

Q. What is the Neshaminy School District's Student Assistance Program?

- A. In Neshaminy, we call our Student Assistance Programs SAP (secondary) and ESAP (elementary). The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Act 211, mandated a student assistance program in every school district by the 1991-1992 school year. Neshaminy has been in the forefront of this much needed movement and we are proud to have been recognized on the local, state, regional and national levels for our commitment to students.

Q. What is the overall goal of SAP and ESAP?

- A. SAP/ESAP identifies students whose behavior, attendance, health or grades indicate that they may have problems that negatively impact their accessing their education. SAP/ESAP identifies students who are at risk; that is, they are not evidencing significant problems at the moment but the probability that they will, unless some series of events changes the course of their lives, is higher than the norm. Through the different steps that comprise the student assistance process, at risk students are directed to appropriate services in or out of the school.

Q. Who are the Team members?

- A. Team members are specially selected and trained volunteers who are in contact with many different parts of the school by virtue of being teachers, coaches, nurses, principals and school counselors. They have a strong, positive image with the student body, faculty and community.

Q. How do I know when a piece of information should be brought to the Team? When do I refer a student? Does the Team accept hearsay evidence?

- A. When in doubt, tell a Team member what you know. The Team will decide if the evidence is substantial enough to warrant further investigation. Information must be firsthand; evidence substantiated.

Q. How can I be sure that something I tell the Team will not involve a student in disciplinary trouble at school or at home?

- A. The specific information you give the Team is kept confidential. The Team is not involved in discipline, so the student will never be "busted" for anything you tell the Team. Students who self-refer, providing they are not under the influence of alcohol or other drugs nor distributing or selling same, are not subject to disciplinary action (see SB Policy 510).

Q. What about depression and suicidal behavior?

- A. Except for emergencies, these cases are handled in the same manner as the other student assistance referrals. The social worker or the guidance counselor on the Team is the

person most likely to respond to these referrals and make the appropriate recommendation.

Q. Does the Team deal with “experimental” drug use or just dependency?

A. Both the District recognizes the need to deal with the health implications of lower level use/abuse through education and counseling.