

UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL
Student Behavioral Health Referral Policy
(Education Code § 49428.2)

PURPOSE

The Governing Board of University High School recognizes that student behavioral health, including mental health, emotional well-being, and substance use prevention, is essential to student learning and overall school safety. University High School is committed to supporting students in grades 9–12 by providing access to appropriate behavioral health resources and referral processes when concerns arise.

This policy has been developed in alignment with Education Code § 49428.2 and reflects the school's commitment to ensuring that all students are supported academically, socially, and emotionally.

DEFINITIONS

Behavioral Health Disorders

Mental health or substance use disorders that may impact a student's well-being or functioning in school.

Behavioral Health Referral Protocol

A process used by school staff to identify students who may need behavioral health support and connect them with appropriate school-based or community-based services.

School-Linked Behavioral Health Professionals

Licensed or credentialed mental health providers who partner with the school or serve students through coordinated systems of care.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

University High School will maintain procedures that allow staff, students, and parents/guardians to seek assistance when a behavioral health concern is identified. The school will offer timely referrals, access to resources, and follow-up support as appropriate.

Special attention will be given to students who may be at increased risk for behavioral health challenges, including but not limited to:

- Students with disabilities or mental health needs
- Students experiencing homelessness or placed in foster care
- Students affected by trauma, grief, or significant stress
- Students identifying as LGBTQ+
- Students experiencing challenges related to substance use
- Students with limited access to healthcare or community supports

All students will be treated with dignity, respect, and confidentiality throughout the referral process.

IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL

School staff will work to identify students who may benefit from behavioral health support through:

- Observations of emotional distress, behavior changes, or academic decline
- Student self-referral
- Parent/guardian referral
- Staff referral based on student communication or concern

University High School will maintain referral procedures for both **non-crisis** and **crisis** situations.

Non-Crisis Referrals

For concerns such as anxiety, depression, stress, or other emerging behavioral health needs.

Crisis Referrals

For situations involving immediate safety concerns, including suicidal ideation, threats of self-harm or harm to others, or severe emotional distress. Staff will follow established UHS safety procedures in all crisis situations.

Appropriate follow-up will occur after each referral to ensure student needs are being met.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

The school will maintain updated information on internal behavioral health supports and external community-based resources. University High School may collaborate with mental health professionals, community agencies, and county behavioral health services to support student needs.

Information about available behavioral health services will be provided to students and families and updated annually.

STAFF TRAINING

University High School will provide training to certificated and classified staff who have direct contact with students. Training will include:

- Warning signs of behavioral health concerns
- Early intervention and supportive practices
- Crisis response and de-escalation
- Referral procedures and staff responsibilities
- Confidentiality and student privacy requirements

Training will be offered during regular working hours and will not be a condition of employment or hiring.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All behavioral health information will be handled in accordance with state and federal privacy laws. Information will only be shared with individuals who have a legitimate educational interest or who are necessary to protect student safety.

REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT

University High School will review available behavioral health supports and referral practices annually. Adjustments will be made as needed to ensure students are receiving effective and timely support.

The Governing Board will review this policy at least every two years or sooner if required by law.