

# The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools

512 Cedar Street  
Scotch Plains, New Jersey 07076

May 8, 2020

Dear Scotch Plains-Fanwood Community,

We hope this letter finds you and your loved ones well. As we continue to thoughtfully navigate through these extraordinary times, we believe communication of offered supports is paramount to the well-being of our school community. Therefore, we want to take the time to share updates with you about specific programming and outreach that is available to all our students and families.

In addition to At Home Learning through the end of the year, teachers, counselors and administrators continue to provide students with lessons, experiences and resources to support social-emotional well-being during this time. It is through these deliberate efforts we are able to assist the ‘whole child’. For example, kindergartners worked on emotion regulation in their social studies lessons and second graders developed action plans to help solve problems they were noticing in their surroundings. The middle and high school students have discussed topics such as anxiety and stress as well as explored strategies for managing loneliness and stress with their teachers. Teachers and counselors have also developed creative ways to check in with students to identify those who are at risk academically, socially, and emotionally. Counselors are meeting with students and families virtually to provide support across a range of challenges including emotional support, using technology, and accessing community resources.

As a school community, we are aware of the ways social, emotional or mental health difficulties can present barriers to students availability or ability to learn at any given time. We remain committed to providing the mental health support necessary to our students and families. We are also aware that this may not be a type of support your child has needed before. Therefore, we would like you to know whether this is the first time you or your family is reaching out for assistance with mental health needs, or you have had the chance to be supported by staff before in this area, we want to assure you of the wealth of resources and connections we can provide. Our district support staff, which includes Guidance, Student Assistance Specialists and Coordinator, and our Child Study Team are trained in the areas of social-emotional needs and mental health concerns. If you would like to reach out to receive assistance for your student we recommend making your primary contact as follows:

- High School and Middle School: Your child’s school counselor (this information can be found on your school’s website).
- Elementary School: Student Assistance Specialists are providing support to elementary schools per the following list.
  - Brunner & Evergreen: Cailin Frantz, cfrantz@spfk12.org
  - School One: Lisa Morra, lmorra@spfk12.org
  - McGinn: Kristine Iarussi, kiarussi@spfk12
  - Coles: Megan Saunders, msaunders@spfk12.org

Additionally, our Building Principals and our Student Assistance Coordinator, Liz Knodel-Gordon, [egordon@spfk12.org](mailto:egordon@spfk12.org), are available to provide support to families at all levels. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us at any time.

For our community as a whole, and particularly as parents and caregivers, it is important now more than ever that we are aware of the mental health needs of our learners and ourselves. Mental health includes our

emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also determines how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Our mental and physical health are often closely linked. It is important to remember that just like our physical health can change over time so can our mental health. We are living in a time where the demands being placed on us may exceed our internal resources and coping abilities. This may cause us to have emotions or difficulties that are not common to us or our child. We do not all respond to stress or lifestyle changes the same way. However, we do want to pay attention to these shifts in ourselves and our children as changes in behavior can point to internal struggles. These common changes to watch for include...

- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits, either too much or not enough
- Irritability and “acting out” behaviors in teens
- Poor academic performance or work avoidance
- Difficulty with attention or concentration
- Preoccupation of negative thoughts or excessive worry
- Excessive self-isolation from family or disconnection from friends
- Unexplained headaches or body pain
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

In addition to the primary resources in our district, our larger community and state also provides an abundance of support systems and resources. Due to the comprehensive level and quality of these resources, we have attached to this letter some primary contacts families can make in key areas of mental health support. If you do not see a resource listed for your area of concern, please be in touch so that we can assist you as best as possible.

*Yours in health,*

*Mrs. Lisa Rebimbas, Director of Special Services*

*Mr. Timothy Donahue, Assistant Principal at SPFHS and Supervisor of Guidance*

*The District School Counselors*

*The Student Assistance Counselor*

*The Student Assistance Specialists*

## Mental Health Supports and Networks

<p><b><i>Crisis Management</i></b></p>	
<p><b>Emergency Response/Police Assistance</b></p>	<p>For immediate assistance please call 9-1-1. For local police departments non-emergency phone number: Scotch Plains 908-322-7100 and Fanwood 908-322-5000</p>
<p><b>Performcare -Mobile Response Services</b></p>	<p>Call 1-877-652-7624-Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to help children and youth who are experiencing an emotional or behavioral crisis. The services are designed to defuse an immediate crisis, and keep children and their families safe.</p> <p>Performcare is operating as usual for new referrals. There is no charge to the services they provide. English and Spanish speaking counselors are available.</p>
<p><b>Union County Emergency Psychiatric Services</b></p>	<p>Primary Screening Center for Union-Trinitas Regional Medical Center Hotline: (908) 994-7131</p> <p>Emergency Services-Affiliated w/Screening Center-Overlook Hospital Hotline: (201) 841-8078</p>
<p><b>211 Impact – First Call for Help or Text your zip code to 898-211 Alternative Number: (973) 887-2772 or Toll-Free (877) 652-1148</b></p>	<p>Call 211:24-hour mental health crisis intervention, information, referral and listening support. English and Spanish speaking counselors available. Call, text, chat with your local 211 to speak with a community resource specialist in your area who will help you find services and resources that are available to you including:</p> <p>Supplemental food and nutrition programs, shelter/housing options, utilities assistance, emergency information, disaster relief, employment and education resources, health care, vaccination, and health epidemic information, addiction prevention and rehabilitation programs, mental health or special needs support groups, domestic abuse victim assistance</p>

<p><b>Crisis Text Line</b></p>	<p>Text HOME to 741741 from anywhere in the United States, anytime, about any type of crisis.</p> <p>Crisis Text Line is free, 24/7 support for those in crisis. Text 741741 from anywhere in the US to text with a trained volunteer to support people in crisis and bring texters from a hot moment to a cool calm through active listening and collaborative problem solving.</p> <p>Text from anywhere in the USA to text with a trained Crisis Counselor.</p>
<p><b>SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline</b></p>	<p>Call 1-800-985-5990</p> <p>Text "talkwithus" to 66746</p> <p>The Disaster Distress Helpline is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year, national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories. Stress, anxiety, and other depression-like symptoms are common reactions after a disaster. Call or text to connect with a trained crisis counselor.</p>
<p><b><i>Suicide Prevention</i></b></p>	
<p><b>Caring Contact</b></p>	<p>Call 908-232-2880/1-800-273-TALK (8255)</p> <p>Listeners are available 7 days a week from 7 A.M. to 11 P.M., based on volunteer availability.</p> <p>Text "heart" to 741-741. Texters are available 24/7</p> <p>Caring Contact provides a crisis hotline to provide active listening support as a resource for people going through difficult times and looking for someone to care.</p>
<p><b>Suicide Prevention Lifeline</b></p>	<p>Call 800-273-TALK (8255) or chat online: <a href="https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/">https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/</a></p> <p>The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.</p>

<p><b>The Trevor Lifeline</b></p>	<p>The Trevor Project offers accredited life-saving, life-affirming programs and services to LGBTQ youth that create safe, accepting and inclusive environments over the phone, online and through text.</p> <p><b>Trevor Lifeline</b> 1-866-488-7386. The only national 24/7 crisis intervention and suicide prevention lifeline for LGBTQ young people under 25</p> <p><b>Trevor chat</b> A free, confidential, secure instant messaging service for LGBTQ youth that provides live help from trained volunteer counselors, open daily.</p> <p><b>Trevor Text</b> text START to 678678. A free, confidential, secure service in which LGBTQ young people can text a trained Trevor counselor for support and crisis intervention.</p>
<p><b>Concerns of Abuse</b></p>	
<p><b>Department of Children and Families</b></p>	<p>Call 1-877-NJ ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) if any person is having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or acts of abuse should immediately report this information. If the child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.</p>
<p><b>National and New Jersey Domestic Violence Hotlines</b></p>	<p>Call 1 (800) 799-SAFE (7233) or 1 (800)-572-SAFE (7233), National and New Jersey hotlines respectively. <i>If you're unable to speak safely, you can log onto <a href="http://thehotline.org">thehotline.org</a> or text LOVEIS to 22522. <a href="http://Thehotline.org">Thehotline.org</a></i></p> <p>Provides life saving tools and immediate support to enable victims to find safety and live lives free of abuse. Highly trained, experienced advocates offer compassionate support, crisis intervention information, educational services and referral services. Visitors to this site can find information about domestic violence, online instructional materials, safety planning, and local resources 24/7. Advocates are working remotely to ensure services continue during the pandemic.</p>
<p><b>Union County Rape Crisis Center</b></p>	<p>Call (908) 233- RAPE (7273) 24 hour hotline</p> <p>Under the auspices of the Union County Department of Human Services, Division of Planning, the Union County Rape Crisis Center (UCRCC) offers a network of services to Survivors of sexual assault.</p> <p>The center is still responding via the hotline</p>

<p><b>The National Human Trafficking Hotline</b></p>	<p>Call 1-888-373-7888 ( TTY: 711) Text 233733 Live Chat(please call if CHAT is unavailable): <a href="https://humantraffickinghotline.org/chat">https://humantraffickinghotline.org/chat</a>  The National Human Trafficking Hotline connects victims and survivors of sex and labor trafficking with services and supports to get help and stay safe. The National Hotline also receives tips about potential situations of sex and labor trafficking and facilitates reporting that information to the appropriate authorities in certain cases.</p>
<p><b>Youth Resources</b></p>	
<p><b>2nd Floor</b></p>	<p>Call or text (888) 222-2228 <a href="http://2ndfloor.org">2ndfloor.org</a>  Confidential and anonymous helpline for New Jersey’s youth between the ages of 10-24 to help find solutions to the problems that they face at home, at school or at play.</p>
<p><b><u>YouthLine</u></b></p>	<p>Call (877) 968-8491 Text TEEN2TEEN to 839863  YouthLine is a 24/7, free, confidential teen crisis helpline.</p>
<p><b>National Runaway Safeline</b></p>	<p>1- 800-RUNAWAY (786-2929)  NRS is available to listen, support and connect youth and families to resources</p>
<p><b><i>Additional Parent Resources</i></b></p>	

<p><b>Union County Youth Services Bureau</b></p>	<p>Call (908) 558-2540 Families-in-crisis can benefit from professional guidance and support to prevent or better manage their child or teen’s behaviors that may place their safety at risk.          After 5PM weekdays and during weekends and holidays, they operate a 24/7 family crisis intervention service.          Contact your local police department and request Family Crisis Intervention Unit assistance.</p>
<p><b>Family Support Organization of Union County</b></p>	<p>Call the warmline at (908)-755-0090          Available Monday-Friday 8:30-4:30</p> <p>The Family Support Organization (FSO) of Union County is a private, non-profit organization that provides family-to-family peer support with a focus on direct support to family members and caregivers of children with special emotional and behavioral needs. Services include advocacy, connection to resource, support groups, and more.</p>
<p><b>Family Helpline</b></p>	<p>Call 1-800-THE-KIDS (843-5437)          24 hours a day - 7 days a week</p> <p>If you're feeling stressed out, call the Family Helpline and work through your frustrations before a crisis occurs. You'll speak to sensitive, trained volunteers of Parents Anonymous who provide empathic listening about parenting and refer you to resources in your community.</p>
<p><b>Women’s Referral Central Hotline-New Jersey</b></p>	<p>Call 1-800-322-8092          24 hours a day - 7 Days a week.</p> <p>Provides comprehensive information, referrals, active listening, and crisis response for issues confronting New Jersey residents, including but not limited to: child care, divorce, employment, single parenting, housing, legal assistance, and social services.</p>
<p><b>American Association of Poison Control Centers</b></p>	<p>Call (800) 222-1222          Poison control centers offer free, confidential, expert medical advice 24/7</p>
<p><b>National Eating</b></p>	<p>Call (800) 931-2237 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM Mon-Thurs; and 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Fri</p>

<b>Disorders Center Helpline</b>	For 24/7 crisis support, text 'NEDA' to 741741 <a href="https://chatserver.comm100.com/ChatWindow.aspx?siteId=144464&amp;planId=467">https://chatserver.comm100.com/ChatWindow.aspx?siteId=144464&amp;planId=467</a> Support, resources and treatment options for yourself or a loved one.
<b>Addictions Hotline of New Jersey</b>	Call 1 (800) 238-2333 Provides trained clinically supervised telephone specialists who are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to educate, assist, interview and/or refer individuals and families battling addictions. Calls are free and information shared is confidential.
<b><i>Grief Support</i></b>	
<b>Imagine</b>	Call (908) 264-3100 <a href="http://www.imaginenj.org">www.imaginenj.org</a> Provides grief support for children, teens and families as well as support for those living with a family member with a life-altering illness.
<b><i>Counseling Services</i></b>	
<b>Resolve</b>	Call ( 908-322-9180) or email at <a href="mailto:ResolveCCC@aol.com">ResolveCCC@aol.com</a> . The community agency located in Scotch Plains is providing counseling sessions through tele-therapy. They are able to provide substance abuse evaluations and early intervention treatment. They accept medicare, medicaid and private insurance.
<b>Other Mental Health Providers</b>	There are many licensed mental health providers in our area. You can contact your insurance carrier for a listing and/or contact your Primary Care Physician for recommendations.