

**SPECIAL SERVICES**

**Guidance Services**

**Guidance and Counseling Services**

This policy supersedes Policy 2501.2.

**I. PURPOSE**

To ensure that guidance and counseling services in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) are provided in compliance with the Standards of Quality for Public Schools in Virginia, the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, and the regulations of the Board of Education of Virginia.

**II. DEFINITION**

Pursuant to the Standards of Quality for Public Schools in Virginia, each school shall make reasonably available, with available resources, to all students, the following guidance and counseling services:

A. Academic guidance helps students and their parents or guardians to acquire knowledge of the curriculum choices available to students, to plan a program of studies, to arrange and interpret academic testing, and to seek postsecondary academic opportunities.

B. Career guidance helps students acquire information to plan for postsecondary education and career opportunities.

C. Personal or social counseling helps students develop an understanding of themselves and the rights and needs of others, resolve conflict, and define individual goals that reflect their interests and aptitudes. Such counseling may be provided either in groups (e.g., all fifth graders) in which generic issues of social development are addressed or through structured individual or small group multisession counseling that focuses on the specific concerns of the participant(s) (e.g., social skills, grief, or anger management).

**III. REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES**

A. Parents shall be provided written notification annually about the academic and career guidance and the personal or social counseling programs that are available to their children, along with written notice of the opportunity to decline participation (opt out of) for their child in any or all of these programs. The written notification shall include the following:

**Policy 2501.3**

Page 2

1. The purpose and general description of the program.
  2. The procedure by which parents may review materials to be used in guidance and counseling programs at their child's school.
  3. Procedures by which parents may limit their child's participation in such programs.
- B. No student shall be required to participate in any guidance or counseling program to which the student's parents object.
1. Parents may elect in writing to have their child not participate in (opt out of) academic or career guidance or personal or social counseling services of a generic nature as described in section II.C. above, at any time. The opt out choice remains in effect throughout the student's K-12 career in FCPS unless written notification is received from the parent or guardian rescinding this choice.
  2. Parents or guardians shall receive written notification from counselors for student participation in short-term personal or social counseling of an individual or group nature.
  3. Parental or guardian consent is not required for short-duration personal or social counseling and crisis intervention that is needed to maintain order, discipline, or a productive learning environment.
- C. Counseling techniques that are beyond the scope of the professional certification or training of counselors, including hypnosis or other psychotherapeutic techniques that are normally employed in medical or clinical settings and focus on mental illness or psychopathology, are prohibited.
- D. School personnel are prohibited from recommending the use of psychotropic medications for any students. They may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner. With the written consent of the student's parent or guardian, counselors may consult with a medical practitioner who is serving the student.
- E. Information and records of personal or social counseling shall be kept confidential and separate from a student's educational records and cannot be disclosed to third parties without prior parental consent or as otherwise provided by law.

**Policy 2501.3**  
Page 3

Legal References: 8VAC20-620-10, Regulations Regarding School Guidance and  
Counseling Programs in the Public Schools of Virginia  
Standards of Quality for Public Schools in Virginia  
Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia

See also the current versions of: Regulation 2122, Formal Short-Term Personal or Social  
Counseling Services  
Regulation 2501, Rules and Procedures for Guidance and  
Counseling Services  
Regulation 2701, Student Personal Data

See also the annual notice: Survey, Records, Curriculum, Privacy, and Related Rights; Opt Out  
Forms

Policy  
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