

MADISON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Ms. Anna Graham, Superintendent
Mrs. Cathy Jones, Asst. Superintendent
Mrs. Tina Weaver, Dir. of Administration

60 School Board Ct.
Madison, VA 22727
(540) 948-3780

November 23, 2020

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Madison County Public Schools knows that education involves more than just academics, and schools can play a critical role in helping children navigate the increasing social and emotional challenges they face. Sadly, during this unprecedented time of virtual learning, social distancing and disruption to normal routines, students and families are navigating increased stressors in many areas of life. In our effort to support MCPS students and families, we are providing information to increase awareness and resources to support mental health for those families and their children who are in need. There still exists significant stigma around mental health, and specifically, topics like self-harm and suicide can be difficult to discuss. However, the good news is that awareness and support are highly effective interventions in addressing mental health concerns and preventing teen suicide. To that end, MCPS is providing all families with general information to help parents and caregivers distinguish between behaviors that are consistent with normal child-adolescent development and those that are cause for concern about a more serious situation.

According to the National Institute for Mental Health, *"in general, if a child's behavior persists for a few weeks or longer, causes distress for the child or the child's family, and interferes with functioning at school, at home, or with friends, then consider seeking help. If a child's behavior is unsafe, or if a child talks about wanting to hurt him or herself or someone else, then seek help immediately."* ("Children and Mental Health." National Institute of Mental Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [Children and Mental Health](#)),

MCPS is also providing parents and caregivers with a comprehensive list of mental health providers and resources. This list will also be available online through each school's website and in Canvas. The information provided will include links to resources and providers' contact information. School counselors are available at each school and can provide age appropriate resources, additional support, and assistance, as well as referrals to outside mental health professionals and agencies, if needed.

If you are currently concerned about your child's mental health or risk for suicide, please immediately contact a mental health professional or your family physician. We are willing to assist families in seeking this help for their children, if needed.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact your child's school counselor.

Sincerely,

Anna Graham, Superintendent
540-948-3780

agraham@madisonschools.k12.va.us

Madison Primary School
158 Primary School Dr.
(540) 948-3781

Waverly Yowell Elementary School
1809 N. Main Street
(540) 948-4511

Wm. Wetsel Middle School
186 Mountaineer Lane
(540) 948-3783

Madison Co. High School
68 Mountaineer Lane
Madison, VA 22727 (540) 948-3785

TEACHING - LEARNING - CARING
www2.madisonschools.k12.va.us

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GENERAL STRATEGIES & SUGGESTIONS FOR COPING AND OVERALL WELLNESS

- **Routine:** Create & stick to a daily schedule. We all need structure, but it is particularly important for healthy child and adolescent development.
- **Take care of your physical health:** Exercise regularly; try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals; practice deep breathing, stretching and/or mindfulness.
- **Rest:** Get plenty of sleep! The National Sleep Foundation recommends that adults get 7-9 hours of sleep each night, It is recommended that preschoolers through teenagers get 8-10 hours of sleep each night.
- **Limit screen time and overexposure to negative news coverage.** Take regular breaks from news and social media outlets.
- **Make time to unwind.** Participate in activities that you enjoy. Children may also enjoy creating artwork, reading books and playing games with family members.
- **Stay connected:** By text, phone, email or in person, connect with someone each day. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

MCPS School Psychologist: Comer Gaither, Psy.D. (cgaither@madisonschools.k12.va.us)

MCPS School Counselors:

Madison Primary School: Karen Organ-Lohr (korganlohr@madisonschools.k12.va.us)

Waverly Yowell Elementary: Nicole Keys (nkeys@madisonschools.k12.va.us)

Wetsel Middle School: Claire Edwards (cm Edwards@madisonschools.k12.va.us) and Sue Wood (swood@madisonschools.k12.va.us)

Madison Co. High School: Chelsea Cummings (ccummings@madisonschools.k12.va.us) and Torie Knighton (tknighton@madisonschools.k12.va.us)

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