

Purpose/Background

Increasing numbers of students and children require specialized services, during school and Early Childhood Services (ECS) program hours. Therefore, the Division will work together with members of the community and community agencies to serve the needs of students and children who are "at risk" or who have special needs.

Procedures

1. In order to minimize duplication of effort and improve access for, and responsiveness to, children and families in need, the Division is committed to working together with other community agencies, organizations and associations; other local education authorities within and across school districts, including operators of Early Childhood Services (ECS) programs; and regional authorities, including Alberta Health Services and Child and Family Services Authorities. Examples of "working together" include information-sharing procedures, sharing of staff facilities, and joint service planning and delivery agreements (informal or formal).
2. To serve the needs of students and children in each school community, principals, counsellors and, where appropriate, other staff members, will take an active role to initiate or participate in working together with other members of the community and community agencies to improve services.
3. In cases where efficiencies can be realized through the provision of centralized services available to all school communities within the Division, the Superintendent or designate, will initiate, develop and/or participate in partnerships designed to improve services to students and children.
4. Procedures in working together with members of the community will be consistent with provincial policies and procedures, including the Standards for Special Education.

Reference:

- Section 11, 33, 52, 53, 196, 197, 222 Education Act
- RVS AF340-A Family/School Liaison Consent for Service
- RVS AF340-B Family/School Liaison Case Notes
- RVS AF340-C Family/School Liaison Service
- RVS AF340-D Family/School Liaison Report
- RVS AF340-E Family/School Liaison Closing Report
- RVS AF340-F Consent for Referral for Divisional Support (access via PowerSchool)
- RVS AF340-G Multidisciplinary Support Team Referral
- RVS AF340-H Mental Health Consultant Consent for Service
- RVS AF340-I External Agencies Confidentiality Agreement
- RVS AF340-J Consent for Referral and Release of Information to an External Service Provider



- RVS AF340-K Audiology Referral for Services Consent Release
- RVS AF340-L Request for Stepping Stones to Mental Health
- RVS AF340-M Assistive Technology/Assistive Augmentative Communication Implementation Plan
- RVS AF340-N Students, Environments, Tasks, and Tools Framework Meeting Template
- RVS AF340-O Success in School Plan
- RVS AF340-P Checklist Transition Planning for Students with Complex Needs
- RVS AF340-Q Mental Health Emergency
- Public Health Act
- Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12
- Standards for Special Education
- Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education

Appendix A – REFERRAL FOR TRANSITION OF COMPLEX STUDENTS

Purpose/Background

A student with complex needs is defined as one who has extraordinary or specialized learning needs and has outside agency involvement such as Child and Family Services, justice, health, and/or specialized placements. As a result of multi-agency involvement, there is often a need to coordinate the gathering and sharing of information in order to make informed decisions about school placement and programming. In addition, these students may require ongoing wrap-around supports, which need to be developed collaboratively in order to ensure a successful transition to their new school. Currently, the Division has a Division-wide Transition Coordinator to help facilitate the process for the entry of new students with complex needs.

Students with diverse learning needs, who are moving within the Division or coming from outside of the Division, are the responsibility of the receiving schools. Student information is to be obtained from the previously attended school as per the standard protocols of releasing confidential information. If requested, the Division's Learning Support Team can assist with this process.

Procedures

A referral may come from the Principal, the Director of Learning, a specialized agency, or a parent. Usually the parent will be directed to the community school to begin the process. When the school is the initial contact, the process is as follows:

1. The Principal ensures that the student is eligible to register at the school (i.e., lives within the Division, and the parent/guardian has the right to register the student). In the event that Child and Family Services is involved, then the Delegation of Authority paperwork must be obtained. The designated person at the school then registers the student in PowerSchool.
2. The Principal contacts the Transition Coordinator to discuss the referral and the student's current special education designation to determine the transition support needed. If the Transition Coordinator is required, registration information is shared, including the consent to release information to the Division/Learning Support. The Principal will be advised to submit an eLSTR referral for the services of the Transition Coordinator as soon as all documentation is obtained. The Transition Coordinator will assign themselves and any other team members as required. They will also inform, by email, the Learning Supports Secretary responsible for tracking students in transition, who will then enter the current special education designation in PowerSchool. In the notes field please state "Special education designation from previous school entered on *DATE*. Student in transition. File to be reviewed by the Learning Team and designation adjusted as needed."
3. The Transitions Coordinator will then contact the parent to apprise them of the intake process, which could include the collection of the previous school files including confidential files, medical information, and professional assessments, background information from the families, the previous school and any other pertinent professional involved with the student. On occasion, a



home or a school visit may be scheduled. In consultation with the Transitions Coordinator, the Division learning support team may be involved throughout the process.

4. After the Transitions Coordinator has reviewed the student's file and met with the parents/guardians, a meeting with the Director of Learning, or designate, may be arranged to address the needs of the student. It may be necessary to make accommodations to a school setting in order to provide the student with access to learning that best fits his/her needs. These accommodations must be identified and approved by the Director of Learning and/or the Director of Facility Planning, and then documented on the Building Modification Tracking form. Accommodations include: access to the school or areas of the school, toileting, mobility, calming space, and other accommodations necessary to assist in the student's learning, as identified by the psychologist. The list of building accommodations must be emailed to the Learning Supports' Secretary to ensure that the Building Modification Tracking is kept up to date.
5. If placement is at Quest, or alternative location is a consideration, the Director of Learning will be consulted.
6. Once all of the information has been gathered, an intake meeting with the Principal or designate will be organized to share information and plan for success in the student's new school. The parents, administration, appropriate staff from the school and from the student's previous school, other outside supports, and the Division Learning Team may be included in this collaborative meeting.
7. It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that all pertinent file information be added to the student's file in eLSTR. The Division Learning Team will review the files and assign a special education designation and level of support in PowerSchool if necessary.

Appendix B – EXTERNAL PROVIDER INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Purpose/Background

The purpose of this procedure is to clarify the relationship between the school and the community health professional/private therapist where parents/guardians have retained such community professionals to support their child (“privately retained community health professionals”), and/or staff from another agency and/or ministry request to observe and/or work with a student at school.

The procedure outlines the background, principles, and administrative procedures that the Division will follow, with respect to the involvement of community professionals and private therapists in school programs where such professionals are retained and/or compensated by parents/guardians. It recognizes that parents/guardians, community health professionals and the school share a common goal to pursue, within defined roles, the best interest of the child.

The Alberta Standards for Special Education states: *“Rights and responsibilities related to special education are included in the School Act. School boards are required to provide each resident and enrolled student with identified special education needs with access to a special education program. Parents have a right and responsibility to work with boards to ensure their children’s special education needs are met, subject to limitations based on reasonableness in each circumstance. In every case, the best educational interest of the student is the paramount consideration for decision-making and programming.”* The Division provides a range of special education programs and services; outlines may be viewed on the Division website.

It is the exclusive role of the school in partnership with parents/guardians to be the primary providers of school based programs and services. Schools have the right and obligation to provide education programs and services as prescribed by the School Act. Ultimately, the school staff is responsible for making educational decisions about programming in collaboration with parents and other relevant parties regardless of third party recommendations.

Where appropriate, a Principal is to take into consideration any written or verbal recommendations third parties make (written preferred) as part of a wider body of knowledge school staff have about the child and context. These recommendations may or may not be acted upon either partially or wholly at the discretion of the Principal or designate, in consultation with the team of people supporting the student. The most important factor to consider is the impact of the recommendations on the learning environment of the student. If unsure about the appropriateness of the recommendations, consult with relevant professionals (other principals, Education Centre staff, identified school staff) as deemed appropriate.

School staffs work in partnership with parents to ensure the needs of their child are identified, considered, and met. To that end, collaboration with community agencies and private therapists is encouraged. Third parties providing the outlined support services to students are generally welcome in schools. Third parties are expected to conduct themselves professionally and be considerate of the nuances of the school environment. Wherever possible and appropriate, and with written consent from

parents, school personnel may collaborate with private practitioners to provide support to the student (conduct classroom observations, complete forms, release children from classes etc.).

The Principal has ultimate responsibility for all third parties entering the building, and therefore has final authority on access. If the Principal believes a certain third party would be inappropriate, he/she is free to deny the request for access. The Principal/designate is to clarify the purpose of any visit by a third party to a school. Such visits must have educational value, or the intended benefits must be greater than the disruption (if any) to the educational program. The Division has ultimate responsibility in determination of any special educational programming and designation.

Students may receive additional support through community agency staff or by private therapists/consultants hired by parents. These services may be beneficial to students, and can be offered to students in the home, community, or practitioner office setting. Occasionally, schools receive requests to have third party services delivered in the school.

Concerns related to having third party services take place in the school:

- safety of students
- privacy and confidentiality issues
- qualifications and professional standards of third party staff
- liability to the Division
- informed consent issues
- use of teacher and educational assistant time
- conflicts with collective agreements
- availability of school space
- payment of services
- equity issues
- duplication of service

Definitions

Direct Services:	Services delivered by Division staff such as teachers, educational assistants, and special services staff.
Third-Party Services:	Services delivered by individuals paid by someone other than the Division. There are two types of third party services:
Public Third-Party Services:	Services delivered by staff from an agency or other public organization. This could also include not for profit charitable organizations that are considered to serve public interests. Public third-party services may be mandated by the government, be the result of inter-ministerial agreement, or be funded by a government agency or donations. Services from these organizations are generally available to students in the system who qualify under the mandate or operation of the public



third party. Public third-party services, where needed, are requested by the Division. The following public third-party services are permitted at the request of the Division and with parent permission:

- speech pathology
- occupational therapy
- psychology
- physiotherapy
- nursing
- nutrition
- hearing and vision consultants
- mental health professionals
- educational consultants

Private Third-Party Services: Services retained and/or paid for by parents/guardians. The request for services has come from parents/guardians, and has not been requested by the Division.

Procedures

1. Direction

Due to difficulties with ensuring student safety, liability, and confidentiality, private third-party services delivered directly to students during the school day are not allowed in the school setting.

- 1.1 The Division does not allow individual parents to provide in-school or in-classroom student direct therapy/assistance.
- 1.2 Privately retained and community health professionals may visit a classroom only to observe a student and not for the purpose of providing instruction or therapy.
- 1.3 Privately retained and/or community health professionals are permitted in schools for the following purposes:
 - 1.3.1 Observation, where this assists the privately retained or community health professionals to set appropriate goals for the child in non-school environments and to ensure consistency of programming outside the school environment.
 - 1.3.2 To attend school meetings in order to share information regarding the child's participation in an outside program or to report results of outside evaluations or testing which may have taken place.
 - 1.3.3 A private therapist or community health professional may act as an advocate for a child in the meetings, only upon the written authorization of the parents or guardians of the child.

2. Parent requests for involvement of community agency staff or privately retained staff.

- 2.1. Requests for involvement in a classroom or school by a privately retained or community health professional must be for observation, exchange of information or advocacy purposes only, and not for the delivery of direct services to students.
 - 2.2. A request by a privately retained therapist or community health professional to observe a student in a classroom must be made by the parent/guardian to the Principal. If parents wish for school staff to share information about the student, the parent will need to complete the consent to release form AF340-M found on the Division website under Learning Supports.
 - 2.3. Privately retained or community health professionals must be accompanied by the Principal or designate (i.e. classroom teacher).
 - 2.4. A Principal, in working with parents, can determine and schedule the number and duration of parental requests in an effort to minimize the disruption to the delivery of the instructional program.
 - 2.5. A community health professional/private therapist must keep confidential any personal information obtained about other students, teachers or staff while observing a particular student in a classroom, in accordance with relevant legislation including the School Act, FOIP and other relevant privacy legislation.
 - 2.6. The health professional must sign the Division form AF340-E External Agencies Confidentiality Agreement.
 - 2.7. A privately retained or community health professional who makes a classroom visit for the purpose of observation must provide a copy of the written report of the observation to the Principal.
 - 2.8. A criminal background check of all private therapists or community health professionals is required prior to any direct one on one contact with pupils.
3. Questions regarding requests.
 - 3.1. Questions or concerns regarding requests for involvement of community agency staff or privately retained staff should be directed to the Director of Learning Supports or designate.