



Student Assistance Program

an intervention to address substance abuse



The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is an intervention program used in schools that provides a systematic procedure of early identification, intervention, referral and follow-up for students displaying potentially unsafe behaviors related to involvement with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. SAP provides a vehicle for the implementation of Policy 9230: Alcohol, Other Drugs, Prescription Medication and Over-the-Counter Products.

Although no amount of substance use is allowed for most students, the goal of SAP is to identify and refer those students whose immediate health and safety may be compromised by involvement with substances. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and student(s) who are concerned should be referred to Student Services staff or school administration.

Free substance abuse evaluations are available to students through various agencies. Student confidentiality is maintained throughout the SAP process.

There are two processes depending on the urgency of the possible substance use concern:

- 1. Immediate Referral:** Implemented when a student exhibits signs that may indicate involvement with substance use during school hours. Steps involve immediate assessment through health services, administrator involvement, and parent(s)/guardian(s) contact.
- 2. Referral to SST (Student Support Team):** Implemented when a staff member has a concern about potential substance use that does not require immediate attention. Student Support Team members can be contacted for more information and next steps.



Please note: Teams may request staff support during the data collection process:

- The team and/or SAP Liaison may request data, observational notes and/or anecdotal information related to the referral.
- The team and/or SAP Liaison will determine when it is most appropriate to contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) after data has been collected from the staff.

Staff should refer to the SST/IIT Community Canvas page for resources, including detailed processes and referral information.

Considerations

Staff Awareness: It is critical that staff members, students and families are aware of the Student Assistance Program and how to refer students of concern. Creating a community within each classroom will help staff members notice when a student might be in need of additional support. Staff should be aware of SST members and the SAP Liaison in the building. Staff should consult school's administration or a member of the SST if they notice any signs or symptoms of concern.

Marijuana Guidance: According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2019), marijuana use in teens has increased over the last several decades. Despite increased recreational usage and the legalization of medical marijuana in several states:

- There are no states where the use of recreational marijuana is legal for use by children or teens.
- Marijuana use can have negative short-term and long-term effects.
- The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry guidance document on marijuana and teens can provide more information.

Family Needs and Rights:

- It is important that staff are thoughtful and considerate of cultural differences in their interactions with or assumptions about families around this topic.
- Staff who have well-established relationships with the student and/or family may be consulted for insights.
- Consultation with administration or staff is a critical step. Although instructional staff may be asked to provide observations and feedback, they may not be included in conversations with the student and family to protect privacy and confidentiality.

Note: Signs of substance abuse are varied and can look different for different individuals. They may include concerns with academics (e.g., not completing work, slipping grades), social interactions (e.g., isolation, change of friends), behavior (e.g., irritable, disruptive), and/or physical characteristics (e.g., bloodshot eyes, weight change). When a staff member, parent, or student has concerns, the SAP process may be accessed for support.

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