



# SAP GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS



## WHAT IS SAP?

The Student Assistance Program, or SAP, is required by the state of Pennsylvania to be in every school. It is a team of school personnel (school counselors, teachers, school nurse, etc.) and a SAP counselor working together to identify and address problems that may be interfering with a student's ability to be successful in school. The SAP program is a process to identify issues and connect with additional resources. The goal is for the school to work together with the student, family and community.



## WHAT IS ESAP?

The Elementary Student Assistance Program, or ESAP, is the SAP program provided within elementary schools. It follows the same processes and guidelines as the original SAP program that was applied at the secondary level. At the elementary level, there is a strong focus on social emotional skills, behavioral concerns and mental health.

## WHAT SERVICES DOES SAP OFFER?

- Short-term problem-solving individual counseling (approximately 6 sessions) This is a support service to students including, but not limited to, increasing motivation, goal setting, techniques for managing emotions, and general strategies for school success. These services can be delivered either during the school day, or after, and can be either in-person or virtual.
- Group counseling
- Behavioral Health Assessments with follow-up recommendations and link to community services

## WHO CAN MAKE A REFERRAL? IS IT ANONYMOUS?

Anyone can make a referral to SAP when they are concerned about a student's behavior, including school staff, classmates, friends, family, community members, or the students themselves. Referrals to SAP may be anonymous.



## WHAT IS SAP NOT?

- SAP is not the first thing used to help a student. It should be used after all other school-based supports have failed.
- SAP is not ongoing therapy.
- SAP is not a punishment for policy violations.
- SAP is not mandatory. (Some exceptions exist in the case of policy violations per district policy).
- SAP is not a crisis service.

## WHAT DOES A SAP COUNSELOR DO?

SAP counselors have four main functions:

- To improve students' participation in the classroom
- Work with school SAP team
- Provide helpful information to students on topics related to emotional well-being
- Act as a bridge to community resources



## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SAP COUNSELOR & A SCHOOL COUNSELOR?

School counselors are the school's primary resource for a student. They are employed by the district and are responsible for supports in school, including academic supports, and all college related processes. A SAP recommendation is made for those students who have not responded positively to school supports. SAP works to connect with resources outside the school.

## HOW DO I ACCESS YOU?

SAP counselors can be accessed by contacting your school counselor or a school administrator.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I EXPERIENCE A CRISIS?

You should contact your school counselor immediately.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SAP REFERRAL AND A SAFE2SAY REFERRAL?

Safe2Say is a confidential tip line to report immediate concerns for another student. If a student would benefit from ongoing services or more thorough assessment for anything reported TO Safe2Say, they will be considered for SAP.

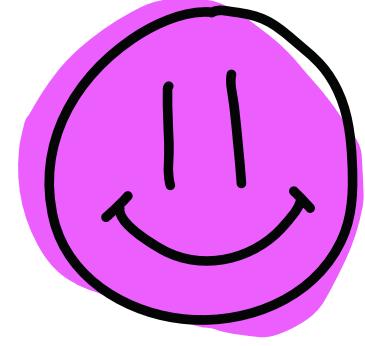


SAP in Bucks County is a collaborative process with Bucks County Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc. and Bucks County Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Programs.



# SAP

## Q & A



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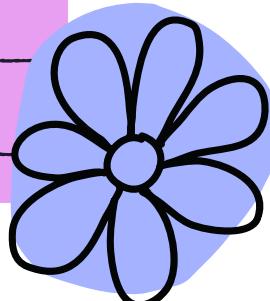
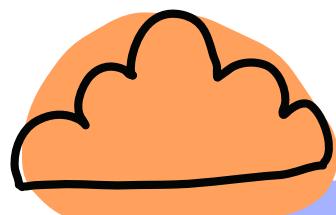
### Why would I be referred?

Students can be referred due to a drop in grades, change in appearance, loss of interest in activities, disciplinary issues, talk of drug and alcohol use, depressed mood, uncontrolled anger, and other concerns that someone may have about a student.

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### Am I in trouble?

No, you are not in trouble. The SAP team/counselor is here to help you! What you say is confidential unless it may interfere with your safety.



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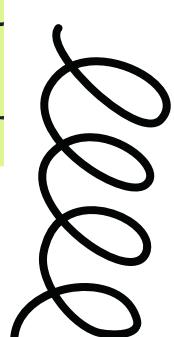
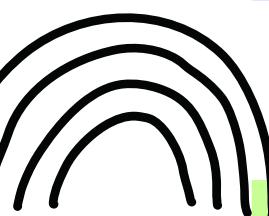
### What if I do not want to participate?

SAP is a voluntary program. If at any point in the SAP process you do not want to participate, you are free to stop at any time

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### Does this affect my class?

It depends on your schedule, as well as the SAP service being provided. The SAP counselor will work in cooperation with the school to limit the amount of time you are missing instructional time.



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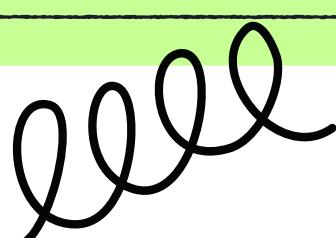
### Does this go on my record?

A SAP referral does not become part of your cumulative file, and does not go on to colleges or employers. All SAP records are destroyed when you graduate.

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### Is this confidential\*?

When engaged in SAP, you are the client. In order for you to feel comfortable expressing yourself and disclosing your concerns, you are provided confidentiality.



#### \*Exceptions to Confidentiality:

\*If you are thinking about harming yourself (suicidal ideation)

\*If you are thinking about harming someone else (homicidal ideation)

\*If someone else is harming you (abuse)

# Reasons for a SAP Referral

There are a variety of reasons why a student would be referred to the SAP program.

Here are some typical reasons, but not an all inclusive list:

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## Academics

Drop in grades, lower achievement \* Decrease in class participation\* Failure to complete assignments \* Short attention span, easily distracted \* Poor short-term memory \* Does not follow directions



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## Attendance

Tardiness to class \* Absent from school \* Cutting class \* Frequent gym excuse \* Frequent visits to the health room \* Frequent visits to the guidance office \* Frequent visits to the bathroom



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## Health

Deteriorating personal appearance \* Sleeping in class\* Frequent cold-like symptoms \* Headaches \* Unsteady on feet \* Frequent complaints of nausea or vomiting \* Odor of alcohol or marijuana \* Glassy, bloodshot eyes \* Slurred speech \* Unexplained frequent physical injuries\* Preoccupation with food and/or weight



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## Behaviors

Change in friends \* Erratic behavior \* Sudden popularity \* Older or significantly younger social group \* Unrealistic goals \* Inappropriate responses \* Appears sad or depressed \* Seeking adult advice without a specific problem \* Defensive \* Withdrawn, difficulty in relating to others \* Talks about problems at home \* Talks freely about drug abuse, alcohol abuse and/or sexual activities \* Mentions or threatens suicide \* Mentions or threatens violence of any kind





# WHAT HAPPENS IN SAP?

## SAP TEAM MEETING

Once a referral has been made, the SAP team will meet to decide to either offer available supports (1:1, group), or proceed with the formal SAP process. If the latter, information is collected from your teachers and other sources (nurse, counselor, attendance, discipline) to identify concerns. Then, the SAP team will meet, review that information, and discuss options to best support you. A SAP team member will contact you and your parent/guardian to discuss these options, and request your permission, and your parent's/guardian's permission to move forward.

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## PARENT COMMUNICATION

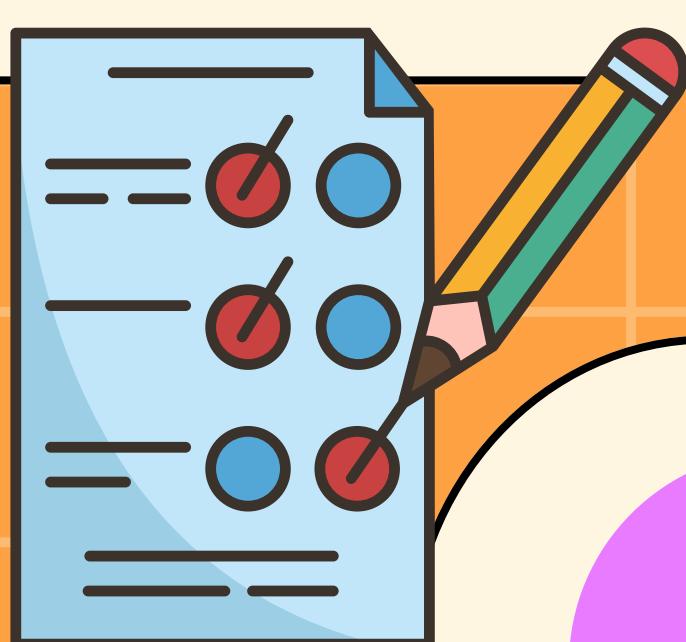
When engaged in SAP, you are the client. In order for you to feel comfortable expressing yourself and disclosing your concerns, you are provided confidentiality. Otherwise you may be too concerned with getting in trouble to be honest. You will be informed that there are a few scenarios in which confidentiality is broken: \*If you are thinking about harming yourself (suicidal Ideation) \*If you are thinking about harming someone else (homicidal ideation) \*If someone else is harming you (abuse)

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## WHAT IS A SAP SCREENING?

An SAP screening can identify areas of concern and determine if further evaluation is necessary. A screening does NOT determine if treatment is needed nor what level of care might be needed.

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## WHAT DOES AN ASSESSMENT MEAN?

Why is it being suggested? Do I need to follow the recommendations of the assessment? An assessment is an interview where you provide your perspective about the events of your life. Questions are asked to get to know you better and understand all of your strengths as well as your challenges. There is also an interview with your parent/guardian so that they can provide their perspective. An assessment is being suggested because the more we know about you, the better we are able to provide resources that may be helpful. While recommendations are not mandatory, they have been thoughtfully identified to provide the best support in mind.

