

Telos Academy – Clinical Best Practices

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to review various best practices used by clinicians and families when coordinating treatment initiatives for an individual student that interact or impact academics.

Scheduling Home Passes

Through the treatment sequence, home passes are an important element that will be included in virtually each case. When a student misses school for any reason, it presents academic liability that must be considered. Home passes are often instances where a student will miss significant time from school unless coordinated with skill and discretion.

Holidays and school breaks create an opportune time for students to schedule home visits or extended passes. In addition, we recommend that any weekend passes include Friday as school classes are limited to clinical groups and school clubs during Fridays. If a pass necessitates some overlap with school, please remind the parents that although we can assist the student in preparing for the time missed, years of experience will show that students who generally struggle in school will also struggle with school recovery. Parents and student assume a liability of lower scores/grades and learning opportunities when a student misses school for *any reason*. Telos Academy strongly recommends against any passes occurring during the last two weeks of any school term. Not only do the last few weeks of a term often include final projects and assessments, but the recovery time for a student to make-up missed work shrinks. Lastly, when a student leaves early, this compounds the teacher's (already heavy) workload as the quarter concludes. While it was needed in a few exceptional cases, it does place an undue burden on our staff and historically we can show a low incidence of full recovery when the student returns from pass or is required to submit work from a remote location.

Summary: Please avoid scheduling home passes that overlap with school days whenever possible. When a pass that overlaps with school is in the best interest of the student, inform all stakeholders of the academic liabilities and allow them to make an insightful choice.

Align Discharge Dates with the Conclusion of School Quarters

In the past, we have a handful of students who are extend their treatment past the natural quarter breaks. It has been our experience in the past that students who are enrolled in school for only a few weeks at the start of the term to be disengaged and fall into negative behavioral patterns. This has even included students at high phases. Consequently, for a number of years, the clinical team aligned discharge dates with the end of our school quarters as a hard and fast rule. This practice eliminated any negative trends where students would get 'checked-out' and wouldn't qualify for their final phase goals or put us in a compromising situation where we had to discipline a student last minute for behavior that was much lower than their overall treatment level.

As a therapist, you have significant influence in the discharge dates of your students. Do all you can to align the discharge of a student with the conclusion of the school term. In the case of a student moving to Anthem, this is less of a concern unless the student has a history of academic struggle during periods of transition. In such cases where a student's discharge date is not able to align with the scheduled school calendar, we request that the primary therapist clearly outline the expectations for the student to be exactly the same as a continuing student, and also give a heads up early on to Academic Administration so they can craft (if possible) an optimal schedule for the student to have.

In all cases of a student attending school without the expectation of receiving credit, our message needs to be consistent: "Your school performance may not be tied to an end grade, but you should strive to practice the skills that have given (and will give) you success in the future. The expectation is for you to work and demonstrate excellence in the basics."

It is not reasonable to expect that all our students treatment plans will naturally align with quarter end dates. However, this should be the rule rather than the exception. Summer term presents higher rate of trends where students stay only partially through the term. Please do all you can to align treatment discharge with the conclusion of school calendars whenever possible. Forecast this to parents as they formulate plans and develop exit strategies. Remember, if a student does not complete a school quarter, his ability to receive academic credit is compromised.

Summary: When planning the conclusion of treatment, take a look at the school calendar and fashion the timeline around the forecasted school terms.

Therapy Sessions and School Attendance

When a student is taken for therapy, the expectation is that the clinician personally escorts the students **to and from** the school area. It is required that a student be checked in and out on the checkout sheet operated by residential staff anytime he is taken out of school.

When students are pulled from PE to attend therapy, they shouldn't wait in the learning center or return to the learning center--unless, of course, the learning center is where the student should be for class. The AM Lead is responsible to oversee students who have a scheduled therapy session and need to be held back from PE to fill it. Clinicians are responsible to assist in this process by forecasting with the students when their therapy session will be and then informing staff through the Checkout Sheet on which students will require such action. In all other cases, a student should attend class as scheduled until the clinician personally comes to pick them up.

We understand that Family Therapy sessions are difficult to interrupt when a student is asked to leave and then the therapist continues to process with a parent in their office. **Please do NOT send a student unaccompanied back down to school.** This often results in wasted academic time as many students may wander when oversight is lacking. We also need to have a careful record of attendance data so we can assess how much time students are spending in therapy during core classtime. If you want to economize your time, we suggest you become familiar with the AM GroupMe text list which is used by AM staff to communicate through the morning. It can be used to seek assistance in retrieving a student from your office and conducting them back to their appropriate class (or Break Room in case of PE).

Whenever a student misses class for any reason, the primary recovery mechanism in place is Flex Period. Encourage your student to check in with his teacher and use Flex Period appropriately to recover what he missed in class while in therapy session.

Avoid taking a student from the same class more than once a week. If possible, retrieve students for therapy while they are in an elective class rather than a core content class (English, Science, Math, Social Studies). Remember, when a student misses school for any reason it presents academic liability.

Summary: Be considerate and communicate clearly when you need to take a student out of school for therapy. Limit the time students spend outside school for therapy sessions and try and coordinate to take a student from the classes in which he can most easily recover.

Regularly Scheduled Therapy that Overlaps with Flex Period

It is customary to inform the Academic Adviser whenever you plan to have a student for therapy between the hours of 110-150PM on a regular basis. If a student is regularly scheduled to meet with you during those times, please send the adviser a note detailing the student and the day of the week you plan for the student to be in session. The Adviser is responsible to keep a record of such circumstances and avoid scheduling that particular student for Flex on that day of the week. Please send these requests within the first 5-7 days of each school term.

Summary: Alert the Academic Adviser when a student will have a regular therapy session during Flex Period.

Standard Practice at Telos Academy Regarding SAT and ACT Exams

College entrance exams are only offered 4-6 days per calendar year. If a student is anticipating admission to college, he will need to take one of these exams. It is common for Junior and Senior year students at Telos to take the SAT or ACT during their enrollment at Telos Academy. Telos Academy will facilitate registration for and travel to the ACT/SAT during the school year. However, parents are responsible to create an account with SAT and ACT in order for Telos Academy Administration to register for specific tests.

In addition, please note that when a parent requests a specific testing date, we cannot change the date once registered. This means that parents will need to work in conjunction with Telos to communicate the date with their therapist. Home Passes, Triathlons, Medical Appointments, Family Days, and other special events can often interfere with the SAT/ACT test dates. Please be mindful of these dates when electing when a student will take the SAT/ACT. We also ask that parents communicate with their son when they would like him to take the SAT/ACT.

Registration for each test costs about \$65. Telos Academy will register the student using the account the parents set up, and charge the fees from their trust account. By submitting an online request form, they agree to allow Telos Academy to charge these fees to their account.

Direct parents to the following link for more information: <http://telosacademy.weebly.com/sat-act-standard-practice.html>

Note: Telos Academy does not facilitate any of the PSAT or PSAT/ NMSQT tests. If parents would like to have their son take an unofficial practice test, he can do so with a Telos tutor at the tutor rate--unofficial practice tests usually take 4-5 hours to complete. Please contact the Academic Director for more information.