

E.5 Behavioural Needs or Mental Illness

Definitions

Students can experience behaviour, social/emotional, or mental health problems that range from mild to serious. Most students with social/emotional difficulties can be supported in school through regular discipline, counselling, and school-based services. A smaller number of students require more intensive support.

Students who require behaviour supports are students whose behaviours reflect dysfunctional interactions between the student and one or more elements of the environment, including the classroom, school, family, peers and community. This is commonly referred to as behaviour disorders. Behaviour disorders vary in their severity and effect on learning, interpersonal relations and personal adjustment.

Students Requiring Moderate Behaviour Support or Students with Mental Illness

Students who require **Moderate Behaviour Support** demonstrate one or more of the following:

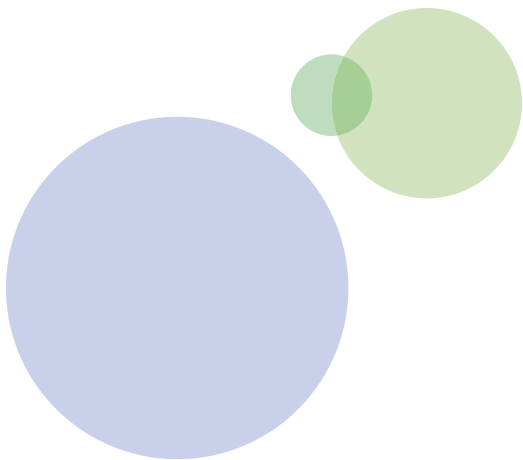
- behaviours such as aggression (of a physical, emotional or sexual nature) and/or hyperactivity;
- behaviours related to social problems such as delinquency, substance abuse, child abuse or neglect.

Students with **Mental Illness** are students who have been diagnosed by a qualified mental health clinician as having a mental health disorder. Students with mental illness demonstrate one or more of the following:

- negative or undesirable internalized psychological states such as anxiety, stress-related disorders, and depression;
- behaviours related to disabling conditions, such as thought disorders or neurological or physiological conditions.

To be identified in the category Moderate Behaviour Support or Mental Illness, students must also meet the following criteria:

- the frequency or severity of the behaviours or negative internalized states have a very disruptive effect on the classroom learning environment, social relations or personal adjustment; and
- they demonstrate the above behaviour(s) or conditions over an extended period of time, in more than one setting and with more than one person (teachers, peers); and
- they have not responded to support provided through normal school discipline and classroom management strategies.



Students Requiring Intensive Behaviour Intervention or Students with Serious Mental Illness

Students identified in this category are those most in need of intensive interventions. They are expected to be less than one percent (1%) of the student population province-wide. These students should have access to co-ordinated school/community interventions, which are based on inter-service/agency assessment processes that are required to manage, educate, and maintain the students in school and in their community.

Students Requiring Intensive Behaviour Intervention are eligible to be reported in this inclusive education funding category if they exhibit:

- antisocial, extremely disruptive behaviour in most environments (for example, classroom, school, family, and the community); and
- behaviours that are consistent/persistent over time.

Students with Serious Mental Illness eligible to be reported in this inclusive education funding category are those with:

- serious mental health conditions which have been diagnosed by a qualified mental health clinician (psychologist with appropriate training, psychiatrist, or physician); and
- serious mental illnesses which manifest themselves in profound withdrawal or other negative internalizing behaviours; and
- These students often have histories of profound problems, and present as very vulnerable, fragile students who are seriously 'at risk' in classroom and other environments without extensive support.

In addition to meeting one of the conditions above, to be eligible for inclusive education funding, these behaviour disorders and or illnesses must be:

- serious enough to be known to school and school district personnel and other community agencies and to warrant intensive interventions by other community agencies/service providers beyond the school; and
- a serious risk to the student or others, and/or with behaviours or conditions that significantly interfere with the student's academic progress and that of other students; and
- beyond the normal capacity of the school to educate, provided "normal capacity" is seen to include the typical inclusive education support/interventions such as school-based counselling, moderate behaviour supports, the use of alternate settings, and other means in the school environment.

Reduction in class size or placement in an alternate program or learning environment is not by itself a sufficient service to meet the criteria.

Identification and Assessment

The process of identification and assessment of students with behaviour disorders or mental illness sometimes begins at the classroom level, although these students are often identified in the community by mental health professionals. To be identified in this category, the behaviours in question should not be transitory but should generalize to different settings and individuals.

When teachers first notice a problem, they will consult with the parents and attempt alternate strategies to manage the behaviour or support the student in the classroom. If these prove unsuccessful, the teacher may seek assistance from other school-based services or from the school-based team. The teacher's observations should be incorporated into an identification and assessment process for educational purposes, as should the assessments of other professionals.

The school-based team may access other school or district support services, and/or request additional assessment. It may also be appropriate at this stage to involve the family's physician, child and youth mental health services, or other community agencies in the identification and intervention process.

Assessment should:

- analyze the student's functional behaviours in various settings and with different people who regularly are a part of their environment (functional behaviour assessment);
- integrate information from the different aspects of a student's life;
- focus on strengths as well as needs;
- rule out or address other conditions which may be precipitating or contributing to the behaviour (e.g., hearing loss, learning disabilities, side-effects of medication);
- clarify the characteristics of the behaviour disorder or mental illness;
- address the possibility of other medical or health impairments;
- contribute to the process of planning and evaluating the student's educational program.

The findings of the assessment should be used to plan support, interventions, and services needed by the student.

Planning and Implementation

In accordance with the process described in these sections, planning is done collaboratively by relevant school and district staff, parents and, when appropriate, relevant professionals, service providers, or agencies and the student.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care requires that an Individual Education Plan (IEP) be developed for each student included in these categories. The IEP describes:

- current behavioural and learning strengths and needs;
- the goals for the student's program referenced to measurable objectives;
- the behavioural strategies used to achieve the goals and measures for tracking student achievement of the goals;
- if applicable, specification of the components of the curriculum that will be adapted and/or modified;
- the resources needed to support the student;
- the names of staff responsible (school, community agencies) for implementing the plan;
- the role of the parents in supporting the plan;
- means of evaluating the efficacy of supports/interventions and a timeline for evaluation;
- decisions regarding where the plan will be implemented; and
- plans for transitions.

In general, these intervention programs should be implemented in the settings in which the behaviours are occurring, rather than through a change in placement. However, integrated approaches should not place the student, their peers, or those providing services in an "at risk" position (see Appendix H.10 Safe and Healthy Schools).

Some of these students may require more specialized services, including part or full-time placement in specialized learning environments (resource room, teaching and evaluation centre, or programs provided in co-ordination with other agencies) until the student can be assisted to re-enter the regular classroom on a full-time basis and/or successfully enter the world of work.

Planning for Students Requiring Intensive Behaviour Intervention or Students with Serious Mental Illness

For students requiring *intensive behaviour intervention or serious mental illness*, there must be one or more of the following additional services provided:

- ▶ direct interventions in the classroom by a specialist teacher or supervised education assistant to promote behavioural change or provide emotional support through implementing the plan outlined in the IEP;
- ▶ placement in a program designed to promote behavioural change and implement the IEP; and/or
- ▶ ongoing, individually implemented social skills training, and/or instruction in behavioural and learning strategies.

These services may be complemented/co-coordinated with:

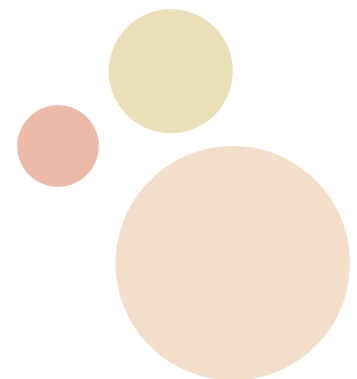
- ▶ in-depth therapy, counselling and/or support for the student or family in the community; or
- ▶ pharmacological treatment as prescribed and monitored by a physician.

In addition to the requirements for moderate support described above, the following are also required:

- ▶ an IEP, which is co-ordinated with intervention/care plans developed by appropriate community service providers or agencies in consultation with the family;
- ▶ evidence of a co-ordinated, cross-agency community planning such as integrated case management or 'wrap-around' planning;
- ▶ documentation that the district has exhausted its own resources and capacity to manage within the typical range of inclusive education support/interventions;
- ▶ evidence of a planned inter-agency or service provider review process, in a stated time frame, recognizing that many behavioural problems will be ameliorated if the interventions are appropriate.

Evidence of inter-agency or service provider involvement, without intensive and collaborative on-going planning and service co-ordination, is not sufficient in itself to warrant funding in this category.

Placement in this inclusive education funding category is not intended to be static from year to year, as it is expected that an intensive and coordinated approach, including in some cases medical intervention, will result in changes. Reviews should be conducted annually and more frequently if warranted. Districts may claim students in subsequent years in this category only if they are justified in doing so because of particular circumstances surrounding the intensity of each student's requirement for services and case management, as reflected in the student's IEP.



Personnel

Teachers

With sufficient training and experience, classroom teachers will be capable of including most students requiring behaviour and mental health supports and providing a program in which they can be successful, provided that support is available when needed. In-service training opportunities and a collaborative team approach are recommended to support and encourage the development of skills required.

Specialist teachers with responsibilities for supporting students in these categories should fulfill the qualifications described for a learning assistance teacher (see Section D.1 Learning Assistance Services).

In addition, boards should ensure that specialist teachers whose responsibilities are primarily concerned with programming for students with behaviour disorders or mental illness have appropriate training. These specialist teachers should possess general training in the area of inclusive education with additional coursework in the education of students with mental illness or behaviour disorders, motivational techniques, and behaviour management.

The skill set for specialist teachers in these programs should include:

- behavioural observation, analysis, strategies and management;
- consultative and collaborative skills;
- direction/supervision of behavioural intervention programs;
- adaptation of curriculum to meet a wide range of student learning needs; and
- counselling skills.

Child and youth personnel and education assistants

Child and youth workers or education assistants working with students requiring behaviour supports/ interventions should have sufficient skills and training for the duties they are assigned including:

- an understanding of behaviour disorders;
- observational, motivational, and behaviour management skills; and
- communication, cooperative and collaborative skills.

It should be noted that education assistants work under the direction of a teacher and the general supervision of a teacher or school principal. In-service training should include opportunities to further develop skills in these and related areas.

Evaluation and Reporting

The **K-12 Student Reporting Policy** pertains to all learners in the B.C. education system. A student who has a disability or diverse ability should receive regular communications of student learning in the same way as their peers in any other program and at the same time as the school and/or districts' regular reporting periods.

In most cases students identified in these categories will achieve the Learning Standards of the BC curriculum although some adaptation may be necessary (e.g., alternate evaluation methods). As outlined in the Inclusive Education section of the **K-12 Student Reporting Policy**, regular reporting procedures are used to communicate student learning for students who use adaptations to access and show their learning.

There will be very rare occasions where students require extensive modifications and are assessed and evaluated only on individualized learning goals as outlined in their Individual Education Plan (IEP), and not the Learning Standards of the curriculum for the course or grade they are enrolled. In these instances:

- Written Learning Updates and the Summary of Learning do not need to include a scale indicator or letter grade and percentage
- Written feedback is required that clearly explains the student's progress made towards their individualized learning goals and areas for further growth
- If a scale indicator or a letter grade and percentage are used on Written Learning Updates and the Summary of Learning, it must be noted that the student is being evaluated in relation to their individualized learning goals as outlined in their IEP and not the Learning Standards of the curriculum for the course or grade for which they are enrolled.

or more information, see the K-12 Student Reporting Policy Information for Educators and School Leaders at <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/reporting/information-for-educators-and-school-leaders>, and the K-12 Student Reporting Policy Communicating Student Learning Guidelines at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/k-12-student-reporting-policy-communicating-student-learning-guidelines.pdf>

Behaviour Needs or Mental Illness: Quick Guide Table

Category	Students Requiring Moderate Behaviour Supports or Students with Mental Illness	Students Requiring Intensive Behaviour Interventions or Students with Serious Mental Illness (Inclusive Education Funding Category)
Assessment Criteria Related to Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have documentation of a behavioural, mental health and/or psychological assessment which indicates needs related to behaviour or mental illness • Demonstrate aggression, hyperactivity, delinquency, substance abuse or neglect, anxiety, stress related disorders, depression, etc. • Severity of the behaviour or condition has disruptive effect on classroom learning, social relations, or personal adjustment • Behaviour exists over extended time and in more than one setting • Regular in-class strategies not sufficient to support behaviour needs of student; beyond common disciplinary interventions • Rule out other conditions which may be contributing to the behaviour (for example, side effects of medication, learning disabilities) • For Mental Illness, the diagnosis must be made by a qualified mental health clinician 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have documentation of a behavioural, mental health and/or psychological assessment which indicates the need for intensive intervention beyond the normal capacity of the school to educate • Demonstrate antisocial, extremely disruptive behaviour or profound withdrawal or other internalizing conditions in school • Behaviour or mental illness serious enough to be a risk to themselves or others and/or significantly interfere with academic progress of self and others • Behaviour persistent over time in most other settings • Behaviour or mental illness serious enough to warrant extensive interventions beyond the school • For Serious Mental Illness, the diagnosis must be made by a qualified mental health clinician (psychologist with appropriate training, psychiatrist or physician)
Criteria Related Planning and Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must develop IEP with goals that address student's behaviour or social/emotional needs and measures for student achievement of the goals • Must provide support services and adaptations/modifications as indicated on the IEP • No requirement for shared planning, implementation, or funding with other service providers or agencies, but does not preclude such arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must develop IEP with goals that address student's behaviour or conditions of the mental illness and measures for student achievement of the goals • Must provide support services and adaptations/modifications related to the behaviour or mental illness as indicated on the IEP • Documentation to show that school district has already exhausted resources normally used for moderate behaviour interventions • Requirement that both plan and delivery of service is coordinated with community service provider or agency (i.e. mental health clinician, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Mental Health, First Nations Social Worker). Not enough that another agency or ministry is "involved".