

When a student is having difficulty in school, referral to psychological services at the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board may be helpful. Psychological services may help teachers and other staff understand your child better, and help develop a program that best meets your child's needs.

This brochure answers questions parent(s)/guardian(s) ask most often about working with psychological services. Please read it before signing the consent form.

Why would the school refer my child for psychological services?

School staff refer students for psychological services if they would like to know more about your child's strengths and needs to help plan the best possible educational program. We are able to provide detailed information about how your child learns as well as recommendations to help your child thrive. Psychological services can also offer ideas and tips on how you can help support your child's learning at home.

What kind of services could my child receive?

The type of service will depend on your child's needs. We may:

- watch how your child acts and works with others at school
- speak with you, others who care for your child or school staff
- review psychological assessment done in the past
- complete an assessment (detailed testing) of your child
- make recommendations to school staff on how best to meet your child's strengths and needs.

The attached consent form describes what services will be provided specifically for your child. We also may speak with you further about any benefits or risks of receiving the service.

Are there other ways to help my child?

Parent(s)/guardian(s) sometimes ask if there are other ways to get help for their child without using the school board's psychological services. You could choose to talk to your child's teacher, or ask for a teacher assessment only. Teachers are trained to measure children's academic (learning) skills and to help them with their courses. Psychological services staff members, however, have the specialized training to identify what is causing your child's problems.

Psychological services can also be accessed outside of the school board by a private practitioner for a fee. If you have an assessment done privately, sharing the results of this assessment with school staff is encouraged as we can use the information to inform programming for your child.

The College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario may also have information of interest. www.cpbao.on.ca



www.kprschools.ca
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Psychological Services for Students

A Guide for Parents/Guardians



Please read this guide **BEFORE** signing an accompanying consent form.

What is a psychological assessment?

Once we have received your permission, we will begin to collect information about your child from you, your child's teachers and your child. We may do this through interviews, by looking at your child's school record, by watching your child in the classroom, and by asking you, your child and the teachers to fill out questionnaires.

When we complete an assessment, we follow several steps:

1. We will meet with your child individually. Your child will complete psychological tests that measure things such as:
 - academic skills, such as reading, writing and math
 - intelligence
 - ability to pay attention and memory
 - daily living skills (e.g., how well children can help themselves adjust to new situations)
 - emotional well-being (e.g., your child's mood, anxiety or sadness)
 - behaviour

Your child may not be given all of these tests. The tests will depend on your child's needs and the reasons for being referred to psychological services.

2. If your child has worked with other school board specialists, such as a speech and language pathologist or mental health clinician, we may review any reports they have completed as well.
3. If needed, we may ask your permission to contact others who have worked with your child, such as your family doctor, a child protection agency or other professionals. We may review any other psychological assessments that have been done in the past.
4. We will interpret and reach conclusions based on all the information we have collected during the assessment. We will then meet to discuss the results and give recommendations to help your child.
5. We will prepare a written report that describes the results of the assessment and recommendations. We will give you a

copy of the report and keep another copy in psychological services digital or paper files for at least ten years after the student leaves school.

6. A copy of the report will be put in your child's Ontario Student Record (OSR) at school. Teachers and appropriate school staff who will be working with your child will be able to access the report. Once the report is in the OSR, only the principal can remove it. You can ask the principal, in writing, to consider removing the report at any time.

Who will be seeing my child?

Psychological services staff members are all highly trained professionals who care about children and youth. Each one has a Master's Degree or a Doctorate in education or psychology. The psychological assessment of your child will be completed or supervised by a registered member of the College of Psychologists & Behaviour Analysts of Ontario.

Why do you need my permission?

Ontario law states that a parent(s)/guardian(s) with legal decision-making responsibility must give "informed consent" for any kind of psychological service, before it begins. "Informed consent" means you must understand the type of psychological service your child will receive, the expected benefits and risks, any possible side effects, other actions you could take and any consequences that would be likely if your child did not receive the psychological service.

This brochure provides the information you need. Please read it carefully. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you have other questions, please ask us before you sign a consent form.

For students up to 17 years of age, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must give permission for their child to receive psychological services. We also take the time to speak with the student to explain what the testing will include and to answer any of their questions. Students who are 18 years of age or older may sign the consent form if they are capable of giving their informed consent. If there is any doubt that the student is able to understand and give permission, we will ask the parent(s)/guardian(s) to give written consent as well.

If you decide that you no longer want psychological services, you may withdraw your consent by contacting the principal or psychological services staff member working with your child.

What are the benefits of working with psychological services?

Our staff members have years of special training and education to help them identify a child's specific strengths and needs related to learning, emotions and behaviour. We can help identify problems and challenges such as learning disabilities, developmental delays, anxiety, depression or behavioural problems. Once we better understand the challenges your child is facing, we can make recommendations to help your child cope with school. We also can give you tips on dealing with behaviour or supporting your child. Any child who is having difficulties can benefit from our services.

What are the risks?

Your child may find parts of the assessment interesting, but they may also find parts of the assessment challenging. A small number of children may feel anxious or distressed when completing the activities. We are well trained in helping children deal with this type of reaction and we will stop the testing until your child is able to continue. Please let us know about any concerns you have before testing begins.

We may find that your child has problems you did not expect. Knowing this information will help your child in the long run, but it can be upsetting at first for you and your child.

The assessment may lead to changes to your child's educational program. This could mean a change in timetable or some time working with a different teacher. In some cases, the assessment may determine if your child meets or does not meet qualifications for participation in a specialized classroom based on Ministry of Education guidelines.