



POLICY ADDRESSING STUDENT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH REFERRAL PROTOCOLS

The Board of Directors of The Accelerated Schools, (TAS, 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.

TAS will comply with all state and federal student data and privacy requirements, including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) in the administration of this Policy.

Whenever possible and practicable, the protocols and procedures below will be used in lieu of disciplinary actions, and students who may be the subject of disciplinary action will be able to access these protocols and will not be prohibited from accessing them.

All protocols will reflect evidence-based and culturally appropriate approaches to student behavioral health referrals.

Addressing the Needs of High-Risk Groups

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

- Students with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders, foster youth and youth placed in out-of-home settings.
- Homeless youth.
- Students experiencing bereavement or loss of a close family member or friend.
- Students for whom there is a concern due to behavioral health disorders, including common psychiatric conditions and substance use disorders such as opioid and alcohol abuse.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning students.

TAS staff who oversee the mental and behavioral health needs of students are responsible for coordinating implementation of these group-specific referral protocols, in collaboration with the Director of Operations, Foster Youth Liaison, Homeless Liaison, and TAS administrators.

TAS may also identify additional student groups, such as English learners or recently immigrated students, if local data or partner input show increased behavioral health risks.



Student Privacy

TAS recognizes and agrees to abide by the variety of federal and state student data privacy laws and regulations (including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA], EC Section 49073, et seq., etc.) with which TAS must comply in connection with its policy on referral protocols for addressing pupil behavioral health concerns and in connection with implementation of its policy and protocols, including but not limited to any of subsets of its policy, such as those listed below.

Referral Protocols and Procedures

1. Needs Assessment

The Director of Equity, Access, and Compliance or designee shall conduct an annual needs assessment to:

- Identify behavioral health trends;
- Review available resources; and
- Detect service gaps within the school community.

TAS shall review referral volume, response times, and outcomes on a quarterly basis for continuous improvement.

2. Capacity Building

TAS shall:

- Provide professional development on referral pathways and staff roles;
- Clarify responsibilities among certificated and classified staff; and
- Maintain partnerships with school-linked behavioral health professionals and community providers

3. Implementation

TAS shall establish step-by-step procedures 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 Training

TAS shall ensure that teachers of students in grades 7–12 receive training at least once on student behavioral health. Training shall include the following:

- Instruction around the unique risk factors and warning signs of behavioral health problems in adolescents,
- Understanding the importance of early intervention,
- 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 TAS shall include:

- How to identify appropriate contacts for behavioral health evaluation, services, or both evaluation and services, at both TAS and within the larger community; and
- When and how to refer students and their families to those services.
- Recognizing the signs and symptoms of youth behavioral health disorders.

Authorization and Scope of Practice

In order to ensure that all school employees act only within the authorization or scope of their credential or license, TAS shall:

- Provide training and guidance to staff clarifying their roles in the referral process and the limits of their credential or license.
- Direct employees to refer students to appropriately credentialed or licensed professionals when behavioral health concerns are identified.
- Maintain referral protocols that specify which staff positions are authorized to act at each stage of the referral process.
- Review job descriptions and assignments to confirm they align with credentialing and licensing requirements.
- Inform staff clearly that only licensed or credentialed professionals are permitted to diagnose or treat behavioral health conditions.

No school staff will diagnose or treat youth behavioral health disorders unless they are specifically licensed and employed to do so.

Adopted/Ratified: January 28, 2026 (pending approval)