

School Psychology Diagnosis Practice Standard

INTRODUCTION:

Effective May 1, 2024, individuals practising as “school psychologists” in the school system in British Columbia are required to be registered with the College of Psychologists of British Columbia as school psychologist registrants (if they do not hold registration as a registered psychologist registrant).

Licensed school psychologists (registered with the College as school psychologist registrants) are authorized to practise school psychology. This is defined by the *Psychologists Regulation* as the health profession in which a person provides the following services:

- (a) the use of theories and principles of psychology for the purpose of understanding and assessing an individual’s developmental, behavioural, cognitive, emotional, intellectual and interpersonal needs as those needs relate to the individual’s ability to learn and function in a learning environment;
- (b) the creation, protection and promotion of learning environments that facilitate learning and intellectual functioning.

Licensed school psychologists provide mental health care services to clients within a learning environment. They consult with systems, school staff, and parents in providing guidance with respect to programme evaluation, behaviour challenges, and the consequences of student difficulties.

In the course of practising school psychology **within a learning environment**, licensed school psychologists are authorized by the *Psychologists Regulation* to make a diagnosis identifying a mental condition or disorder as it relates to learning and intellectual functioning as the cause of an individual’s signs or symptoms within that environment (a “school psychology diagnosis”). In making a school psychology diagnosis, licensed school psychologists:

- must comply with the limits and conditions set out in this Practice Standard when making a school psychology diagnosis within a learning environment, as required by sections 46(7) and 62(1)(b) of the College’s bylaws;
- may only provide or perform a school psychology diagnosis in the course of their work within a learning environment as described in section 46(8)(b)(i) to (v) of the College’s bylaws;
- are not authorized to provide or perform any diagnosis other than a school psychology diagnosis, in any setting; and
- must comply with all other applicable standards, limits or conditions established under the College’s *Code of Conduct*, including the requirement in Standard 3.26

to refer any aspect of a particular assessment or intervention to another qualified professional if it is outside the licensed school psychologist's individual competence.

LIMITS AND CONDITIONS:

1. A licensed school psychologist who provides or performs a psychoeducational assessment in the course of their work within a learning environment may diagnose a learning disorder (disability) or intellectual disorder (disability) that is within their individual competence.
2. Licensed school psychologists do not diagnose other mental health concerns, such as ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, anxiety, or depression.
3. Licensed school psychologists may use screening tools to gather information about mental health concerns described in paragraph 2, and may include their observations in a psychoeducational assessment, without making a diagnosis.
4. When it is necessary to do so, licensed school psychologists recommend a referral to another qualified professional (e.g., a registered psychologist or physician) who is authorized to diagnose a condition or disorder that is outside the scope of practice of school psychology or the licensed school psychologist's individual competence.