

Guidelines for School-based Student Well-being Teams

Maryland's Largest School District

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential

What are Student Well-being Teams?



The Student Well-being Team (SWT) is a collaborative, comprehensive learning. Their primary role, as we begin in an all-virtual semester of learning, is to support students to reduce barriers to learning, conduct outreach, problem-solve, and support students who are:

- Demonstrating mental health concerns
- Not engaging in their online educational program.

Function



The SWT is a collaborative problem-solving team focusing on unique student needs and family outreach. Student and Family Support and Engagement (SFSE) staff members, including PPWs, PCCS, and ETCs, are skilled at creative ways to engage families and are valuable resources when families are not responsive to initial school-based staff member outreach.

SWTs collaborate with families and engage in collaborative problem solving and root cause analyses to identify and remove barriers in order to improve student engagement. Targeted school-based and community resource can address these unique barriers.

During the first two weeks of school, SWTs should identify, contact, and check in with families of vulnerable and at-risk students.

Members



The SWT should consist of 5 to 10 staff members who are well-versed in collaborative problem-solving, root cause analysis, mental health support, attendance and engagement interventions, and/or the availability of community resources, including:

- Administrator or designee
- Pupil personnel worker (PPW)
- School counselor(s)
- School psychologist
- ESOL transition counselor (ETC), parent community coordinator (PCC), or school-based ESOL counselor (if assigned to the building)
- Staff members with strong connections to students, families, and the school community

Ongoing Data Collection and Monitoring



SWTs develop internal data collection methods to document which student groups are referred most frequently. Data analysis needs to be regular and continuous to develop schoolwide strategies that address target populations.



Show Up!

Be present • Be prepared • Be engaged

SWTs need to coordinate regular review of attendance and engagement data; meet regularly; move away from notifications and warnings towards outreach, problem-solving, and support; and recommend outreach and support that considers a variety of factors, such as the unique circumstances of the student or family, previously outreach and support, and attendance trends. SWTs should identify the staff members who will be responsible for specific family outreach efforts.

Outreach Efforts

- Multiple documented attempts to reach parent/guardian via phone, text, or email at different times of the day and via contact information of known siblings or emergency contacts
- Attempts to arrange to meet the parent/guardian and student virtually
- In circumstances when all outreach attempts listed above are unsuccessful, reach out to known friends of the student

Problem-solving and Support

- Initial outreach to parent/guardian designed to:
 - Educate student and parent/guardian on importance of regular live, virtual lesson attendance and engagement, or access of recorded lessons;
 - Informally problem-solve to determine why student is not participating in live virtual lessons or their recordings; and
 - Provide resources or support to address the issue.
- Additional formal problem-solving that includes parent and student, if appropriate, to:
 - Consider root causes of student's lack of attendance and/or engagement;
 - Plan interventions to address the root causes; and
 - Plan to monitor impact of interventions and support.

For more information, contact Student Family Support and Engagement

Additional Guidelines and Supports



Child abuse and neglect reports are down since schools closed because of COVID-19. However, the incidence of abuse and neglect have not decreased—it is just going unnoticed. It is our job to be vigilant and report any suspected abuse or neglect.

1 Regularly engage with students and their caregivers

2 Ask questions and be curious

3 Observe the environment

4 Observe student behavior, demeanor, and appearance

5 If a student discloses abuse or neglect and it is safe for the student to answer, ask open-ended questions to clarify (when, where, how, what)

6 Educators are required by law to report any suspicions of abuse and neglect. Remember, you do not have to verify that abuse or neglect has occurred

Click here to make an online report of child abuse and neglect

Questions to Consider When Student Engagement is a Concern

- Who, on the SWT, has attempted to contact the student and family? Have all known contacts been attempted and documented? Has the student's trusted adult at school made contact?
- Are there language needs or considerations?
- Are telephone numbers disconnected and emails being returned undelivered?
- Was student attendance and engagement a concern prior to COVID-19? Was there a history of mental health or safety concerns? Has Child Welfare Services been involved with the student and family before?
- Is there a history of self-harm behaviors, suicidal ideation, or other significant concerns?
- Are there known family challenges, such as food insecurity, housing, immigration status, or student working to support family?

Ask OSFSE

Ask OSFSE is a way for the SWT and central office-based staff members to stay connected with students and families, as part of the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) *Be Well 365* initiative. After exhausting and documenting all other methods to engage students and families, school administrators may contact *Ask OSFSE* to request a wellness check (e.g., because of concerns regarding food availability, social-emotional well-being, medical needs, academic or behavioral supports, or online learning). OSFSE staff members, upon receipt of a submission, will connect with the SWT. OSFSE staff members will monitor all requests to *Ask OSFSE* to ensure that school SWTs have the resources they need to work with students and families to ensure ongoing academic and social-emotional success and well-being.

REMEMBER: If you are concerned about a student's health and safety, contact Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) at 911 if it is an emergency or 240-279-8000 if it is not an emergency).

Wellness Checks

There may be occasions when a wellness check will be necessary due to concerns about a student's safety and well-being. The following guidelines should be considered.

- If the student appears to be in imminent danger, ask the student to retreat to a safe place in the home and call 911 so that the MCPD can conduct a wellness check.
- If the student is not in imminent danger, staff members can review safety provisions with the student in the event that the situation escalates. Student should be provided with resources, including the Montgomery County Hotline telephone number 301-738-2255 which is available 24/7.
- If the welfare of the student is in question but cannot be ascertained, school administration should consult with Student Welfare and Compliance (SWC). SWC and Systemwide Safety and Emergency Management may assign two staff members to conduct a wellness check, while observing safety protocols and with appropriate personal protective equipment.

Contact Information

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For more information, contact Student Family Support and Engagement