

**Mode of Service Provision for Students
with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties**

This document is subject to regular update as required. The online version shall always apply.
[September 2026 version]

A Conceptual Framework

Family Support	Degree of Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties		
	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Adequate	Support Service in Ordinary School	Schools for Social Development (SSD) (Including Short-term Adjustment Programme)	SSD or SSD/RH
Could Improve	Support Service in Ordinary School or Support Service in Ordinary School & Residential Care ¹	SSD/RH (Including Short-term Adjustment Programme) & Transitional Care Programme in Residential Service (RH) or Residential Care ¹	SSD/RH
Inadequate	Support Service in Ordinary School & Residential Care ¹	SSD/RH (Including Short-term Adjustment Programme)	SSD/RH

- Note: (1) Residential Care refers to residential services not associated with SSD/RH.
- (2) Some students with emotional and behavioural difficulties may also have other special educational needs. The Vetting Committee will take into consideration the characteristics and needs of the cases and the support provided by the original school.
- (3) Some students with emotional and behavioural difficulties are not suitable for services rendered by SSD, e.g. those with severe delinquency, deep-rooted drug problems and acute psychological/mental health problems. These students should be referred to more appropriate counselling/treatment/intervention and follow up first. Should they have shown improvement and still have needs for SSD, they could apply for the services.

Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties the Students May Display (For the reference of the referrers only)

I. Behavioural Problems at School and Illustrations

S1. Skipping Class/ Truancy (*Relative to secondary school students, the extent of difficulties of primary school students who display the related behaviours is more severe.)

<u>Mild</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
• Often arriving late or leaving early • Being absent from school occasionally e.g. once a month without acceptable reasons • Playing truant occasionally e.g. once in 2 weeks* • Showing improvements in school attendance after intervention by teacher, school guidance teacher/ officer/ personnel or school social worker	• Playing truant quite frequently and the problem has persisted for one to two months • Skipping classes for one or two months without acceptable reasons • Showing no marked improvement in school attendance even after intervention by teacher, student guidance teacher/ officer/ personnel or school social worker	• Playing truant frequently and the problem has persisted for several months • Skipping classes for several months without acceptable reasons • No. of days non-attending in the school year is more than no. of days attending and the student has begun to abscond from home • Parents having no ideas about the whereabouts of their child and being inadequate to provide intensive supervision • No improvement or maybe even deterioration despite intensive support and intervention

S2. Displaying Uncooperative Behaviour

<u>Mild</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
• Adopting uncooperative and disrespectful attitude to defy the teachers, e.g. doing what one likes in class, reading comics, playing with mobile phone, etc. • Disobeying specific teachers' instructions • Displaying rude and maybe even hostile attitude towards specific teachers • Over-reacting to specific teachers' views or comments • Persistently failing to submit homework given out by specific teachers	• Neglecting all the instructions of the teachers • Displaying disruptive behaviours to protest against the teachers e.g. speaking loudly and out of turn to interrupt the lesson, using foul language to insult teachers, breaking rules deliberately, etc. • Habitually using aggressive/provocative language with teachers • Repeatedly breaking school rules to express discontent • Showing no marked improvement in behaviour even after intervention by teacher, student guidance teacher/ officer/ personnel or school social worker	• Completely ignoring the instructions of the teachers and may even deliberately perform defiant behaviours • Frequently using verbal aggression to confront teachers • Resorting to physical aggression to confront teachers e.g. pushing over desk/ chair or hitting out at teachers • Instigating other students to cause disturbance at school • Inappropriate behaviours persisted despite intensive intervention rendered by teacher, student guidance teacher/officer/personnel or school social worker

S3. Disruptive Behaviour in Class

<u>Mild</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
- Occasionally being a nuisance/ disruptive at school e.g. running around, being noisy in class/ making odd noises/ shouting from seat, talking nonsense or playing the fool, incessantly asking irrelevant questions, playing tricks on others, deliberately provoking others with words or actions, etc. - Demonstrating inappropriate and disruptive behaviours to seek attention from teachers and peers - Retorting back to teachers when he/ she is being expostulated with - Showing positive response to intervention	- Habitually and willfully being a nuisance as a means of protest against the school authority and/or to draw attention e.g. frequently mocking or annoying others, quarrelling with classmates during lessons, hitting other students (sometimes), etc. - Being ‘uncontrollable’ in the regular classroom, frequently interrupting classroom/ school activities and having significant adjustment problems, requiring special resources and handling skills to manage the behaviours of the student - Showing no marked improvement in behaviour even after intervention by teacher, student guidance teacher/ officer/ personnel or school social worker	- Seriously interrupting the delivery of lessons with destructive behaviours e.g. not subservient to boundaries, leaving seat, disturbing the learning of classmates or teaching of teachers - Habitually resorting to aggressive and destructive behaviours e.g. turning over desk/ chair, hitting other students during lessons, challenging teachers and the school authority, threatening, and acting obscenely, etc. - Inappropriate behaviours persisted despite intensive intervention by teacher/student guidance teacher/ officer/ personnel or school social worker

S4. Breaking School Regulations (*Relative to secondary school students, the extent of difficulties of primary school students who display the related behaviours is more severe.)

<u>Mild</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
- Breaking school rules occasionally e.g. smoking, speaking foul language, cheating* - Breaking appearance or uniform codes, failing to hand in assignments, non-punctual and talking incessantly in class - Showing positive response to intervention	- Despite receiving repeated interventions, still continue to display relatively serious behavioural problems and break the school regulations e.g. gambling in school, fighting, insulting others, speaking foul language, and participation in gang activities, etc. - Repeatedly stealing or stealing classmates’/ school’s property - Despite intervention by teachers, student guidance teacher/ officer/ personnel or school social worker, rule breaking behaviours did not show significant improvement	- Persistent severe unruly behaviours e.g. extorting money from peers, intimidating schoolmates for benefits, etc. - Engaging in dangerous horse-play or fight - Totally ignoring school regulations and rejecting discipline, acting recklessly - Instigating other students to break the school rules - Inflicting injury to teacher/ classmate with aggression - Rule breaking behaviours persisted even after intensive intervention by teacher, student guidance teacher/ officer/ personnel or school social worker

II. Social Adjustment / Behaviour Problems and Illustrations

D1. Acts of Doing Harm to Others or Property

<u>Mild</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
• Displaying impulsive and impetuous acts but no serious harm or damage is done • Damaging properties e.g. kicking doors, walls, rubbish bins, etc. • Hitting others without causing injury • Showing positive response to intervention	• Frequently acting brutally on own or others' property • Frequently engaging in vandalism e.g. breaking windows, damaging library books, notice boards or racks, darting the desk top or toilet seats with pointed edge, etc. • Deliberately hitting others and causing injury • Destructive behaviours showed no significant improvement after intervention by teacher, student guidance teacher/officer/personnel or school social worker	• Resorting to habitual violence with deliberation • Acting brutally towards public property, inflicting injury to animals or people • Massively damaging school's, teacher's or schoolmate's properties • Destructive behaviours persisted despite intensive intervention by teacher, student guidance teacher/officer/personnel or school social worker

D2. Abscondence From Home (*Relative to secondary school students, the extent of difficulties of primary school students who display the related behaviours is more severe.)

<u>Mild</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
• Running away from home to live in relatives' or friends' places with the latter's family members' knowledge and around, returning home by himself/herself or willing to return home when found by parents • Still going to school during abscondence • Not taking up indecent jobs or manifesting significant behavioural problems during abscondence	• Occasionally running away from home for a few days alone or with peer(s) and willing to return home when found* • Having several missing records with duration ranging from two to three days to a month* • Involving in activities that violate social norms or engaging in indecent jobs during abscondence	• Having habitual and long periods of abscondence, unwilling to return home when found • Having many records of missing with duration ranging from 1 month or more each time • Involving in activities that violate social norms, engaging in indecent jobs or even crimes during abscondence

D3. Loitering/ Staying Out Overnight (*Relative to secondary school students, the extent of difficulties of primary school students who display the related behaviours is more severe.)

<u>Mild</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
- Loitering/staying out overnight on one or two occasions with family members' knowledge, returning home by himself/ herself later or when found by parents* - Still going to school during the period of loitering/ staying out overnight* - Loitering alone or with peer(s) in park, video-game centre, cyber-cafe, etc. or staying out overnight once or twice* - No involvement in indecent activities or manifesting no significant behavioural problems during the period	- Occasionally loitering/ staying out overnight without relatives' or family members' knowledge, but willing to return home when found* - Unstable school attendance during the period of loitering/ staying out overnight* - Intermittently loitering/ staying out overnight alone or with peer(s) in park, video-game centre, cyber-cafe, etc.* - Involving in activities that violate social norms or engaging in indecent activities whilst loitering/staying out	- Frequently loitering/staying out overnight without relatives' or family members' knowledge, and unwilling to return home when found - Usually being absent from school during the period of loitering/ staying out overnight - Having many records of loitering/ staying out overnight, once or several times a week, and showing signs of deteriorating - Involving in activities that violate social norms, indecent activities or even crimes during the period

D4. Gang Involvement

<u>Mild</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
- No participation in gang activities but showing an inclination to imitate acts of gangs - Bullying e.g. asking peers for money without returning - Showing positive response to intervention	- Habitually using slangs of gangs - Frequent showing off by claiming to be a gang member, displaying behaviours that violate social norms e.g. bullying, fighting, etc. - Problem behaviours did not significantly improve despite intervention by teacher, student guidance teacher/officer / personnel or school social worker	- Bullying/ intimidating peers in the name of a gang member - Displaying behaviours that violate social norms with the support of the gang - Introducing or forcing other people to join gang activities - Periodically participating in gang activities - Problem behaviours persisted despite intensive intervention by teacher, student guidance teacher/ officer/ personnel or school social worker

D5. Stealing/ Shoplifting

<u>Mild</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
• Demonstrating occasional stealing behaviour (out of greed due to deprivation or envy) • Stealing at home in general • Having a strong sense of guilt after stealing • Showing positive response to intervention	• Stealing at home and in other places • Stealing usually under the influence of peers • Frequent involvement in stealing, sometimes as a planned action • Having little guilt feeling but is afraid of being caught • Repeating the act after being caught, warned and counselled	• Habitual stealing with plans • Goading others to steal and heading the gang • Having a sense of achievement instead of guilt if ‘successful’ • Repeating the act after being caught, warned and counselled

III. Emotional Adjustment Problems and Illustrations

P1. Emotional and Behavioural Regulation Problems

<u>Mild</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Severe</u>
• Attention-seeking e.g. frequently asking irrelevant questions in class • Displaying emotional outbursts with inappropriate behaviours to ventilate such as screaming, lashing out when discontent, anxious or angry • Acting impulsively but could have regulation in the presence of teacher(s) • Showing improvement in self-regulation after the intervention by teacher, student guidance teacher/officer/personnel or school social worker	• Throwing big tantrums with meagre incidents and showing poor response to self-regulation training • Fluctuating emotion and easily losing control, throwing frequent (e.g. daily) big tantrums • Engaging in destructive behaviours when losing emotional control e.g. throwing objects, destroying other's property, injuring others during hitting, demonstrating minor self-injurious behaviours, etc. • Demonstrating uncontrollable impulsive acts with no consideration of the consequences, but show better regulation for a short period of time with the presence of authoritative figures • Problem behaviours did not significantly improve despite intervention by teacher, student guidance teacher/ officer/ personnel or school social worker	• Completely losing control in emotional dysregulation • Repeatedly demonstrating dangerous responses when emotionally dysregulated e.g. swinging at people with objects, throwing heavy objects towards others, etc. • Behaving impulsively and resorting to violence, easily causing injury to self and others • Despite intensive intervention by teacher, student guidance teacher/ officer/ personnel or school social worker, the problem behaviours persisted

Family Support for Students with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

Family support	Parents' ability			Parents' attitude		Environmental factors				Family Relationship	
	Physical condition	Mental condition	Marital relationship	Degree of concern	Responsive-ness to Help	Financial condition	Housing condition	Relatives' support	Parents' work	Parent-child relationship	Sibling relationship
Adequate	good health	emotionally stable, rational	both/single parent(s)/ remarried stable marital relationship single parent but appropriate care & support	caring, supportive	willing to take professional advice	stable, parents with adequate income	stable home environment	grandparents, relatives, elder siblings, etc. assist in supervision	parents have normal working hours	Harmonious on the whole	Harmonious on the whole
Could Improve	Hearing impairment/ visual impairment/ physical disability/ old age ill health	Emotionally unstable/ difficult to relate to Mental health problems requiring regular treatment	both/single parent(s)/ remarried single parent and insufficient care absence of both parents unstable marital relationship	Permissive/ over-protective inadequate/ ineffective parenting skills	unmotivated to seek professional advice, but show positive response when approached	unstable income	undesirable living condition	grandparents, relatives, guardians, etc. assist in supervision, but being permissive/ over-protective	parents work long hours, unstable jobs	Frequent quarrels between parents and student, even using aggressive languages Student holds hostile attitude towards parents or adults in the family	quarrels/ fights on occasions
Inadequate	chronic illness, long-term hospitalisation, drug addiction, imprisonment	chronic mental illness, long-term hospitalisation	Inadequate care from both/single parent(s)/ remarried parents absence of both parents	constantly abusive and neglectful of parenting skills	poor attitude towards professionals, reject professional assistance	debt-ridden due to gambling, etc.	no fixed abode street sleeping (refuse compassionate rehousing)	no next-of-kin's support	illegal jobs long-term unemployment	Hatred against each other Fights between children and parents Mutually rejecting in a cold war Student being driven away from home/ often absconds from home	Poor