

Policy Addressing Student Behavioral Health Referral Protocols

The Board of Directors of Westlake Charter School (“WCS,” or “Charter School”) adopts the following policy on referral protocols for addressing student behavioral health concerns in grades 7–12. This policy has been developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders and school-linked behavioral health professionals and establishes the adopted procedures relating to referrals to behavioral health professionals and support services. This policy is adopted to be consistent with Education Code Section 49428.2.

Addressing the Needs of High-Risk Groups

WCS recognizes the importance of ensuring equitable access to behavioral health supports for all students, including the unique needs of high-risk student groups which may include but are not limited to:

- (A) Pupils bereaved by death or loss of a close family member or friend;
- (B) Pupils for whom there is concern due to behavioral health disorders, including common psychiatric conditions, and substance use disorders;
- (C) Pupils with disabilities;
- (D) Pupils experiencing homelessness or placed in out-of-home settings, such as foster care; and
- (E) Pupils identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning.

Referral Protocols and Procedures

WCS shall establish procedures relating to referrals to behavioral health professionals and support services and document these procedures in an internal policy. These procedures may include how to:

- Initiate referrals;
- Document concerns;
- Notify parents/guardians consistent with law;
- Triage level of need;
- Link students to appropriate services; and
- Schedule follow-up checks.

Staff Development

WCS shall ensure that staff who support students in grades 7–12 receive at least one training on student behavioral health. Training on student behavioral health may be combined with other student-centered trainings. Training shall include the following:

1. Instruction around the unique risk factors and warning signs of behavioral health problems in adolescents;



2. Understanding and building on the importance of early intervention; and
3. How to help an adolescent in crisis or experiencing a behavioral health challenge, including guidance on when to make referrals consistent with this Policy.

Training materials approved by WCS shall include:

- How to identify appropriate contacts for behavioral health evaluation, services, or both evaluation and services, at both WCS and within the larger community; and
- When and how to refer students and their families to those services.

If a staff member receives student behavioral health training in a manner other than through an in-service training program provided by WCS, the staff member shall present a certificate of successful completion of the training to WCS for purposes of satisfying the student behavioral health training requirements.

WCS may exempt a licensed behavioral health professional who holds a pupil personnel services credential from the student behavioral training required under this Policy.

Authorization and Scope of Practice

WCS staff should act only within the authorization and scope of their credential or license. This policy shall not be construed as authorizing or encouraging an employee to diagnose or treat youth behavioral health disorders unless the employee is specifically licensed and employed to do so.