

## **ASD-S School Counselling Services and Superintendent's Update**

Our School Guidance Counsellors and Guidance Teachers will be offering telephone support to K-12 students and families beginning Wednesday, April 1, 2020.

We know the important role our Guidance staff plays throughout the year and believe their support is needed at this time more than ever. We have set up a phone service to allow students to connect with the Guidance Counsellor or Guidance Teacher from their school. This service may be used by any ASD-S student or their family.

### **How can my child's guidance staff help?**

School Counsellors and Guidance Teachers can help students dealing with mild anxiety, personal issues such as stress management, and offer supportive strategies for maintaining good mental health and well-being during the COVID-19 crisis. Our Guidance staff can also answer questions related to the school counselling services, including postsecondary planning.

Please be advised that Guidance staff may be unable to answer specific questions related to the school closure, for example questions about exams, school work, or graduation celebrations. Please refer to the [Q & A document](#) on our website for the most up-to-date information available. Guidance staff also have limited information on adjusted timelines for postsecondary institutions; however, please remember that all students are affected by this pandemic and the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Labour is working with colleges and universities to ensure students are not disadvantaged by the school closure.

### **How do I access school guidance staff?**

There are three dedicated phone lines for students and families to call:

**Hampton Education Centre** (Sussex to Kennebecasis Valley) - 506-349-6241

**Saint John Education Centre** (Saint John, Grand Bay-Westfield, St Martins) - 506-349-7663

**St. Stephen Education Centre** (St. George to the Fundy Isles) - 506-343-5263

Students in Grades 9-12 or their parents or guardians are welcome to call for support. We ask that parents or guardians call on behalf of our students in K-8. Callers will reach a member of our Education Support Service team who will ask about the nature of the request and then have the Guidance Counsellor or Guidance Teacher from your child's school return your call.

The phones will be answered **Monday - Friday 8:15 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.** beginning Wednesday, April 1, 2020.

## **What if my child or youth has a more serious mental health concern?**

You can reach the nearest Child and Youth Team (weekdays 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) at the following numbers:

**Charlotte County area:** 506-466-7380

**Saint John area:** 506-658-3737

**Sussex/KV area:** 506-432-2217

If your child is in crisis outside of these hours, please contact Saint John Mobile Crisis Services at 1-888-811-3664 (evenings and weekends). In case of emergency, please call 911.

- - -

We know feeling a sense of connection to those close to us during these uncertain times is very important. Some schools have been connecting with students through telephone calls, creative You Tube videos, Twitter messages, and suggestions for home activities. We feel extending access to our Guidance staff is an essential piece of maintaining that connection to our students.

We will continue to reach out to our ASD-S families as more information becomes available regarding school closures and continued services. Please keep checking the [ASD-S website](#) for updates to our Q & A document, self-care information, and some great ideas for home learning. There, you can also find a link to a helpful resource, "[How to talk to my child about COVID-19.](#)"

You may have received or will receive a question from your school about Internet access and devices in your home. This information will help inform plans for home learning options. The school districts have been working collaboratively with the Department of Education and Early Childhood to develop a home learning plan and we expect a communication in early April from the Department regarding the continuation of learning during the school closure.

Please note the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development have confirmed there will be no April Report Cards.

Hoping you and your family are doing well, thank you for your on-going support of our schools.

Zoë Watson, Superintendent