Definition and Criteria for Social Emotional Disorder

Introduction
Catholic school authorities in Queensland have agreed that the definition and criteria below will be used in the verification of the diagnosis of Social Emotional Impairment for all students who attend Catholic schools in Queensland. Only those students who meet the criteria will be eligible for funding targeted through the Federal and State governments.

Background
With the very mobile population in Queensland and the need to have equitable access to government funds for students with disabilities, members of the QCEC Equity Subcommittee recognized the need for an agreed definition and set of criteria to be established. Consultation across the state through Diocesan and Religious Institute representatives as well as input from experts in the field has resulted in agreement on the definition and criteria outlined below.

Definition
For the purposes of this definition a Social Emotional Disorder and an Emotional or Behavioural Disorder are seen as referring to the same condition.

“Emotional or Behavioural Disorder refers to a condition in which behavioural or emotional responses of an individual in school are so different from his/her generally accepted, age appropriate, ethnic or cultural norms that they adversely affect performance in areas such as self care, social relations, personal adjustment, academic progress, classroom, behaviour or work adjustment.

An Emotional or Behavioural Disorder is more than a transient, expected response to stressors in the child’s or young person’s environment and would persist even with individualised intervention, such as feedback to the individual, consultation with parents or family members, and/or modification of the educational environment.

This category may include children or youth with schizophrenia, affective disorders, anxiety disorder, or who have sustained disturbances of behaviour, emotions, attention or adjustment.

(National Association of School Psychologists, 2004 p. 1)
Criteria
For a diagnosis of Social Emotional Disorder to be verified all four of the following criteria must be met:

1. A documented DSM-5 diagnosis from a:
   a. Medical Specialist (psychiatrist, paediatrician, neurologist) or
   b. Clinical Psychologist will be considered when a Medical Specialist Report is unobtainable
2. Multiple sources of data about the individual’s behaviour or emotional functioning
3. Behaviour exhibited in at least two different settings, one of which will be school related
4. ADHD is not included unless it co-exists with another clinically diagnosed social and emotional disorder.

The following factors must be considered before verification can be granted:
- socio-cultural and socio-economic factors, ESL, illness, family background, II, LD, SLI have been ruled out as the primary cause for difficulty in accessing education
- the disorder is sufficiently severe to require a partially or totally alternative program involving the design of an IEP/IBP
- the student’s behavioural or emotional responses are markedly different from appropriate age, cultural or ethnic norms
- adjustments have been put in place and programs implemented using the school’s available resources and these were found to be insufficient to meeting the student’s needs
- performances in areas such as self care, social relationships, personal adjustment, academic progress, classroom behaviour or work adjustment have been adversely affected
- access to learning (both inside and outside the classroom) has been compromised and this failure to learn is primarily attributable to the student’s social emotional disorder

References


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