



Washtenaw County

Handle With Care

Frequently Asked Questions

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About the Handle With Care Process

1. **I'm concerned about student and family privacy. Exactly what information will law enforcement share about incidents with school staff?**
 - a. No information about incidents with school staff. We also value and respect the privacy of students and families in our community, and schools will only know that an incident occurred that could be potentially traumatic for students. Schools will not know any details about what occurred. The goal of Handle With Care is not to know *what* happened, but rather that *something* happened and that schools and the community should respond appropriately to reactions to trauma.
2. **I couldn't attend the Handle With Care training. Where can I access the training presentation?**
 - a. All training materials including the Handle With Care Notification, Process Flow Chart, and Powerpoint presentation, plus additional information on trauma, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and building resilience, are available at www.washtenawisd.org/HandleWithCare.
3. **What communication will be shared with parents and the community?**
 - a. We will be hosting two Community Forums for community members and social service providers who partner with schools so that they're aware of the Handle With Care process and goals of the initiative on the following dates:
 - i. [Friday, February 23 from 9:00-10:00 am at the Washtenaw County LRC \(4135 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor\)](#)
 - ii. [Tuesday, February 27 from 4:00-5:00 pm at the Washtenaw Intermediate School District \(1819 South Wagner Road, Ann Arbor\)](#)

4. How timely will this entire process be?

- a. Law enforcement officers must submit a HWC notice immediately as a part of their reporting after every incident, and their supervising sergeants are responsible for reviewing all police reports for each shift. School districts' have designated specific teams within their central administration offices responsible for receiving the initial notices from law enforcement and then disseminating to the appropriate individual school building staff. The goal of Handle With Care is for schools to be aware of potentially traumatic incidents occurring in the community before school starts the next morning.

5. What if a child lives outside of Washtenaw County, but attends school within Washtenaw County? Or if he/she lives in Washtenaw County, but attends school outside of Washtenaw? Will Handle With Care be implemented with school districts or police departments on the edge of or just outside of Washtenaw County?

- a. Currently, Van Buren Public Schools and South Lyon Public Schools are aware of and participating in the Handle With Care initiative. However, police departments outside of Washtenaw County and with jurisdictions overlapping Van Buren Public Schools and South Lyon Public Schools are not involved. We are focused on prioritizing schools and police departments within Washtenaw County first, but the HWC initiative will be inclusive of any non-Washtenaw schools and police departments serving our children, youth and families who choose to participate.

Questions Related to Law Enforcement

1. Which police departments are currently involved with the HWC Initiative?

- a. As of February 1, 2018, the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office and Ann Arbor Police Department are involved in HWC and will begin submitting HWC Notifications for students who live within their jurisdictions. All other local police departments in Washtenaw County are aware of HWC and have plans to train their officers so they can participate in HWC soon.

2. How will law enforcement use the HWC information to influence how they respond to youth and families in the community?

- a. Currently, local law enforcement regularly engage in training on mental health, working with youth, etc. We anticipate that local law enforcement will also use Handle With Care to better inform how they interact with children, youth and families.

3. **Will HWC notifications be submitted if Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents are engaging with families?**
 - a. Federal ICE Agents are not involved in Washtenaw County's Handle With Care initiative; however, Federal ICE Agents *usually* notify local law enforcement (i.e. Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office or Ann Arbor Police Department) if a raid will occur and therefore the local police department is often present at the incident or after the incident as well.

Questions Related to Schools

1. **Will there be training for teachers?**
 - a. We currently do not have in-person training for teachers scheduled due to the challenges of scheduling professional development outside of the school day. We highly encourage all school staff, including and especially teachers, to watch the Handle With Care Overview video and also the training video for what trauma might look like in a classroom or school with strategies to support children and youth who have been affected by trauma appropriate for the age group they work with. These videos are available at www.washtenawisd.org/HandleWithCare.
2. **Will there be ongoing communication to School Building Champions about implementation progress and which partners are involved?**
 - a. As we continue to train local police departments on the Handle With Care initiative and process, we will be sure to communicate with school district central office designees and school building champions that additional police departments will begin submitting HWC notifications.
3. **Will HWC "building champions" meet together? If so, how often? Will there be some kind of learning community or cohort?**
 - a. Individual school districts or school buildings can choose to have monthly HWC meetings. We suggest that central office designees regularly convene all of their building champions. Currently, we have not planned for larger community-wide HWC Building Champions meetings, but are considering 1-2 larger community convenings to share information and best practices across school districts.
4. **How do the RAHS clinics fit into the Handle With Care initiative?**
 - a. The RAHS Clinical Supervisor has been notified about HWC, though they are not officially part of the formal process. However, School Building Champions should reach out to their own RAHS clinic within their building.

5. **We need to update the contact information for our Central Office designee(s) who receive the initial notices directly from law enforcement. Who should we contact?**
 - a. Please contact Holly Heaviland (hheaviland@washtenawisd.org) or Shannon Novara (snovara@washtenawisd.org).

Questions Related to Washtenaw Community Mental Health

1. **If someone needs to make a CMH appointment, how much notice does CMH need?**
 - a. Appointments are scheduled based on urgent, emergent or routine appointment designations. Urgent needs can be addressed within 24 hours. The longest wait time is 2 weeks.
2. **How will confidentiality work if CMH referrals need to be made, especially if the student is young? Should parents be contacted before the CMH referral is made?**
 - a. It depends on the situation -- it's best practice to contact families first, but if it's a mental health crisis where there is a threat of harm to the student or to other students, CMH can be called without parent consent (similar to a medical emergency occurring in the school).
 - b. For youth 14 years and older, parent consent is not needed and a young person can give consent for themselves.
3. **What happens when schools make a referral to CMH for a child, but a parent is either not responsive to CMH or refusing to allow their child to access services?**
 - a. If a child is already receiving CMH services, then the child can access additional support from CMH specifically responding to their HWC referral.
 - b. The Handle With Care website (www.washtenawisd.org/HandleWithCare) also has materials for the school's behavioral health professional(s) to use to inform their strategies for working with students within the school.
 - c. If absolutely necessary, neglecting a child's mental health needs is considered Medical Neglect. However, this is the last and most extreme situation and we will work to explore and exhaust all other options first.