

Therapeutic Learning Classroom (TLC)

Policy & Placement Procedures

Participating Humboldt – Del Norte Local Education Agencies (LEAs) 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, Orick School District, Pacific Union School District, 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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Therapeutic Learning Classroom (TLC) Policy and Placement Procedures	3
Program Purpose and Philosophy	3
Program Description	3
Program Components	4
Pre-Referral Procedures	7
Referral Process	7
Admission Procedures	7
Transitioning into the Classroom	8
Student and Staff Safety	9

Therapeutic Learning Classroom (TLC) Policy and Placement Procedures

Program Purpose and Philosophy

The programs for students with social-emotional/behavioral needs are designed to assist students whose behaviors have adversely affected some aspect of their educational performance 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 by the 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 to CA Special Educational criteria. The program focuses a significant amount of time and attention initially 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.

Program Description

STAFFING

A. Personnel

1. Credentialed Special Education Teacher, 1.0 FTE
2. Instructional Assistants, minimum of 1.0 FTE
3. Behavior Support Assistant (“BSA”), 1.0 FTE (Classified staff with specific training in behavioral intervention).
4. Behavioral Health Clinician SELPA Administrator (off-site)
5. Site 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 TLC Review Committee grants student admission to the program.
3. Class size typically is limited to a maximum of 10-12 students.

B. Hours of Program

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

C. Setting

1. Special Education Class on a Regular Campus.
 - a. Instruction is provided by the same educational staff on a daily basis in one or two main classrooms.

- b. Most students initially will remain within a single 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 that opportunity.
- 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. Consequences are determined by the classroom behavior management system, school district policies and procedures, and California Ed. Code.
 - 3. Every student has an IEP that determines his/her 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 Law Enforcement contact.
- E. Suspensions (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.)
- 1. 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.
 - b. The classroom staff maintains current telephone numbers (also cell phones, pager numbers, work number).
 - 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.
 - d. When parents are unavailable to pick their child up, staff will follow LEA procedures.
 - 2. Depending upon the offense, the rest of that school day may be all that is warranted (one day suspension). A student may be suspended for several days depending upon the degree or repetition of the offense.
 - 3. All suspensions will be discussed and approved by the administrator or designee.
 - 4. The parent/guardian may be expected to participate, along with the suspended student, in a meeting prior to the student returning to school.
 - 5. 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 what changes may need to be made in the student’s educational program. Any subsequent suspension over ten days within the same year also require a manifestation determination meeting.
- 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

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. The packet is forwarded with accompanying documentation to the TLC Review Committee. This committee meets as needed throughout the school year. Referring staff (i.e., school psychologist, program specialist, LEA representation, administrator, teacher, etc.) attend this committee meeting to present information. The TLC Review Committee determines whether to accept the student into the program.

Admission Procedures

- A. Once the Therapeutic Learning Classroom Review Committee has made a recommendation for the IEP team to consider, the following shall occur:
1. The student's IEP team should meet to determine if a change of placement to the TLC is necessary to provide FAPE in the LRE to the student. If the IEP team decides to change the student's placement, then the next steps in this section should occur.
 2. The referring school district will facilitate a planned visitation for the student and parent/guardian to the proposed Therapeutic Learning Classroom.
 3. A separate orientation/intake meeting may be requested by the Therapeutic Learning Classroom teacher for the purpose of explaining the specific components of their classroom.
 4. Parent/guardian will submit completed student registration packet as appropriate to the school of location of the TLC program.

The Review Committee provides admission decisions to the student's District of Residence and all decisions regarding placement and services are determined by the IEP team.

- B. On occasion, students transfer into the Humboldt-Del Norte SELPA previously having been served elsewhere in a program similar the TLC program.
1. If this occurs, school district administration should contact the SELPA as soon as possible to discuss providing a comparable 30-day interim placement.

Transitioning into the Classroom

The student's district of residence 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 to a Less Restrictive Environment

- A. Criteria
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 considering whether to move a student in a TLC program back to the general education classroom.
 2. Students who are successful in acquiring and consistently utilizing productive social and behavior skills in the Therapeutic Learning Classroom and the mainstream classes will be candidates for transitioning out of the program. Student demonstrates the following skills for a period determined by the IEP team:
 - a. Successfully mainstream into a less restrictive environment for a portion of the school day including unstructured time (i.e., lunch, recess, etc).
 - b. Follows teacher/adult directions.
 - c. Expresses self to adults and peers in a non-confrontational manner.
 - d. Interacts with peers and adults in a socially acceptable manner.
 - e. Accepts "no" for an answer.
 - f. Accepts criticism and consequences appropriately.
 - g. Gains teacher's attention in a non-disruptive manner.
 - h. Completes assignments as independently as possible.
 - i. Accesses help from other sources when needed.
 - j. Self-monitors and assesses own behavior (e.g., requesting to "take space").
 - k. Adequately refrains from aggressive behaviors for a period of time as determined by the IEP team.

Exiting Program Procedure

The student who demonstrates consistent and successful progress in the program will be recommended to exit the Therapeutic Learning Classroom for placement in a less restrictive environment. A transition plan should be developed to assist in returning the student to their neighborhood school or other placement as determined by the IEP team. An IEP meeting will be scheduled to finalize this process.

- C. If the TLC Placement Is Not Providing FAPE

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 the other students in classroom, as well as the school's general education population and staff. The student's behaviors may be affecting other students' progress toward their identified areas of need. These situations would warrant the collaboration of the Therapeutic Learning Classroom staff and student's District of Residence LEA administration to pursue a more appropriate environment in 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 or 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.