

Dear Students and Families,

We hope this email finds you well. As our circumstances continue to evolve, we wanted to provide you with updated information about how school social workers can provide support remotely.

Of course, school social workers will continue to be available via email and phone for students and parents. If you would like us to reach you via phone, please send an email and we can make an appointment during the school day to have a phone conversation. We are also entering into Zoom classroom meetings and interacting with students during their online classroom times as possible.

Confidentiality will remain an important boundary for school social workers to hold. To the extent possible given the use of technology, we will keep information that is shared with us private and confidential. However, as is the case when we meet with kids face to face, school social workers are still mandated reporters, which means that we are obligated to make a report to Child Protective Services and/or the appropriate authorities when a child is in danger or is actively being hurt or hurting someone else. Additionally, we will be in communication with parents/guardians if we feel your child is in crisis or needs a referral for a crisis assessment or outside counselor, as we would if we were in school. Please see below for more detailed information about confidentiality.

School social workers may have the opportunity to join some online classes to say hello. Please keep in mind that confidentiality is more difficult at this time, as we are all in our homes, often with other people around. We, as well as students, would need to find a quiet, private room and wear headphones. We ask that students are away from distractions (tv, cell phones, video games, siblings etc.) as much as possible. We ask for sessions NOT to be RECORDED nor screenshots taken. Students will be reminded of this at the beginning of each virtual session.

We want to acknowledge that our current circumstances leave us limited in the type of support we can provide. Still, given this new norm, we will work hard to provide the best quality support possible.

IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND ABOUT VIDEO CONFERENCE MEETINGS

- We are still Mandated Reporters. So anything that you say (or we see in a video conference) that indicates you are being harmed, you are going to harm yourself or you are going to harm someone else means that we will break confidentiality in order to make sure you are safe. This could mean that we notify your parents/guardians, administration, DHHS or local law enforcement.
- We will still strive to maintain the highest level of confidentiality in our conversations (with the exceptions outlined above). However, using a video conference platform like Zoom means that we cannot control our surroundings like we can in our offices. We will do our best to minimize interruptions and meet with you in a quiet, secure location. When practical, we will use earbuds so that others in our house cannot hear you.
- We ask that you also try to find a quiet location to meet with us.
- No recording or screenshots of video conferences is allowed.

- Please put away all other devices during a video conference and minimize other distractions.

Please remember that the following resources are always available to support you during this time:

- Maine Crisis Hotline: 1-888-568-1112
- Call 211 - help in connecting to area resources
- Call 911 - for immediate crisis concern
- Text: 741-741 for crisis/emotional support. Text the word "HOME" to start a text conversation with a trained counselor
- your primary care doctor
- outside service provider (counselor) that you may also be connected with
- another trusted adult that you can talk with in person

If you have questions or concerns beyond the scope of what we're offering, please reach out to us and we will do our best to connect you to appropriate resources. Please be well and we look forward to ongoing communication.

Social Workers' Contact Information

- Tacy Libby (tlibby@rsu16.org)

- Abby Brown (abrown@rsu16.org)