

Background

Guidance and counselling services are available to students as an integral part of a continuum of supports and services. Counsellors work collectively with students, parents/guardians and the school learning team to support the educational, personal, social and career needs of students.

Definitions

Guidance is a process that is both individual and group-oriented. It includes self-awareness, identification and development of positive relations supportive of goal achievement, educational and career planning, making decisions, setting goals and problem solving. In schools in this province, these topics are also included in Health and Career and Life Management curricula.

Counselling assists individuals with personal, social, educational or career goals. Counselling activities may involve the expertise of a School Advisor or School Liaison Counsellor with specialized skills to address concerns that impact student learning. For longer term or more in depth counselling, students may be referred to outside agencies.

Procedures

1. Guidance and counselling services are a joint responsibility involving all staff, and are provided by schools to address identified needs through the following service areas –
 - 1.1. Educational/Career – services may include:
 - 1.1.1. Assist student program planning and course selection
 - 1.1.2. Providing post-secondary information
 - 1.1.3. Providing programming support to all students
 - 1.1.4. Providing information about career possibilities and work trends
 - 1.1.5. Creating structures that support opportunities for students to connect educational and career plans to abilities, achievements, interests, values, attitudes and goals
 - 1.1.6. Developing student job search skills and strength-based resume development
 - 1.1.7. Providing students with information regarding scholarships
 - 1.1.8. Providing supports with transitions from school to school, school to work, or school to additional education and training
 - 1.1.9. Bridging staff, student and community relations that contribute to the larger societal context
 - 1.2. Personal/Social Emotional – services may include:
 - 1.2.1. Providing students with services which help develop solution focused problem-solving skills
 - 1.2.2. Assisting students to develop coping, advocacy, and resiliency skills for managing a variety of life situations
 - 1.2.3. Implementing structures, strategies and supports that contribute to a safe, caring and welcoming environment for all students
 - 1.2.4. Referring students to appropriate personal/social service agencies

2. A continuum of supports is provided in guidance and counselling services:

2.1 Preventative Services (Universal Supports) – consist of proactive activities that help all students plan, monitor and manage their own learning to help ensure success in their personal and career development.

2.2 Developmental Guidance (Universal Supports) – instruction consists of structured developmental experiences presented systematically through classroom and group activities.

2.3 Responsive Services (Targeted and Individualized Supports) – consist of activities to meet the immediate needs and concerns of students via counselling, consultation, referral or information.

2.4 School-Community Services – include contributing to the larger societal context and developing school-community partnerships.

Both the preventative and developmental approaches attempt to prepare individuals for a variety of life situations by sharing information and discussing issues. Responsive services are intended to help students cope effectively with a situation or a series of difficulties.

3. Responsibility for Guidance and Counselling

Successful provision of guidance and counselling services is based on a team approach. The individual student and all those providing support should be involved in the process. Roles of those commonly involved in a student's support network are outlined below.

3.1 The Division

The Division will maintain liaison with local service agencies through the Office of the Associate Superintendent of Learning Services.

The Division will provide guidance and counselling services for all students in order to support and facilitate achievement of the following:

- 3.1.1 Students demonstrate care, respect and consideration for themselves and others in fulfillment of the Gospel message respecting human dignity;
- 3.1.2 Students participate positively and actively in learning activities developing their talents to the fullest degree, and
- 3.1.3 Students acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to help them lead productive, satisfying lives.

3.2 Teachers

Teachers work with individual students on a daily basis. This relationship makes them key members of the guidance and counselling team. Teachers are obligated to make themselves aware of the guidance and counselling services available within the school community and to follow established procedures related to accessing these services for children. Teachers are sensitive to the developmental needs of students and can accommodate them by:

- 3.2.1 Listening and responding to student concerns and identified needs
- 3.2.2 Encouraging advocacy and communication skills
- 3.2.3 Adapting teaching methods/instruction to different learning styles and needs
- 3.2.4 Consulting with parents and the school-based counselling team as well as other related professionals or natural supporters to reach a mutual understanding of individual student behaviour and needs



- 3.2.5 Referring students to counselling services as required
- 3.2.6 Supporting students in conversations about career plans and learning goals

3.3 The Administrative Team

The Administrative Team is responsible for:

- 3.3.1 Organizing and coordinating school guidance and counselling services
- 3.3.2 Assisting in establishing long and short-term goals for school programs and individual students through programming plans
- 3.3.3 Helping to monitor and evaluate services provided by the counselling team as appropriate
- 3.3.4 Becoming familiar with Alberta Education documents and requirements dealing with guidance and counselling services; in particular, the Comprehensive School Guidance and Counselling Programs and Services document and Policy 1.6.3: Guidance and Counselling.
- 3.3.5 Ensuring an approach that focuses on prevention, rather than individual crisis situations, with the intention of providing services to the maximum number of students, teachers, parents and administrators will be promoted.
- 3.3.6 Principals, in consultation with staff, shall define and implement school guidelines and procedures based on needs assessment in accordance with the guidelines specified herein.

3.4 Student Advisors

Student Advisors are members of the school-based counselling team. They are primarily responsible for providing educational and career guidance, social emotional learning and self-regulation, and advising that contribute to a safe, caring and welcoming environment. This is accomplished through the provision of universal and targeted approaches and supports that are personal and social in nature.

- 3.4.1 Student Advisors can be consulted for support, information, prevention and universal services.
- 3.4.2 In middle and high schools, Student Advisors also serve as resource persons or consultants to staff, parents and the community.
- 3.4.3 Student Advisors provide educational and career guidance.
- 3.4.4 Student Advisors contribute and provide leadership to the school team by ensuring the provision of universal and targeted approaches and supports to support the social-emotional well-being of students.
- 3.4.5 All individuals providing guidance and counselling services shall respect the confidentiality of information received in accordance with professional ethics, Division policy and procedures, and the law.

Advisor Qualifications

School Advisors must be certified to teach in Alberta. Advisors are teachers bound by the Code of Professional Conduct of the Alberta Teachers' Association (Alberta Teachers' Association 2004). Advisors should be trained in:

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
- Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA)

These qualifications will need to be maintained while acting in an Advisor position thus requiring recertification every 2-5 years depending on requirements.



3.5 School Liaison Counsellor

School Liaison Counsellors are members of the school-based counselling team and provide universal and targeted supports as well as confidential individual and family support of a personal/social nature through a variety of means such as counselling, referrals and coordinating service delivery.

3.5.1 The School Liaison Counsellor can be consulted for support, information, prevention and/or early intervention.

3.5.2 The School Liaison Counsellor assumes an integral role on the school-based Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) team in the provision of assessment and responsive services related to critical incident stress.

3.5.3 The School Liaison Counsellor holds caseloads and provides individualized short term therapeutic intervention for students. This includes Mental Health interventions using evidence-based practices.

3.5.4 The School Liaison Counsellor bridges students and families requiring individualized supports to the appropriate outside agencies and supports. Referrals are to be made to service providers outside of the school for cases that are deemed to be beyond the individual counsellor's scope of competence or where counselling services are not available.

School Liaison Counsellor Qualifications

School Liaison Counsellors should hold a Bachelor's Degree or Master's Degree in Social Work, Psychology, or Psychiatric Nursing or other related degree and be registered with the appropriate governing body (i.e. Alberta College of Social Workers or College of Alberta Psychologists). Advisors should also be trained in:

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
- Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA)

These qualifications will need to be maintained while acting in a counselling position thus requiring recertification every 2-5 years depending on requirements.

3.6 Learning Support Teachers

Learning Support Teachers are members of the school-based team and play an important coordinating role as part of the school team.

3.6.1 Learning Support Teachers work with the school counselling team and administrators to ensure a continuum of supports and services that result in improved student outcomes.

3.7 Resources and Resiliency Worker

Resource and Resiliency Workers are members of the school-based team and assist in the design and implementation of individual, group and school programs that focus on personal growth, self-regulation, and social-emotional growth and development. These professionals assume a role as a school-based team member primarily in the provision of preventative and developmental services through activities such as mentoring, supported problem solving, and intentional development of positive relationships.

3.8 Parents / Guardians

Parents can assist in the guidance and counselling of their children by becoming involved in and supporting school efforts, as well as by establishing open lines of communication with their children and the school. Parents can also:



- 3.8.1 Serve as role models in educational and career areas
- 3.8.2 Act as guest speakers during school career days
- 3.8.3 Provide feedback on the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling services in the local school


3.9 Community Partnering Agencies

School Counsellors consult with and refer clients to a variety of social agencies within the community. These agencies may be accessed when longer term or more intensive counselling services are required. Referrals or connections may be made to service clubs, recreational organizations, and other community groups who can provide direct services. These team members:

- 3.9.1 Provide school resources
- 3.9.2 Serve as mentors
- 3.9.3 Provide locations for work experience programs

3.10 The Student

Children begin to seek independence at a very early age. The level of independence they acquire is in direct proportion to the level of responsibility they accept. Guidance and counselling services provided in the school, home and community help students assume increasing responsibilities for educational, personal or social, and career outcomes. The ultimate aim of all of these services is to develop in each student a sense of purpose in life, self-advocacy and the capability to achieve individual goals.

<p>Reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sections 18, 33, 52, 53, 22 Education Act · Guidance and Counselling Policy 1.6.3 · Comprehensive School Guidance and Counseling Programs and Services (1997) · Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act · Informed Consent and Records Management for Alberta School Counsellors 	<p>Approved:</p> 
	<p>Date Approved: August 2006</p>
	<p>Reviewed or Revised: Revised September 2012, March 2025</p>

Note: References shall be updated as required and do not require additional approval

