

## Further Information Regarding Informed Consent

Informed consent is the result of a process of reaching an agreement to work together collaboratively, rather than simply having a consent form signed. In obtaining informed consent, parents and guardians are provided with as much information as a reasonable or prudent person would want to know, in an appropriate manner, before making a decision or consenting to a psycho-educational assessment or service for their child.

### **The Purpose and Nature of a Psycho-educational Assessment**

The purpose of this assessment is to obtain information about the child's abilities and needs in order to assist school personnel with educational planning. A psycho-educational assessment gathers information about a student's strengths and weaknesses in various domains (e.g., cognitive, achievement, processing, language, and behaviour). The assessment process is driven by individual student need and can include any of the following: interviews, rating scales, observations, file review, testing, curriculum-based measurement, and history taking, and take into consideration response to intervention. The assessment process typically requires the School Psychologist to work with the referred student 1:1, outside of the regular classroom, during regular school hours. At the end of the assessment, a report is written and shared with the parents or guardians, and relevant school personnel during a meeting. The parents or guardians will generally receive a copy of the report at that meeting and have an opportunity to ask questions at that time. The report will become part of the student's record, kept within a confidential file. Copies of the report will be maintained in paper and electronic forms.

### **The Benefits and Risks to Assessment**

Generally, assessment is organized to answer questions about a student's learning or behaviour. It may help school personnel gain a better understanding of the child's learning strengths and challenges, and help the School-Based Team (SBT) develop insights into needed changes, as well as develop new strategies, accommodations and adaptations that may be necessary to improve the child's learning. The assessment may also lead to the student being diagnosed and/or identified as having special educational needs. One possible outcome parents or guardians could hear is that their child has a learning disability or an intellectual disability. Identifying a student as meeting British Columbia Ministry of Education criteria as a student with special needs may make it easier for the student to access some additional services that may be beneficial. It is important that any concerns or questions that develop over the assessment period be mentioned to the School Psychologist promptly so that they can be alleviated or addressed.

It should be noted that not all assessments lead to a diagnosis or designation, and students may also not meet the current established criteria (e.g., for the Ministry of Education, CLBC or other agencies) and, if previously designated, this may result in a "de-designation". Should this happen, discussion will occur as to what supports, services and adaptations a student will be able to access, or if any follow-up or additional assessments may be beneficial.

## **Alternatives to Assessment**

The decision to assess the child could be postponed to another time, and the current educational programme or placement maintained. A wait-and-see strategy can be a reasonable choice as other alternatives to a full assessment are implemented and evaluated. Such a strategy might provide new and useful information about the child's needs and abilities. However, decisions about the educational programme of a student should be made with adequate information, so the absence of psycho-educational information may limit the effectiveness of other actions or delay the implementation of appropriate interventions. Depending on the finances or services available to the parents or guardians, an assessment could also be completed privately, by individuals or agencies not connected to the school district. If shared with the school staff, outside assessment reports may then be reviewed by school district personnel to determine if the student meets the criteria for designation within the district.

## **Mutual Responsibilities**

The student's parents/guardians and teachers will ensure that the child undergoing the assessment is prepared for any change of routine, and is made to feel as comfortable as possible regarding the assessment. The School Psychologist will ensure that a written copy of the assessment is given to the school in a timely manner. School personnel will be responsible for setting up a meeting to discuss the results with parents/guardians, the School Psychologist, and the child's teachers.

## **The Ongoing Right to Refuse or Rescind Consent**

Consent is not valid if it occurs under the following conditions: coercion, undue influence, misrepresentation, fraud, or duress. Moreover, the child's participation is voluntary and consent can be withdrawn at any time. The right to refuse consent can be invoked at any point during the assessment process by contacting the School Psychologist or school principal. The consent for assessment (signature) is time limited, lasting for a calendar year from the date the consent form is signed.

## **The Limits to Confidentiality**

All documents and the written report relating to the assessment are the property of the school district. The information is considered private, confidential and protected by law. Sharing this information with anyone other than authorized employees of the school district requires the parent's or guardian's written consent. However, there are limits on this confidentiality, and it may be revoked if: the student represents an imminent danger to themselves or others, the student is in need of protection and a report must be filed with the appropriate agency, a court orders the disclosure of the records, or as required under the Infants Act. In addition, as part of the student record, the written report may be included when files are transferred to the receiving school if the student leaves SD 61.

# School Psychologist Services



## Data Storage

The B.C Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act requires the school district to inform parents/guardians that some assessment measures use web-based administration and/or scoring programmes, with data stored on servers in both Canada and the United States. The school district requires written consent for the child’s information to be stored on these servers. Depending on the assessment measures used, some of the child’s information will be subject to the US “Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy” laws; however, no unnecessary personal information (e.g., full name, school name, telephone number, address) is required to use these programmes. The information to be stored is safeguarded and encrypted to ensure security and unauthorized access, and deleted once the assessment is completed.

## Registration

All school psychologists employed by the Greater Victoria School District (SD #61) are either Licenced School Psychologist registrants or Registered Psychologist registrants of the College of Psychologists of British Columbia (CPBC). CPBC regulates the profession of psychology in the public interest in accordance with the *Health Professions Act* by setting the standards for competent and ethical practice, promoting excellence, and taking action when standards are not met. Information for the public respecting the laws, the Code of Conduct, and guidelines governing the practice of psychological services, including school psychology, in B.C. can be found on the CPBC website. If you have questions or concerns about the practice of a registrant, the CPBC website also provides information regarding what steps can be taken, including the process of making a formal complaint to the College. The reader is directed to the public page of the CPBC website for more information (<https://collegeofpsychologists.bc.ca/public/>)