



PNSAS SAP CONNECTION

DECEMBER 2023

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A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY PA NETWORK FOR STUDENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES

FAQ Corner

“Parental Consent and the SAP Process”

Parental/Guardian consent is a must if a student is going to participate in the SAP process. Communication with parents/families should be in each phase of the SAP process and is especially important in the referral and data collection phases. Communication may include check-ins to gather insight, obtain an opinion, collaborate on an action plan, and give voice to parents/families regarding their student’s involvement in the SAP process. Ongoing communication helps enhance parental/family engagement which is key when obtaining consent for the SAP process. The following are excerpts from the SAP Frequently Asked Questions and Answers Document (SAP FAQ) available by clicking [here](#).

24. Is written parental consent required for SAP?

Yes. The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) requires that the student's and parent/guardian's rights be recognized and respected, especially in instances of surveys, analysis, or evaluations. PPRA requires written parent/guardian permission when interviewing students regarding “...mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family; sex behavior or attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.”

26. When a parent/guardian gives written permission for the SAP process, does that permission also cover the mental health and/or drug and alcohol screening/assessment conducted by an SAP liaison or provider agency if recommended by the SAP team?

No. A separate written parent/guardian permission for the screening/assessment is required. One of the functions of the SAP team is to foster involvement by parents and guardians throughout the SAP process. Written parent/guardian permission should be obtained for the following areas:

- A. Initial onset of the SAP process (this can be before or after student information forms are collected as long as it is before student interview); and/or*
- B. When the SAP team recommends a Mental Health (MH) and/or a Drug and Alcohol screening/assessment. While the school can collaborate with the agency, the agency is required to gain permission for this screening/assessment. If any in-school supports, such as an educational support group, are recommended, passive consent is required.*

27. What should happen if a student is referred to SAP and a parent/guardian does not consent to the SAP process?

Best practice is to ensure that the parent/guardian is knowledgeable of the SAP process, which can help build communication and collaboration between the school and family. The SAP team should keep lines of communication open and maintain a log of all calls/actions including the date and times the parents/guardians have been called. The school may suggest different supports that are available to the parent/guardian and student. The rights of parent/guardian under PPRA must be observed. The SAP team should make a written record of a refusal and check back with the referral source 30 days after the original referral.

For more information on family engagement, contact your [SAP Regional Coordinator](#).



SAP Interagency

[Department of Drug & Alcohol Programs \(DDAP\)](#)

[PA Department of Education \(PDE\)](#)

[Department of Human Services \(DHS\)](#)



Training Opportunities

SAP Training - For upcoming training opportunities, click [here](#).

Pennsylvania Association of Student Assistance Professionals (PASAP) Annual Conference - To be held 2/25/24-2/27/24 in State College - click [here](#) for details. Registration is now [open](#).



Grants

For open PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) grant opportunities, click [here](#).



Liaison Corner

Information

2023-2024 PDE4092 SAP reporting form is available. Visit the [Safe Schools website](#) to download the [updated form](#).

SAP Liaison Contacts for Cyber Schools has been updated and is now on the PNSAS site.

PA Parent and Family Alliance has developed a new resource with input from families across the state. The [Inpatient Hospitalization Tip Sheet](#) is a resource for parents and families to offer support and answer questions they may have about a child's inpatient stay.

Children's Interagency Conference - The 21st Children's Interagency Conference is scheduled for April 2024 in State College, PA. The conference theme is "Shine The Light on Mental Health-- Building Youth Wellness & Resilience." The conference will provide an excellent opportunity for participants to learn about changing trends, promising and best practices, resources, and various system of care activities across Pennsylvania. Please visit the [conference website](#) for more information.

“Liaisons and Consent”

Once the team has decided that there may be issues beyond the scope of the school, what responsibilities do the liaisons have when it comes to parental/guardian consent? For a refresher, review this excerpt from the [Liaison Frequently Asked Questions](#).

5. What do liaisons need to do regarding parent/legal guardian permission for a screening/assessment?

First and foremost, the liaison must ensure a signed school SAP consent has been obtained from the parent/ legal guardian giving the team permission for the student to be involved in SAP services. A liaison should never meet with a student for any reason without written parent consent for screening/ assessment. It is important that the school and agency both be aware of how parent permission for screenings or assessments will be obtained. Liaisons need to discuss this with the participating school and outline the procedures in the Letter of Agreement. Where agencies conduct assessments in schools, parent permission should be on agency letterhead. In some schools the team case manager is responsible for acquiring the consent and in other schools the liaison may obtain the consent.

6. Are non-custodial caregivers (who do not have legal guardianship, but care for the child) permitted to sign for a SAP screening or assessment?

These caregivers may have "education rights" affidavits, allowing them to make educational decisions, but not medical decisions. Liaisons should not accept this as legal guardianship; thus do not perform assessments under these circumstances. Depending on the age of the student and agency regulations, students may be able to access services at the agency.

7. If a student is over age 18, do you have to get parent permission prior to screening or assessing?

First, check the district policy on obtaining consent for students over age 18. Unless legally emancipated, most districts continue to require parent consent for students over age 18. If legally emancipated, then a copy of the document should be obtained by the school. Typically, permission is still received for field trips, absences, and extra-curricular activities, so SAP consent would follow the same practice.

It is important for these issues to be discussed with the SAP Team prior to the school year to make sure all are aware of responsibilities regarding parent/guardian consent for screening/assessment. If you have any questions, feel free to contact your [SAP Regional Coordinator](#).