

<b>Procedure Title</b>	<b>Virtual Care</b>		
<b>Date of Issue</b>	September 30, 2020	<b>Related Policy</b>	BP 1408-D
<b>Revision Dates</b>		<b>Related Forms</b>	
<b>Review Date</b>		<b>Originator</b>	Administrative Council
<b>References</b>			
Education Act; Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA); Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA); Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA); Health Care Consent Act; AP 6845-D “Mental Health Services – Age of Consent”			

## **1.0 RATIONALE**

- 1.1 During periods of school closure, and/or when remote learning has been selected, Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) Professional Learning Services Student Support staff will be unable to provide in-person support to students and/or families. Under these circumstances, virtual care may be provided using a board-approved platform (i.e. Microsoft Teams), in coordination with other telecommunication technology (e.g., telephone), given that the following procedures are adhered to, and with the understanding that staff will always act cautiously regarding the personal information that they collect, use, and disclose.
- 1.2 Notwithstanding the following procedure, BWDSB Professional Learning Services Student Support staff must ensure that they are acting in accordance with the regulations of their respective regulatory college, and that any technology that they use to provide virtual care is compliant with current privacy legislation and security requirements of the board.
- 1.3 For the purpose of this procedure, virtual care is defined as the provision of direct, technology enabled support services to students and/or families who are in a different location from the Bluewater District School Board staff providing the care. Virtual care can also include training or educating, via technology, parent(s)/guardian(s) on the standards of virtual care.

## **2.0 PROCEDURE**

### **2.1 Initial Contact and Informed Consent**

- i. Virtual care services are optional. Parent(s)/guardian(s)/student(s) can decline to participate at any point before or during service. This will not impact their ability to resume traditional service when available.
- ii. Contact information for parent(s)/guardian(s)/student(s) must be verified and the best means for initial contact determined (e.g., parent/guardian/student's email address, work phone number, personal cell vs. home phone number). Seek consent for email communication as appropriate and document, as required
- iii. Email, text or call the parent/guardian/student and schedule a time to connect.
- iv. Regulatory college and BWDSB procedure-specific informed consents must be obtained and documented, in addition to virtual care consent (AF 6860). When obtaining informed consent, staff must ensure that appropriate legislation regarding age of consent requirements are strictly adhered to (e.g., AP 6845-D “Mental Health Services – Age of Consent”).

- v. Staff will verbally review and complete AF 6860 "Virtual Care Informed Consent" with parent(s)/guardian(s)/student(s) to obtain and document verbal informed consent.
- vi. If the virtual care consent is declined, indicate this on the virtual care form (AF 6860) and file in accordance with current practice. Staff must ensure that they reconnect for service once in-person service is available.
- vii. Staff will endeavor to only collect the minimum amount of personal health information needed in order to safely provide services. Consideration should be given to the most secure way to complete different facets of each intervention (e.g., complete case history over the telephone, not via virtual care).
- viii. Please refer to Appendix A: Guidelines for Virtual Care Considerations.

## **APPENDIX A: GUIDELINES FOR VIRTUAL CARE SESSIONS**

### **Logistics Prior to First Virtual Care Session**

Prior to the first virtual care session, staff will:

- i. ensure that a backup contact plan has been developed and communicated with the student/family should audio/video fail. For example, "if we get cut off, I will....";
- ii. identify their emergency work contact information to student/family (e.g., board email, board issued cell phone number, or office-based voice mail extension);
- iii. develop a plan (ahead of time) if they cannot reach the student/family. For example, "if I cannot reach you at the designated time, I will...";
- iv. develop a safety plan, if required, in case of emergency during the session.
- v. contact student/parents to enquire about the following in determining whether telephone check-ins or online/video sessions would be appropriate:
  - Wi-Fi/Internet quality and availability (e.g., do they have unlimited or high data allowance for their home internet? Is their home internet password protected?)
  - Do they typically stream movies/shows/YouTube with their home internet? Usage for video call will be comparable to other video call platforms, such as Skype/Facetime or to video streaming.
  - It is NOT advisable to use cell data for video calls. For scheduled phone call, ask about cell/home phone (e.g., reception, any limit to number of minutes/free times of day for calls).
- vi. if connecting by phone, block phone number prior to call by starting the call with \*67.
  - advise student/parent/guardian that the call will appear as a blocked number.
- vii. if using Microsoft Teams, send student/parent/guardian a calendar invite using Teams online option. Staff will advise student/parent/guardian that they can opt to join the meeting via video or dial-in with the phone number provided.
- viii. ensure, prior to connecting, that:
  - they have up-to-date and appropriate resources to provide to the student/parent/guardian;
  - they are using a password protected Wi-Fi network;
  - their device is up to date with security protocol/virus definitions;
  - they have a private room available for the session, or ensure, to the best of their availability, that they have a private space;
  - their background is neutral. Consider removing personal items or distractions in the background. Plain background is best;
  - the room/space that they are using is well-lit (e.g., a window in front of you might cast a shadow or create low visibility);
  - they have made family members/people that they live with aware of the fact that they are going to conduct an online session and cannot be disturbed;
  - they have another phone ready if you have safety concerns.

### **Virtual Care Session**

Upon connection to the virtual care session, staff will:

- i. reaffirm that it is okay that they are connecting and that it is a good time to check-in;
- ii. ensure that they have sufficient privacy for a check-in;
- iii. verify the identity of the client (e.g., ask them to tell you a bit about themselves);

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- iv. confirm where the student is (address, in province) and who is nearby (in case you need to access help);
  - v. confirm the amount of time available for the current session;
  - vi. turn off apps, close unnecessary browser windows and computer programs, turn off computer notifications (e.g., all social media apps/windows should be closed). Staff will ask all participants to do the same;
  - vii. advise participants **not to use** the chat function (a record is kept of the chat which creates confidentiality and record retention concerns);
  - viii. ensure audio/video recording button is not on;
  - ix. use headphones, if available, and suggest that participants also use headphones;
  - x. check the picture and audio quality (e.g., can you see and hear each other; make sure nobody is muted);
  - xi. discuss how to use the technology with participants;
  - xii. position your camera so that it is easy to look at the camera and the student/parent on screen (to improve eye contact);
  - xiii. ask participants to show them the space that they are in;
  - xiv. ensure anyone in room is within camera view;
  - xv. speak clearly;
  - xvi. conduct the session as they would an in-person session (e.g., be yourself);
  - xvii. ensure that everyone hangs up/logs off when the session is over. The staff member should always be the last one to leave the session.