

## Are the Sessions Confidential?

All information is gathered from school staff, parents and the student in a sensitive and confidential manner. Information relevant to the assessment (i.e. learning about the student's strengths and needs) will be shared with school staff and parents at a follow-up case conference. However, under certain circumstances there are limits to confidentiality. By law, all professionals are required to report to the authorities any suspicion that a child may be the victim of abuse or neglect. Secondly, if the gathered information indicates that there may be potential harm to themselves or others, then by law, the Psychometrist must override confidentiality. Finally, if your child's file is subpoenaed for a court case, we must supply all information in the file. These examples illustrate that in certain circumstances, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

When a student is having difficulty in school, a referral to Psychological Services can be very helpful. Parents may have several questions about the purpose of the referral and what it involves. The purpose of this brochure is to answer some of the questions that parents most often ask.

## What if I have further questions?

Any additional questions you have may be discussed with:

1. Your school principal, or
2. Psychology Staff, who may be reached at the Education Centre, at (519) 336-1500, ext 461 (Sarnia); or (519) 354-3775, ext 267 (Chatham).

Revised, January, 2008

# A Parent's Guide to Psychological Services



## PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT SARNIA CHATHAM

|                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| PHONE:<br>(519) 336-1500, ext. 461 | PHONE:<br>(519) 354-3775, ext. 267 |
| FAX:<br>(519) 336-1586             | FAX:<br>(519) 354-3219             |

TO AVOID LONG DISTANCE CALL TOLL FREE:  
1- 800-754-7125

Psychological Services is a department within the Lambton Kent District School Board, staffed by a Registered Member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario and Psychometrists. Psychometrists have master's level university training in psychology including child development and assessment practices and a Registered Member of the College of Psychologists employed by the school board supervises their work.

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### When does Psychological Services become involved?

Schools in the Lambton Kent District School Board are committed to providing appropriate programming for all students. If a student experiences difficulty in the classroom, the school-based team in consultation with parents will try a variety of school-based interventions.

If these interventions are not successful, the school-based team consults with a Psychometrist about the appropriateness of a referral for psychological intervention. If a referral to Psychological Services is considered suitable for your child, you will be provided with an opportunity to provide informed consent by signing a form to indicate that you understand the assessment and/or counselling procedures and possible outcomes for your child.

### What services are provided by the Psychology Staff?

1. **Psychological Assessment.** A psychological assessment is a way of collecting information about your child to more fully understand why they may be struggling at school. The assessment may include discussions with your child's teacher(s), a review of your child's Ontario Student Record (OSR), interviews with you and/or your child, and the individual administration of the following types of tests:
  - achievement tests (*how the student is doing in basic school subjects such as reading, math and spelling*)
  - intelligence tests (*how capable the student is and how the pattern of strengths and needs helps to explain possible learning problems*)
  - information processing tests (*specific strengths and needs in processing and making sense of the information presented at school*)
  - behaviour scales (*strengths and needs in behavioural and social functioning at school*)
  - social-emotional tests (*how the student views and feels about themselves and others*)
2. **Consultation** with teachers and other board staff regarding the educational and psychological needs of your child. With appropriate consent, this may include a review of your child's OSR, classroom observations, interviews with your child, one or more parent conferences, collaboration with other agencies, and/or offering suggestions or recommendations to assist the pupil.
3. **Short-term Counselling** on school-related issues, such as academic motivation, social skills, conflict resolution and self-esteem.
4. **Behavioural Programming** assistance for classroom teachers.
5. **Assisting with referrals** to other professionals or agencies, and follow-up consultation with those agencies.

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### How Do I Find Out About the Results of a Psychological Assessment?

As the parent, you will be invited by school staff to attend a case conference at the school so that the psychometrist will be able to present the findings and make recommendations. The conference will include relevant school staff and everyone will be encouraged to add to the discussion and ask questions. The goal of the conference is to share information and to work together in planning a course of action to benefit your child's learning at school. A copy of the report is placed in the OSR (for the use of relevant school staff) and a copy is given to parents. As well, copies are stored at the Board Office in a confidential psychology file where test documents are kept. This information is stored in locked files for a period of at least ten years after the student turns 18. Assessment reports may be sent to other persons or agencies outside of the school board only with parents' permission on a signed release form.

### What Could Happen Following an Assessment?

The assessment results could lead to further decisions and changes for the student at the school. The report will include recommendations to address your child's special learning needs. Based on the results of the assessment, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) may be prepared by school staff to specify educational objectives for the student and the strategies used to meet those objectives. The school team may also consider referring the student to a Special Education Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meeting to determine whether the student has exceptional needs. If this is the case, the regular program may be modified or adapted in order to better meet the identified needs of the student. The student may receive support services from the Special Education Resource Teacher or from other specialized providers. Findings outlined in the report may also indicate that a special diagnosis is warranted (e.g. learning disability).