

Topic:	Age Consent for Professional Services from School Social Workers
Effective:	January 2009
Review/Revision Date:	January 2017
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Education (Student Services)

INTENDED PURPOSE:

The Halton District School Board employs school social workers to provide professional services to its students. This procedure addresses age of consent and the consent process.

PROCEDURES:**1. Referral Procedure for Administrators and Teaching Personnel**

1.1 Referrals are presented at a School Resource Team meeting for information or discussion. Social Workers will provide referral forms where appropriate and needed. Exceptions to this process are listed below and, when they occur, the Administrator, and/or designate, will be informed.

1.2 Exceptions:

The School Administrator may request the intervention of a Social Worker in situations that require prompt interventions to safeguard the physical/emotional well-being of the student or others.

The Social Worker may consult, observe in a classroom, or have initial contact with a student at the request of the principal, student or parent.

Attendance referrals may be identified and referred to the School Social Worker, in their role of Attendance Counsellor, outside of the SRT process.

1.3 The Secondary School Administrator, or designate, should regularly inform students, parents (or guardians) of the existence of School Social Work services in their school setting. This may occur through ongoing publication in the school newsletter, through service updates at parent council meetings, at grade 8 Parent Information/Orientation evenings or other ongoing information sources. This information should include a statement about the Age of Consent.

1.4 Students who enter secondary school should be informed of School Social Work services and each secondary school should outline a process for disseminating information about the service and location of the service within their setting.

2. Age of Consent and Consent Process

2.1 A student may consent to the services of a School Social Worker within the Secondary School setting. Parental Consent is not required.

2.2 A student who is age 14 and under, and attending an Elementary School, must have written or verbal consent of a parent to obtain School Social Work service, unless the support is related to Attendance concerns.

2.3 A School Social Worker will utilize and document an Informed Consent process with each student who accesses service, regardless of referral source or age, to ascertain the students understanding of the risks and benefits in utilizing this support.

2.4 Regardless of a student's age, a School Social Worker will actively encourage the involvement of parents/guardians in the consent process and seek parental assent to service except where:

2.4.1 The student is living independently of parent/guardian, or

2.4.2 It is in the best interests of the student to receive support without parental assent; where this is the case, the School Social Worker will continue to actively encourage the student to consent to parental involvement when it is clinically appropriate to so.

A School Social Worker will keep all documentation of support in a file that is separate from the Ontario School Record according to current Halton District School Board SSW documentation and filing procedures.