



# *Prince Albert Catholic Schools*

*"A Caring Faith Community Sharing in the Teaching Mission of Jesus"*

## **Guidelines**

**for the**

## **Employee / Family Assistance Program**

**(EFAP)**

**APRIL 1990**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Employee/Family Assistance Programs have evolved because of the changes in modern society. More and more employees are hindered from doing their jobs productively because of personal problems and employers are realizing it is not only humanitarian, but cost effective, to take more responsibility than they have in the past for helping employees solve their problems. It is also recognized that most personal problems can be dealt with successfully when identified early and referred to appropriate resources.

The overall objective of the Employee/Family Assistance Program is to maximize employee functioning in personal matters and thus maximize performance on the job. The Employee/Family Assistance Program provides these services through an arrangement with an external agency. The services will be purchased by the Board of Education to allow staff members and their dependents to make full use of the program when experiencing difficulties that may be or are affecting work performance of the employee.

The Program is designed to deal with a broad range of human problems such as family and marital, spiritual, financial, substance abuse, emotional/behavioral, and others. Costs for counseling are covered by the employer. If costs are incurred for other services that are not covered by the contract, that cost is the responsibility of the employee.

The purpose of this document is to describe the operation of this program which provides confidential assistance to Catholic School Board employees and eligible members of their families. It provides help in resolving personal difficulties that affect job performance. The program also provides a mechanism whereby the Catholic School Board may refer staff members whose job performance is a reason to believe personal problems are a cause.

## **II. PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

Employees, regardless of their position, potentially face a variety of problems in their daily lives, such as emotional stress, death of a loved one, financial problems, marriage and family difficulties, or problems caused by substance abuse. Some of these problems may not be their own but rather those of their dependents. Generally, all employees are able to manage their problems successfully; however, sometimes such problems can grow beyond the employee's capabilities to handle them without adverse effect on personal and business lives.

The basis for this program is the belief that the negative aspects of personal problems can be relieved or reduced if the individual has access to appropriate treatment resources. With a service readily available, individuals are more likely to connect with the treatment resources early, thereby preventing more serious personal and performance problems from developing.

### **III. CONFIDENTIALITY**

The design of the program is such that individuals can receive appropriate assistance in a manner that ensures complete confidentiality. The external agency's paramount concern is for the protection of the individual's privacy; therefore voluntary use of the service must be totally confidential. Further, the external agency may contact the Board of Education only after receiving a written request from the individual concerned to release specific information. The only reports from the external agency to the Board of Education are statistical and summarized so that no individual can be identified.

### **IV. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM**

- a. To provide a confidential counseling service to deal with problems that could adversely affect on-the-job performance.
- b. To provide a mechanism whereby the Board of Education may refer staff whose job performance is noticeably deteriorating and where there is reason to believe personal problems are a cause.

### **V. REFERRAL PROCEDURES**

Individuals must be able to contact the counselor directly for an appointment or advice. The counselor will in most cases provide the service, but where it is more appropriate the counselor will assist the individual in the referral to another agency or organization. Confidentiality is assured. Neither the Board of Education nor colleagues will know about the request for help with the exception of the Directed Referral (see below).

There are three ways in which individuals may be introduced to the counseling program: Self Referral, Suggested Referral, and Directed Referral.

***a. Self Referral***

Self Referral is provided for staff members who take the initiative on their own to access the counseling service. Contact can be made directly to the counselor. In the case of Self Referral no one in the school division will be informed and the strictest confidence is maintained. The counselor does not exchange confidential information with any source without written consent of the individual concerned.

***b. Suggested Referral***

Suggested Referral is available to help a staff member whose performance is deteriorating and where there is reason to believe personal problems are a cause. The supervisor who is responsible for the overall performance of the individual may suggest that the individual contact the counselor.

However, as in the case of the Self Referral, information is not shared by the counselor within or outside the school division, including the person who made the Suggested Referral, without written consent of the individual concerned

***c. Directed Referral***

Directed Referral is an option available to the administrative officers of the Board of Education for staff for whom there is a documented case of termination. If this option did not exist, termination of employment would occur. The Board of Education may consider the use of Directed Referral only on the basis of poor work performance. Participation in the program under Directed Referral does not in itself offer the individual guaranteed employment.

In developing whether the Directed Referral is to be invoked, the Director of Personnel will contact the counselor to discuss the decision. Where appropriate the Director of Personnel will arrange a meeting with the individual in question to explain that his/her current employment is in serious question and the referral to the counselor is a condition of continued employment. The Director of Personnel will make every effort to determine that the Directed Referral procedure is fully explained to the individual in question. This will include emphasizing the fact that the individual will not only be expected to become involved with the program but also that he/she must follow the process through to an acceptable conclusion.

If the individual agrees to participate in the Directed Referral procedure, he/she will make arrangements for the first interview with the counselor within a specific period of time as agreed to by the Director of Personnel.

In the first interview with the counselor, the individual will be required to sign a release of information form. The form gives the counselor permission to share only the following information:

- Did the individual arrive for the appointment?
- Is the referral of this individual to the counseling program considered appropriate by the counselor?
- Does the individual plan to participate in an ongoing manner in the program until satisfactory completion?
- What time away from work (if any) will be required to facilitate the individual's treatment?
- Did the individual terminate treatment before satisfactory completion and number of cancelled appointments (if any)?

The intent of this sharing is to offer the Board of Education sufficient information to determine appropriate performance expectations of the individual during the early stages of treatment. No detailed personal information of diagnostic statements will be shared with any member of the Board of Education or the community. If the individual in question is not prepared to sign the Release of Information Form, the counselor will inform the individual that he/she is not accepted into the program. The counselor will, as well, inform the Director of Personnel of this fact.

## **VI. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### ***a. The Employee/Family Assistance Program - (EFAP) Committee***

The EFAP Committee is comprised of the Director of Personnel and representatives from various staff groups, one representative from each of the following:

- Central Office Staff
- Non-Union School Support Staff
- Union Support Staff (Caretakers)
- Teacher Council
- Board of Education

The Director of Personnel is responsible for coordinating the Committee. Other members of the Committee will be appointed for two year terms where possible.

The EFAP Committee shall meet at least once each year by mid-November and thereafter as determined by the Director of Personnel or Committee member request.

The mandate of the EFAP Committee is as follows:

1. To ensure that the program objectives and design are defined and revised as necessary.
2. To develop, implement and maintain an awareness program for employees and their families.
3. To prepare a program evaluation method, then conduct an annual evaluation with report to the Board of Education.
4. To develop a knowledge base of similar programs and of agencies and organizations operating in the field of employee assistance programs.

***b. The Counseling Agency***

A professionally qualified counselor will offer direct service to the staff and eligible family members of Prince Albert Catholic Schools. The responsibilities of the counselor are as follows:

1. To ensure the confidentiality of case information.
2. To undertake the primary responsibility for the treatment of individuals or their dependents who voluntarily request the service or, where more appropriate, to refer individuals to other community services. In the case of a referral, the counselor is to track the matter sufficiently to establish that the individual is being helped by the resource and supply follow-up service if required.
3. To assist the Director of Personnel, when necessary, concerning procedures for Directed Referrals, and to determine whether or not such referral is appropriate.
4. To inform the Director of Personnel in the case of a Directed Referral if the individual terminates involvement with the program before satisfactory completion of treatment or if the appointments are not being kept.
5. To attend EFAP Committee meetings when required.
6. To perform other professional duties to assure the successful functioning of the counseling component.

7. When time permits, to provide education and in-service to groups of employees, as requested through the office of the Director of Personnel.

## **VII. THE STATISTICAL COLLECTION SYSTEM**

The Employee/Family Assistance Program Committee, in collaboration with the external agency, will adopt a statistical collection system for evaluation purposes. This system is designed in such a way that any one individual's personal information cannot in any way be determined by the reader.