



Social Work Support

WHO ARE WE?

A team of Registered Social Workers are assigned to support all elementary and secondary schools within Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board. One Social Worker is specifically allocated to provide Board wide support for our Indigenous students/families.

REFERRALS

Teachers, Guidance Counsellors, parents/caregivers, Administrators, Child and Youth workers notice a concern regarding the mental health and wellness of a student/family. The Administrator obtains consent from caregivers to consult with the Student Support Team. If parent/caregiver consent is permitted, a school meeting is scheduled (elementary are typically monthly, secondary are weekly). Should the school team believe that all school-based, system and community strategies and supports have been exhausted and the student continues to require support, the following steps take place:

1. Concerns are brought by Teacher, Guidance Counsellor, or parent/caregiver to Administrator. Administrator contacts Social Worker (SW) to schedule a meeting to discuss concerns and determine additional steps (verbal consent from the student's parent/caregiver is required for consultation where student identity is disclosed). A discussion with the parent/caregiver takes place; the Administrator (in elementary school/secondary school) or Guidance Counsellor (in Secondary school) completes the Request for Consultation form to initiate the process to schedule a meeting (verbal caregiver consent is permitted in the short term, however efforts should be made for signature consent at the earliest convenience).
2. Following caregiver consent, an In-School Team Meeting takes place to determine the most appropriate service for the student. Reasons for Social Work service includes anxiety, stress, navigation of community services, crisis support, challenges with mood and/or emotional regulation, and/or parental support for those with children/youth receiving Social Work services.
3. The Social Worker provides the family with the informed consent form. If the caregiver agrees to the service, the Social Worker will begin working on agreed upon goals. Throughout counselling sessions, the Social Worker provides feedback to school personnel to support student well-being.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM SOCIAL WORK SUPPORTS?

- Consultation
- Assess suicide risk and non-suicidal self-injurious behaviours: Social Workers can be involved in crisis situations to support students and link to community and hospital supports during a crisis
- Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Support: Social Workers partner to support safe schools with risk assessment and safety planning within the schools.
- School attendance support for both problematic attendance including consecutive absences
- Individual Short-Term Counselling: a short-term targeted intervention. Priorities are school based anxiety and mental health that impacts student school functioning (observation of symptoms over a 1-month period are required for referral to social work support). Student and parent must support counseling services with specific goals related to school functioning. Social Workers cannot provide service if the student is involved in similar service through a community provider, however acting as a conduit within the circle of support and ongoing communication could be provided by the Social Work staff.
- Ongoing liaison with community agencies

Questions or comments: Please connect with April Taylor, Senior Social Worker aptaylor@bhncdsb.ca