

PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR CHECKING-IN ON STUDENTS DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES

This document is to provide guidance for Pupil Personnel Service (PPS) professionals on how to support all students during the global pandemic using a “check-in” model.

The “Big Picture” Checklist

1. **Self-care:** Ensure that you are staying emotionally grounded. During this time of “shelter in place,” *try* to maintain normal daily routines, find safe ways to continue social contact with trusted friends and family, keep up physical activity, practice healthy eating and sleeping routines. Keep [accurately informed](#), but minimize watching, reading or listening to news about COVID-19 that causes you to feel distressed.
2. **Support the school site personnel:** [PPS professionals](#) are skilled to provide psychological support to site staff. Consider creating a list of resources and activities that staff can remotely access and implement for themselves, their families, and their students (e.g. [free guided meditations](#), [self-care exercises](#), and [social emotional learning activities](#)).
3. **Professional development:** Seek out and participate in any educational technology training your county office of education or district office may be offering and supporting on distance learning platforms (e.g. [Webex](#), [Zoom](#)). To ensure competence and adherence to professional standards and ethics, check on your state and national organization’s website for guidance on telehealth services ([CASP](#), [NASP](#), [CASC](#), [ASCA](#), [CASSW](#), [NASW](#)). It is also recommended that the PPS professional be trained in the [PREPaRE Model for Crisis Intervention](#).
4. **Scope of practice:** New anxieties may arise due to the effects of the pandemic (e.g. being restricted to their homes, isolated from friends or family members, financial hardships, educational impact). A “check-in” is a narrow, care-focused process to meet the immediate student/family needs while counseling focuses on long-term goals and a broader range of issues. PPS staff should adhere to their professional scope of practice and ethical guidelines in the remote environment as in the face-to-face settings.

“Check-in” Defined

What a check-in **IS NOT**:

- Crisis hotline counseling.
- A social call.
- A telehealth therapy session.
- A weekly counseling session for an individual student or meant to replace previous counseling services provided by the Local Educational Agency (LEA) or community agency provider.

What a check-in **IS**:

- A short phone conversation with a student to check-in on how s/he is doing.
- Within your PPS scope of practice.
- An opportunity to connect with the student and express empathy.
- A method to monitor a student’s stress reaction.
- Available to all students.

Delivery Steps

1. Before the “check-in”

- Collaborate with district and site administrators regarding how parents and students can access remote supports and resources (e.g. landline, virtual platform).
- Discuss the frequency of the check-ins with district and site administrators.
- Triage: Discuss with your district and site-based leadership teams how you will prioritize the students you call for a check-in.

Examples of student triage considerations (not designed to be an exhaustive list and not in a prioritized order):

Consider students who...	
are currently receiving mental health services and/or experienced an involuntary hospitalization.	you know are living in an unstable home, an open DCFS case, are foster or homeless youth.
you were providing counseling services and remain concerned about their safety and security.	experienced school failure and teachers referred them for support services.
have a 504 Plan or an IEP. Special consideration for those students receiving DIS Counseling and/or are placed in a Non-Public School (NPS) or Residential Treatment Center (RTC).	expect to participate in promotion or graduation activities in 2020.
are receiving home/hospital instruction.	newly enroll in the district.
...are not capable to participate in a regular check-in due to his/her developmental level, cognitive ability, verbal skills, and psychosocial situation. Consider an alternative manner to check-in.	

- If you are working from home, find a quiet and confidential location.
- Ensure client confidentiality and security of the communications medium. To keep your personal number private, create a free [Google Voice phone number](#).
- Make a list of hotline numbers, district supports, and community resources (e.g. food pantry, housing, health, employment, etc.).
- Have contact information for relevant mental health resources, including local emergency services such as the Department of Mental Health Psychiatric Mobile Response Team (PMRT), in the student’s geographical area.

NOTE: If student is significantly stressed, consider using the [PREPaRE model, Crisis Intervention, and Global Pandemic](#) as a guide.

Check your LEA’s policies and procedures regarding suicide risk assessment protocols during remote contacts. If they do not have a protocol for this unique situation, offer to work with your supervisor on developing a safety protocol. Post hotline numbers, such as the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK**, the **California Peer-Run Warm Line 1-855-845-7415**, the **TrevorLifeline 1-866-488-7386**, and local mental health agencies phone numbers for telehealth services on the district and school websites.

If the student states suicidal ideation, immediately contact the parent/guardian regarding the location of the student, your concern, and notify your supervisor for further support. **Call 911 if emergency!**

2. During the “check-in”

Call parent/guardian

- Share the purpose of the call and build rapport. *Example prompt: Hello, this is _____, the school counselor/school psychologist/school social worker from _____ school. May I please speak to the guardian/parent of _____? I am calling to check in on your son/daughter. How are things going at home during this unusual time?*
- Ask if the family needs any support or resources. Refer the parent to the appropriate district department or local community support agencies.
- Ask for verbal permission to check-in with the student.
- Share the [limits of confidentiality](#).
- For safety purposes, ask about the student’s present location (if the parent/guardian is not at home with the student).

Call student for “check-in”

- At the beginning of each check-in, obtain verbal consent from the student. Note this consent in your professional log. Confirm student’s location at time of check-in and phone number.
- Introduce/remind student of your role and explain confidentiality limits and [mandated reporting laws](#).
- If you have a preexisting relationship with this student, you will be sharing that you can only support them remotely, for now. This might be a difficult conversation. *Example prompt: I know this is difficult and isn’t exactly how we usually share in person, but we can still talk on the phone or through a virtual platform. We will get through this together.*
- If a distal learning option has been initiated by the district, ask the student about his/her learning experience. If needed, provide district information on remote learning opportunities.
- Ask the student about his/her daily routine. *Example prompts: How are things going with your distal learning opportunities? How are the assignments? How are you managing your time during the day?*
- Ask about the student’s social support systems. *Example prompts: How has social distancing affected you? How are you staying connected with your friends from school? Extended family members? Teachers? Spiritual congregation?*
- Ask them if they need you to check in on them periodically. How often? Best way to contact them?
- Encourage them to ask questions, share their feelings, and remind them how brave and courageous they are during this difficult time.
- End the conversation with hope and reassurance: ***We are all in this together. We will take this one day at a time.***

If the call becomes a longer conversation because...

A. The student is significantly stressed:

- Provide psychological education and resources.
- Collaborate with the parent/guardian and provide related resources/referrals.

B. The student expresses suicidal ideation:

- Use the district’s modified Remote Access Suicide Assessment Form and follow the district modified suicide protocol.
- Take appropriate steps to keep the student safe.

3. After the “check-in”

- Document that the check-in occurred in the appropriate confidential area of your LEA’s Student Information System. Log the date and the time spent with the student. Make note of any concerns or resources needed for the student, and follow up with providing those resources.
- If needed, collaborate with/support the parent/guardian regarding community support resources.
- Determine if there is a need for a follow-up “check-in”, enrollment in a social/academic instructional group, or a referral for telehealth sessions.



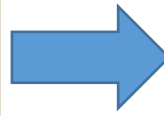
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FLOWCHART: PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR CHECKING-IN ON STUDENTS DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES

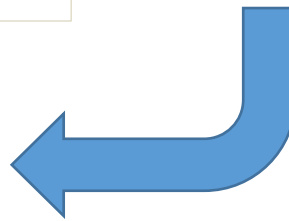
Before the “check-in” checklist:

- Ensure your own self-care
- Triage and determine whether the student is capable of participating in a check-in given the student’s developmental level, cognitive ability and psychosocial situation.
- If at home, find a confidential location.
- Ensure security of the communication medium. If using a private number, download an app to keep the private number private.
- Have relevant resources, including emergency services accessible. Have the district’s remote suicide assessment guide available.



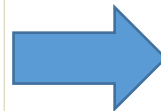
Call the parent/guardian:

- Share the purpose of the call and build rapport.
- Ask if the family needs any support or resources. Refer the parent to the appropriate district personnel or local community agencies.
- Ask for verbal permission for the student check-in.
- Share limits to confidentiality.
- For safety purposes, ask about student location (if parent/guardian is not in the home with student or at another location).



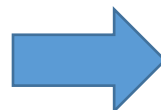
Check-in with student:

- Ask verbal permission to check-in.
- Introduce/remind student of your role and confidentiality limits.
- Ask are they in a comfortable, non-distracting, private location for the call?
- Ask about the home-learning-opportunity experience.
- Ask the student about their daily routine.
- Ask about social supports systems.
- If needed, provide district information/support on home-learning-opportunities.
- End the conversation with reassurance: ***We are all in this together. We will take this one day at a time.***



If student is significantly stressed:

- Provide psychological education and resources.
- Collaborate with the parent/guardian and provide related resources/referrals.



If student expresses suicidal ideation:

- Use district modified Remote Access Suicide Assessment Form.
- Follow district modified suicide protocol.
- Take appropriate steps to keep the student safe.



- Document contact.
- Determine the need for a follow-up “check-in”, participation in a social/academic instructional group, or referral for telehealth sessions.