

Do to legal and ethical issues with counseling via electronic methods, we requested the development of this policy. It covers changes in Telehealth and offers the district legal methods for counselors to address the needs of students during times of school closure. We have outlined the training required and will look for additional training in the future.

In recognition of the diverse and complicated demands upon students, their families and the public-school system, the district believes that counseling offered in this district should be flexible and responsive. In order to promote such flexibility and responsiveness, district counselors are authorized to provide virtual counseling and career guidance services in accordance with this policy and applicable Idaho law *during emergency school closures or other situations deemed necessary by the administration.*

### **COMPETENCY AND TRAINING**

In accordance with the Idaho Telehealth Act, Title 54, Chapter 57, Idaho Code, all district counselors providing virtual counseling are required to obtain training, education and supervision in the unique clinical, technical and administrative challenges which arise in virtual counseling service delivery prior to providing such services. The district will establish internal procedures to ensure compliance with this requirement.

### **INFORMED CONSENT**

Prior to participating in any virtual counseling services, parents/guardians will be asked to complete an informed consent for their student(s). The informed consent will advise parents/guardians of the specific benefits and risks of virtual counseling and guidance services, including those related to confidentiality and technology-assisted services.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY AND ETHICAL STANDARDS**

Counselors will be required to follow all applicable confidentiality regulations, including FERPA, IDEA and HIPPA, and all ethical standards for school counselors. As part of the informed consent required by this policy, district counselors will communicate with parents/guardians and students about risks associated with virtual counseling, including transmission of personal information to unauthorized persons and/or access to personal information stored in district electronic files by unauthorized persons. Parents/guardians and students are reminded that exceptions to confidentiality required by law apply in a virtual setting, such as where there are reports about harming oneself, someone else, or of someone harming a student.

### **APPLICABILITY OF RELATED SCHOOL POLICIES**

All persons using district virtual counseling and career guidance services are subject to district policies relating to student records and student data protection; and use of district computers, software and technology.

**DELIVERY OF VIRTUAL SERVICES**

Virtual counseling and career guidance services in the district will include the elements established in regulations established by the State Board of Education. These elements include: guidance; individual planning; response services of counseling, consultation and referral; and system support functions that promote effective delivery of guidance services. District counselors will be available to students through *email, phone or online platforms such as Zoom, Remind, or Google Hangouts*. The method of delivery and accessibility of school counselors will *be communicated to students through the counselor after initial contact*. Counselors may also provide referral lists that include outside mental health services, social/emotional and physical well-being support to share with parents and families.



**LEGAL REFERENCE:**

Idaho Code Sections:

33-1212 (Counseling)

33-1612.7 (Thorough System of Public Schools – Technology)

33-1619 (Virtual Education Programs)

IDAPA 08.02.03.108 (Guidance Programs)

**ADOPTED:**

**AMENDED:**

*\*Language in text set forth in italics is optional.*