



Para Los Niños Referral Protocols for Addressing Pupil Behavioral Health Concerns

Purpose and Overview

Para Los Niños' ("PLN") Referral Protocols for Addressing Pupil Behavioral Health Concerns ("Policy") addresses procedures relating to referrals for students in grades 7-8 to behavioral health professionals and support services in accordance with Education Code section 49428.2. This Policy has been developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders and school-linked behavioral health professionals.

Addressing the Needs of High-Risk Groups

PLN recognizes the importance of ensuring equitable access to behavioral health supports for all students. PLN hereby adopts this Policy to address the needs of high-risk student groups, which include but are not limited to the following:

- Pupils bereaved by death or loss of a close family member or friend.
- Pupils for whom there is concern due to behavioral health disorders, including common psychiatric conditions and substance use disorders such as opioid and alcohol abuse.
- Pupils with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders.
- Pupils experiencing homelessness or placed in out-of-home settings, such as foster care.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning pupils.

Referral Protocols and Procedures

I. Assessing School Needs

A meaningful behavioral health system begins with understanding community-specific needs. The Associate Director of School Social Work or designee will endeavor to regularly identify student behavioral health trends and identify potential gaps in student services/supports. In doing so, the Associate Director of School Social Work or designee may examine data such as, but not limited to, attendance-related data, academic performance data, disciplinary data, and conversations with stakeholders.

II. Building Capacity

PLN will provide training for employees who have direct contact with pupils in grades 7-8 in accordance with Education Code section 49428.2(c). Materials approved by PLN for training



shall include how to identify appropriate contacts for behavioral health evaluation, services, or both evaluation and services, at both PLN and within the larger community, and when and how to refer students and their families to those services.

PLN may provide further professional development opportunities for staff related to pupil behavioral health as well as build relevant partnerships with local community providers.

III. Identifying Students

PLN shall identify students with behavioral health concerns using various methods, including but not necessarily limited to the following:

- Any screening tools, surveys, and/or questionnaires as may be distributed to students or families
- Teacher/staff observations
- Parent/guardian and family input
- Data tracking (e.g., discipline or attendance patterns)

IV. Implementing Student Supports

Students identified by PLN staff as having behavioral health concerns shall be promptly referred to the Associate Director of School Social Work or designee.

PLN shall support students identified with behavioral health concerns as follows:

- PLN will offer positive behavioral interventions and supports as appropriate, such as but not limited to: contacting and/or holding conference(s) with the student's parent/guardian, counseling, academic supports, peer support groups.
 - PLN endeavors to use positive behavioral interventions and supports in lieu of disciplinary action as appropriate. Students who receive disciplinary action may also be offered positive behavioral interventions/supports.
- As appropriate, PLN may conduct disability-related screenings/evaluations to determine whether the student's behavior reflects an underlying disability.
- As appropriate, PLN may refer students to outside agencies (e.g., therapists, social workers, clinics).
- As appropriate, PLN may coordinate implementation of supports with the student's IEP/504 Team, the Foster Youth Liaison, and/or the Homeless Liaison to ensure synchronicity with other supports the student may be receiving.
- PLN will schedule follow-up checks with students to monitor progress and/or determine if further supports may be required.



V. Continuous Evaluation

The Associate Director of School Social Work or designee will endeavor to regularly evaluate these protocols and the school's implementation of these protocols to promote timeliness and efficacy in supporting students with behavioral health concerns.

Authorization and Scope of Practice

Employees of PLN must act only within the authorization and scope of their credentials or license. Nothing in this Policy shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging school employees to diagnose or treat youth behavioral health disorders unless they are specifically licensed and employed to do so.