, school counselors, and administrators to assist in the development of a comprehensive (K-12) school counseling program, to audit its results, and to recommend priorities to school administrators. A school's Advisory Council may be combined with the School Planning Council.

Legal Reference

Code of Virginia 22.1-253.13:1, as amended. Standard 1. Instructional programs supporting the Standards of Learning and other educational objectives.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. Part 99, as amended.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) 20 U.S.C. § 1232h; *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. Part 98, as amended.

Approved by Superintendent: June 18, 1996

Revised by Superintendent: August 20, 2012

Revised by the Superintendent: 2024



APPROVED AS TO
LEGAL SUFFICIENCY

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