INSTRUCTION

School Counseling Services, Elementary, Middle, and High School

All schools must have in place a comprehensive school counseling program designed to meet the needs of all students and the requirements of Virginia law, and the Standards and Regulations of the Virginia Department of Education relating to the provision of guidance and counseling services to public school students.

I. Goal of Comprehensive School Counseling Programs.

The ultimate goal of a Comprehensive School Counseling Program is to complement and support the state Standards of Learning to ensure that all students in pre-K through grade 12 receive support in academic, career, and personal/social development. The Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) Comprehensive School Counseling Program is a collaborative effort with parents, teachers, administrators, and other school and community members to foster, promote, and improve student success and achievement in our schools. In conjunction with the Office of Student Services, each Prince William County Public School shall establish a Comprehensive School Counseling Program which is based on the Virginia Department of Education Standards for School Counseling Programs in Virginia Public Schools and aligned with the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) National Model.

The Standards for School Counseling Programs in Virginia Public Schools reflect the progression of the student’s growth throughout the pre-K through grade 12 school experience, and are organized by grade level and comprised of three developmental domains; Academic, Career, and Personal/Social:

A. Academic Developmental Domain-focuses on how the school counseling program delivers to students those strategies and activities that support and contribute to learning. Services may include, as developmentally appropriate, academic counseling, which assists students and their parents in acquiring knowledge of the curriculum choices available to students, planning a program of studies, and seeking post-secondary academic opportunities. This domain also focuses on achieving goals and assisting students in understanding the relationship of academics to the world of work, and to life at home and in the community.

B. Career Developmental Domain-focuses on providing the foundation for the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enable students to make successful transitions from school to post-secondary educational and career
opportunities. Services may include, as developmentally appropriate, career counseling, which helps students acquire information and take actions relative to career goals.

C. Personal/Social Developmental Domain-focuses on providing a foundation for the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help students understand and respect self and others as they progress developmentally. Services may include, as developmentally appropriate, individual and group personal/social counseling.

II. Components of the Comprehensive School Counseling Program

Each school’s Comprehensive School Counseling Program shall:

A. Include mission, vision, and belief statements and program goals developed in collaboration with parents, teachers, and other stakeholders, which are intended to promote the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students.

B. Provide direct and indirect services to students.

Direct services include school counseling core curriculum delivery, individual student planning as appropriate, and responsive services.

1. School counseling core curriculum consisting of structured developmentally appropriate activities and lessons presented by K-12 professional school counselors in collaboration with other professional educators.

2. Individual student planning consisting of appraisal and advisement, designed to help students establish goals and develop future plans. This may be done through individual or small group appraisal and advisement and/or developmentally appropriate individual planning activities intended to help students acquire the skills necessary to plan, monitor, and manage their learning and future goals. The involvement of students, parents/guardians, and teachers is critical in the planning process.

3. Responsive services consisting of those school counseling services which address students’ immediate needs and concerns and are delivered through
prevention and intervention activities. Responsive services are short term and goal focused in nature, and are not long term mental health interventions. Responsive services related to the academic, career, and personal/social concerns of students include:

a. Group counseling to assist students in resolving or coping with personal/social, academic, career, and developmental concerns.
b. Individual counseling which involves prevention, intervention, and follow-up services.
c. Consultation with parents, teachers, and other educators to gain appropriate information to best respond to student needs.
d. Referrals to other mental health professionals in a crisis or emergency situation when it is determined the student may need more intensive intervention.
e. Peer facilitated interventions to respond to student needs when appropriate and are supervised by a professional school counselor.

Indirect services include referrals, consultation, and collaboration. These services support student achievement and promote systemic change to address the needs of all students.

1. Referrals initiated by the school counselor assist students and parents as they seek to identify additional information and resources. Referrals may be made as appropriate to public and private community agencies to intervene in crisis situations.

2. Consultation with parents, teacher, and other educators and community organizations to support student achievement and personal/social growth.

3. Collaboration with parents, other educators, and community organizations to provide a pathway for equitable access to services and programs that help fulfill the goals of the school counseling program.

C. Be managed in an organized and clearly defined manner which ensures that:

1. The program is reflective of student and school needs as determined by data and is effectively implemented to achieve the goals of the guidance and counseling programs. Annual agreements shall be approved by each school principal prior to the beginning of each school year to serve as a
guide to school counselors and administrators for determining the amount of time their program should devote to each of the four components of the delivery system, and to assure that no less than 80 percent of each school counselor’s time will be devoted to direct and indirect counseling services for students.

2. Each school has an advisory council of stakeholders (school counselors, parents, students, teachers, administrators, community representatives) appointed to review counseling program results and to make recommendations.

3. Action plans for closing the achievement gap are prepared in a cohesive manner to include a means of evaluating and monitoring students’ success.

4. Calendars are developed and shared which inform parents, teachers, students, and administrators of school counseling activities.

5. Effective classroom or large group lessons are planned and delivered.

6. Time is used effectively and appropriately.

7. Counseling program is assessed regularly.

8. Data is used and analyzed to develop and guide program goals.

D. Provide accountability measures which ensure that:

1. The collection and utilization of data links the program to student achievement and progress.

2. The use of such data in program decision-making is intended to affect change within the school and to guarantee that all students receive the benefits of the school counseling program.

3. Program results reports are analyzed and shared.

4. Counselor use of time is analyzed regularly to ensure that 80 percent of the counselor’s time is spent in direct and indirect services to students and 20 percent or less of the counselor’s time is spent in program management tasks.
III. Student Participation

A Comprehensive School Counseling Program is designed to meet the needs of all students and to be inclusive, preventive, and developmental in nature. Parents may opt-out their child(ren) from personal/social counseling to which they object.

A. Parents have the option to withdraw their child(ren) from the personal/social portion of the Comprehensive School Counseling Program by obtaining an opt-out form from the school counseling office or by printing the opt-out form (Attachment I) and returning it to the school counselor. This request should be appropriately filed in the student’s educational record, and school counseling staff should be advised of student non-participation.

B. Opt-out requests shall not transfer from school to school. Parents must initiate an opt-out request each time a student changes schools.

C. The opt-out provision excludes short duration personal/social counseling which is needed to maintain order, discipline, or a productive learning environment. In such situations, affirmative parental consent is not required.

IV. Requirements and Procedures

A. Notification to Parents

Notification to parents is published annually in the PWCS’ “Code of Behavior” and shall include the following:

1. Purpose and description of the Comprehensive School Counseling Program;
2. Student participation and parental consent;
3. Counseling techniques;
4. Confidentiality and maintenance of personal/social counseling information and records; and
5. Review of materials used in the Comprehensive School Counseling Program at the child’s school.

B. Review of Counseling Materials

Materials used with students in the Comprehensive School Counseling Program shall be made available for parent review and comment through arrangement with
the school counselor. The selection and review of such material shall be in compliance with Regulation 653-4, “Evaluation and Selection of Instructional Materials.”

C. Meeting with the School Counselor

A student meets with the school counselor when he/she requests a meeting; parents/teachers, administrators, and other school staff members refer the student or the school counselor initiates contact.

D. Consent for Counseling

1. As noted in Section III of this Regulation, parents may opt-out their child(ren) from personal/social counseling to which they object. Parental consent shall not be required for any counseling which is needed to:
   a. Maintain order, discipline, or a productive learning environment;
   b. Respond to a crisis situation where there exists an immediate threat to the health and safety of the student or others;
   c. Determine progress with a student who has previously participated in individual or group counseling; and
   d. Meet with a student who is suspected of being abused or neglected, as provided by Va. Code § 63.2-1518.

2. At all levels, parental consent will be obtained before a student participates in a planned small group counseling session.

3. At the elementary level, parental consent will be obtained before a student participates in short-term individual counseling sessions.

4. At the secondary level, school counselors will consult with parents/guardians, as needed, about individual services rendered to support the student during the school day.

E. Procedures for Obtaining Parental Consent

Parental permission forms for group (Attachment II) or individual counseling (Attachment III) shall be sent to parents and include the following:

1. Purpose and goals of the group/individual counseling;

2. Name of group, if applicable; and

3. Number and length of counseling sessions.
F. Counseling as a Related Service

Counseling as a related service shall be provided by school social workers per Regulation 763-1, “School Social Work Services” and school psychologists per Regulation 761-1, “Psychological Services.”

G. Long-term/Intensive Counseling

1. School counselors shall refer parents to an appropriate agency or private mental health care provider for long-term intensive counseling. A resource list of those agencies or mental health providers available in the community will be maintained by the Office of Student Services and provided to each school counselor.

2. School counselors shall consult with and/or work collaboratively with outside counselors who are conducting long-term intensive counseling services for students, when warranted.

H. Confidentiality of Student-Disclosed Information and Personal/Social Counseling

Records

Counselors shall comply with Regulations 651-2, “Confidentiality of Student-Disclosed Information,” and 790-2, “Disclosure/Access to Student Educational Records.” Records of personal/social counseling shall be kept separate from a student’s educational records and shall not be disclosed to third parties without prior parental consent, or as otherwise provided by law.

V. Staffing

In accordance with the Standards for Accrediting Schools in Virginia and Standards of Quality, each school counselor must possess an earned master’s degree in school counseling from an approved school counselor education program and meet Virginia requirements for licensure

A. Elementary-Each elementary school shall have at least one full-time school counselor for the first 500 students. Elementary schools with enrollments greater than 549 students will hire additional counseling staff in order to meet or exceed minimum staffing requirements as set forth in the Virginia Standards of Quality. Each elementary school shall assign a .2 itinerant counselor for each additional 100 students or major fraction thereof.
B. Middle-Each middle school shall have at least one full-time school counselor for the first 400 students and shall hire additional counseling staff, as needed in .2 increments, to meet or exceed minimum staffing requirements as set forth in the Virginia Standards of Quality. Each middle school shall also be required to designate one counselor as the Director of School Counseling.

C. High-Each high school shall have at least one full-time school counselor for the first 350 students and shall hire additional counseling staff, as needed in .2 increments, to meet or exceed minimum staffing requirements as set forth in the Virginia Standards of Quality. Each high school shall also be required to have a Director of School Counseling who at minimum, serves as the administrator overseeing the activities of the school counseling department, its employees, and associated activities.

The Standards of Accreditation, 8 VAC 20-131-240, state that each secondary school with 350 or more students and each middle school with 400 or more students shall employ at least one member of the school counseling staff for 11 months. School counseling shall be provided for students to ensure that a program of studies contributing to the student’s academic achievement and on time graduation as specified in 8 VAC 20-131-50 is being followed.

The Associate Superintendent for Student Learning and Accountability (or designee) is responsible for implementing and monitoring this regulation.

The Associate Superintendent for Student Learning and Accountability (or designee) is responsible for reviewing this regulation in 2018.
SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES

OPT-OUT FORM

Complete and return this form only if you DO NOT want your child to participate in personal/social components of the school counseling program.

An opt-out request will become effective from the day it is received by the school and will remain in effect for the duration that your child is enrolled at his/her present school, unless the opt-out request is rescinded in writing by his/her parent or legal guardian. Opt-out requests will not transfer from school to school. A new opt-out form will need to be completed each time your child changes schools.

I am requesting that my child, ____________________________, not participate in personal/social counseling that is provided by his/her school.

I understand that parental or legal guardian permission is not required for personal/social counseling and/or crisis intervention that is needed to maintain order, discipline, or a productive learning environment.

____________________________  ______________________________
Date                          Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

Student’s Name: __________________________
Please Print

Student’s School: __________________________
Please Print
Parent Permission Letter for Small Group Counseling

Date

Dear (name of parent/guardian):

I am currently offering a (name of group) group which will be conducted in (number and length of counseling sessions). The goal of this group is: (goal).

If you would like your child to participate in this group, please complete the form below and return to me by (date).

If you do not want your child to participate in this group, please check the appropriate line below, sign, and date.

If you have any questions, please call (telephone number) between (time) a.m. and (time) p.m.

Sincerely,

_________________________________

School Counselor

I give permission for ________________________________ to participate in the ________________________________ group.

_________________________________  __________________________

Parent Signature  Date

I do not give permission for ________________________________ to participate in the ________________________________ group.

_________________________________  __________________________

Parent Signature  Date
Parent Permission Letter for Short-term Individual Counseling Sessions

__________________________
Date

Dear (name of parent/guardian):

I am currently offering a (individual counseling session) which will be conducted in (number and length of counseling sessions). The goal of these individual sessions is:

__________________________

If you would like your child to participate in these sessions, please complete the form below and return to me by (date).

If you do not want your child to participate in these sessions, please check the appropriate line below, sign, and date.

If you have any questions, please call (telephone number) between (time) a.m. and (time) p.m.

Sincerely,

__________________________
School Counselor

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I give permission for ________________________________ to participate in the ________________________________ individual sessions.

__________________________  __________________________
Parent Signature  Date

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I do not give permission for ________________________________ to participate in the ________________________________ individual sessions.

__________________________  __________________________
Parent Signature  Date