



Therapeutic Learning Classroom (TLC) Policy

Participating Humboldt – Del Norte Local Education Agencies (LEAs): Arcata, Big Lagoon Union School District, Blue Lake Union School District, Bridgeville School District, Cuddeback Union School District, Cutten School District, Del Norte Unified School Districts, Eureka City Schools, Ferndale Unified School District, Fieldbrook School District, Fortuna Elementary School District, Fortuna Union High School District, Freshwater School District, Garfield School District, Green Point School District, Hydesville School District, Jacoby Creek School District, Klamath-Trinity Joint Unified School District, Kneeland School District, Loleta Union School District, Maple Creek School District, Mattole Unified School District, McKinleyville Union School District, Northern Humboldt Union High School District, Northern United – Humboldt Charter School, Orick School District, Pacific Union School District, Pacific View Charter 2.0, Peninsula Union School District, Rio Dell School District, Scotia Union School District, South Bay Union School District, Southern Humboldt Unified School District, Trinidad Union School District

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Therapeutic Learning Classroom (TLC) Policy

Program Purpose and Philosophy

Therapeutic Learning Classrooms (TLCs) are programs for students with social-emotional/behavioral needs and are designed to assist students whose behaviors have adversely affected some aspect of their educational performance such that they are unable to function or make acceptable progress with services and/or program options available in less restrictive environments. Most of the students have emotional and behavioral challenges that are demonstrated in significant interpersonal and social skills deficits as well as some students with poor academic work habits. The goal of each program is to work collaboratively with students, their families, and community agencies to promote self-awareness and self-control, along with the development of productive interpersonal/social skills and necessary coping strategies. Once students acquire the necessary skills, they will return to their neighborhood school or, if age appropriate, will transition out of public education into an appropriate community setting. The program provides a safe, supportive environment where students will have the opportunity to mainstream with their peers and to make progress within a time frame that meets their needs and abilities.

The students served in a Therapeutic Learning Classroom generally fall within the low average to above average intellectual range. Therefore, the majority of students served who have had poor academic success are generally intellectually capable of learning and completing assignments but are not “emotionally” available to the task. Many of the students in the Therapeutic Learning Classroom are also identified as having an “emotional disturbance” (5 CCR § 3030) in accordance with California Special Educational criteria. The program focuses a significant amount of time and attention to activities that encourage positive social skills and personal management skills. Academic instruction continues to be a part of each student’s daily program but may be modified to accommodate each student’s current emotional/behavioral status. Often, academic instruction comes secondary to emotional or behavioral instruction that is impeding a student’s access to the academic components of school.

Students in the SELPA may be placed in a TLC classroom at the request of a (DSEA)/District of Special Education Accountability for a student. Placement procedures and other policies for a TLC classroom are delineated in a Memorandum of Understanding. This Policy is intended to describe the TLC and advise member LEAs on admissions, operations, and other issues surrounding the TLC programs. The Humboldt-Del Norte SELPA is not responsible for running these programs or for implementation of this Policy.

Program Description

STAFFING RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Personnel

1. Credentialed Special Education Teacher, 1.0 FTE
2. Behavior Support Assistant (“BSA”), 2.0 FTE (Classified staff with specific training in behavioral intervention).
3. Behavioral Health Clinician (off-site)
4. Site Administrator
5. HCOE Administrator

B. Other School Personnel Who May Provide Support

1. Behavior Intervention Specialist
2. School Counselor
3. School Psychologist
4. Other Related Service Providers
5. Other Related School Staff

C. Outside Agencies Who May Provide Support/Collaboration

1. Behavioral Health Therapist as assigned by Mental Health Children’s Services of Humboldt County
2. Other support staff from outside agencies such as Department of Social Services, Redwood Coast Regional Center, and Probation
3. Local law enforcement (police/sheriff)
4. Private therapist
5. Local tribal entities

Program Components

A. Students

1. Students whose social/emotional and/or behavioral needs impact their ability to access a general education classroom.
2. IEP team determines the Therapeutic Learning Classroom as the least restrictive environment and student is granted admission to the TLC Program.
3. Class size typically is limited to 10-12 students.

B. Hours of Program

1. Unless specified in the IEP and necessary to provide a FAPE, students attend school for, at a minimum, the same amount of instructional minutes as their non-disabled peers in their grade level at their District of Special Education Accountability.
2. Start and end times for each classroom vary by school site.

C. Setting

1. Classroom on a Regular Campus.
 - a. Instruction is provided by the same educational staff on a daily basis in at least two main classrooms.
 - b. Most students initially will remain within the TLC classroom for their daily activities (this may also include breaks and lunch).
 - c. Those students who demonstrate readiness for less restrictive experiences will be provided education with non-disabled peers as indicated in their IEPs.

D. Classroom Organization and Management

1. Structured behavior modification systems such as the following may be used:
 - a. Token economy.
 - b. Positive reinforcement may include but not limited to:
 - 1) Modified Check-In Check-Out (CICO) with privilege or tangible rewards.
 - 2) Verbal praise.
 - 3) Classroom Store.
 - 4) Certificates.
 - 5) Field trips.
 - 6) Other methods as described in Individualized Behavior Plans (BIPs).
 - c. Skill development for age-appropriate behavior may include but are not limited to:
 - 1) Individual or small group social skills activities.
 - 2) Self-initiated or staff directed "time away".
 - 3) Self-initiated or staff directed alternative activity.
 - 4) Adjustment of mainstreaming or field trip opportunities.
 - 5) Academic workload adjustment.
 - 6) Self-management/monitoring programs.
2. Behavior consequences are determined by the classroom staff in accordance with the TLC behavior management system, school district policies and procedures, and California Ed. Code.
3. Every student's IEP determines his/her individual goals for academic, behavioral, and social/emotional learning.
4. Primary focus of the program is the development of "school appropriate" behavior and social/emotional skills.
5. Harm to self or others may require SELPA approved emergency behavior intervention, and/or the involvement of Law Enforcement.

E. Suspensions and Expulsions

1. Students enrolled in TLC Programs are subject to the same disciplinary procedures and consequences as other students on the school site. The site administrator of the school at which the TLC is located is authorized to investigate suspected student misconduct and impose discipline on students in the TLC when the student violates school rules or the provisions of Education Code sections 48900 *et seq.*

2. Alternatives to suspensions may be implemented in cases of rule violating behaviors – i.e. Restorative Practices – although students in the Therapeutic Learning Classroom may be subject to suspension as a disciplinary procedure.
3. If a student is sent home for behavioral reasons, for any part of the school day, this is considered a suspension. Suspensions may occur for students who are displaying dangerous behaviors and/or commit violent acts or drug/alcohol offenses.
 - a. In these cases, a parent/guardian may be contacted to remove the student from the school site for one or more days, depending on the length of the suspension imposed.
 - b. The classroom staff maintains current telephone numbers (also cell phones, pager numbers, work number) for parent/guardian. This information also is maintained in the main office at the TLC school site.
 - c. It is expected that a parent/guardian (or other emergency contact person) will pick up a student within one hour of the call requesting such from the school staff, or in accordance with regular procedures at the TLC school site. Frequent non-responsiveness of parent/guardian when student is unsafe may be grounds for dismissal from the program.
 - d. When parents are unavailable to pick their child up, staff will follow LEA procedures.
4. All suspensions will be approved by the administrator or designee at the TLC school site.
5. The administrator at the TLC school site should follow all procedures in the Education Code with regard to suspensions, including with regard to parent/guardian meetings.
6. An IEP team meeting (Manifestation Determination) is required for students who have incurred 10 or more days of suspensions within the current school year to discuss whether the behavior for which the student was suspended was a manifestation of his/her disability or a result of a failure to implement the student's IEP. An IEP meeting also should be convened to discuss what changes may need to be made in the student's educational program to address the behavior. Any subsequent suspension over ten days within the same year requires a manifestation determination meeting.
7. Should expulsion be considered necessary for any student, the District of Service agrees to notify the District of Special Education Accountability, who, in consultation with the District of Service, may proceed with expulsion of the student from the District of Special Education Accountability. The District of Service and District of Special Education Accountability agree to coordinate regarding the basis for any recommendation for expulsion and the applicable administrative process for expulsion proceedings that may apply.

F. Evaluation of Student Progress/Feedback

Students who have been identified as requiring special education services continue to have systematic progress reports sent home at the same intervals as their peers or as identified in their IEP. Each classroom teacher has developed a behavior management system for the purpose of encouraging positive behaviors and discouraging unproductive behaviors (see Classroom Organization and Management).

1. Students are informed about their progress on pro-academic and pro-social behaviors on weekly regular basis.
2. Student behavior is monitored daily by a variety of means.
3. An IEP meeting is held at least annually to discuss achievement, revision and continuation of benchmarks, and goals.
4. All students may participate in state assessment, with or without accommodations, as determined by the IEP team.
5. All students receive progress reports/report cards/parent-teacher conferences as frequently or more often as identified by IEP as regular education students. Progress on goals is reported twice yearly, once at the end of the first semester and once at the end of the year.
6. High School students will be assigned course work for which they can receive credit toward graduation.
7. Graduation requirements are based on the district of service graduation requirements unless otherwise determined by the IEP team.
8. Parent/guardians may contact the teacher for updates on student progress.
9. Families and other support persons are encouraged to contact the classroom teacher to report any unusual or relevant happenings related to the student during non-school hours.

G. Student Medication Administration

1. If student requires that medications be administered during school hours, the necessary medical forms and permissions must be on file with the district of service.

H. Field Trips

1. Field trips off campus may be offered.
 - a. Students and their parents/guardians will be apprised of upcoming off-campus field trips.
 - b. Students will be informed and instructed in the basic criteria needed in order for them to participate in off-campus field trips.
 - c. In the event that a student is unable or unwilling to participate on a field trip, teacher and parent will collaborate on an alternative educational option for that school day.

I. Curriculum and Grading

1. The Therapeutic Learning Classroom is designed to be a classroom in which each student can receive all of his/her academic coursework taught at his/her academic level. Each classroom serves an expanded age range and several academic grade levels. Classroom teachers develop a combination of pertinent group lessons, which relate to the overall grades they serve.
2. The program consists of individualized assignments that are relevant to each student's academic grade level.
 - a. The specific academic course work and grading process is individualized per student.
 - b. Even though all students will have the opportunity to participate in academic instruction and receive grades, many students' IEP goals and objectives are initially focused on the need for improved behavior management. Social skills lessons and activities are an integral part of the Therapeutic Learning Classroom.
 - c. Classroom teachers will work with their IEP teams to determine an appropriate curriculum and grading system.
3. If and when students are able, they will re-integrate into appropriate general education classes. Students can attend one or more general education classes.

J. High School Therapeutic Learning Classroom

In some cases, 11th or 12th grade students enter the Therapeutic Learning Classroom with a significant deficit in high school credits. The classroom is designed so that students with shortages of credits are expected to work collaboratively with the IEP team to determine a reasonable academic goal. In these cases, educational staff encourage the completion of as much academic coursework as possible. Most students who graduate from the TLC program do so with a regular high school diploma.

Pre-Referral Procedures

NOTE: Not all students with social/emotional and/or behavioral needs are placed in Therapeutic Learning Classroom. The least restrictive environment is determined on an individual basis through the IEP team.

A. Interventions to be implemented prior to referral:

1. Revise or develop and implement a Behavior Intervention Plan.
2. Develop and implement classroom accommodations.
3. Increase special education supports and services.
4. Adjustment of daily schedule (not shortened day).
5. Educationally Related Intensive Counseling Services (ERICS).
6. Consult with outside agencies that are involved with the family.

Referral Process and Admission Procedures

- A. Upon determining that a student's current level of services and placement is not meeting the student's educational needs, the student's IEP team can consider whether the TLC program might be appropriate for a student. If the IEP team determines that the TLC program could potentially provide the student with a FAPE, a referral packet should be completed in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding governing the requested TLC program. The IEP team would then forward that packet and any accompanying documentation to the appropriate school personnel for review and consideration of acceptance.
- B. Once accepted into a TLC program, the student's IEP team should meet to determine if a change of placement to the TLC is necessary to provide FAPE in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for the student, and should receive written consent to change placement from the student's parent/guardian.

- C. The student's District of Special Education Accountability should include any necessary transition supports in the student's IEP, and should list those supports on the IEP on the Offer of FAPE-Educational Setting page.

Transitioning out of a TLC

- A. Criteria for transitioning to a Less Restrictive Environment
1. Students should be in the least restrictive environment in which they can make appropriate progress on their IEP goals in light of their disabilities. The IEP team should be regularly evaluating and considering increased opportunities in the general education environment whenever appropriate.
- B. Exiting Program Procedure
1. If there is a recommendation for a student to transfer out of a TLC, the DSEA Special Education Director or designee will be contacted by the DOS regarding this recommendation.
 2. Upon notice of a request for transfer, the DSEA shall convene an IEP team meeting within no more than 30 days to discuss the transfer and develop a transition plan and alternate prospective placement offer for student
 3. The DOS and DSEA agree to consult in advance of the IEP team meeting regarding possible appropriate placement alternatives for student. In the event there is uncertainty or disagreement regarding appropriate prospective placement alternatives for student, the DSEA and DOS agree to refer to the COE/SELPA to identify possible prospective placement alternatives for student. In response, COE/SELPA agree to confer with staff and identify alternate placement options for student for consideration by the IEP team.
 4. In the event of a due process complaint regarding placement for a student, the COE, DSEA, and DOS confirm their awareness of the stay put provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and implementing regulations and that student, in certain circumstances, may be entitled to implementation of stay put.
- C. Exceptionally Disruptive and Not Benefitting
1. In some cases, students consistently refuse to actively participate in the program or they continue to demonstrate habitually disruptive and/or violent behaviors regardless of the many educational and behavioral strategies presented. Over a period of time, these behaviors may negatively impact the progress of student and other students in classroom, as well as the school's general education population and staff. Other students may not be violent or excessively disruptive, but are not benefitting from their program, including making sufficient progress toward any of their identified areas of growth. These situations would warrant the collaboration of the DOS Therapeutic Learning Classroom staff and student's District of Special Education Accountability LEA administration to pursue a more appropriate environment by which the student would benefit. An IEP meeting will be held to determine educational service options.

Student and Staff Safety

IF THERE IS AN IMMINENT RISK OF DANGER TO SELF OR OTHERS – LAW ENFORCEMENT SHOULD BE CONTACTED CONCURRENTLY AND THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES IMPLEMENTED:

- A. Visitors
Parents have a right to observe their child's classroom. The school visitor guidelines should be followed.
- B. Law Enforcement Contact
The TLC program may contact Law Enforcement when students are involved in the following activities or behaviors:
1. Leaves campus without permission *and* is considered a danger to self or others.
 2. Causes, attempts to cause, or threatens to cause physical injury to self or others.
 3. Possesses, sells, or otherwise furnishes a weapon or dangerous object.
 4. Possesses a controlled substance.
- C. Threat Assessments
A Threat Assessments may need to be completed when a student displays behaviors or makes strong statements that lead staff to believe that the student may pose a danger to self or others. Types of behaviors of threats include, but are not limited to:
1. Suicidal statements or gestures.

2. Homicidal statements or gestures.
 3. Uncontrollable rage which threatens the safety of self or others may require police intervention.
- D. General school policies will be followed.
- E. Restraints
- The Therapeutic Learning Classrooms are not high security facilities; they are on comprehensive public school sites. Programs do not consist of involuntary locked rooms or guards. The physical restraining of students is rarely used in the programs and considered a last resort.
1. Reasonable and prudent measures will be used to ensure the safety of students and staff.
 2. Persons using restraints to control student behavior shall be certified in Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI).
 3. The *SELPA Behavior Emergency Procedure Report* form shall be completed after the incident.
- F. Per SELPA Local Plan Policy Section (4.4), Procedures for Emergency Interventions:
1. Emergency Intervention shall be used only for as long as necessary for the student to control the behavior deemed by staff to present a danger to self or others.
 2. The LEA designated Program Administrator is notified immediately following the use of an emergency intervention.
 3. Parents are notified immediately (within one school day) by an educational staff member as designated by the Program Administrator.
 4. Per Education Code, law enforcement agency may be notified at the discretion of the Program Administrator if assault/battery has occurred.
 5. Parents shall be informed by the Program Administrator or designee when law enforcement is notified.
 6. Behavioral Emergency Report shall be completed by educational staff.
 7. Behavioral Emergency Report shall be forwarded to the Program Administrator or designee no later than the end of the same school day that the emergency intervention occurred.
 8. The Program Administrator or designee shall forward a copy of the Behavior Emergency Report to the SELPA Director within one week.
 9. Each student in the program has a Behavior Intervention Plan, and the Program Administrator or designee shall initiate the assessment/IEP process and meet within two days with the parents to further develop the Behavior Support Plan.
 10. It may be determined that an assessment plan should be signed by a parent or guardian to initiate a Functional Behavior Assessment, in order to develop further individualized behavioral support strategies for the BIP revision.