Behavioral Risk Assessment

Purpose

The Fargo Public School District ("District") is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for students and staff. The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent, research-based process for identifying, assessing, and responding to concerning, disruptive, or threatening behaviors. This policy ensures that the District responds to student, staff, and community concerns in a manner that is objective, team-based, preventative, and proportional to the level of behavioral risk.

Scope and Function of Risk Assessment Team

All schools within the District will identify a team that assesses risk, which may be the MTSS-SEB team. The team is committed to a proactive, multidisciplinary, coordinated, and objective approach to responding to incidents along the spectrum of risk. Team members assess the risk of every referral and initiate appropriate interventions based on risk level. The team supports student wellbeing and success while supporting a safe school environment.

In alignment with best practices, the team has the authority to engage in the following activities to access risk and deploy interventions:

1. Identifies and assesses concerning, disruptive, or threatening behaviors that may indicate a risk of harm, to self, other students, staff, school visitors or school property. The team will address behavior that occurs both on and off school grounds or behavior that has a connection to the school. Threats of self-harm or suicide unaccompanied by threats of harm to others should be promptly evaluated according to Administrative Policy 6523 Suicide Prevention.

2. Gathers and analyzes information about the student's behavior to determine a level of concern for risk using an evidence-based, objective risk rubric. The District may mandate further assessment to assess the student and the circumstances surrounding the referral to inform its interventions.

3. Engage in structured problem-solving, intervention planning, and improved awareness of factors associated with potential harm. The risk assessment team will make an individualized assessment based on reasonable judgment and available evidence as applicable. No assessment process can predict or guarantee the prevention of harm to self, violence, or dangerous behavior.

4. Communicates with each other, school administrators, and other school staff who have a need-to-know information to support the safety and well-being of the student, school, its students, and its staff. The team will also ensure communication is provided to parents or guardians as needed.

In cases where the student whose behavior is threatening or potentially threatening also has a disability, the team aligns intervention strategies with the student's individualized education program ("IEP"), or the student's plan developed under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504 plan) by coordinating with the student's IEP team or Section 504 plan team. Although some of the functions of a school-based risk assessment may run parallel to the functions of a student's IEP team or Section 504 plan team, school-based risk assessments remain distinct from those teams and processes.

Information Disclosure

Each risk assessment team member is a "school official with a legitimate educational interest" in educational records controlled and maintained by the District. The District provides team members access to educational records as specified by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"). Team members will not use any student record beyond the prescribed purpose of the risk assessment team or re-disclose records obtained by being a member of the risk assessment team, except as permitted by FERPA.

Disciplinary Response and Emergency Removal

The risk assessment process is distinct from student discipline procedures. Student discipline shall be in accordance with Administrative Policy 6310 Student Behavior, Discipline, and Reporting. District employees are required to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act when responding to violations of student behavior standards by special education students.

The District conducting a risk assessment does not by itself require a student to be suspended or expelled. However, nothing in this policy precludes District personnel from acting immediately to address an imminent threat, including imposing an emergency removal, if the District has sufficient cause to believe that a student's presence poses an immediate and continuing danger to other students or school personnel or an immediate and continuing threat of material and substantial disruption of the educational process. Suspension and expulsion of students shall be in accordance with Administrative Policy 6320 Suspension and Expulsion.

Law Enforcement Intervention

Based on the nature of the behavior, the District may notify law enforcement. When law enforcement or the team substantiates a threat, the District shall immediately take all necessary and timely measures to safeguard students, staff, and District property.

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