

## **Central Co-ordinating Referral Mechanism**

Upon parents' consent, ordinary schools may refer their students with emotional and behavioural difficulties to the Central Co-ordinating Referral Mechanism (CCRM), which is jointly managed by the Education Bureau (EDB) and the Social Welfare Department (SWD), for vetting and arrangement of appropriate services in schools for social development (SSD)/residential homes (RH). The Vetting Committee under CCRM vets the referrals to decide on their suitability for placement in SSD/RH. Details are as follows:

### 1. Referrers

- (i) Referrals can be made by social workers, student guidance personnel, educational psychologists, clinical psychologists and psychiatrists. Referrals from school personnel and social workers should be countersigned by their respective school head and centre-in-charge.
- (ii) Students and their families should have been given appropriate professional assessment and counselling services to ascertain their need for placement before referrals are made. The referrers should complete the application form (CRM-F1), which has been uploaded onto EDB webpage, and submit it to CCRM, together with the relevant information (see Part 2 below).
- (iii) For students in need of residential service, the referrers who are not their family caseworkers should refer the cases as soon as possible to the Integrated Family Services Centres serving the respective districts of the students' families. This is to ensure that appropriate and adequate support services are rendered to the families for the students to resume normal family life early.
- (iv) Referrers should comply strictly with the requirement for timely updating of the latest service need of the students waitlisting for day and boarding placement by submitting the standard form "Updating of the Application for Residential Placement" (CRM-F3B) to CCRM on a monthly basis. In the event that a referrer fails to submit the standard form for more than three months, CCRM will send a written request to the referrer for providing the latest information of the student within seven working days. This is to avoid keeping those students who had already withdrawn their application on the waiting list. Besides, CCRM will only proceed the cases with updated information on the waiting list. For other waitlisted cases, CCRM will re-activate them after receiving their updated information from the referrers.

- (v) For urgent cases with genuine needs justified by professional assessment, heads of SSD/RH may contact the Vetting Committee under CCRM for special consideration. Upon the Vetting Committee's consent, SSD/RH may give priority to the students for admission.

## 2. Referral Procedures

- (i) Referrers should submit the following documents for processing by the Vetting Committee under the CCRM for placement in SSD/RH:
  - (a) CRM-F1 - Application Form for Placement in SSD/RH; and
  - (b) The following documents, where appropriate:
    - (i) Psychologist's/Counsellor's report;
    - (ii) Medical report;
    - (iii) Psychiatrist's report; and
    - (iv) Latest school report.
- (ii) Referrers must provide comprehensive and accurate information to the best of their knowledge, so as to avoid any delay in vetting and referral. Unless the referrer can provide acceptable reasons, the application will not be entertained if the required supplementary information does not reach the Vetting Committee within two weeks from the date of the request for such information by the Vetting Committee.
- (iii) The application forms and related reports in successful cases will be copied to the receiving SSD/RH. Referrers must inform the report issuing agencies (such as psychologists, paediatricians and psychiatrists) or parents/guardians in advance of the aforesaid procedure and obtain their consent before submission of the documents and application forms to the Vetting Committee.
- (iv) SSDs and RHs are required to provide updates at least once a month by phone and the standard form to CCRM on the existing and estimated day and boarding vacancies available within a month<sup>1</sup>. In accordance with the order on the waiting list, CCRM will refer cases to SSDs and RHs for admission as soon as possible. Under special circumstances, if no immediate day and boarding places can be provided for the students, SSDs and RHs should contact CCRM for arrangement of alternative arrangements for the students.

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Remark<sup>1</sup>: If SSDs and RHs anticipate that vacancies may be available in more than one month's time (e.g. during June/July before the summer vacation, SSDs may be able to estimate more accurately the vacancies available in September), they should set out in the standard form the estimated time for available places to enable filling of the places as appropriate.

- (v) In the course of registration for admission, the referrers should work closely with the SSD/RH concerned. Unless there is no vacancy, the admission procedures should be completed within 14 working days upon receipt of the admission notification (starting from the date of issue of the admission notification from EDB to the SSD/RH). If a student fails to turn up for admission to the SSD/RH within the aforesaid period, the referrer is required to provide acceptable reasons and apply to the SSD/RH for an additional 14 working days to complete the procedure. If the student still fails to turn up for admission within the aforesaid 28 working days to complete the admission procedure, the place will be allocated to another applicant. Unless there are acceptable reasons, the application will be treated as a withdrawn case.
- (vi) For an SSD (secondary section)/RH reported to have more day and boarding vacancies, CCRM will refer cases based on the reported number together with “extra case(s)” to the SSD/RH. The SSD/RH must strictly adhere to the request of Item (v) above and complete the admission procedures for the students no later than 28 working days. For any cases who failed to complete the admission procedures within the time limit, the day and boarding places reserved for them will be given to the “extra case(s)”.

### 3. The Vetting Committee

#### (i) Functions

- (a) To vet all referrals for placement in SSD/RH, so as to ensure that the educational and residential placement meets the needs of each student; and
- (b) To keep statistical records, to facilitate EDB and SWD to understand the students’ need for SSD/RH service, and to consider if other modes of service are required.

#### (ii) Composition

The Vetting Committee comprises:

- (a) one educational psychologist (EP);
- (b) one educational counsellor (EC);
- (c) one inspector from EDB responsible for referral and placement; and
- (d) one Senior Social Work Officer from the Corrections Section of SWD.

#### (iii) Duties

- (a) The Committee meets regularly and at least once a week.
- (b) The EP/EC will hold discussion with the referrers about the educational needs of the students and alternative placement as appropriate. The inspector responsible for referral and placement will contact the referrers for additional case information if needed.
- (c) EDB members are responsible for vetting referrals for day placement and assessing the educational needs in cases applying for residential service. The SWD member is responsible for vetting referrals for residential service.

#### 4 Referral to SSD/RH/other services

- (i) Students assessed by the Vetting Committee to be suitable for placement in SSD are referred to SSD by EDB.
- (ii) Students assessed to be suitable for placement in both SSD and RH will be referred by EDB to SSDs/RHs concerned when SWD has confirmed vacancies in relevant residential homes and has provided EDB with the referral list. SWD will send in parallel the referral list and contact details of the referrers to the SSDs/RHs concerned. On receipt of the referral list and contact details of the referrers, the SSDs/RHs can contact the referrers as soon as possible to arrange interview for the students. When the SSDs/RHs receive the comprehensive information of the students from EDB, they can then contact the referrers to proceed the admission procedures.
- (iii) For students considered more suitable for other types of schools or specialist services (e.g. psychiatric treatment), their cases are returned to the referrers for follow-up actions.

#### 5. Appeal Board

- (i) An Appeal Board will be convened whenever necessary to review cases encountering placement difficulties. The main task of the Appeal Board is to ensure that all students in need have access to appropriate services for students with moderate to severe emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- (ii) Depending on the nature of the case, EDB and SWD will invite representatives from SSD and RH to form an Appeal Board with EDB and SWD officers. The Appeal Board will meet at the earliest possible time to explore possible means of helping the students in need to receive appropriate service as soon as possible.

6. Information to be submitted by SSD/RH and Referrer to EDB and SWD

Subsequent to the admission of students or pursuant to any changes of the students' placement, SSD/RH should use the following forms to notify EDB and SWD of the details by fax as soon as possible. Referrers should regularly provide update on the details of the students' applications for the services of SSD/RH:

(i) Forms to be used by SSD/RH

(a) Progress on admission to SSD/RH: Form **CRM-F 2A**

(b) Notification for discharging from SSD/RH: Form **CRM-F2B**

(c) Change of service for students in SSD/RH: Form **CRM-F2C**

(ii) Forms to be used by Referrers

(a) Updating of application for day placement: Form **CRM-F3A**

In case of withdrawal of the application for a day placement, the referrer should notify EDB and SSD immediately by a duly completed CRM-F3A.

(b) Updating of the Application for Residential Placement: Form **CRM-F3B**

The referrer should provide updates on the application for a residential placement by completing CRM-F3B on a monthly basis starting from the approval date of the application. In case of withdrawal of the application in the admission process, the referrer should notify EDB, SWD and the SSD/RH concerned immediately by completing this form.

Addressees of EDB and SWD and their fax numbers are as follows:

EDB

Senior Inspector (Special Education Support 2) Fax: 2760 4191

SWD

Senior Social Work Officer (Corrections Service)2 Fax : 2833 5861

7. Criteria for discharging students and arrangements

(i) Criteria for discharge

Whether a student is suitable for discharge should be based on professional judgment. An SSD/RH should refer to the following areas for assessing the suitability for discharging a student:

- (a) Behavioural condition - To assess whether there is improvement in the student's behaviour and emotion as compared with the conditions right after his/her admission by making reference to the information on the application form and the welfare plan provided by the referrer.
- (b) Family condition - To assess whether the family support is stable and appropriate, whether family acceptance and support are adequate and whether there is improvement in the student's self-care ability.
- (c) Academic condition - To assess whether there is improvement in the student's motivation and initiative to study and whether there will be any negative influence on the student's succession upon changing school.

Different professionals, including teachers and social workers of the SSD/RH, the referrer or the case worker of the student, parents or guardian, etc. should be involved in the assessment. When there are long-stay cases, EDB will look into them based on the information provided by the SSD. If necessary, EDB will follow up and review the cases.

(ii) Discharge arrangements

(a) Day students and boarders

Upon admission of a student, the SSDs/RHs should review regularly his/her progress as well as his/her education and welfare plan. When a student has stayed for about one and a half years, the SSD/RH should conduct a comprehensive review on his/her progress and discuss discharge arrangements with time frame to help the student return to ordinary school and/or re-integrate into the community as early as possible.

(b) Students of short-term adjustment programme

SSD/RH should review the progress of the students and the discharge arrangements with time frame once every three months so as to collaborate with the students' original schools and facilitate the students to return to their original schools as early as possible.

(8) Review on long stay cases

According to experience of SSDs/RHs and statistics, most students in SSDs are able to achieve apparent improvement and leave school within two school years. As such, EDB, SWD and SSDs/RHs have agreed to take two school years as a reference point for follow

up on the long stay cases in SSDs.

For students having stayed in SSDs/RHs for two school years, SSDs are required to provide explanations for their long stay and the discharge plans for them in September and January every academic year. SSDs/RHs are required to keep records of every case for examination by the parties concerned when necessary. Based on the information provided by SSDs, EDB will study the reasons of individual long stay cases. If necessary, EDB will conduct school visits to check records and observe the students for review and follow-up purposes.

9. Flow-chart on Central Co-ordinating Referral Mechanism

