

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

REGARDING PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS

1) Why was my child or adolescent referred for a psychological assessment?

Children and adolescents who are referred for a psychological assessment are referred by the school team. Generally, students who are referred have a history of delays or challenges and have received academic support. The purpose of the assessment is to provide information to parents and teachers regarding the student's learning, intellectual ability, behavior, mental health, and social-emotional profile.

2) Who will assess my child?

Psychological assessments are conducted by members of the psychology department that includes registered psychologists, registered psychological associates, and psychoeducational consultants. All psychology staff members have extensive post-graduate training in child development, learning processes, social-emotional development, and psychological health and wellness.

3) What is involved in a psychological assessment?

- First, the psychology staff member must meet with the parent or legal guardian to provide information about the assessment and implications in order that the parent or guardian can make an informed decision about going ahead with the assessment.
- Once the parent agrees to an assessment, the psychology staff member will spend time with the parent/ guardian reviewing the child's developmental history and any medical concerns or issues, in order to develop an understanding of the child's personality and how the child functions within the family and the community.
- The psychology staff member will then gather information from teachers and other school staff, review the child's Ontario School Record, and review all existing documents including any available professional reports.
- The psychology staff member can then observe the student in the school setting and meet with the student to begin the assessment. Observation of the child both in the class, at recess, and during the assessment is important in gathering information.
- The psychology staff will administer a variety of standardized tests based on the referral question. Measures that are commonly administered include standardized tests of intellectual ability, academic achievement, attention and information processing, perceptual motor skills, learning and memory, language skills, personality, socio-emotional functioning, and adaptive functioning.
- The psychology staff member then gathers all the information, including test scores, analyses all measures administered, and comes to a conclusion about the nature of the problems and strategies necessary to help the child be more successful in all relevant areas.
- The psychology staff member then writes a complete report, and the results are shared with the parents/guardians and the school team.



4) Will my child feel singled out?

Psychology staff are present within the schools and do their best to make students feel comfortable. Typically students are aware of the issues leading to the assessment and the parents and psychology staff member discuss what to tell the student and how far in advance to inform the student. In a given classroom, there are a number of students who leave the class to participate in different programs, and teachers are sensitive to the needs of each student in arranging for the testing sessions.

5) How long does it take?

Students are seen in a one-on-one setting over a few sessions to avoid fatigue and promote optimal performance. A typical break down of the assessment is as follows:

- 3-4 hours of interviewing/talking with teachers and parents, reviewing reports, and observing the student at school.
- 6-10 hours of test administration.
- 10-12 hours to score tests, write the report, and share the information with parents/guardians, and school staff. The process takes place over several weeks, and varies with the number of measures used and the child's ability to focus and concentrate for extended periods.

6) Where does the report go?

The original report is stored in the student's confidential psychology file.

A copy of the report is filed in the student's Ontario Student Record.

Parents can receive a copy of the report.

The psychology file is stored at a secured board location. When the student leaves high school, it will remain in a secure location at the board until 10 years after the student's 21st birthday.

7) Who is this information shared with?

Access to the file is restricted to staff who are directly involved with the student. The information in the psychological assessment cannot be released outside of the school board without parental permission. In rare cases the information can be requested by the court.

For further information, contact the current psychological consultant at your child's school, or Dr. Debra Lean, Chief Psychologist, at 905-890-0708, x24330.