



South Slave Divisional Education Council

School Community Counselor Position Description

South Slave Divisional Education Council

The South Slave Divisional Education Council strives to provide relevant programs and resources to the students of the South Slave communities so they may fulfill individual education goals and become contributing members of society.

IDENTIFICATION

Job Title: School Community Counselor	Location: Hay River	School/Office: Princess Alexandra School
Position Number: 99-4922		

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

(The main reason for the position, in what context and what is the overall end result)

The School Community Counselor (SCC) position at Princess Alexandra School is designed to be a flexible position that fulfills a number of roles based on the needs of the student body of Princess Alexandra School. School Community Counselor position descriptions, Student Support Worker position descriptions, as well as the Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling (2006) were examined in order to develop the Princess Alexandra School-specific position.

The Princess Alexandra School SCC provides advocacy, counseling, support services, and referrals for children, youth and families that encourage mental health and well being, and active and successful participation in school programs and activities. The SCC operates under the Education Act and the policies and procedures established by the district, region, and school.

SCOPE

(The way that the position contributes to and impacts on the organization)

The SCC reports to the Principal and is under the indirect supervision of the PST/Vice Principal. They work closely with school administration and staff to provide a variety of individual, family, group and crisis counseling and referral services to students and families. The SCC is familiar with many of the challenges facing children, youth, and families at home, at school and in the community. The SCC is also familiar with current research and resources about the issues facing children, youth, families and communities, and with effective strategies to address these issues. The SCC will be informed about community services, programs and resources so that effective and efficient referrals and placements can be made when required.

The SCC incorporates the Goals of Schooling (physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual) and the Continuum of Prevention (Honoring the Spirit of our Children: Framework for School Counseling Programs in the Northwest Territories) into their school counseling practice, manage their practice using the Canadian Counseling Association Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, and Counseling Ethics Casebook 2000.

The SCC provides support and wellness services and referrals by providing information to children, youth, families, school staff and communities, providing crisis counseling and support, providing on-going supports and wellness services, and by providing advocacy and referral services when required.

In addition, the Princess Alexandra School SCC assists with implementing specialized and modified learning and educational activities in order to provide a positive learning experience for students with special needs or students who require additional support. The SCC works with special needs/additional needs students either individually or in small groups to provide academic assistance. The SCC ensures that special needs/additional needs students are provided with positive learning environments and have an opportunity to learn effective listening and communication skills and good work habits.

RESPONSIBILITIES

(Major responsibilities and target accomplishments expected of the position including the typical problems encountered in carrying out the responsibilities.)

The specific duties of the SCC will be determined by the Principal, Program Support Teacher and/or Classroom Teacher(s) based on the needs of students within the school. These duties vary from year to year and from time to time. In general, these duties will include, but may not be limited to, the following:

1. Provide counseling and guidance to students by:

Main Activities

- Following guidelines relating to confidentiality, integrity and objectivity using the Canadian Counseling Association Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, and Counseling Ethics Casebook 2000.
- Counseling individual students seeking assistance or a "listening ear" to share a success or discuss a problem in their life, and those individuals identified by other school staff as needing guidance in regards to study skills, adverse behavior, discipline, and family or community situations.
- Establishing and maintaining good rapport with all students.
- Promoting positive self-esteem and assist students to learn and apply realistic problem solving strategies and effective communication skills.
- Gathering and providing to students (in consultation with administration) appropriate information relevant to community and student related problems and concerns.
- Discussing with students, individually or in groups, their beliefs, values, opinions, feelings, about the community, social and student-related problems and concerns.
- Promoting tolerance and understanding through the breakdown of bias, discrimination and stereotyping.
- Mediating between students and students, and making recommendations to students and teachers in disputes or similar problems.
- Reinforcing student positive behavior.
- Monitoring student attendance as required. Researching children and youth histories through available student records.
- Providing short-term support to children and youth at the earliest indication of a problem.

- Providing long-term support to children and youth to decrease the impact of an existing severe problem.
- Identifying serious problems (drugs, abuse, addictions, illness etc...) and making the appropriate referral.
- Consulting appropriate agencies when their area of expertise is required and working as a team member with these agencies.
- Referring/contacting the appropriate agencies (social services, hospital, alcohol and drug worker, RCMP), when necessary, in consultation with the principal and School Team. Providing support to the students who must attend court.
- Preparing and delivering presentations in classrooms.
- Recording and maintaining accurate, confidential information for all students and parents contacted.
- Maintaining regular contact and follow-up with students.

2. To promote, support and maintain school, family and community relationships by:

Main Activities

- Following guidelines relating to confidentiality, integrity and objectivity at all times.
- Working with students and parents to clarify the purpose and relevance of education to future lifestyle, and assisting students in making this connection.
- Working cooperatively with school staff and parents to promote physical, social, spiritual, emotional and intellectual well-being of the students.
- Encouraging parents to participate in their child's education by organizing group sessions or workshops on how to become involved; by encouraging parents to visit the school and attend school activities.
- Developing, maintaining and building positive school-family and school-community relationships in order to create positive reinforcement for learning and to reduce attendance and tardiness problems.
- Emphasizing the need for and importance of regular attendance in relation to success in school and thus for future lifestyle.
- Encouraging parents, through a variety of ways, to visit the school at any time during the day as well as in the evening when special events are taking place.
- Participating in consultative discussions and act as a resource person between parents, students and teachers.
- Advocating for the student and explaining the problem to the family when warranted.
- Assisting children, youth, families, staff and administration in recognizing the individual needs of children and youth.
- Acting as a resource person in meetings with parents and teachers to discuss problem areas and corrective measures.
- Attending interagency meetings for the benefit of children and youth.
- Providing support to new staff when requested.
- Maintaining liaison with community groups to promote awareness, tolerance, and understanding of educational and school issues and solicit their advice and support.

3. To support, maintain and promote school-wide EBS program by:

Main Activities

- Identifying problem areas (attendance, bullying, substance abuse, etc...) and finding workable solutions.
- Counting, tracking and celebrating student achievement through PAS coupons data.
- Maintaining Easy Discipline electronic and paper files by inputting EBS data from FYI and ODR forms.
- Tracking and keeping files on the school's Lunch Program, including student attendance statistics and students who require lunches from the school's canteen.
- Acting as Liaison with the Hay River Soup Kitchen.
- Maintaining an updated list of students who have lost the privilege of staying at school for lunch and student suspensions.
- Addressing behavioral expectations and developing solutions that mitigate behavioral concerns.
- Participating in the school's EBS CEP Committee.
- Preparing EBS and Lunch reports for the Principal for submission to the DEA and regular meetings with the Supervisor.

4. To deliver appropriate and general learning programs and activities based on students' needs in order to ensure students have an opportunity for a successful learning experience by:

Main Activities

- Tutoring individual students, working with small/large groups of students or in a team teaching situation with the teacher, always under the supervision of the teacher.
- Providing assistance to designated students to ensure the highest possible degree of inclusion within the educational and social programs of the school.
- Providing appropriate learning activities.
- Reinforcing classroom instruction with individuals and/or small groups.
- Promoting the growth and independence of each student.
- Teaching social and emotional skills that enable the successful management of life tasks (such as learning, forming relationships, solving everyday problems, and adapting to the complex demands of growth and development).
- Ensuring the safety of all students.
- Assisting the teacher with classroom discipline according to guidelines developed in cooperation with the teacher.
- Assisting in evaluating students' understanding of directions, concepts and/or progress.
- Clarifying teacher and school expectations, directions for students and vice versa.
- Encouraging students to develop independent skills in working, thinking and communicating.
- Keeping records and logs of activities and students.
- Providing debriefing opportunities as required.

- 5. To participate in supervisory and extra-curricular activities in order to provide opportunities for all students to become active in cultural, sport and other activities and events by:**

Main Activities

- Supervising students in the school, on the school ground and in other locations.
- Patrolling school grounds and halls at recess and lunch hour as per duty schedule.
- Monitoring students on field trips and during extra-curricular activities, as required
- Developing and delivering Exploratory classes
- Participating in the school team upon request.
- Attending committees (i.e. literacy, beautification, etc).
- Participating in staff meetings.
- Taking advantage of personal skills that could benefit students through participation in extra curricular activities.

- 6. To function as a member of the school staff in the area of public relations in cooperation with administrative and teaching staff by:**

Main Activities

- Operating according to school procedures and education policies.
- Acting as a resources person for school staff/DEA for locally developed programs.
- Representing the school and education in a positive light at all times.
- Providing information (only in consultation with administration) on school activities to local radio and newspapers.

- 7. To participate in ongoing professional development activities by:**

Main Activities

- Attending teacher workshops where possible.
- Participating in school professional development and activity days.
- Undertaking professional development opportunities not provided by the employer.

- 8. To perform other related duties as required.**

Position Security:

- ☐ No CRC required,
- ☐ Position of Trust – CRC required
- ☐ Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a CRC.

Official Language Considerations:

English required. One or more of the local Aboriginal languages and/or French a definite asset.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

(The knowledge, skills and attitudes required for satisfactory job performance)

Knowledge

Incumbent must have the ability to work independently with a minimum of supervision. Skills in managing a varied caseload is required; the nature of the caseload requires a high level of skill in problem solving techniques and the ability to reach sound decisions in high stressed situations. Exceptional skills in communication and interviewing techniques are required in both written and verbal form, and effective listening skills are essential to fulfill the demands of the position. The incumbent must have the ability to work effectively in a cross-cultural setting, have direct counselling experience, and have an understanding of human behaviour and development as well as family dynamics.

Skills

The incumbent must demonstrate the following skills:

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| ✓ excellent interpersonal skills | ✓ project management skills |
| ✓ team building | ✓ ability to work in a multi-cultural setting with young people, staff and parents |
| ✓ analytical and problem solving skills | ✓ ability to work with students with special needs |
| ✓ planning and organizational skills | ✓ ability to speak the local language may be a requirement dependant on the students who have been identified with special needs |
| ✓ decision making skills | ✓ ability to use sign language in special cases |
| ✓ effective verbal and listening communications skills | ✓ ability to read instructions, IEPs, minutes of meetings |
| ✓ effective written communications skills | ✓ ability to write and maintain accurate student records |
| ✓ conflict management and resolution skills | |
| ✓ stress and anger management skills | |
| ✓ time management skills | |
| ✓ ability to deal with difficult situations | |
| ✓ computer skills, including Excel | |

Personal Attributes

The incumbent must maintain strict confidentiality in performing the duties of the School Community Counselor. The incumbent must also demonstrate the following personal attributes:

- ✓ be honest and trustworthy
- ✓ be empathetic to student needs and circumstances
- ✓ be positive and respectful
- ✓ possess cultural awareness and sensitivity
- ✓ be flexible
- ✓ be dependable, self-motivated, demonstrate sound work ethics and act as a role model for students
- ✓ demonstrate patience and self-control

A degree in social work, counselling or an equivalent field, with three years experience working with school aged children. A valid Class 5 driver's license is required.

WORKING CONDITIONS

(The unavoidable, externally imposed conditions under which the work must be performed and which create hardship for the incumbent including the frequency and duration of occurrence of physical demands, environmental conditions, demands on one's senses and mental demands.)

Physical Demands

(The nature of physical effort leading to physical fatigue)

With the approval of the Principal or Superintendent, it is anticipated that the Counsellor may be required to perform duties outside the traditional hours of school operation that include visiting homes and contact with other community agencies. Client contact is high, telephone use is frequent.

Environmental Conditions

(The nature of adverse environmental conditions affecting the incumbent)

Environment is generally comfortable with exposure to some children who may be suffering from colds and other contagious illness. May require some work outdoors (travel, home visits, cultural camps and playground observation). Travel is required and transportation may occur by land or air as weather conditions permit. Road conditions may vary from fair to poor.

Certain students may display inappropriate behaviors such as abusive language or may have personal hygiene problems or lack of personal habits. The SCC is exposed to cold and inclement weather on a daily basis.

Sensory Demands

(The nature of demands on the incumbent's senses)

Sensory demands include use of the computer, which may cause eyestrain and occasional headaches. The classroom environment can also be noisy and stressful. The personal hygiene of some students may be offensive.

Mental Demands

(Conditions that may lead to mental or emotional fatigue)

Family work and community demands create a great deal of mental stress as decisions made may cause an unfavourable reaction from families, community and client. Formal written reports require recommendations to other agencies and may have serious implications upon the client. The counsellor works mainly in a school office environment with frequent interactions with students, parents and teachers throughout the day. Working with parents and students on sensitive issues can be extremely stressful.

SCCs work with students who require additional assistance and support and who do not generally achieve the same level of success in the classroom as other students. Many of these students have a high level of needs and may not react in a typical manner. The high needs of the students and the lack of success often leads to frustration and emotional stress for the SCC. In some cases, students may not attend regularly and/or make the expected progress, which can lead to frustration and emotional fatigue given the time and energy provided by the School Community Counselor.