

Opportunity Classroom

Policy and Procedure Manual
2015/2016



“Doors of opportunity don’t open, they unlock; it is up to you to turn the key.”
Lily Taylor

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Overview of Opportunity Program

The purpose of this program is to provide resources and support for their student with emotional and behavioral disabilities to be successful in the school setting. The classroom uses the Boys Town Model of intervention to promote positive social interaction, improve personal relationships and promote academic growth. The team approach is used through the IEP and case management process. The classroom size is small to ensure additional one on one instruction in both academics and social skills. Staff is trained to identify student strengths and provide positive interactions to facilitate social and emotional skill growth.

IEP Process

The Opportunity Program is a special education classroom which operates under the State and Federal Special Education regulations/laws. If you have any concerns regarding this process you may contact the special education teacher or refer to your South Dakota Parental Rights and Procedural Safeguards handbook.

Parent Communication

Frequent, two-way communication is essential to student growth in the Opportunity Program. Much of this communication will occur through the program point sheets provided via e-mail or in a printed version. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher if questions or concerns arise. Please call Holgate and leave a message for the teacher to return your call (725-7700). All teachers also have school e-mail addresses. Parents who wish to correspond by e-mail are encouraged to do so.

Visitation Policy

Parents and other adults are always welcome to visit the school. All visitors need to report to the office on arrival to the building to obtain a visitor badge. It is helpful if parents make an appointment prior to their visit by calling the school at 725-7700. The Opportunity Program is a fragile learning environment, therefore, great effort is made to minimize disruptions to the classroom in order to maximize student learning.

Transportation

Students involved in the Opportunity Program may be provided transportation to and from school in accordance with state special education law, if their disability affects them getting to and from school. The IEP team, along with the district administrator and the bus company will determine the

appropriate means of transportation for the student. If the option for busing is chosen, the student will need to follow the guidelines and rules established by the busing company.

Meals

The IEP team will determine the appropriate setting for school meals. This may range from students eating in the cafeteria with peers with minimal supervision to the possibility of being supervised in a designated area.

Extra-Curricular Requirements

The Opportunities Team encourages extracurricular activities so that students may become socially active with their peers, and to aid in learning essential life skills. Staff will communicate with coaches and parents if needed.

The Opportunity students will follow the general school rules for participating activities. The student may be removed from activities if he or she breaks school rules such as inappropriate physical aggression, intent to harms self or others, sexual risk, or illegal activities. If the student is on a restrictive behavioral plan, this will be shared with the coaching staff to determine if the child will be able to attend this activity.

Detention

Detention assigned by the school administrator outside of Opportunities Program may be served before, during, or after school hours. The setting in which a detention is served may vary. Parents will be notified of detentions which take place before or after school hours.

Supervision of Students

The supervision of students is a priority of the Opportunities Program. Staff members are aware of the location of students, and they provide supervision in accordance with the student's plan.

1. **Classroom Supervision:** When students are in the classroom, staff members observe all activities that are taking place. Students are to be in their assigned areas and may not leave the area without permission. Staff members will report on the behaviors and location of any students that they are supervising.

2. **Hallway Supervision:** Staff members will monitor the behavior of students in the hallway. Students are to comply with the following hallway rules:
 - a. Horseplay is not allowed
 - b. Respect personal space
 - c. Respect students, staff, and building
 - d. No running
 - e. Observe rules of courtesy and consideration of othersStudents are also to use appropriate language and demonstrate appropriate use of social skills in the hallways. Staff members will address inappropriate behavior as necessary.

3. **1:1 Supervision:** If a student needs one on one supervision the following options may be considered:
 - a. Direct line of sight at all times
 - b. Private restroom
 - c. Supervised restroom breaks
 - d. Alternative break times
 - e. Alternative setting for lunches

Behavior Plans

Students will be provided with a behavior intervention plan. Students in the Opportunity Program will use the Boys Town model for dealing with desirable and undesirable behaviors, unless another model has been determined as most appropriate by the special education team.

The behavior plan outlines procedures and responses for the students and staff. Student plans will be geared to the student's strengths and needs and states rewards, privileges, and consequences. The effectiveness of this plan will be monitored. All behavior plans will be discussed during an IEP meeting. Parents must communicate with the Opportunities Program teacher or counselor if they feel a behavior plan needs to be changed. The school administrator has the right to deviate from the plan at any time based on the need or safety of the student or students.

Social Skill Building Activities

On a daily basis the staff will provide classroom instruction to enhance social skills. Topics may include: interpersonal relations, mental health, conflict resolution strategies, anger management, understanding special education, sexual harassment, team building, time management, independent living, responsibility and personal hygiene.

Student Conferencing

Students will meet periodically with staff to review behaviors. Students and staff will calculate points earned and determine positive reinforcers. Students will identify areas in which they will improve. Points earned from the point system can be redeemed at a point store; which is a token reward program in which students can purchase a variety of items and privileges. Confirmation of parent knowledge via signature or electronic verification of reviewing the point sheet with their child is strongly recommended.

Monthly Team Review

There will be periodic case management meetings to review the students' progress. Team members will include the special education teacher and counselor, designated administrator, school psychologist, and Director of Special Education. Prior to the team meeting input may be sought from the parents and, if applicable, the students' community therapist, physician, and any other involved professionals for whom a release of information has been obtained.

Counseling

The Opportunity Program school counselor will provide individual and social skills group counseling for the students as needed. The purpose of these sessions will be to support the student's success in the school setting. The parent/guardian may decide to have additional individual or family therapeutic support at the family's expense unless otherwise approved as part of a written IEP or approved by school administration.

Counseling Confidentiality

The Opportunities Program school counselor will keep student information confidential. An exception will be made if disclosure is required to prevent clear and imminent danger to the student or others, when legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed, or when a release has been signed by the parents and discussed with the student. The school counselor will consult with professionals when releases have been signed.

Staff Confidentiality

Information regarding the student will only be exchanged with school staff that has direct contact with the student or is part of the student's educational team. Knowledge about a student's learning abilities and other personal information is only used as necessary to help the student obtain program or personal goals.

Release of Information

Placement for the Opportunity Program encourages parents to sign a release to allow school personnel to communicate and exchange information with therapists, physicians, court service workers, etc. The purpose of this would be to facilitate coordinated efforts to assist the student. These releases will be obtained and maintained in accordance with policy of the Aberdeen School District.

Corrective Teaching

Corrective Teaching will be used if a student has behavior that needs to be corrected. This teaching includes the teacher stating a positive relevant statement, described the inappropriate behavior, negative consequence with a positive correction statement, review the expected behavior, give a rational, practice, half points earned back and general praise.

Office Referrals

Typically referrals to the school office will be made for more severe behaviors such as persistent defiance. If determined by administration that an office referral entailed any of the following: risk to self or others, sexual harassment or abuse, threatening of physical harm, and physical aggression a risk assessment may be required. See **Risk Assessment** section.

1. Phone call to parent. Student does not leave the designated office space until parent has been notified.
2. Develop contract with student.
3. Review student contract with teacher to see what the student needs to do to re-enter classroom.
4. Develop and practice apology.

5. Give apology to those offended in front of staff performing the office referral. If not appropriate, return to the office.
6. The student may complete a therapeutic activity or mediation essay, return directly to the class, or be placed in a supervised area until the student and staff feel he/she is ready to return.
7. Follow up with administrative personnel with-in 24 hours.

In the event the office referral procedure is considered ineffective, the following options may be utilized:

1. Return to a more restrictive environment
2. Report to Superintendent for recommended intervention
3. Follow risk assessment procedure
4. Report to law enforcement
5. Out of school suspension
6. Other to be determined by the building administration

Risk Assessment Procedure

Students in the Opportunities Program have typically been determined to have a significant emotional/behavioral disorder. The emotional state and mental status of these students tends to be easily affected by stress or daily events. Consequently, when a student makes a comment or action that suggest that a possible risk to self or others could be present, it is important to follow school policy requiring an assessment update to determine the risk to the student or others. This update should occur even if the last psychological evaluation is recent. A qualified mental health professional will complete this assessment.

When determined the student is a possible risk to self, it becomes imperative to obtain the parent's release of information for an assessment to be completed. The qualified mental health professional or the psychological consultant and designated school administrator should be contacted concerning setting up an adequate safety plan while the student is in the building. If parents refuse to participate in this assessment, school administrators will be notified along with the school resource officer. It may be an option for the parents to obtain their own assessment by a qualified

mental health professional that possesses credentials acceptable to complete such an assessment, if they are currently in services with the qualified mental health professional. The school counselor and administrator will monitor the follow-up recommendations on the school safety plan.

New Transfer Students:

The Opportunities Program team will review the file of students who come from out of district placements. If a qualifying disability is noted a temporary plan will be developed until the student's needs are determined and appropriate programming is implemented. The student may follow the schedule below:

- Day One: (Limited to individualized access with staff)
 - Tour with Opportunity's Program Counselor
 - Introduce general school rules
 - Develop schedule
 - Purchase planner
 - Complete forms
 - Complete lunch paperwork and make payment
 - Arrange busing if necessary
 - Introduce Boys Town Behavior Program
 - Meet and greet students and staff
 - May begin academic coursework

- Day Two: (Limited to individualized access with staff)
 - Informal Assessments
 - Courses in self-contained setting
 - Interest Inventory
 - Review Boys Town Behavior Program
 - Continue academic coursework

- Day Three and ongoing:
 - Determine and implement student plan
 - Continue academic coursework
 - Assess understanding of the Boys Town Program

Inclusion Procedure

The goal for Opportunities Program students is to re-integrate into general education classes. The Opportunities Program staff may go with the students to supervise behaviors and provide support.

General Education Inclusion Guidelines

Program Goal: The goal of the Opportunities Program will be to successfully transition students to general education when they have the skills to succeed in this setting.

*Students will not be placed in classes for which they lack the skills to succeed without support.

*Students will not be kept in general education, if they demonstrate safety concerns or are no longer applying the skills to succeed in the general education setting.

*Support will regularly be provided by general education classroom teachers and staff from the Opportunity Program.

*Prior to transitioning students to general education, students will learn and demonstrate the skills needed to show they can succeed.

*Through the use of the Boys Town Behavior Management Program students will be able to earn entrance to general education classes as per the leveling system and purchasing of bonds.

Inclusion to General Education Procedure:

Unless decided otherwise by a student's IEP team, the following steps will typically be utilized to help foster successful inclusion to general education:

1. Student earns the necessary bonds to request a general education class.
2. Potential class or classes are discussed Opportunities Program staff.
3. Opportunity Program staff contact the general education classroom teacher to determine necessary skills to succeed.

4. Student will demonstrate skills with Opportunities Program staff to show readiness for the general education setting.
5. General education classroom teachers will be provided with a summary of child's strengths and weaknesses and recommended teaching interventions that foster success for that student. A written summary of the plan will be given to the general education classroom teacher.
6. Opportunity Program staff will monitor educational and behavioral success.
7. Every student will develop a contract for classes they are enrolled in general education.

Removal from General Education: Student's progress in general education will be monitored. If a student fails to show progress, does not complete schoolwork, or refuses to participate in class, Opportunities staff will set up a program of educational support. If the problem continues for a second week, the teacher may recommend removal from general education. If this was the action taken, the change would be noted in the IEP. Behavior requiring an office referral as noted above may also result in removal from the general education classroom.

Returning to General Education: A student will not return to general education until:

1. Student earns necessary points or completes assigned project.
2. Student meets with staff to develop short term goals and complete a new classroom contract.

Directed study may be recommended by the Opportunity Program staff to assist the student to return to general education classes.