

# Support for Illinois School Counselors on Remote Learning/Counseling



We are all facing unique challenges in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we acknowledge, as school counselors, you are well-equipped with the tools needed to establish creative and evidence-based plans for your students in the remote learning space. Here are some suggestions and resources to consider as you continue to provide support to your students. Amidst it all, please remember your students are lucky to have you in their corner.

## Counseling Students in Virtual Remote Learning

***Be mindful of district guidance regarding approved virtual remote learning platforms. Before you take any action, consult with your district regarding any guidance parameters to ensure your actions align with the school and district mandates.***

- ◆ Consider how your [ethical and legal obligations](#) inform your virtual school counseling strategy.
- ◆ Recognize and mitigate the limitations of virtual school counselor confidentiality, which may include unintended viewers or recipients. Take steps to ensure confidentiality in your virtual space. Be mindful that you have no control over the student's virtual space.
- ◆ Educate students on how to participate in the virtual school counseling relationship in order to minimize and prevent potential misunderstandings that could occur. Misunderstandings could occur due to lack of verbal cues and difficulty reading body language or other visual cues that provide contextual meaning to the school counseling process and school counseling relationship.
- ◆ Implement procedures for students to follow in both emergency and nonemergency situations when the school counselor is not available.

## Best Practices for Virtual Remote School Counseling

- ◆ Email students and parents/guardians signifying the hours the school counselor will monitor email.
- ◆ If using virtual classroom platforms, post office hours for student and parent/guardian awareness.
- ◆ If possible, do not use personal devices.
- ◆ Utilize \*67 or Google Voice if using a personal phone.
- ◆ Document all student/parent interactions.
- ◆ Focus on relationships and helping students maintain a sense of connectedness.
- ◆ Personal social media platforms are not an appropriate avenue of communication with students. Please consult with your district on the approved use of social media platforms.
- ◆ Be mindful of resources shared. Are the resources from a reputable source? Are the strategies and interventions that you are sharing evidence-based? If tools are offered free for a limited time, what is your plan for ongoing coaching?

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## Procedures Which Remain the Same as On-Site Settings

### Suicidal Ideation

The only knowledge you need to meaningfully act on is an expressed, implied, veiled, peer-reported or rumored suicidal ideation.

- ◆ Contact the local police department immediately to conduct a welfare check
- ◆ Contact parent/guardian
- ◆ Consult with site administration
- ◆ Document actions taken
- ◆ Provide resources to students as appropriate

### Child Abuse/Neglect

- ◆ The only knowledge you need to meaningfully act on is if you suspect a child is being neglected or abused, report any concerns immediately. [Illinois Mandated Reporters Document](#)
- ◆ Promptly contact Illinois Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873)
- ◆ Document the referral number
- ◆ Follow subsequent district guidelines for documentation

## Resources

**Illinois Department of Human Services Calm4Calm** Text TALK or HABLAR (for Spanish speakers) to 552-020

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** Call 800-273-8255 or [Chat with Lifeline](#)

**Crisis Textline** Text HOME to 741741

**MY3 App** Suicide Prevention App for Safety Planning

**Disaster Distress Helpline (SAMHSA)** Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746

**CDC video for explaining COVID-19 to younger students (Elementary)** [Elementary Video](#)

**Illinois State Board of Education Covid-19 Resources** [Covid-19-Resources](#)

**United States Department of Education Updates and Guidance** [FAQ's 1](#) and [FAQ's 2](#)

**American School Counselor Association: Planning for Virtual/Distance School Counseling** [Planning Doc](#)

**American School Counselor Association Position on Virtual School Counseling** [ASCA Position Statement](#)

**Illinois School Counselor Association Webinar Roundtable Support** [Roundtable Support Doc](#)