

490 - TEACHER ASSISTANTS

Background

Some students may have direct or indirect needs that cannot be met in the regular program, but must be addressed in order that the student may receive the most appropriate educational program available.

To this end, it is recognized that there may exist a small minority of students, who require support in addition to that provided by the classroom teacher. The following guidelines and procedures shall apply to the provision of additional assistance to such students.

Guidelines

1. Aiding assistance is usually restricted to students exhibiting severe problems beyond the scope of being handled within the regular classroom programs. Such students may include:
 - 1.1 Multi-sensory or other multiple handicaps;
 - 1.2 Severe disruptive behaviour students;
 - 1.3 Visual, hearing, and speech impaired students; or
 - 1.4 Any disability formerly recognized under Program Unit Grants.
2. Resident pupils shall be the responsibility of Wild Rose School Division. Non-resident pupils will be the funding responsibility of the resident board, as defined under Alberta Education guidelines. Full costs of the program, including administrative costs and supplies/materials, will be billed to the home-school jurisdiction or parent/guardian.
3. Teacher Assistants shall be employed only as long as needed by the student(s) or school division. Positions no longer required shall be terminated on two weeks written notice.

Procedures

1. The responsibility for determining the need for a Teacher Assistant is that of the Principal or designate, in consultation with the parents of the student and/or specialists in the area of disability.
2. It is recommended that a comprehensive assessment be done if one has not been completed in the previous two years.
3. Teacher Assistants are selected, and terminated by the Principal of the school in which they are employed. The decision of the Principal to provide or not provide a

Special Needs Assistant is appealable under Administrative Procedure 201 – Student Program Placements.

Responsibilities

An assistant is, by definition, one who helps another individual, and has no authority other than that granted by the person to whom he/she is assigned for supervision.

Guidelines of Responsibility

1. The Teacher Assistant is responsible to the classroom teacher and Principal.
2. On a day-to-day basis, the Teacher Assistant is responsible to the classroom teacher. The general objectives of individual and small group educational needs are devised by the classroom teacher in consultation with the Principal for Teacher implementation by the Assistant. Such objectives form part of, and are recorded in the student's Individual Program Plan (IPP).
3. Under no circumstances shall Teacher Assistants be responsible for directing or determining the course of action to be taken with the student or group of students.
4. Teacher Assistants may work with students independently of direct supervision, using previously agreed-upon strategies and procedures.

Responsibility for Behaviour of Special Needs Students

1. While the responsibility for behaviours of all children lie with the classroom teacher, the Teacher Assistant is empowered to take appropriate measures when working with children. The type of measure to be used should be mutually agreed upon between the Teacher Assistant and his/her supervisor. The above particularly applies when escorting, transporting or supervising students who have been moved from the direct area of responsibility of the teacher.
2. Disciplinary action taken by Teacher Assistants shall be noted in writing in the child's record, indicating the date, time, type of behaviour and what measures were taken.

Code of Conduct

1. In relation to students:
 - 1.1 The Teacher Assistant respects the rights of students without prejudice.
 - 1.2 He/she treats students with dignity and respect and is considerate of their circumstances.
 - 1.3 He/she maintains confidentiality at all times. Teacher Assistants shall not divulge information received about a student during the course of his/her duties, except as required by law, or by the Principal. Failure to adhere to this procedure shall be grounds for disciplinary action.

2. In relation to school staff:

- 2.1 In areas of concern, the Teacher Assistant should first consult with the classroom teacher. If resolution is not possible, consultation with the Principal and/or Superintendent is appropriate.
- 2.2 Teacher Assistants are expected to abide by the Alberta Teachers' Association Code of Ethics with respect to confidentiality and related matters.

Reference: Section 47, 60, 117, School Act