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Background Information for Elementary and Secondary E.I. Program Placement

In order to assure that all appropriate options have been attempted prior to consideration of placing a student in an E.I. Program, the Success Through Positive Support (STEPS) Entry Criteria was first developed during the 2004/2005 school year and revised during the 2006/2007 school year. Issues related to least restrictive environment (LRE) and free appropriate public education (FAPE) and Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) are paramount when a district moves towards consideration of a more restrictive option for students with E.I.:

1. Special Education in a Local Education Association (LEA)
2. Elementary STEPS Program or Secondary STEPS Program

Every attempt is made to assure parents, students and professionals that placement in an E.I. program occurs only after the LEA has exhausted all possible options and it is clear that the student with emotional impairment continues to experience significant behavior and emotional problems. The Eligibility Criteria is a set of standards that will allow for a quality education in an appropriate setting while responding to changing trends in the field of Special Education.

During the 2003/2004 school year, a community wide Task Force was convened to look at a variety of issues related to the needs of local students. The Task Force consisted of representatives from area superintendents, parent advocates, regular and special education teachers, regular and special education building administrators, school administration, Human Development Commission as well as Court personnel. The Task Force identified the need for a program at the secondary level that provides services for students with emotional impairment that are apart of the least restrictive continuum. During the 2005/2006 school year it was decided that there was an increasingly greater need for a similar program to serve students at the elementary level.

Purpose and Philosophy

The purpose of this handbook is to inform the students, parents, guardians, and other interested persons of the various components, policies, and procedures of the STEPS (Success Through Effective Positive Support) Program. The STEPS Program is an alternative placement for students with severe emotional impairment and behavioral challenges. Both programs are operated by the Huron Intermediate School District and located in the Huron Learning Center. The intent of this program is to provide a short-term placement for eligible students by providing an intensive social skills component within an educational setting.

Through this cooperative effort, an individualized educational plan is designed and implemented using a modified version of the Girls and Boys Town Model of Specialize Classroom Management. The purpose is to allow students to return to less restrictive settings as soon as they are able to meet the established behavioral criteria.

The overall goal of the STEPS Program is to maximize the students' learning potential, teach students to understand and manage their behavior, afford students the opportunity to enhance their self-esteem, encourage students to develop independence and, at all times, preserve students' dignity and self-worth.

The Use of Seclusion and Restraint

It is recognized that there may be a need to use emergency procedures including: seclusion or physical management in emergency situations in the STEPS Program. As stated in the State of Michigan Standards for the Use of Seclusion and Restraint:

“Seclusion is the last resort emergency safety intervention that provides an opportunity for students to regain self-control. Seclusion is the confinement of a student in a room or other space from which the student is physically prevented from leaving and which provides for continuous adult observation of the student.

Behavior that requires immediate intervention constitutes an emergency seclusion. Emergency seclusion must be used only under emergency situations and if essential. An emergency that may require the use of seclusion includes behaviors that:

- 1) pose an imminent risk to the safety of an individual student; or
- 2) pose an imminent risk to the safety of others.

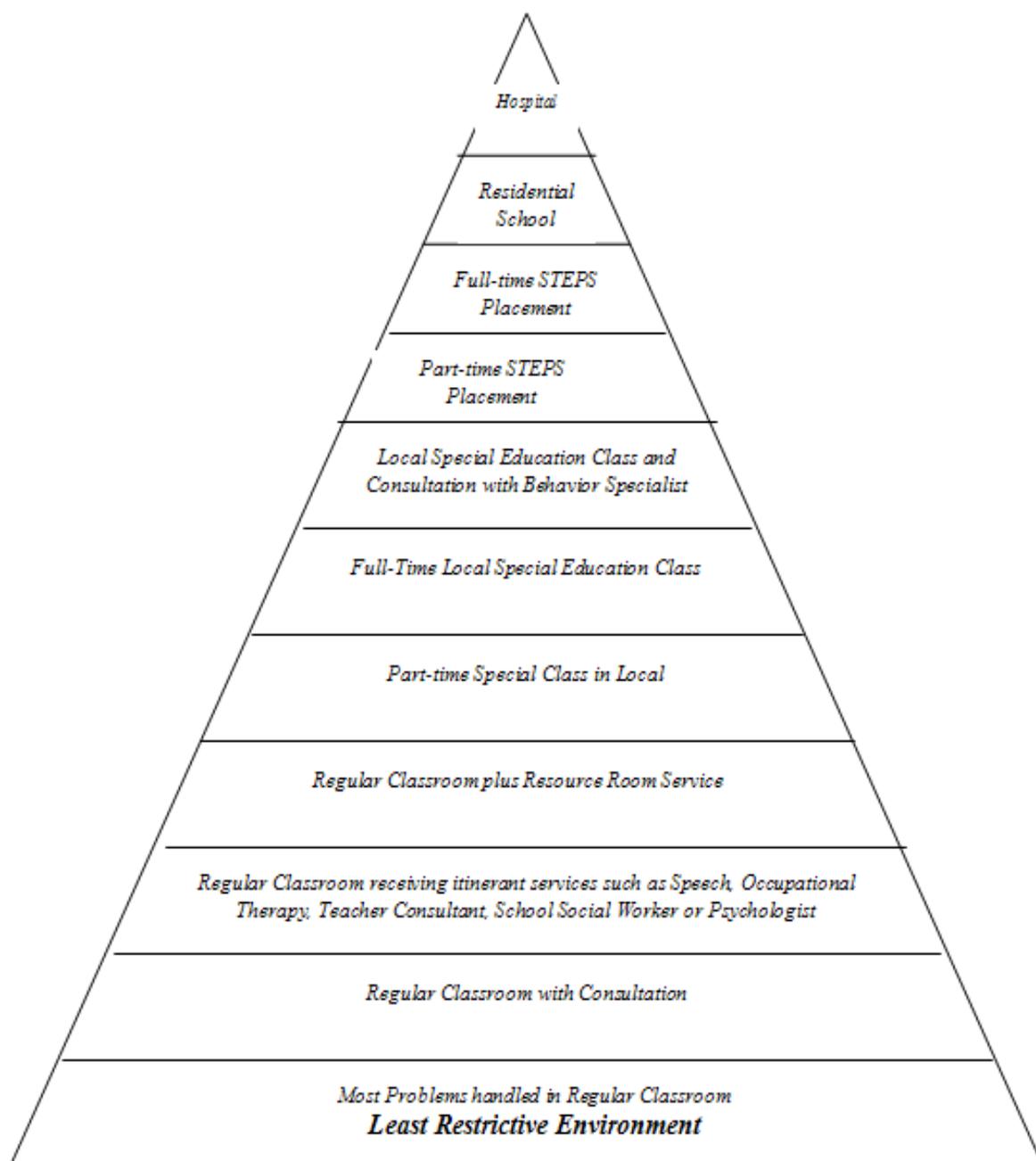
Physical restraint involves direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's movement. Restraint is a last resort emergency safety intervention. Restraint is an opportunity for the student to regain control.

A behavior that requires immediate intervention constitutes an emergency restraint. Emergency restraint must be used only under emergency situations and if essential. An emergency that may require the use of restraint includes behaviors that:

- 1) pose an imminent risk to the safety of an individual student; or
- 2) pose an imminent risk to the safety of others.
- 3) is otherwise governed by The Revised School Code, 1976 PA 451, otherwise known as the Corporal Punishment Act.”

It is also recognized that parents will be notified of such emergency procedures within a 24 hour period. When emergency procedures are necessary on a consistent basis, the parents/guardian and staff will be involved in the development of an emergency intervention plan.

Huron Intermediate School District Continuum of Services



STEPS Program Admittance Process and Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria assume that the student is currently identified as having an Emotional Impairment and the required rules 340.1706 and 340.1721a have been met. In unique cases, other special education eligibilities may be considered.

- A relevant and current Functional Behavioral Assessment must be completed by the Behavioral Specialist or sending schools social worker (as approved by the STEPS Committee) and a specific behavior plan designed to address the areas of serious concern are in place at the discretion of the STEPS Program Committee.
- Documentation of a relevant and current behavior plan addressing the current serious behaviors and duration of each intervention tried denoting expected results and actual results
- Completed behavior checklist and additional pertinent information
- Documentation of current grades. Student must be at risk of educational failure due to emotional and behavioral concerns.
- Current IEP, including goals specific to student's behavior and progress on goals. Specific goals have been developed through the IEP process related to the behaviors of serious concern with data indicating expected results and actual results.
- Student must be eligible for special education programs and services.
- STEPS must be the least restrictive environment option for the student as determined by the STEPS Committee.
- Targeted students for the Elementary STEPS Program: Kindergarten through 8th grade. Targeted students for the Secondary STEPS Program: 7th grade through 12th grade. (note: placement determination is made on an individual basis)
- Student placement must be determined through the IEP process at which STEPS Program committee must have representation present.
- Student, family, and LEA must understand and agree that the overall goal of the STEPS program is to transition the student back into the local school. The STEPS Program is a short-term placement.
- Special application steps must be taken prior to consideration of the program
- Agreement from LEA's, parents/guardians to attend monthly staffings and all IEP meetings.

- Signed Parent/Guardian permission for Interagency Release/Exchange of Information with agencies that the student and family are involved with.
- Documented home-school communications must have occurred on a consistent basis.
- Direct student contact with itinerant staff (teacher consultant, school psychologist, school social worker, behavior specialist) or appropriate local agencies is in place.
- Placement in the local school full inclusion program, special education resource room 40%-50%, or placement in a local district categorical classroom 75%-85% has been documented. Reason: When moving to the most restrictive STEPS Program, the local district must place the student in the maximum time available for special education intervention with the LEA or clearly justify as to why the STEPS Program is the most appropriate placement.
- Specific behaviors and incidents have been documented over an extended period of time (90 days minimum according to the Michigan Monitoring Standards).
- A review of the student's medical history has taken place and, when appropriate, contact with student's doctor has occurred and been documented. Issues reviewed may include medical history, T.B.I., E.E.G., brain scan, etc.

Upon receipt of application, the STEPS Program Committee* will review the submitted application and proceed with a case investigation. A report of the completed investigation will be drafted with the disposition and recommendations within 5 school days.

* The STEPS Program Standing Committee membership may include, but is not limited to, the following individuals:

HISD Administrator
 HISD STEPS Program Teacher
 HISD Behavior Specialist
 HISD STEPS Program Paraprofessional

Use the **STEPS Application Checklist Form** to document the criteria listed above. This form must be completed and submitted to the HISD Behavior Specialist. Occasionally it may be necessary to offer additional supports or recommendations prior to further consideration for placement. HISD administrators will consider exceptional circumstances and emergency placements on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the STEPS Program Committee with final acceptance pending their approval. Once the committee recommends placement in the STEPS Program, the LEA with the STEPS Committee representatives will organize an IEP meeting before a change of placement may occur.

STEPS Application

Basic Information:

Date: _____

Name: _____

DOB: _____

School: _____

Class type: _____

Hours in Special Education: _____

Teacher Certification: _____

IEP Date: _____

MET Date: _____

Eligibility: _____

Medication: _____

Grade: _____

Criteria for Entrance (check those that apply):

- History of significant assaultive behavior (include documentation)
- History of significant self-abusive behavior (include documentation)
- History of significant damage to school property (include documentation)
- Psychiatric evaluation within the past year that clearly states a significant disturbance that requires STEPS Program placement (attach evaluation)
- Recently released from 24 hour Emotionally Impaired Facility (include release summary)
- Transfer student from segregated Emotionally Impaired Program
- History of repetitive behavioral difficulties

Presentation of Problem:

History (include overview of behavior problems, discipline reports, and copies of current behavior plan, medical concerns, etc...):

Present status (attach discipline reports, suspension letters, etc...):

Briefly summarize parent conferences, level of cooperation, etc...:

Affective goals and objectives (attach a copy of goals and objectives from current IEP and progress to date):

Which of these goals cannot be met in the current program? Why not?

What was the target behavior of the management plan? (Attach plan with documented results)

List four things that the student likes or will work for:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Additional information:

Is the student in foster care?	Yes	No
If yes, which agency:		

Is the student involved with the courts?	Yes	No
If yes, which court:	Probation Officer:	

Do you suspect substance abuse problems?	Yes	No
Do you suspect the student was physically abused?	Yes	No
Do you suspect the student was sexually abused?	Yes	No

Support Services:

Consultation to teacher(s) provided by:

Results:

Student counseling provided by:

Results:

Other services provided by:

Results:

Additional Comments:

People present while completing Entry Criteria:

Parent/Guardian

Student

LEA Administrator

LEA Special Education Teacher

School Social Worker

LEA General Education Teacher

Other

Other

Application Documentation Checklist

STUDENT: _____
GRADE: _____
IEP DATE: _____
DOB: _____

DATE: _____
SENDING SCHOOL: _____
MET DATE: _____

- STEPS Application completed
- Functional Behavior Assessment
- Behavior Plan in place
- Counseling Services in place
- Current IEP Goals consistent with student's difficulties (behavioral and academic)
- Disciplinary documentation consistent/appropriate
- Documentation of home-school communication present
- Current MET
- Student grades encompassing the last two years
- Signed copy of release of information from parent or guardian
- Documentation of Home-School communication present
- Behavior Intervention Checklist

Upon receipt of application, the STEPS Program Committee will review the submitted application and required documentation and proceed with a case investigation. A report of the completed investigation will be drafted within 5 school days with the disposition and recommendations.

Documentation of *each* of the above is required by the LEA prior to placement consideration.

STEPS Program Placement Agreement for Students leaving a 24-hour Psychiatric Facility

Student: _____ Grade/Age: _____

The above student is being released from the following twenty-four hour facility:

Facility Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Based on staffing results, there is reason to believe that this student may be successful in a less restrictive program within the local district and will be placed in the following school:

School District/Building: _____

Grade: _____

Superintendent, Principal/Designee: _____

Title: _____

Title of Person Calling Staffing: _____

Date of Staffing: _____

Suggested target behaviors for the next thirty school days:

- 1.
- 2.

Immediate STEPS Program placement can be obtained within the next thirty school days, with appropriate documentation.

Principal of Local School District

Date

Teacher of Local School District

Date

Criteria for Immediate STEPS Program Entry Placement of Transfer Students

Procedure:

1. Student arrives in your LEA and there is evidence that the student is Emotionally Impaired and was previously enrolled in:
 - A) A separate public school facility for students with severe emotional and or behavioral difficulties.
 - B) A public school E.I. Categorical Program
 - C) A 24 hour Facility Care Program
2. LEA will follow up with previous placement staff and, at a minimum, ask the **Contact Questions**.
3. LEA will complete a Request for Records form, obtain parent signature and send to previous placement.
4. LEA will have the most recent IEP and MET faxed as soon as possible to (989) 269-3403.
5. LEA will contact the Behavior Specialist to arrange for a staffing.
6. Behavior Specialist will coordinate an intake for the identified student at the STEPS Program. A thirty-day placement may be implemented at the STEPS Program.
7. See the Entry Criteria for alternative placement at STEPS Program.

Contact Questions

STUDENT:

DOB:

SCHOOL:

1. In what type of program or facility was this student placed?
2. What behaviors or incident led to the placement there?
3. What are the current behaviors of concern?
4. What is the current frequency and intensity of those behaviors?
5. Was there a behavior plan in place?
6. What was the effect of that plan?
7. Was the student receiving any type of counseling or therapy services? Describe:
8. Can this student function academically and/or socially in a general education environment?
9. Are there any issues related to the transportation of this student?
10. Will the parents cooperate in the implementation of a behavior intervention plan?

Other Concerns:

Approval for STEPS Program Entry Consideration

Occasionally it becomes necessary to recommend or consider a student for placement in the STEPS Program who does not meet the entry criteria.

Student Name: _____ Grade/Age: _____

Local District: _____ School: _____

Reason(s) for exceptions to STEPS Program Entry Criteria:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Other important information:

In some cases where the STEPS Program is deemed most appropriate, this exception can only be approved by the STEPS Program Committee.

HISD Administrator Signature and Title

Date

SENDING DISTRICTS RESPONSIBILITY

Elementary

- Provide transportation to and from the STEPS Program
- Provide student with a Planner
- Provide books and materials for instruction based on students' individual needs as addressed in the IEP or approve usage of STEPS Program materials
- Assign student with grade and/or credit for the course
- Provide STEPS with a local school calendar (Inform STEPS instructor as soon as possible of any upcoming schedule changes i.e. field trips, half-days)
- A district representative must participate in monthly staffings (i.e. counselor, principal, special education teacher, administrator, general education teacher)
- Provide present level of performance with accompanying educational goals for student
- STEPS students will be responsible for taking Goal Card to their local district. Each individual teacher must fill out the card appropriately and return to the student. The student is then responsible for returning the filled out card to the STEPS Program teacher.
- Notify STEPS in a timely manner of bus misconduct or any major or repetitive behavioral difficulties (i.e. office referrals, suspensions)
- Provide all educational programming agreed upon at the IEP or staffing
- Provide lunch for students daily once they return to the local district
- Follow behavior plan agreed upon at the IEP or staffing and provide regular feedback.
- In the event of a school delay STEPS students will not report
- To provide standardized testing (MEAP or MiAccess) and county-wide benchmark testing to students who spend the majority of their school day at the local district
- To complete Medicaid forms on students who spend the majority of their school day at the local district

Secondary

- Provide transportation to and from STEPS Program, regardless of the amount of time being served
- Assign student with credit for the course once STEPS has recommended the grade
- A local representative must participate in monthly staffings (i.e. counselor, principal, special education teacher, social worker, administrator)
- Provide the present level of performance for the student with accompanying educational goals and an Educational Development Plan (EDP) when necessary
- STEPS students who also attend their local district will be responsible for taking a Goal Card to their local district and having each individual teacher fill out the card appropriately. It is the student's responsibility to return the filled out card to the STEPS Program teacher. It is the responsibility of the teacher to fill out the card daily upon request.
- Notify STEPS in a timely manner of bus misconduct or any major or repetitive behavioral difficulties that occur (i.e. office referrals, suspensions)
- Provide STEPS with a local school calendar (Inform STEPS instructor as soon as possible of any upcoming schedule changes i.e. field trips, half-days)

- Provide educational programming agreed upon at the IEP or staffing
- Follow behavior plan agreed upon at the IEP or staffing and provide regular feedback
- In the event of a school delay, a.m. STEPS students will remain at their local districts. The STEPS Program will not start until noon on these days. Lunch will not be provided
- Provide lunch for students who are not at the STEPS Program during the time lunch is served
- To provide standardized testing (MEAP or MiAccess) and county-wide benchmark testing to students who spend the majority of their school day at the local district
- To complete Medicaid forms on students who spend the majority of their school day at the local district

RESPONSIBILITY OF STEPS PROGRAM

Elementary

- Provide students with daily course lessons and instruction in academic areas as agreed upon in the IEP.
- Provide students with social skills instruction.
- Develop and consistently follow a behavior plan following the Girls and Boys Town Specialized Classroom Management Model.
- Provide local district with recommended grade for courses taken.
- Contact parents/guardian, local school agency and/or community agency regarding behavior and/or academic progress on a regular basis.
- Provide locals with follow up support to ensure student success.
- To provide standardized testing (MEAP or MI-Access) to students who spend the majority of their school day at the STEPS Program.
- To complete Medicaid forms on students who spend the majority of their school day at the STEPS Program.

Secondary

- Provide students with daily course lessons and instruction as agreed upon in the IEP.
- Provide students with social skills instruction.
- Develop and consistently follow a behavior plan following the Girls and Boys Town Specialized Classroom Management Model.
- Provide local district with recommended grade for courses taken.
- Contact parents/guardian, local school agency and/or community agency regarding behavior and/or academic progress on a regular basis.
- Provide locals with follow up support to ensure student success.
- Provide lunch for those students who are present during the time lunch is served.
- To provide standardized testing (MEAP or MiAccess) to students who spend the majority of their school day at the STEPS Program.
- To complete Medicaid forms on students who spend the majority of their school day at the STEPS Program.

PARENT/STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

- Student will follow local district's school calendar including early dismissals and inclement weather (in the case of delays the STEPS Program will not run until noon).
- Sign STEPS contract, Parent Agreement Form, and Acceptable Use of Technology Policy.
- Actively participate in monthly staffings and IEP meetings and provide thoughts, ideas and suggestions to ensure the success of your child/self. *PARENT INPUT AND INVOLVEMENT IS VERY VALUABLE!*
- In addition to following STEPS Program expectations and local district school rules, STEPS students will abide by all rules outlined in the Huron Learning Center Student Handbook. Parents and students will be required to sign a form stating they have read and understand the rules and expectations outlined.
- Follow Severe Weather Policy of the local school district (in the event of a school delay STEPS students attending in the a.m. will remain at their locals until noon).
- STEPS students attending their local district will be responsible for taking a Goal Card and having their individual teachers fill out the card and initial appropriately. It is the responsibility of the student to return the filled out card to STEPS Program teacher.
- Complete all necessary forms:
 1. Emergency card
 2. Provide copy of Immunization Record
 3. Complete a lunch form
 4. Provide copy of Birth Certificate
 5. Complete a Medication Form (only if there are any medications that are taken during school hours)
 6. Sign a release of information
 7. Sign an acknowledgment form for the use of Seclusion and Restraint

Student/Parent/Guardian Rights

1. The parent, student, or guardian has the right and responsibility to be present and participate at any meeting that involves the design and finalization of a behavioral plan including those that involve the use of physical management techniques.
2. The student has the right to receive the least punitive consequences possible, without jeopardizing the rights or safety of other students and staff. Staff must have data that less punitive approaches have not been successful in controlling the undesirable behavior before an intrusive and/or physical management program can be implemented, except in an emergency situation. Parents will be notified within in 24-hours of such restraint or seclusion.

3. The parent or guardian has the right to call an IEP at any time to discuss the specific behavior intervention plan and/or academic plan developed for their student. They may invite others of their choice to attend.
4. The student has the right to have the behavior plan developed and used by trained professional staff.
5. The student has the right to have his or her progress, as it is related to behavioral and academic goals, monitored by regular and reliable data collection.
6. The parent, student, and/or guardian have the right to review this data at any time.
7. The parent, student, and/or guardian has the right to have any behavior plan reviewed either at a pre-determined time or at the request of any of the involved parties.
8. The parent and/or guardian have the right to observe classroom staff's use of the educational and/or behavioral plan in class and during school hours. Prior arrangements must be made with the STEPS Program teacher and/or administrator. Parents/guardians must abide by the policy and guidelines outlined in the Huron Learning Center Student Handbook.

Attendance Requirements and Procedures

STEPS students will follow their local district calendar. In the event of a school delay the a.m. STEPS Program will not run. In the event that the Huron Learning Center is closed and the local district is not, the STEPS Program will NOT run. See your local district calendar for the schedule. However, in the event that a local school is delayed or closed and the STEPS Program is still operating, parents may bring their STEPS student to the HLC during the student's regularly scheduled time. Although TAT will pick up students from a district that is delayed, they will not enter into a district if it is closed. If parents cannot provide transportation, the student will not have that day count against them.

The school district emphasizes the value of regular attendance in enabling students to benefit from the school's education programs. Michigan law places responsibility on each student to attend school on a daily basis, and on each parent or guardian to send their child to school on a daily basis. More important, however, is the effect of regular and punctual attendance on the student's educational achievement. Regular school attendance also helps develop positive traits such as punctuality, dependability and self-discipline that are important vocational skills needed later in life. Not only is each day's lesson important to the individual student, the student's participation in class contributes to the education of others. Frequent absences and tardiness, for any reason, are certain to adversely affect the student's schoolwork. Each student is expected to be in school every day except when illness, injury, or some condition beyond the student's control prevents attendance.

Excused Absence

One where the parent or guardian has called his/her child's teacher or the Huron Learning Center office by 9:00 a.m. the day of absence to report an illness. In cases where parents do not have a phone, a written excuse signed by the parent shall be submitted the first day the student is back in school. Some examples of an excused absence: illness, local school bus transportation problems, death of a family member, doctor's counseling, and/or court appointment (note will be required), or pre-arranged vacations (work must be made up). ***In the event that a student is transported by Thumb Area Transit (TAT) it is the responsibility of the parent to call and cancel TAT transportation for that day.***

Unexcused Absence

One in which the parent or guardian has not called or written the school to report an absence, student is known to be "skipping," or a doctor's note has not been received for a student with three or more absences due to illness. Secondary students will follow their local district's policy regarding attendance and earning credit. STEPS students missing more than 10 days in a semester (or 7 days in a trimester) will be referred directly to the HISD Truancy Officer. In all cases of an unexcused absence, parents will be contacted and apprised of the absence by the classroom teacher.

Absences from school for reasons other than illness are discouraged. Excessive unexcused absences may result in loss of credit for the marking period(s). Probation officers will be notified for students involved in the court system or other relevant individuals or agencies.

Transportation Requirements

In an effort to transport students safely to and from the STEPS Program, the following procedure has been adopted:

1. The local district bus driver or local administrator must report all discipline problems to the principal and/or STEPS teacher *as soon as possible*. Drivers should report significant behavior problems *as soon as possible*.
2. A conference may be held with the Principal, STEPS Teacher, Transportation Coordinator, student, and bus driver, if possible, to discuss what is expected of the student. This conference should occur as soon as possible after the incident has occurred.
3. If problems continue on the bus, the student may be given an assigned seat and/or placed on a bus pass reporting system between the driver and a STEPS Committee member. Parents will be notified when their son or daughter is experiencing difficulties on the bus.
4. If problems on the bus continue, the STEPS Committee member(s) will meet with transportation personnel to discuss other options (i.e. specific behavior contracts, in-school suspension, parents transporting)
5. If problems on the bus cannot be resolved, then an IEP will be called to determine what options are available for transporting the student in a safer manner.
6. In addition, all Huron Learning Center and Huron Area Technical Center transportation rules and expectations will be followed.

Early Dismissal/Leaving School

Early Pick-up from School

The school district emphasizes the value of regular attendance in enabling students to benefit from the school's education programs. Michigan law places responsibility on each student to attend school on a daily basis, and on each parent or guardian to send their child to school on a daily basis. More important, however, is the effect of regular and punctual attendance on the student's educational achievement. Regular school attendance also helps develop positive traits such as punctuality, dependability and self-discipline that are important vocational skills needed later in life. Not only is each day's lesson important to the individual student, the student's participation in class contributes to the education of others. Frequent absences and tardiness, for any reason, are certain to adversely affect the student's schoolwork. Each student is expected to be in school every day except when illness, injury, or some condition beyond the student's control prevents attendance.

Leaving School with Staff and/or Agency Personnel

When it becomes necessary for students to leave the school grounds with authorized personnel, a sign-in and sign-out register will be maintained in the main office. It is the parent/guardian, authorized personnel, and/or students' responsibility to sign out of the building upon the student's departure and sign in upon return. A specific reason for leaving the school grounds will be required as will the signature of the authorized personnel accompanying the student. Where appropriate, written parent permission will be required before any student is allowed to leave the school grounds. Failure to sign in and out of the building may result in future loss of privileges or other disciplinary action.

Referrals to Department of Human Services Children's Protective Services

All staff members at the STEPS Program are required by law to report any suspicion of neglect or physical and/or sexual abuse to the Department of Human Services/Protective Services and/or appropriate legal authorities. It is required by law that all incidents be reported.

Parents must understand it is not our responsibility to assess the accuracy of these reported incidents. Education's responsibility is to report their suspicions or report what is relayed to them by a student, not to judge the merit or accuracy of them.

It is understood that this may, at times, cause difficulties for parents, but the Huron Intermediate School District staff cannot ignore our legal responsibilities.

Department of Human Services forms necessary for a protective services referral are available from the STEPS Program Teacher or the Huron Learning Center office.

Student Awareness of Handbook Requirements

The STEPS Program will review the STEPS Program Student/Parent Handbook and the Huron Learning Center Handbook. The STEPS teacher is responsible for the Handbook review and will document that the student has been informed of the various rules, procedures and requirements contained in this handbook. Specific items of the handbook will be reviewed at the beginning of each marking period.

To assure us that each parent has received a copy of the Student/Parent Handbook, each parent and student will sign the “Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement of Handbook.” Any student who shares time between attending the two programs will be responsible for and expected to follow all requirements for each program.

Instruction

The STEPS Program offers a wide range of academic programs based on student need. The academic goal for each student is to bring his/her academic performance to its maximum, given the student’s abilities. Academic focus for STEPS Program students will be discussed and agreed upon in the IEP meeting.

As secondary students enter the STEPS Program, emphasis is placed upon credits required for graduation. A schedule of class requirements is developed to assure the student a fulfillment of graduation requirements. The STEPS Program recommends credit or a grade to the student as agreed in the IEP and the local district is responsible for awarding the grade.

Girls and Boys Town Social Skills Curriculum

The Girls and Boys Town Social Skills curriculum provides the foundation for a structured educational approach to the socialization of school-age children. The curriculum offers a well-defined set of social behaviors encompassing, Adult Relations, Peer Relations, School Rules, and Classroom Behaviors. This set of skills assist teachers to go beyond merely labeling problem behaviors (i.e. compulsive talker, lazy, restless, etc...), which often hinders identifying specific alternative behaviors that should be promoted, reinforced, strengthened, or taught.

The Girls and Boys Town Specialized Classroom Management Program is firmly rooted in principles of applied behavior analysis and social learning theory. Its underlying premise is that behavior is learned through feedback on behavior and its environmental consequences. The models focus is on teaching because troubled youth have social skill deficiencies and have not yet learned or been effectively instructed on how to interact in a socially appropriate way with others. This behavioral model involves the identification of desirable pro-social behavioral expectations, the effective use of instructional strategies to teach those expectations, the application of an incentive system, and the effective implementation of reinforcement principles.

The system, including the motivation component, will be described to parents and students prior to entry into the program. At any time parents are welcome to contact the STEPS Program instructor to ask questions or get clarification on the system.

Support Services

The STEPS Program has access to a variety of support services as important components of total programming for students. Below are support services offered and a brief description of each. Services are available to students based on need as determined by the IEP team.

Teacher Consultant: Offers diagnostic and consultative services regarding academic instruction.

Speech and Language Therapist: Offers direct therapy for students with speech and language difficulties.

Occupational Therapist: Offers direct and/or consultative assistance to students and teachers who require physical adaptations in the learning environment.

Physical Therapist: Offers assistance in physical mobility for students who require special training.

School Social Worker: Offers direct and/or consultative assistance to students both individually and/or in groups to focus on individual social needs of the student.

Behavior Specialist: Offers positive behavior support components for total program through consultative and direct assistance to students both individually and/or in groups to focus on individual social and behavioral needs of the student.

Paraprofessional: Offers direct assistance to students both individually and/or in groups to focus on academic and social needs.

Community Education

A unique and important component of the STEPS Program is the Community Education Program. Community Education is an innovative program based on experiential learning that emphasizes group interactions and individual challenges outside the traditional classroom setting. Through a variety of community-based activities, our students learn to participate as part of a group, encourage and help their peers to gain individual success, and participate in group activities which stresses group problem solving skills and working together toward a common goal.

One of the overall goals of the Community Education Program component is to give students experience and expertise in a variety of leisure time activities. The acquisition of skills will provide students with many future activities in their lives that can be rewarding and positive.

The individual goals and objectives contained in this program are the basic skills that students need to master in order to assure that they learn the minimal skills necessary for successful community experiences.

By challenging themselves and meeting individual goals, students learn to believe in themselves and develop feelings of self-worth. By participating in-group activities, they learn the value of working towards a common goal.

Monthly STEPS Staffings

To help ensure the success of our students it is important for all persons involved with each student to communicate with one another on a regular basis. Monthly staffing will be scheduled at an agreed upon time and will last 20 minutes each. Participants in the staffing will include Parents/Guardians, Students, STEPS Program Teacher, STEPS Program Administrator, Local District Representatives (counselor, SSW, teacher, administrator), and other relevant outside agencies (probation officers, case workers, counselors). Attendance at these meetings is a critical part in the success of our students in the STEPS Program.

Monthly STEPS Staffing

Student : _____ Date: _____

Participants

Parent

Parent

Student

STEPS Program Teacher

Paraprofessional

Special Education Teacher

Behavior Specialist

School Social Worker

Administrator

Administrator

General Education Teacher

Other

Other

Other

Please address scheduling/instructional arrangements, socialization and communication, IEP objectives, and behavior.

What is going well?

What are the concerns/problems/issues? (See Action Plan)

Action Plan

Concern/Problem/Issue	Suggested Action	Person(s) Responsible

Notes:

Date of Next Meeting: _____

STEPS Program Exit Criteria

Procedural steps for students leaving the STEPS Program and entering a local school program full time:

1. STEPS Committee will complete an Exit Criteria Form to include successful reintegration to general education and/or special education.
2. STEPS Committee will call a staffing to be held with potential receiving school. Staffing to include:
 - a. STEPS Program Administrator
 - b. Potential Caseload Teacher/Special Education Site Facilitator
 - c. Local School Social Worker/MET Representative
 - d. Local School Administrator
 - e. STEPS Program Teacher
 - f. HISD Behavior Specialist
3. Upon consensus, a timeline is established
4. An After Care Plan is developed collaboratively at the staffing
5. Behavior Specialist will monitor progress at least quarterly throughout the year
6. Review After Care Plan with the Behavior Specialist at the next annual IEP and, if student is successful, a Certificate of Completion is given

Exit Consideration

Student Name: _____
Age/Grade: _____
Receiving School District: _____
Current Program: _____
Phone Number: _____

SSN: _____
Date of Entrance into Program: _____
Date: _____
Current Teacher: _____

1. Describe behavior progress since entering the STEPS Program. Attach Individual Plans and/or contracts and observations.

2. Current Level attained (duration on level):

3. Describe current academic levels and/or credit status:

4. Describe family contacts and cooperation (Teacher and Counselor):

5. Is the student involved with the courts? Yes No If yes, describe:

6. Is attendance a problem? Yes No If yes, describe:

7. Is bus behavior a problem? Yes No If yes, describe:

8. Continuing needs of the student behaviorally and academically:

9. Counselor's Name: _____ Phone Number: _____
Recommendations:

10. Specialized Programs/Services under consideration:

Local District Resource Room	Local District Categorical Room
LEA Teacher's Name:	Certification Area:
Continued Placement in EI Room	Rationale:

11. Receiving school's Special Education team input/concerns:

12. After Care Plan to be developed collaboratively at the staffing. Person(s) responsible for developing and implementing After Care Plan:

Committee Members Present while completing Exit Criteria:

_____ Parent/Guardian	_____ Student
_____ STEPS Program Instructor	_____ Behavior Specialist
_____ School Social Worker	_____ STEPS Administrator
_____ LEA Administrator	_____ LEA General Education Teacher
_____ LEA Special Ed Teacher	_____ Other

After Care Plan

Student: _____
DOB: _____
Age/Grade: _____
Completed By: : _____

School: _____
Teacher: _____
Date: _____

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this After Care Plan (ACP) is to assist _____ in his/her successful reintegration into their local school district program. This ACP is also designed to provide support to Student's local school district should problem behaviors begin to resurface.

LENGTH OF AFTER CARE:

_____ will be on an ACP for a period of one school year as agreed by the local school district, intermediate school district and parent/guardian or adult student at the IEP meeting. This ACP should be attached to the aforementioned IEP.

CONDITIONS/EXPECTATIONS:

1. It is expected that _____ will follow the regular school rules contained in his/her local school district's student handbook, administrative guidelines and board policies.
2. It is expected that _____'s local school district will provide the support necessary to enable him/her to effectively transition, allowing a full return to his/her local school building. This may include, 1:1 counseling, group counseling, a Behavior Plan, pull out special education support, outside agency support, modified curriculum, and other appropriate related or direct services as determined by the IEP team.
3. It is expected that _____ will have zero episodes of assaultive (**verbal** or physical) behavior towards peers or adults throughout his/her school day (bus to bus, extra curricular, etc.).
4. It is expected that _____ will experience minimal episodes of insubordination, noncompliance, talking out, off task or other similar behaviors. IEP goals should reflect these areas if they are of concern.
5. It is expected that the STEPS Program will provide consulting and direct support quarterly or as requested by the local school district in order to maintain _____ in the local district programs.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO THE LOCAL DISTRICT:

1. STEPS Program staff available for consultation, direct observation, direct intervention, and other local district needs.
2. Other support as requested and appropriate.

CONSEQUENCES FOR BEHAVIORS:

1. If _____ has any episodes of actual self-abuse, serious property destruction, or “physically assaultive” behaviors (i.e.: assault and battery) a staffing will be scheduled to consider placement options.
2. If _____ begins to experience consistent behavior problems in any identified area, a staffing will be convened to explore the problem behaviors and consider appropriate alternatives. Appropriate alternatives should be in place within the local district program(s) (see Conditions/Expectations #2).
3. If _____ successfully completes this ACP, he/she shall be provided with an official certificate showing successful completion of his/her specific ACP.

Committee Members Present while completing Exit Criteria:

Parent/Guardian

Student

Behavior Specialist

School Social Worker

Administrator

STEPS Program Teacher

Sending District (Special Ed. Teacher, Administrator, Counselor)

Other

Agreement and Consent Form

Parental/Guardian/Student Agreement

We/I the parent(s)/guardian(s) of _____, agree that our involvement is critical in the development of responsible behavior in my/our child. The behavior problems exhibited recently by my child indicate the need for changes in his/her entire environment. It has been agreed up on by the IEP team that the STEPS Program is the Least Restrictive Environment for my child at this time. The STEPS Program is intended to be a short-term placement for my child in hopes that he/she gains the skills needed to transition back into his/her local district. I have been explained and understand the Girls and Boys Town Expectations and the Specialized Classroom Management Model to be used within the STEPS Program.

In addition, I fully understand that my child will follow all rules of the Huron Learning Center and their local sending district as outlined in each handbook. At any time should I have questions or concerns regarding my child or the program I am aware that it is my responsibility to contact a STEPS Program Committee Member to set up an appointment.

I have read and understand all of the contents of the STEPS Program Handbook and agree to abide by it. I also agree to participate in the following ways:

1. Participate in all monthly staffing and IEP meetings
2. Cooperate with staff recommendations
3. Communicate concerns, challenges, hopes, and desires with staff on a continuing basis
4. Encourage and support all STEPS Program expectations and building rules

My signature indicates that I have read, understand, and agree to the procedures and policies outlined within this handbook, that of the Huron Learning Center and the STEPS Program Parent-Student Handbook. In addition, I have been given and understand the Acceptable Use Policy (for use of technology).

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Witness Signature

Date

Student

Date