

Murrieta Valley Unified School District School Closure Teleconferencing Counseling Support Guidelines

During these challenging times, our students will greatly benefit from social and emotional supports. Our counseling team is equipped with being able to provide students with a familiar contact that can ease the stress, provide coping strategies and serve as a protective factor. Research supports that videoconferencing is an acceptable and efficacious method to deliver related supports. The California Association of School Counselors (CASC) identifies the following best practices for School Counselors under the umbrella of Mental Health supports:

- School counselors utilize research-based methods to provide mental health services for students.
- Utilize early warning systems to identify students exhibiting at-risk behaviors.
- Provide crisis counseling and short-term individual and group counseling.
- Conduct initial phases of appraisal and remediation and provide referrals to parents when additional therapy is needed.
- Apply trauma-informed strategies.
- Conduct mental health awareness training for teachers, parents and staff.

ASCA Standards

M 1. Belief in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional and physical well-being

M 2. Self-confidence in ability to succeed

B-SMS 7. Demonstrate effective coping skills when faced with a problem

B-SMS 9. Demonstrate personal safety skills

B-SMS 10. Demonstrate ability to manage transitions and ability to adapt to changing situations and responsibilities

B-SS 9. Demonstrate social maturity and behaviors appropriate to the situation and environment

Ethical Guidelines

The following are the ethical guidelines for Virtual/Distance School Counseling provided for School Counselors:

- Adhere to the same ethical guidelines in a virtual/distance setting as school counselors in face-to-face settings.
- Recognize and acknowledge the challenges and limitations of virtual/distance school counseling.
- Implement procedures for students to follow in both emergency and nonemergency situations when the school counselor is not available.
- Recognize and mitigate the limitation of virtual/distance school counseling confidentiality, which may include unintended viewers or recipients.
- Inform both the student and parent/guardian of the benefits and limitations of virtual/distance counseling.

- Educate students on how to participate in the electronic school counseling relationship to minimize and prevent potential misunderstandings that could occur due to lack of verbal cues and inability to read body language or other visual cues that provide contextual meaning to the school counseling process and school counseling relationship.

School Counselors Practices and Expectations

To ensure safety for all while videoconferencing with students within MVUSD, school counselors will adhere to these practices and expectations in addition to those outlined above:

- Remain within your scope of practice and ensure that parents are clear of this as well.
- Request students find a quiet and private location to conduct a phone or face-to-face meeting.
- Prior to your initial videoconference with a student, provide parents with the resource list and explain what the different contacts are for. It is critical that you make it clear to parents that you are not the contact for a crisis situation (parents/guardians should dial 911 if student is in imminent danger).
- Before contact, ensure that you will be distraction-free for a pre-determined amount of time.
- When videoconferencing with students/parents, please adhere to school attire. If you would not wear your outfit to work, don't wear it while videoconferencing.
- Keep in mind that while we **will not** be recording sessions, someone may be recording on the other end.
- Keep your walls clear or use materials such as posters that your students are familiar with.
- While students may wish to speak to you in private, it is not advisable that you contact a student without an adult being present in the home. This is important for student and staff safety. To protect student privacy, you may encourage the parent to leave the room.
- It is advisable that you schedule your students during your pre-determined office hours. Make it clear to the parent and student of your "office hours" and how they may contact you during "office hours".
- MVUSD staff may only conduct a phone or face to face conference with 1 (one) student at a time. Group facilitation is not endorsed by MVUSD at this time due to privacy, confidentiality, and safety related issues.
- You may communicate and/or provide large group lessons through pre-recorded video without back and forth student-to-student or counselor-to-student live communication. Please disable a student's ability to comment on a video posting.
- Ensure that you are equipped with crisis contact information, Murrieta PD/Riverside County Sheriff Dispatch, CPS phone number and digital form. In addition, have your cell phone accessible in the event that you need support in a crisis situation.

- Report any mishaps right away to your site administrator and district coordinator/s.

CONSENT AND NOTIFICATION

- *Ensure the consent form has been sent (consider dual homes) and signed for students you will be working with continuously and providing extended supports through teleconferencing. To address restrictions during school closures and distance learning modalities, parents will be offered through an emailed Form which outlines all elements of a consent.*
- *Ensure that the Notification Form has been sent to all families of that site with specifics of support availability.*

Things to consider when using district supported conferencing platforms for face-to-face, 1 on 1 meetings.

When using Office 365 Teams-

- Create a meeting to invite the student from your calendar
- Video is currently locked down on the student to student end.
- Can use audio function (enable private chat component) w/ students.
- Must have access to a headset, microphone or computer w/ built in microphone.
- You can use your Teams identifier and send this info to students and families.
- Do NOT record a meeting with students.
- The conference call video feature will be activated on the side of the SC or MH Team Member (Be on the lookout for an email from Ken Ballinger to add this feature and set-up instructions).