

School Social Work Association of Sweden

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

A guide for School Social Workers



This general description is intended to serve as an aid for social workers who wish to share information about school social work with politicians, school personnel or other groups.

Mission

School social workers carry out their work duties in accordance with the overall mission of the school as stated in the school policies. School social workers are members of the school's

student services team. School social workers serve as experts on social work and social legislation in the schools and are responsible for providing social and psychosocial competence.

Governing laws and regulations

- National school law, *Nya skollagen*, SFS 2010:800
- Curriculum for elementary schools, preschools and after-school programs, *Läroplan för grundskolan, förskoleklassen och fritidshemmet 2011*
- Curriculum for Sámi schools, preschools and after-school programs, *Läroplan för sameskolan, förskoleklassen och fritidshemmet 2011*
- Curriculum for special education schools, *Läroplan för grundsärskolan 2011*
- Secondary school regulations, *Gymnasieförordning (2010:2039)*
- Regulations for special education schools, preschools and after-school programs, *Förordning om läroplan för specialskolan samt för förskoleklassen och fritidshemmet i vissa fall (SKOLFS 2010:250)*
- United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child, *FN:s konvention om barnets rättigheter (1989)*
- Principles, policy and practice in special needs education, *Salamanca-deklarationen 1994*
- Discrimination Act, *Diskrimineringslag (2008:567)*
- Social Services Act, *Socialtjänstlagen (2001:453)*
- Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act, *Offentlighets- och sekretesslag (2009:400)*
- Administrative Procedure Act, *Förvaltningslagen (1986:223)*

Guiding document

Government Bill on Health, Learning and Safety, *Regeringens proposition Hälsa, Lärande och Trygghet (2001/02:14)*

Goal

That all students will reach their academic goals and develop socially and emotionally in an environment that promotes learning.

School social work duties

School social workers bring social and psychosocial competence on individual, group, organization and community levels in order to promote the learning and development of students. Their work implies creating opportunities for change and growth from a holistic perspective, both in providing services to individual students, as well as in general prevention and health promoting programs. School social workers accomplish their goals through cooperation and collaboration with others inside and outside of the organization.

School social workers use best practices and evidence-based psychosocial interventions with students, individually or in groups, and with health promoting and preventive interventions in order to create a learning environment where all students are given the opportunity to reach their academic goals and develop socially and emotionally.

School Social Workers

- conduct professional conversations, such as supportive, motivational, crisis and conflict conversations, as well as assessment, advisory and therapeutic conversations with individual students and their families
- represent students with special needs by advocating on their behalf
- initiate and participate in networking on behalf of students
- conduct assessments of the social and psychosocial situation of individual students, for example used as a basis for creating an individual education program

- initiate and participate in making mandated reports to child protective services and law enforcement, as well as mediate contact with psychiatric services, unemployment agencies, youth health care centres, etc.
- work with groups of students with acute needs, as well as provide preventive interventions
- provide supervision and consultation to school staff
- are members of the school's student services team
- bring social and psychosocial competence to the school's student services team
- participate in class and transitional planning conferences
- are members of the school's emergency planning/crisis intervention team
- participate in establishing, implementing and revising intervention plans
- work with the school's structure and organization to develop core values and promote equal treatment
- call attention to issues that need altering in order to ensure a safe school environment
- bring social and psychosocial perspectives into the development of the educational work place
- contribute to skills development among staff in the social and psychosocial area
- collaborate with community resources (social services, psychiatric services, habilitation services, recreational services, law enforcement, youth health care centres, etc.)

Competence and skills

School social workers hold a degree in social work or have equivalent training and are the school's social and psychosocial expert. School social work practice requires the ability to work independently in the professional role and social work experience is of great importance. The skills required include knowledge of behavioral and social sciences, such as social work, sociology, psychology, political science, social change management, psychosocial treatment, social justice and law. Professional knowledge of conversational and interviewing methods is essential for school social work practitioners, as are theories of human behavior, social systems and of human interaction with the environment from a strengths perspective.

In addition to the above there are several qualified training programs suitable for the profession.

Tools and methods to ensure quality

- School operational plan/policies and annual reports
- Supervision, external and specific for the profession
- Documentation
- Continuing education
- Introduction plan including mentoring for new employees
- Collaboration with local, national and international school social work networks
- Regular updates on current developments and research in school social work
- Professional ethical guidelines
- Quality assurance programs for student services (on school and community levels)

The School Social Work Association of Sweden is working to promote the creation and implementation of a graduate education program in school social work.

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This guide is made by the School Social Work Association of Sweden. Other documents in Swedish by the association are Cooperation, Documentation, Secrecy and Supervision.

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