

School Social Workers

WHO ARE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS?

Social work services are provided by social workers who are registered with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers. The academic qualifications for school social workers range from a Bachelor of Social Work Degree (B.S.W.) to a Master of Social Work Degree (M.S.W.).

Support through Social Work and Attendance Services in the York Region District School Board is provided during the school year.

Social Work and Attendance Services are a part of the York Region District School Board's Student Services Department.

CONSENT TO SERVICE

Students under 12 years of age require the consent of their parent/guardian for a school social worker to begin service.

Students ages 12 and above are encouraged to involve parents by obtaining parent/guardian consent for social work services. However, on a case by case basis, parental consent may be waived depending on the individual student's situation. Where overriding issues of the health and safety of the student arise, a decision may be made to inform the parents.

Students ages 16 and 17 years, who have withdrawn from parental control, may provide consent on their own behalf.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Contact your local school for information on who to speak with for further details.

Chief of Social Work and Attendance Services
Student Services Department can be contacted at:

York Region District School Board
Centre for Leadership and Learning
300 Harry Walker Pkwy. South
Newmarket, ON, L3Y 8E2

Telephone:
905-727-3141 - (Aurora/King)

905-895-7216 - (Newmarket/East Gwillimbury)

905-722-3201 - (Georgina)

416-969-8131 - (Toronto/Markham/Richmond Hill/
Vaughan/Whitchurch-Stouffville)

Fax:
905-727-1931

Automated Attendant Telephone:
905-727-0022 905-895-7227
905-722-6255 416-969-7170

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60 Wellington Street, West Box 40, Aurora, Ontario L4G 3H2
905.727.0022

LDD00321

A Guide for Parents and Guardians



WHAT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS?

School social workers focus on helping students find solutions to the social and emotional factors which impact a student's school performance. They are knowledgeable and trained to assist students, families and school communities.

School social workers offer a broad range of services, which may include:

- Advocacy
- Assessment
- Attendance Counselling
- Case Conferences
- Conflict Resolution
- Consultation with students, families, school staff and community services
- Crisis Intervention
- Participation in Violence/Threat/Risk Assessments
- Referrals to appropriate community resources
- Short-term counselling regarding a specific concern affecting a student's progress
- Staff professional development and education
- Traumatic Events

WHEN TO INVOLVE THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER?

School social workers may become involved when any of the following issues are impeding school success:

- Anger management
- Anxiety
- Bullying
- Depression
- Eating Disorders
- Family Conflict
- Grief/Loss
- Parenting Support
- Peer Relationships
- Self-esteem
- Self-harm
- Sexuality and sexual health
- Stress management
- Substance use
- Suicidal behaviour
- Trauma

ATTENDANCE

The law requires regular attendance at school until the student reaches 18 years of age or graduation, whichever comes first. In cases of serious non-attendance, the school social worker supports the student, family and school to develop a plan for improved attendance. This support focuses on the student's strengths, interests and academic ability.

Attendance referrals may be initiated by the school administration in consultation with parents, teachers and the school social workers.

HOW TO ACCESS A SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER

If a principal or vice-principal believes that a student could benefit from the support of a school social worker, they will contact the school social worker for a confidential consultation. This allows the school social worker to determine if they are the best person to support the student.

Parents/guardians may also recognize that their child is in need of additional support to be successful in school. In this case, parents/guardians may contact the principal or vice-principal to discuss the possibility of the school social worker becoming involved.

There may be situations where it would be more appropriate for counselling to occur outside of school in a setting where individual and/or family therapy can take place. The school social worker can provide the parent/guardian with suggestions or suitable resources in the community. Sometimes, the family doctor will refer a student to a psychiatrist or mental health clinic for further support.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Privacy of information is a legal requirement. Confidentiality will be discussed with the parent/guardian/student preferably prior to the first meeting with the student. This is the informed consent process and will address any questions or concerns that anyone might have.

Services provided to students are confidential unless health and safety issues, of a significant nature, arise.