

## **SECTION G: PERSONNEL**

**GBGC**

### **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)**

#### **PURPOSE:**

The Portsmouth School Department (PSD) recognizes that personal concerns can complicate life at home and in the workplace. While the PSD has no intention of intruding in the private lives of its employees, we recognize that concerns such as illness, stress, marital or relationship difficulties, alcohol and substance abuse, personal legal or financial issues, grief and loss, or child or elder care needs may eventually affect work performance. The primary purpose of this policy is to provide confidential and voluntary assistance through an employee assistance program (EAP) to all employees and their immediate family members who may find themselves in need of short-term professional assistance including the direct services outlined above as well as ancillary services such as wellness focused materials, informational training sessions, newsletters and website materials. For the welfare of employees as well as for effective operations, The Portsmouth School Department encourages its employees to take advantage of this valuable benefit.

#### **PROCEDURES:**

Employees and their immediate family members can voluntarily refer themselves to the EAP. The program may be reached 24 hours a day on weekdays and weekends. Contact information can be found on the Human Resources Department page of the School Department's website or by contacting Human Resources.

#### **MEETINGS WITH EAP COUNSELORS:**

EAP counselors are available to meet virtually or by phone with employees or immediate family members to assess a problem and develop a plan for resolution. The counselors may suggest a referral to an outside resource, such as a therapist, agency, physician, treatment facility or other professional that would be appropriate to assist in resolving the problem or situation.

There is no charge for employees or their immediate family members to use the services of the EAP. The EAP counselors will make every effort to coordinate referrals for ongoing treatment with the employee's health insurance coverage as well as with the employee's ability to pay.

### **EAP VISITS DURING WORK HOURS:**

In most cases an EAP session that is urgent or cannot be scheduled outside of work hours will be treated similar to other contractual leave and would be subject to PSD personal or sick leave absence protocols and applicable collective bargaining agreements or individual employee contracts.

### **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:**

Voluntary participation in the EAP in no way jeopardizes job security or promotional opportunities. However, it does not excuse the employee from following School Department policies and procedures or from meeting required standards for satisfactory job performance except where specific accommodations are required by law.

### **REFERRALS FOR EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OR BEHAVIOR ISSUES:**

When an employee's job performance or attendance is unsatisfactory or there appear to be signs of other problems impacting work performance, the employee may be encouraged to voluntarily access the EAP with an end toward resolving the situation. If the circumstances warrant, the employee may be referred to the EAP to assist in the resolution of the problem. The employee may accept or refuse participation in the EAP. At no time will an employee be required to use the EAP before choosing to access mental health or substance abuse benefits offered through the employee's healthcare plan.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

A critical component of an EAP is confidentiality. All contact between an employee and the EAP is held strictly confidential. The EAP counselor is legally prohibited from disclosing certain confidential information to the PSD except by express written, signed consent of the employee. All counselors are guided by a professional code of ethics.

#### **Legal References:**

The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA)  
Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-336, 104 Stat. 328 (1990)

Policy Revised: September 28, 2021  
Policy Adopted: March 11, 1980

Portsmouth School Department  
Portsmouth, RI