

Da Vinci Schools

Policies and Procedures

STUDENT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH REFERRAL PROTOCOL

This document formally establishes the Da Vinci Schools policy on referral protocols for student behavioral health, integrating the California Department of Education's model policy and Education Code section 49428.2's requirements. Da Vinci Schools recognizes the strategic importance of providing equitable and targeted support to high-risk student populations. This policy has been developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders and school-linked behavioral health professionals. This policy applies to students in **grades 7-12** as required by Education Code section 49482.2.

Certain groups of students face distinct vulnerabilities that can impact their behavioral health and academic progress. Therefore, Da Vinci Schools has established a coordinated network of support, with specific protocols and resources to ensure these students receive the necessary support to thrive both academically and emotionally. The following groups are explicitly addressed by this policy:

- Pupils with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders:
 - When a student with a disability exhibits behavior that impedes their learning or the learning of others, their Individualized Education Program (IEP) team considers the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports. The process, governed by the *Behavioral Interventions for Students in Special Education* policy, includes conducting Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs) to identify the purpose of the behavior and implementing a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) to address it.
 - For students facing substance use challenges, Da Vinci Schools provides access to a range of internal and community resources and support for both the youth and educational rights holder(s).
- 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:
 - Da Vinci Schools provide a comprehensive, multi-tiered system of internal and external behavioral health supports to identify and respond to students experiencing emotional, psychological, and behavioral health challenges, including psychiatric conditions and substance use disorders such as opioid and alcohol abuse. These supports are trauma-informed, restorative, and student-centered, prioritize safety, dignity, and confidentiality, and engage families as partners when appropriate to reduce barriers to learning and promote student well-being
- Foster youth and youth placed in out-of-home settings:
 - Da Vinci Schools ensures that the educational rights holders for foster youth receive the same rights as a parent or guardian. As specified in the *Suspension and Expulsion Policy*, this includes the right to receive a suspension notice, expulsion notice, manifestation determination notice, involuntary transfer notice, and other documents and related information, ensuring their advocates are fully involved in critical decisions.
- Homeless youth:
 - In accordance with the *Education for Students Experiencing Homelessness* policy, Da Vinci Schools designates a liaison responsible for identifying and removing barriers to enrollment and retention for students experiencing homelessness, ensuring they have equal access to a free and appropriate public education. Da Vinci Schools engages our community in semesterly housing surveys to ensure we have the most updated data on our McKinney-Vento eligible youth and families.

- Pupils experiencing bereavement or loss:
 - Students confronting bereavement or loss have access to general support services, including referrals to school counselors and community-based mental health resources, to help them navigate these difficult experiences.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) pupils:
 - The *Bullying* policy ensures that school site and community resources are available for the support of LGBTQ students.
 - Furthermore, the *Sexual Health Education* policy mandates that instruction must be inclusive of different sexual orientations and same-sex relationships, fostering a respectful and affirming learning environment.
- English learners or recently immigrated students:
 - The *English Learner Master Plan* outlines a robust support system, including designated EL Coordinators who monitor student progress. Students who are not making satisfactory academic or linguistic progress are referred to the Student Success Team (SST) to determine appropriate program modifications and interventions.

Together, these targeted protocols create a comprehensive safety net, ensuring Da Vinci Schools can provide specialized support while rigorously maintaining student privacy.

Student Privacy

Protecting student privacy is a foundational principle of Da Vinci Schools' behavioral health support system. Adherence to all federal and state privacy laws ensures that students and their families can seek assistance in a confidential, secure, and trusting environment. This commitment to confidentiality is critical for fostering a climate where students feel safe asking for help.

Da Vinci Schools recognizes and agrees to abide by all applicable federal and state student data privacy laws and regulations, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and California Education Code Section 49073, et seq., in connection with this policy and its implementation.

This principle extends to all related procedures. As outlined in the *Bullying* policy and the *Policy to Address Racist, Discriminatory, and Dehumanizing Incidents*, investigations into sensitive matters are conducted in a confidential manner to protect the privacy of all parties involved.

This commitment to privacy underpins the structured protocols Da Vinci Schools uses to refer students for appropriate and effective support.

Referral Protocols and Procedures

A systematic and well-defined referral process is the operational core of this policy. These protocols are designed to ensure a consistent, timely, and effective response to student needs, from initial identification to long-term support and evaluation. Da Vinci Schools follows a five-part framework to guide its referral process and will offer positive behavioral interventions and supports as appropriate.

1. Needs Assessment

The Superintendent or designee will endeavor to conduct regular needs assessments to identify behavioral health trends, review available internal and external resources, and detect service gaps within the school community. This assessment informs strategic planning and continuous improvement efforts.

2. Capacity Building

Da Vinci Schools builds and maintains both internal and external capacity to meet student behavioral health needs.

- **Internal Capacity:** Our health services team includes a Director of Health Services, a School Nurse, and a Health Assistant. These professionals plan and monitor the care of students with health concerns, develop and implement individual health care plans, assess students in Special Education and make recommendations for school-based health support, conduct mandated screenings, and provide health-related professional development and training to Da Vinci staff. As appropriate, Da Vinci Schools 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.
- **Professional Development:** Da Vinci Schools is committed to ongoing training for all staff. This includes professional development on preventing bullying, restorative justice, trauma-informed care, addressing racist and dehumanizing conduct, supporting students in special education, and implementing drug and alcohol prevention programs.
- **External Partnerships:** We seek to maintain strong partnerships with community-based organizations to expand the resources available to our students. Key partners and resources include the **Venice Family Center**, the National Eating Disorders Association (**NEDA**), the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders (**ANAD**), the **South Bay Eating Disorder Coalition**, Beach Cities Health District, Clear Behavioral Health, and various substance abuse support services.

3. Planning

Da Vinci Schools endeavors to use positive supports and interventions in lieu of disciplinary action as appropriate. Students who receive disciplinary action may also be offered positive behavioral interventions/supports. Da Vinci Schools has established clear referral pathways for both crisis and non-crisis situations.

- **Crisis Concerns:** Immediate threats to health and safety are managed through our *First Aid and Illness at School* protocols, which include contacting paramedics when necessary. The *Comprehensive School Safety Plan* outlines procedures for emergency drills for events such as intruders or natural disasters to ensure a coordinated response.
- **Non-Crisis Concerns:** Non-crisis referrals follow established pathways. Academic and behavioral concerns are typically addressed by the Student Success Team (SST). Specific health conditions are managed through Individual Health Plans, coordinated by our health services team.

4. Implementation

The following table outlines the step-by-step procedures for implementing a student referral.

Procedure Step	Da Vinci Schools' Implementation Protocol
----------------	---

Initiate Referrals	Students can self-report concerns to any staff member. Staff who witness bullying or racist conduct are required to intervene and report. Counselors and school psychologists provide insights to administration and staff, as well as direct services resulting from findings from social-emotional assessments. Parents can provide medical or mental health information or request support directly. (Source: <i>Bullying policy, Health Services policy</i>)
Document Concerns	Incidents are formally documented using complaint forms (<i>Bullying policy</i>), behavior emergency reports (<i>Behavioral Interventions for Students in Special Education policy</i>), and in confidential student records.
Notify Parents/Guardians	Parents/guardians are promptly notified in cases of health emergencies, head injuries, significant illness, and disciplinary actions such as suspension or expulsion. Parents/guardians shall be notified within one school day whenever an emergency intervention is used or serious property damage occurs. (Source: <i>Health Services policy, Suspension and Expulsion Policy, Behavioral Interventions for Students in Special Education policy</i>)
Triage Level of Need	School nurses, office managers, and administrators assess the severity of health incidents. Disciplinary matters are triaged based on the grounds for suspension or expulsion to determine the appropriate level of intervention. (Source: <i>Health Services policy, Suspension and Expulsion Policy</i>)
Link to Services	Students are connected to internal support systems (school counselors, nurses, SST) and external community resources for mental health, substance use, and health insurance as needed. (Source: <i>Health Services policy, Bullying policy</i>)
Schedule Follow-Up	Student progress is monitored through formal reviews of IEPs and BIPs, post-reclassification follow-ups for English Learners, restorative processes, and case management cycles to ensure behavioral issues are addressed and supported. (Source: <i>Behavioral Interventions for Students in Special Education policy, English Learner Master Plan, Bullying policy</i>)

5. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Da Vinci Schools shall conduct an annual evaluation of its referral protocols, which includes data collection and analysis, input from staff and families, and targeted improvements based on results.

Evaluation will monitor outcomes such as the median time to first contact with a service provider and the percentage of follow-ups completed within ten school days. A summary of these results is reported to the Governing Board annually to support transparency and continuous improvement.

Effective evaluation depends on the ability of our staff to consistently implement these protocols, underscoring the necessity of comprehensive training.

6. Staff Training

Well-trained staff are the cornerstone of an effective system for identifying and responding to student behavioral health needs. This policy formalizes Da Vinci's commitment to ongoing, high-quality professional development in this critical area, in full alignment with the requirements of Senate Bill 153.

Da Vinci Schools will ensure that certificated employees and classified employees with direct contact with pupils in grades 7–12 receive training on youth behavioral health by the required training deadlines. This training will include how to identify appropriate contacts for behavioral health services at both the school site and in the community, and when and how to refer pupils and their families to those services.

This requirement complements Da Vinci's existing training commitments, which include staff development to:

- Prevent bullying and effectively support LGBTQ students through PRISM California (*Bullying policy*).
- Address racist, discriminatory, and dehumanizing incidents (*Policy to Address Racist, Discriminatory, and Dehumanizing Incidents*).
- Implement positive behavioral interventions for students in special education (*Behavioral Interventions for Students in Special Education policy*).
- Enact comprehensive drug and alcohol prevention programs (*Alcohol and Other Drugs policy*).

This multi-faceted training strategy ensures that staff are equipped to address student behavioral health not only through direct referral protocols but also through proactive, preventative practices that foster a positive, safe, and inclusive school culture.

7. Authorization and Scope of Practice

This policy clearly defines the professional boundaries for school staff in addressing student behavioral health. The primary role of school employees who are not licensed health professionals is to identify students in need and refer them for support, not to diagnose or treat behavioral health conditions. This ensures that students are promptly and safely connected with appropriately qualified professionals.

To ensure all school employees act only within the authorization and scope of their credential or license, Da Vinci Schools establishes the following directives:

- All employees shall only act within the authorization and scope of practice of their respective credential or license.
- Only licensed or credentialed professionals are permitted to diagnose or treat behavioral health conditions.
- School personnel are authorized to provide first aid for injuries that occur at school but are not authorized to treat any serious illness or injury, or to give any internal first aid medication.
- All behavioral assessments and intervention services for students with disabilities will be provided only by individuals possessing the specific qualifications required by the California

Education Code.

- 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.

This policy ensures that all actions taken by Da Vinci Schools' employees are professional, ethical, and legally compliant, thereby prioritizing the safety, health, and well-being of every student we serve.

Approved and adopted by the Da Vinci Schools Board of Trustees on January 28, 2026

Approved and adopted by the Da Vinci Schools: L.A. County Board of Trustees on January 21, 2026