SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
Operational Criteria Reference Sheet

Emotional Disability

Operational Definition

“Emotional Disability” means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child’s educational performance:

1. An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
2. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers (e.g., inability to get along with others, feelings of isolation, withdrawal, avoidance of social interaction, etc.);
3. Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances (e.g., excessive crying, paranoia, verbal or physical aggression, attacking others for no apparent reason, etc.);
4. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression (e.g., suicidal ideation, clinical depression, mood swings, self-destructive behavior, etc.); or
5. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems (e.g., stomachaches or headaches related to school, truancy, school refusal, etc.).

Emotional disability includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they also have an emotional disability.

Criteria

Students identified with an emotional disability will meet the following:

1. The student has had academic learning experiences appropriate for age and grade level.
2. Scientific, research-based interventions have been implemented, and the student’s performance has not improved.
3. The student requires accommodations or assistance that cannot be reasonably provided solely through regular education.
4. Evidence of an emotional disability is present over a long period of time and to a marked degree.
5. The disability is not the result of transient, environmental or external social stressors.
6. The disturbance has an adverse effect on the student’s educational performance.
7. The student requires special education.