

# Communication Guidebook

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A Collaborative for Students with Significant Needs

**SouthWest Metro Intermediate District 288**

Belle Plaine, District 716

Central Public Schools, District 108

Eastern Carver County Schools, District 112

Jordan, District 717

New Prague, District 721

Prior Lake-Savage, District 719

Shakopee, District 720

Waconia, District 110

Watertown-Mayer, District 111

Tri-City United, District 2905

Rice, Sibley, Carver, Scott, and LeSueur Counties

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# Introduction

## **Purpose**

The originators of this guidebook believe that the enhancement of system coordination and collaboration is imperative to positive outcomes for students. The creation of this guidebook resulted from a collaboration between county employees and school district employees in order to improve educational outcomes for children and youth involved in county systems. An establishment of standards and staff expectations regarding cross-system communication will help to reduce conflicts, reduce service redundancy and enrich the service delivery to children. The guidebook will provide an establishment of communication standards for county and school staff to follow. Communication of information sharing, type of information, frequency of information sharing, and the depth and breadth of information sharing of cases will be outlined in this guidebook. This guidebook is not an exhaustive digest of every possible case or scenario; therefore it is highly encouraged that users of this guidebook also seek the advisement of their supervisors when managing highly sensitive and complicated cases.

## **Use**

This book provides communication guidelines for county and school staff. Staff members are expected to use this book as a reference to the communication agreement that schools and counties now have between one another. This book provides the guidelines that staff members of the school and the counties are expected to follow in order to serve our high need students. The main audiences of this book are child welfare workers, mental health professionals, case managers, probation officers, child advocates, teachers and school administrators.

## **Expectations for Communication & Collaboration**

Information sharing and interdisciplinary collaboration are important, because it contributes to positive outcomes for the children served through the school and county systems. However, information sharing is a sensitive issue, both from a legal perspective and from the perspective of protecting the child's best interests. The following is a list of two best practices that should always be followed when collaborating with other agencies:

- Routinely ask for a Release of Information Authorization
- Make Relationship Building with the other teams your priority
  - The construction of this guidebook proved that this is the number one attribute to a successful collaboration across different agencies
  - Relationship building contributes to a more collaborative working environment, and ultimately the child will benefit
  - Maintain professionalism when working with one another
  - Use sensitivity and compassion with one another

## **Target Population**

The following list describes children and youth in which there is county and school involvement, and for which this book should be utilized in cross-system information sharing:

- Students who live in group homes, has a court appointed guardian or has a history of prior restrictive placements
- Students involved in the juvenile corrections system
- Students who have case management plans, an IEP or receives special education programming
- Students with complex medical management, cognitive disability or developmental delay
- Students who present a safety concern or has a history of aggressive behavior towards others, including sexualized or physical behaviors
- Students who have Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) or Fetal Alcohol Effect (FAE)
- Students who need a sheltered work environment and a supervised living arrangement after transitioning out of special education services
- Families who have exhausted financial and community support services
- Families who struggle to appropriately advocate for the student's mental health needs due to specialized circumstances

## **Decision Making Tree**

This tool is used as a first stop when thinking about requesting or sharing information. It helps the staff member to consider important aspects as well as the sensitive nature of sharing information in reference to this specialized population. Always ask your supervisor or legal counsel if you are unclear about your authority or responsibility to share information with others.

## **Special Thanks**

We want to thank everyone who had a role in the creation of this book, including, but not limited to, our member districts and county agencies.

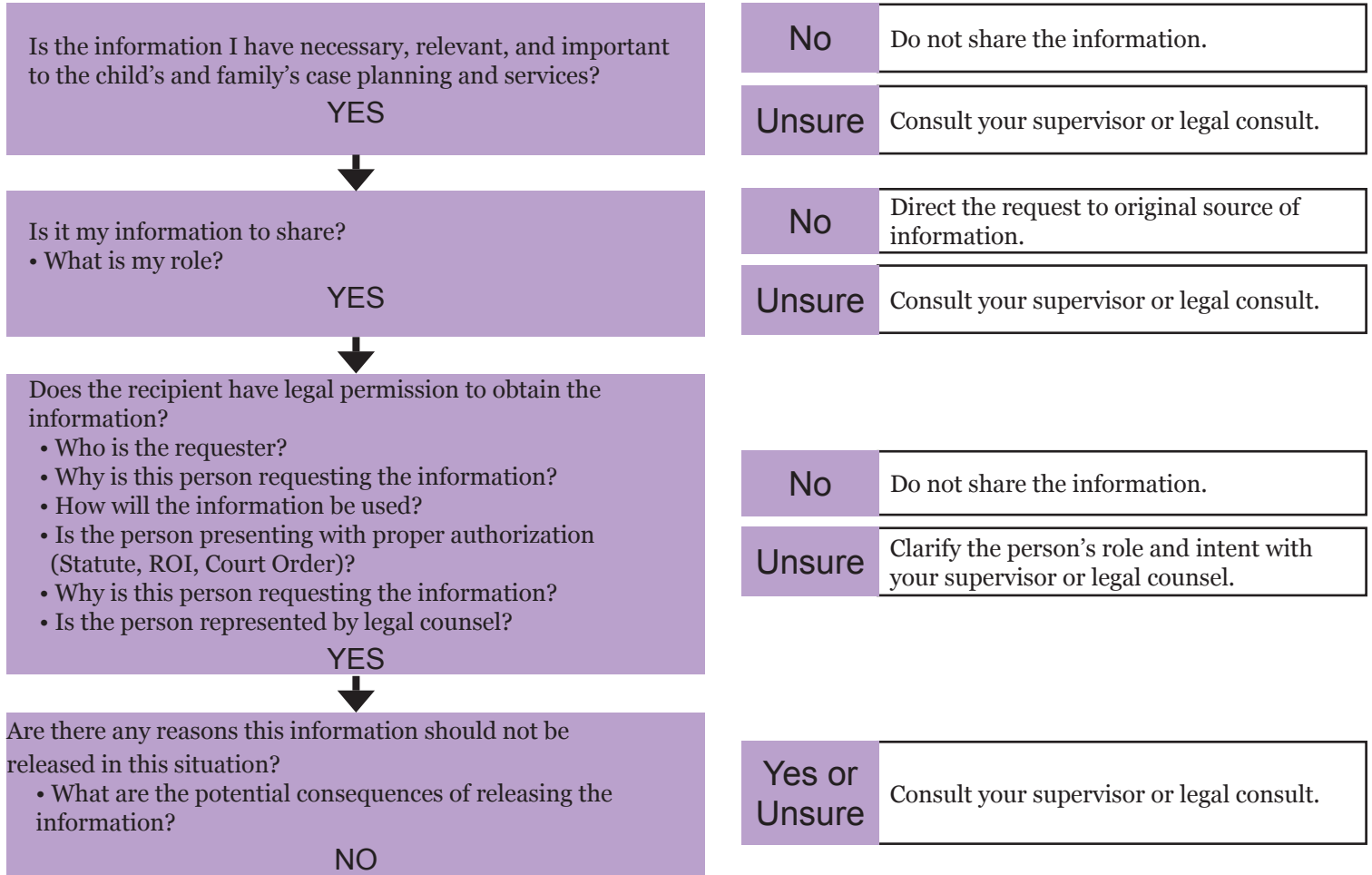
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# Decision Making Tree

Most Important Step for Information Sharing: Get a  
**RELEASE OF INFORMATION AUTHORIZATION**

Providers of Information: Information Sharing Decision Tree\*\*



## Share the information and be sure to:

- Use common sense! Remember the purpose of the exchange and the role of everyone involved.
- Consider time lines and priorities; provide critical information promptly.
- Think about where and how the information will be exchanged. Consider the purpose and type of information to be shared, the parties involved, and the time lines when selecting the setting for exchange. Share only to the extent authorized. Also consider whether the information may or will be further disclosed. If only part of the information may be disclosed, then the remainder needs to be redacted or withheld.
- Document the release of information as required by your agency.

**DO NOT STOP HERE!**  
Be sure to check the law!

\*\*The Decision Making Tree resource was drawn from the Clark County Information Sharing Resource Guide: Guidelines for Serving Youth and Families.

# Guidelines for Communication Between County Agencies and School Districts

## **Definition**

The collaborative process occurs when a student, or school age client, begins to receive services or intervention from the county or the school district. The following provides the policy and examples of how information might be communicated across agencies. This is not an exhaustive list, and it is always a best practice to consult with a supervisor whenever there is uncertainty about whether the information should be shared.

## **Procedure**

School districts, juvenile justice officers, and/or county service workers are authorized and expected to share information with each other when a student, or a school age client, begins to receive services or interventions that impact the educational and/or safety outcomes of that student and the staff who interacts with the student.

# Examples of Intake Communication

What the county might share with the schools:		What the schools might share with the county:
<p>From the County Attorney's Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the student is charged with</li> <li>• Court Dates</li> <li>• The rights of the school</li> <li>• Contact person</li> </ul>	<p>From the Human Services and Probation Offices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location of the child</li> <li>• Special needs of the child</li> <li>• Name of the assigned case worker</li> <li>• The legal role of the county</li> <li>• Expected services the child will receive</li> <li>• Safety issues for child and for workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade of the child</li> <li>• Level of care for the child</li> <li>• Recent test scores</li> <li>• Academic status</li> <li>• Role and contact information for the school support staff assigned to the student</li> <li>• Treatment plan or IEP for the student</li> </ul>
<p>The County Attorney may communicate to the following school staff:</p>	<p>Human Services and Probation may communicate to the following school staff:</p>	<p>School staff may communicate with the following county staff:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The individual at the school who is identified in the police report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Social Worker</li> <li>• Teacher</li> <li>• Special Education Director</li> <li>• Principal (if the child is assigned to the district)</li> <li>• District lead (if the child is not assigned to the district)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case Manager</li> <li>• Probation Officer</li> <li>• Group Home/Caregiver/Parent</li> <li>• Court Appointed Guardian Ad litem</li> </ul>
Time line	1-7 days depending on level of urgency	

# Service Planning

## **Definition**

Treatment planning, for the purposes of this guidebook, is defined as a proposed program or set of arrangements that works to treat a school age student and/or county client for behavioral, mental, educational or emotional disturbances. Examples of this include students who need an IEP planning session. The following provides the policy and examples of how information might be communicated across agencies. This is not an exhaustive list, and it is always a best practice to consult with a supervisor whenever there is uncertainty about whether information should be shared.

## **Procedure**

School districts, juvenile justice officers, and/or county service workers are authorized and expected to share information with each other when a student, or school age client, becomes a part of the treatment planning process and it impacts the educational and/or safety outcomes of that student and the staff who interacts with the student.



# Examples of Service Planning Communication

What the county might share with the schools:		What the schools might share with the county:
<p>From the Human Services Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Custody Changes</li> <li>• Change in Case Manager</li> <li>• Special Needs Have Changed or Identified</li> <li>• Case Closure</li> <li>• Change in Treatment or Medications</li> <li>• Portions of the Case Place Relevant to Academics</li> </ul>	<p>From the Probation Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Custody Changes</li> <li>• Change in Probation Officer</li> <li>• Case Closure</li> <li>• Short Term Placements/ Detention</li> <li>• Case Plans or Case Plan Changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in School Plan</li> <li>• Process for Making the Changes for the Child</li> <li>• Meeting Dates</li> <li>• Focus of the Meeting to Discuss the Plan</li> <li>• Impetus for the Change</li> <li>• Rationale/Reasons for Current Plan</li> </ul>
<p>Human Services and Probation may communicate to the following school staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Social Worker</li> <li>• Teacher</li> <li>• Special Education Director</li> <li>• Principal (if the child is assigned to the district)</li> <li>• District Lead (if the child is not assigned to the district)</li> </ul>	<p>The County Attorney may communicate information to the following school staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The individual at the school who is identified in the police report</li> </ul>	<p>School staff may communicate with the following county staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case Manager</li> <li>• Probation Officer</li> <li>• Caregiver/Parent</li> <li>• Provider</li> <li>• Human Services Supervisors</li> <li>• Court Services Supervisor</li> </ul>
Time line	1-7 days depending on level of urgency	

# Changes that Occur in Student's Life

## **Definition**

Changes that occur within a student's treatment plan, living situation, academic progress, etc. should be shared between the school and county workers if it is in the best interest of the child.

## **Procedure**

School districts, juvenile justice officers, and/or county service workers are authorized and expected to share information with each other when a student, or school age client, experiences a change in his or her living situation, academic progress, etc. and it impacts the educational and/or safety outcomes of that student and the staff who interacts with the student.

# Changes that Occur in Student's Life

## What the county might share with the schools:

### General Information Needed

- Contact Information for County Staff Involved
- Provide Information if a Change in Staff Assigned Takes Place

### From the Probation Office

- Out of Home Placement Decisions from the Court

### From the Human Services Office

- Placement Details
- Reason for the Placement (See decision making tree)

## What the schools might share with the county:

- Voluntary Drop Out
- Child is Transferred
- Dropped by School
- Suspensions
- Expulsions
- Testing/Assessment Needs
- Summer School Enrollment
- Change in Classroom Setting
- Graduation
- Credit Attainment
- Change in Grade Level
- Attendance Status Changes
- Behavior Changes
- Child Moved

## Human Services and Probation may communicate to the following school staff:

- School Social Worker
- Teacher
- Special Education Director
- Principal (if the child is assigned to the district)
- District Lead (if the child is not assigned to the district)

## The County Attorney may communicate information to the following school staff:

- The individual at the school who is identified in the police report

## School staff may communicate with the following county staff:

- Case Manager
- Probation Officer
- Caregiver/Parent
- Provider
- Human Services Supervisors
- Court Services Supervisor

Time line

ASAP if urgent or within 5 business days of placement.

# Special Incidents

## **Definition**

Special incidents happen when there are concerns for the safety of the student, the staff or the school. It also includes when students become involved in juvenile corrections or child protection services. The following chart describes what information the county should consider sharing with the schools and vice versa what the county should request from the schools when special incidents or crises occur.

## **Procedure**

School districts, juvenile justice officers, and/or county service workers are authorized and expected to share information with each other when a student, or school age client, creates or participates in a special incident and it impacts the educational and/or safety outcomes of that student and the staff who interacts with the student.

# Examples of Special Incidents to be Communicated

## What the county might share with the schools:

### From the Human Services Office

- Mental health crisis
  - Only during an initial crisis as the result of safety concerns or to address safety concerns
- Shelter placement
- De-compensation of functioning
- Whereabouts unknown
- Stabilization issues

### From the Probation Office

- Arrests
- If there is a risk of harm/danger to the school
- Whereabouts unknown

## What the schools might share with the county:

- Potential harm/danger has occurred in the school or on the bus, along with the facts of the incident
- When at-risk behaviors occur
- An incident report is filed
- A mental health emergency has occurred and the school has gone through its protocols, but additional assistance is needed
- Police or school safety officer involvement has occurred
- School consequences have been put in place
  - Suspension
  - Change of Placement
  - Need for mental health care
  - Additional services are needed

## Human Services and Probation may communicate to the following school staff:

- School Social Worker
- Teacher
- Special Education Director
- Principal (if the child is assigned to the district)
- District Lead (if the child is not assigned to the district)

## The County Attorney may communicate information to the following school staff:

- The individual at the school who is identified in the police report

## School staff may communicate with the following county staff:

- Case Manager
- Probation Officer
- Caregiver/Parent
- Provider
- Crisis Therapist
- County Coverage Worker
- Human Services Supervisors
- Court Services Supervisor

Time line

Immediately during or after the incident occurs or within 24 hours of the incident