

## **Professional Disclosure Statement and Confidentiality Notice**

### **Introduction**

South Middle School is committed to providing quality education to its students, and the counseling department seeks to support the development of all students in the academic, social-emotional, and career development domains. In an effort to achieve these goals, parents/guardians or school staff may refer students for counseling during the Coronavirus closures by filling out [THIS FORM](#).

### **Confidentiality**

It is important for the SMS counseling department to create a trusting environment and keep information confidential aside from some exceptions. Code A.9. outlines our professional and ethical responsibility to breach confidentiality if:

1. A Student presents a serious and foreseeable harm to self and/or others.
2. Evidence or disclosure of any type of abuse or neglect
3. Threats to school security and safety
4. Criminal or delinquency proceedings mandating break in confidentiality

### **Benefits and Limitations**

#### **Benefits:**

- Online platforms provide school counselors with the ability to communicate and disseminate information to students as well as parents/guardians in an efficient manner.
  - Communicating online provides flexibility 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. Google Hangouts, Zoom).
- School counselors will try to recommend and use the best means of contact based on each individual student and their visual needs, verbal needs and technological needs.
- 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 communicating 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.

### **Limitations:**

- Confidentiality and Privacy cannot be guaranteed with services provided through online platforms.
  - In the event that a student/parent identifies or a school counselor believes that the virtual meeting is not private or other participants not anticipated are observed, the meeting can be rescheduled for another time when confidentiality and privacy can be ensured.
- 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.

### **ASCA Ethical Standards**

As a School Counselor we adhere to the American School Counselor Associations (ASCA) code of ethics. First and foremost, following ASCA's code A.1. We have a primary obligation to the students, who are to be treated with dignity and respect as unique individuals. Code A.2. outlines the limits of confidentiality which include: informed consent, limits of confidentiality, and parental rights. We have an obligation to inform students of the goals, techniques, and rules of procedure under which they receive counseling. It is our duty to provide informed consent to every student and provide clarification to the limits of confidentiality. Information and student records will be kept confidential unless legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed.