



MONROE TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COUNSELING INFORMED CONSENT

INTRODUCTION

Monroe Township Public Schools in partnership with the community, will provide an exemplary, comprehensive education that develops all students to be knowledgeable, responsible citizens in a global environment. In an effort to achieve this goal, parent/guardian(s), students, or school staff may refer students for counseling. The focus of the school counseling program helps its students with academic, college/career, and social/emotional concerns.

BACKGROUND

With a Master's in School Counseling, all of the school counselors are qualified to address students' academic, college/career, and social/emotional development needs through the implementation of a school counseling program that promotes and enhances student success.

SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

All of our school counselors work to ensure that all students have access to the resources necessary for student success. School counselors see students for short-term, individual counseling on topics ranging from academic, college/career, and social /emotional issues. As needs arise, school counselors will provide group counseling to address issues of concerns in an effort to support student needs. In the event that the student needs long term counseling, the school counselors will provide referrals to outside mental health providers upon request. Please visit the [Monroe Township Public Schools](#) District website for a list of schools and resources within each of our school buildings.

VIRTUAL/DISTANCE COUNSELING

School counselors may use forms of digital communication (e.g., email, phone, video conferencing) on a regular basis to help facilitate interactions with students and parents that expedite program or service delivery or allow interaction with students/parents/guardians. Counselors cannot interact with students via social media platforms or accept friend requests.

COUNSELOR CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Information students share with the school counselor is confidential. The student's right to privacy is guarded as much as permitted by law, ethics, and school rules. All meetings held with the counselor will remain confidential unless the student or parent gives permission to share information with related parties. As Professional School Counselors, we respect the rights of confidentiality of personal information disclosed during the course of a conversation between ourselves and students, except in the following cases:

- If the student presents a danger to themselves
- If the student presents a danger to others
- If the student has been neglected or abused by others
- If required to do so by court order
- If the parent or adult student gives permission for the information to be shared

As mandated reporters, we are bound by Federal and State law to break confidentiality in the situations mentioned above and will do so to protect our students and to remain legally and ethically true to our profession. Counselors may consult with other school professionals but will only share information necessary for achieving the goals of the consultation. In addition, it is important to note that if a student is a part of group counseling there is the risk that other students may share information outside the group setting.

NOTE: If you would like the School Counselor to share information with a third party, such as an outside counselor, psychiatrist, social services worker, or pediatrician, you will need to sign an additional release of information form.

MONROE TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS VIRTUAL SCHOOL COUNSELING RESOURCES

During the closure of schools due to the health emergency, school counselors will be available through email and virtual meetings. Counselors will be checking their voice mails periodically from home and email is the best venue to reach your school counselor. To schedule an appointment, students and parents may email the counselor directly to find a mutually agreed upon date/time.

OFFICE HOURS: Counselors are available M-F. Please check start and end times of each school by visiting the [Monroe Township Public Schools](#) District website and then each schools webpage.

IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE

If you or someone you know is in crisis, please dial 911, go to the nearest emergency room, or call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to reach a 24-hour crisis center.

The Monroe Township Public Schools would like to ensure that students and parents are fully informed about the benefits and limitations of a virtual platform in a counseling setting.

Benefits:

- Online platforms provide school counselors with the ability to communicate and disseminate information to the student body as well as parents/guardians in an efficient manner.
 - Communicating online provides flexibility for the counselors as well as accessibility for students to review information at their convenience.
 - Parents also have more flexibility to participate in meetings through alternative methods (e.g. Zoom).
- Certain students may feel more comfortable using the school counseling services through a virtual platform compared to appointments in person.
 - Less anxiety may be associated with disclosing information electronically to school counselors.
 - Online services can give students a greater sense of autonomy and empowerment to use school counseling services.
- School counselors have the ability to collaborate with other staff/teachers online to make sure the students are receiving the proper services needed for their success within and outside of the classroom.

Limitations:

- Confidentiality and Privacy cannot be guaranteed with services provided through online platforms.
 - In the event that a student/parent or a school counselor believes that the virtual meeting is not private or other participants not anticipated are observed, the meeting will be rescheduled for another time when confidentiality and privacy can be ensured.
 - Headphones with a microphone are recommended for students and counselors.
- Depending on each individual student's needs, telehealth may or may not be the best medium. Counselors will try to recommend the best medium based on each individual student and their visual and/or verbal needs.
 - In a crisis situation, please dial 911.
- Timing of connections with students and parents based on virtual activity.
- Students who do not have access to a computer or the internet should contact their school counselor by phone and leave a voice message.
- Technical issues
 - In the event of technological failure during a meeting, the school counselor will make attempts to reconnect for ten minutes. If the internet or technological failure cannot be resolved, the school counselor will call you back via the telephone.
 - If the technological failure interferes with the goals of the meeting being achieved, another meeting will be scheduled at a mutually convenient date and time.

RESOURCES FOR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

[Disaster Distress Helpline](#)

Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. The Disaster Distress Helpline (DDH) provides crisis counseling and support for anyone in the U.S. experiencing distress or other behavioral health concerns related to any natural or human-caused disaster, including public health emergencies.

[Crisis Text Line](#)

Text MHA to 741741 and you'll be connected to a trained Crisis Counselor. Crisis Text Line provides free, text-based support 24/7.

[The Trevor Project](#)

Call 1-866-488-7386 or text START to 678678. A national 24-hour, toll-free confidential suicide hotline for LGBTQ youth.

[Dial 2-1-1](#)

If you need assistance finding food, paying for housing bills, accessing free childcare, or other essential services, visit 211.org or dial 211 to speak to someone who can help. This service is provided by the United Way.

[National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)

For any victims and survivors who need support, call 1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-799-7233 for TTY, or if you're unable to speak safely, you can log onto thehotline.org or text LOVEIS to 22522.

STATE/NATIONAL RESOURCES

[NJ Hope Line](#) for suicide prevention, available at 1-855-654-6735.

[PerformCare](#) partners with the New Jersey Children's System of Care (CSOC) to coordinate the care of your child. New Jersey Children's System of Care addresses behavioral, mental health, or emotional challenges and provides access to needed services. The contact number is 1-877-652-7624.

- **Mobile response stabilization services (MRSS)-** [PerformCare](#) also has options to authorize mobile response stabilization services (MRSS) to come to your home within one hour of notification to provide face-to-face crisis services. The goal is to stabilize behavior and keep your child at home. Mobile response is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and can offer up to eight weeks of stabilization services.

The [NJHelps](#) Services Home Page is designed to give consumers a “one-stop” shopping resource for the wide range of programs, information, and services provided by the Department of Human Services and its partners, to assist individuals, families, and communities throughout the State of New Jersey.

The [Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care](#) has a center that connects callers to the appropriate division of the statewide behavioral health services system at 1-800-969-5300.

The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA) has a national helpline at 1-800-985-5990, or text officials there at TalkWithUs to 66746 (TTY 1-800-846-8517).

[Crisis Text Line](#): Free text line, 24/7 support for those in crisis. Text HOME to 741741

[2nd Floor Youth Helpline of NJ](#) - CALL 888-222-2228 a confidential and anonymous helpline for New Jersey's youth and young adults. They are available 24/7.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health: Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation During an Infectious Disease Outbreak](#) (SAMHSA)

[Care for Your Coronavirus Anxiety](#)

[Helping Children Cope with Emergencies](#)

[Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs in Emergencies](#)

[10 Things To Do With Your Teens While ‘Social Distancing’ During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)