

## Guideline for Students with Emotional Disorders

1. **Class Composition:** Class size averages between 10-12 students depending on age level and classroom dynamics. Students are grouped by age and grade level. (Preschool, lower elementary, upper elementary, middle school, high school, 18-22).
2. **Staffing:** Each class has one teacher and two or more full or part time assistants. If a classroom is experiencing significant disruptions, a temporary support assistant (TSA) may be assigned to support the classroom or an individual student for a brief periods of time so that the teacher is able to establish instructional control. Counseling staff via Sonoma County Mental Health, agency contract, or qualified district staff provides support for a minimum of 50% time.
3. **Student Services:** Classroom time and Designated Instructional Services (DIS) for each student are based on individually assessed needs and IEP team decisions. Integral components of the program are counseling/therapeutic support and behavioral support. Services may include but are not limited to Speech and Language, APE, OT, PT, assistive technology, and positive behavioral support.  
  
Mental health/counseling support, based on IEP driven needs, include a minimum of individual and/or group counseling, social skills training, crisis intervention and administrative time. Family counseling and /or in-home support may also be provided as appropriate.
4. **Administration:** An administrator selected by the lead education agency (LEA) provides support to the classroom. This individual must have knowledge of the needs of students with emotional disorders and be able to represent the district at IEP meetings.
5. **School Psychologist:** A school psychologist is assigned to support the special day classes. This individual must be able to conduct assessments and file reviews for students emotional disorders, may be able to handle intakes and placement changes, conduct suicide and threat assessments, work with mental health or other agencies (e.g., make AB 3632 referrals), in addition to other administrative and typical duties assigned to this role. This position requires a significant amount of teacher consultation and crisis response (5150's, CPS, self injury, suicidal threat, violence, psychotic breaks, etc.) The school psychologist may be required to do an FAA/PBIP, FBA/BIP and act as a trainer in assault prevention and management, and/or provide counseling, as in 3A.
6. **Nursing Services:** A school nurse experienced with students with emotional disorders serves the special day classes. The school nurse provides training and support for all specialized health care needs and medication management. The school nurse monitors dietary and nutritional needs and completes all required health care documentation, including medication monitoring.
7. **Credentials:** The teacher has either a moderate/severe or SH credential. Counseling staff have MFT or LCSW license, or if interns, have a minimum of two hours weekly supervision by qualified, licensed professional. A school psychologist may provide counseling under a credential or license.
8. **Curriculum:** The classroom provides district approved core curriculum aligned to state standards and designed to meet district and state graduation requirements, including textbooks and materials to allow all levels within the class(es). Students who are not diploma-bound follow a certificate program. The ED program does not meet the needs of students who need a functional skills curriculum.

## Guideline for Students with Emotional Disorders

9. **Instructional Strategies:** Appropriate, research-based instructional strategies are implemented utilizing a prompt hierarchy and fading and shaping techniques as appropriate. Instruction will include teaching and reinforcing positive replacement behaviors. Instruction is tied to IEP goals and changes are data driven. Emergency procedures for behavior are used only in extreme situations when a student presents a danger to self or others and are documented by credentialed staff. De-escalation techniques (such as Pro-ACT) are used in preference to restraint.
10. **Behavior Supports:** A behaviorist or school psychologist supports the classroom for behavioral consultation and the development, implementation and management of behavior plans. In addition to the individual plans, each classroom utilizes positive behavioral support systems, such as positive reward systems, a token economy, and level systems, as well as a social skills curriculum.
11. **Staff Training:** All teachers and assistants are trained in diffusion of behavior escalation and assault prevention techniques utilizing a program such as Pro-ACT or other research based programs. This training is provided in-house by a trained trainer. Additionally, teachers and assistants participate in positive behavior intervention trainings during minimum, half days, and in-service days. Staff are also required to attend mandatory district trainings (CPR, epi-pen, sexual harassment, child abuse reporting, blood borne pathogens, etc.).
12. **Scheduling:** Class is scheduled, as much as possible, to allow for mainstreaming students in the least restrictive environment. Parent involvement is sought and regular communication is an ongoing part of the program. Educational and counseling staff have regular, structured weekly time to meet, review data and plan. Ties are established and maintained with School Resource Officers, if applicable.
13. **Facilities:** All facilities for students with disabilities follow SELPA housing guidelines. (See SELPA policies manual.) There must be a separate room (either inside or outside the classroom) in which counseling can be privately conducted. Counseling staff have regular access to a phone/computer. Classrooms are located so that site administrators can respond quickly and efficiently in an emergency, or if assigned support staff are not available.
14. **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** Training locations, scheduling, and access to extracurricular and non-academic activities are designed to foster interaction with non-disabled peers.
15. **Specialized Budget:** Programs for students with emotional disorders may have a specialized budget for their unique needs, e.g., cell phones or walkie-talkies, assistive technology such as AlphaSmart and computer games, sports equipment, and behavior reinforcers.
16. **Inter- and Intra-agency Agreements:** Agencies appropriate to the program will have agreements for issues such as campus safety, site emergency procedures, communication with district personnel, regional center, mental health, social services, SCOE, etc. to define roles and responsibilities and communication procedures. The IEP team will actively collaborate with Sonoma County Mental Health.