

E49 Protocols for Counselors District 49

Thank you for your continued support and service to our students and staff as we move forward into our e-learning environment. Your care of our community will be critical to everyone's success. This is a new adventure for all of us and one that will be both fun and frustrating. Please be sure to take the time to lean on each other and encourage each other.

As we begin to move to extended learning and work, we also need to consider how extended counseling (E-counseling) services might look for mental health support. The following is guidance for specific situations as well as general support and definitions of types of meetings.

Where we could walk down the hall to check in with a student under normal circumstances, we need to come up with strategies to virtually "walk down the hall" to speak to a student. As we would attempt to ensure ethics by having a window in a room or keep a door ajar, we need to think how we can protect ourselves and our students by virtually "keeping the door ajar or having a window".

Types of Meetings- Definitions

Public Meetings/Communications-

Public meetings or communications are those that include at least 3 people. This could be 1 teacher and 2 students, 2 staff and 1 student, multiple students and a staff member, 2 staff and a parent, etc. These can be virtual meetings with video, phone calls, or texts. This type of meeting should be the most frequently used as it provides the most assurance of transparency and keeps both the staff and the students safe from accusations and possible harm. Whenever possible, try to have 3 or more people in the communication.

Private Meetings/Communications-

Private meetings will be ones where the staff member has prearranged the meeting with the student and has gained consent from the parent. It will be scheduled for a specific time and the parent is well aware of the date, time, and purpose of the meeting. These should be less frequent but may be necessary for a student to participate in private conversations and be open about how things are going. These are not necessarily video recorded, however, please check with your building administration as to their guidance on this topic.

Secret Meetings:

There should be NO Secret Meetings with Students! Secret meetings are one-on-one meetings, phone calls, or texts that the parent has not consented to and is not aware. All communications with students should be either Public or Private.

Mental Health Counseling and Check-ins During E-Learning

- It is highly recommended that counselors have or create a list of students that might need regular check-ins. Check-ins should be pre-scheduled with parents prior to meeting with a student individually. An added layer of security would be to have another trusted adult on the call, video chat or text such as another counselor, admin, or the parent.
- If you have a concern about a student due to parental issues, then have another adult on the call or video chat. If the concern is imminent danger, then contact law enforcement to conduct a welfare check and complete the suicide screener.
- Document check-ins in PowerSchool as you normally would after meeting with a student.

Suicide Risk Assessments During E-Learning

A student may make suicidal statements during a video chat, or engage in online activity indicating suicidal intent and screened through Syscloud or Securly, or reported via Safe2Tell. If this occurs, the counselor should use the following guidelines and their professional judgement.

Situation occurs on a call or chat:

- If the counselor is currently on a call or video chat with a student, the counselor should address the statements of concern and attempt to gain an understanding of the student's emotional state.
- If the counselor feels that the student is in any kind of distress, they will attempt to contact the student's parents immediately to let them know about the situation so **they** can keep **their** child safe.
- The counselor will attempt to keep the student on the video chat or phone until the parent has indicated that the child is safe.
- The counselor will contact another counselor or administrator to have them on the conference call or video chat as they would if they were on campus.
- The counselor may need to complete the suicide assessment screener if warranted to document the interaction and determine the student's level of need.
- If the assessment is completed and is at a level of moderate to high, the counselor will work with the parent to ensure the safety of the student. If the parent is unavailable or the situation warrants it, the counselor should contact law enforcement or the county/city Crisis Response Team to conduct a wellness check.
- The counselor should provide the parent with the resources typically provided in these situations and found in the Counselor's Corner in Schoology.

- The counselor will document the interactions in PowerSchool and if an assessment or screener was completed will email the completed screener/assessment to d49safetyassessment@d49.org

Syscloud, Securly or Safe2Tell report:

- If a report comes in pertaining to a concern about a student's online use and this would typically result in simply pulling a student out of class for a discussion, then the counselor and /or administration should contact the student's parent and request to speak with both the parent and the student.
- If there is a high level of concern upon receiving the notification, then a call to both parents and law enforcement may be necessary to keep the student safe.
- If the concern is about suicidal comments, then the counselor, with another individual present on the call, can discuss with the student the concern and attempt to determine the level of concern. This may include beginning a suicide screener.
- If the screener moves into a full assessment leading to a moderate or high level of concern, the counselor will address this with the parent and may determine it is necessary to call law enforcement or the county/city Crisis Response Team for a welfare check.
- The counselor will provide the parent with resources and work with the parent to determine the level of support needed for the student.
- The counselor will document the interactions in PowerSchool and if an assessment or screener was completed will email the completed screener/assessment to d49safetyassessment@d49.org

Mandatory Reporting Guidance During E-Learning

During the e-learning time period, the following process should be conducted to ensure the safety of our students and families. All D49 staff are mandated reporters and are required by law to report both abuse and neglect if suspected. Reporting to the Department of Human Services will provide help and support to the family and will only result in family disruption in extreme cases.

- If a staff member is made aware that a student may be experiencing abuse or neglect, they will immediately contact their school counselor by phone within 1 hour of learning about the abuse or neglect, or before the end of the typical school day, whichever comes first.

- If the counselor cannot be reached, or does not respond within 1 hour, the staff member will attempt to contact their campus administrator for consultation.
 - The staff member may also reach out to the Director of Community Care or the Director or the Senior Safety and Security Specialist for consultation if the counselor or administrators cannot be reached.
 - Director of Community Care- Dr. Kim Boyd- 719-651-5605
 - Director of Safety and Security- David Watson- 719- 499-3583
 - Senior Safety and Security Specialist- David Pratt- 719-963-0762
 - The staff member will complete the Mandatory Reporting form in Google Forms via the link.
 - [Mandatory Reporting Form Link](#)
- If the situation is one of the 6 that require law enforcement support, the staff member will contact law enforcement and the Safety and Security Department as directed in the form.
 - Once the form is complete, but prior to submitting the form, call the DHS Hotline at 844-264-5437.
 - The case worker will ask the questions on the form and the staff will provide verbal responses.
 - The staff may want to add information into areas of the form after speaking with the case worker
 - The staff will obtain the name of the case worker and the case number and put it in the form.
 - Once the call is complete and the staff have all necessary information they will click <Submit> and the form will be emailed to the person completing it.
 - Go to your email and open the form
 - Click <View Score> This will open the document
 - Right click on the document and click <Save As>.
 - Naming Convention of Document: Lastname.firstintial.date
 - Example: Boyd.K.03.30.2020
 - Save to a file or your desktop
 - Create an email to the following individuals and attach the saved copy of the document
 - School Administrator named in the document
 - D49safetyassessments.org
 - School Counselor for the grade level

Consent and Confidentiality Concerns During E-Learning

As we begin to meet with students, we need to ensure that we have parental consent to do so.

- If you already have consent to meet regularly with a student, then you may schedule times to meet with the student while also providing the parent with the dates, times and platform (schoolology, phone, video chat)
- If you are going to start seeing a student, you need to gain consent from the parent prior to meeting with the student. This can be done by sending the parent an email that contains the purpose of meeting with the student, the duration of the counseling session and the frequency, along with the limits of confidentiality (just as you typically would in a paper consent form). You then ask the parent to respond to email with a “Yes, I give consent for my child to meet with the counselor via _____ (phone, video chat, schoolology, etc). Or, “No, I do not give consent for my child to meet with the counselor”.
- The email can then be saved and placed in a digital folder under that student’s name on your computer.
- Then abide by the the Check-in guidelines above

Limits of Confidentiality

While we strive to provide students and parents confidentiality, there are limits to that confidentiality when there are concerns of abuse or neglect. When working with students, you may want to consider the following:

- Ensure that the students and their parents understand the limits of confidentiality when there are concerns about possible abuse or neglect.
- I have seen in several counselor offices a posted document indicating the limits of confidentiality to remind students this during counseling meetings. Counselors could post a printed or handwritten paper behind them on the wall when video chatting with students as a reminder of those limits.
- Although counselors often meet with students alone in their office, there is typically a window or other means for others to see what is happening in the office. When working virtually, counselors need to protect themselves and the student from possible harm or accusations. Therefore, as much as possible,

meetings with students should meet the definition of Public and at least the definition of Private seen above.

Other Ideas and Considerations

- It was suggested that counselors put an away message on their email that responds to all incoming emails. This message would provide immediate resources and instructions on how to make an appointment with the counselor, suicide prevention hotline, Safe2Tell, 911 and other options if the counselor is not able to respond immediately. Dr. Boyd may be working with Communications to put a graphic together. More on this later....
- We will be accepting new enrollments for this school year. It was suggested that counselors make a short onboarding video that parents and students can watch so the counselors don't have to repeat the same things over and over. This can be placed on the school's web page or sent to a family after they enroll. Then, after the family watches the short video, a video chat can be scheduled to answer questions and make a connection.
- CDE has indicated that the SAT and PSAT are on hold at this time. Kathleen Granaas has indicated that counselors should work with their School Assessment Coordinator for updates on these and other assessments.

Thank you all for your continued support in keeping our students safe and supported. For questions or comments, please contact Dr. Kim Boyd, Director of Community Care at kboyd@d49.org or 719-494-8944.