



Counseling Department

Virtual Counseling Practices and Procedures

Brownell Talbot Counseling Department remains committed to supporting students' and families' mental and emotional health and well-being through virtual counseling. During times of uncertainty, our students may experience a host of emotions, including fear, anxiety, worry, and anger. Because our students' educational routine has changed, students may need additional academic support. As students recalibrate to primarily communicating with teachers, students, and friends virtually, students may feel disconnected and need social support. The Counseling Department will continue to focus on and provide support in congruence with the department's mission, philosophy, and goals, as outlined on the last page of this document. In addition, the counselors will adhere to the [ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counseling](#).

Virtual Counseling Practices

Brownell Talbot Counseling Department will be available to support the emotional and academic needs of our students, from a distance. In addition, the college counselors will continue to provide college guidance. To best address the concerns of our school community, the following document will clearly outline the Virtual Counseling practices and procedures being implemented by the Brownell Talbot Counseling Department.

Scheduling a Meeting

Mrs. Katie Tessin, school counselor, will continue to work with students and families in Early Years and kindergarten through grade 8. Ms. Miranda McOsker, long-term substitute counselor, and Mrs. Stacey Evert, director of college counseling and guidance, will provide support to students and families in grades 9-12. Juniors and seniors have an assigned counselor and students and families in grades 9 and 10 should reach out to both counselors to schedule a meeting, which will be coordinated with one counselor based on availability. As we adapt to virtual learning, counselors may offer specific office hours in addition to the times already shared through Brownell Talbot's Distance Learning Plan.

To schedule a virtual counselor meeting, please send the counselor(s) an email with the subject line: *Meeting Request*. In the body of your email, please share the nature of your request as well as a few dates/times you are available throughout the week. Students and/or parents can email to request a meeting. If there is a student or family need that may require a more immediate response by a counselor, please email and include your phone number. The counselors hope to

reply via email to a meeting request within 24 hours of the initial email. If you do not receive a response within 24 hours, please feel free to reach out again.

Virtual Counseling Meetings

The Brownell Talbot Counseling Department uses Zoom to conduct virtual counseling meetings, as well as small groups and classes. When counselors schedule a meeting, the counselor will share a link to participate in the meeting via email.

Confidentiality

Counselors will conduct virtual counseling meetings and classes from home. Although Brownell Talbot counselors strive to enforce best practices while working from home, we must also be transparent with the potential limitations of virtual counseling, so that all students and parents enter into a virtual counseling meeting fully informed.

Counselors will establish a dedicated workspace from which to conduct virtual counseling sessions. During this time, counselors may be working from home alongside spouses, children, family members, and pets. Although counselors will surely safeguard in-home work spaces as best as possible, and will communicate the workspace environment needs to our families, we simply cannot guarantee a 100% confidential workspace, free of minor disruptions during classes, small groups, or individual meetings. Subsequently, we ask the Brownell Talbot community for trust in our department's efforts to provide quality services to the best of our ability, understanding that minor disruptions may occur while working from our personal spaces, and collaborative flexibility in navigating such potential complications during virtual counseling meetings and small groups.

Please note, Middle and Upper School classes will be recorded through Zoom and stored on the counselor's desktop. Small group and individual meetings will not be recorded. Any exception to this policy will be clarified at the beginning of the meeting. In addition, please refer to the [Zoom's FERPA Compliance](#) for more information on efforts to protect our students' educational records and confidentiality.

During Virtual Counseling sessions, the Brownell Talbot Counseling Department will continue to enforce our regular policies concerning student confidentiality, as outlined in the [ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counseling](#).

Brownell Talbot Counseling Department Mission

The Brownell Talbot Counseling Department fosters a community of inclusivity and supports students throughout the process of self-discovery.

Brownell Talbot Counseling Department Philosophy

We believe in each student's unique and intrinsic self-worth and in the importance of educating the whole child. We value positive relationships, mutual trust and respect, and advocacy for the best interest of each student.

Brownell Talbot Counseling Department Goals

- Provide tools to nurture emotional intelligence.
- Create opportunities for students to define what success means to them, form their future goals, and identify steps to achieve those goals.
- Foster an environment where it is safe to succeed as well as fail.
- Build collaborative relationships with students, families, teachers, and administration.
- Educate all constituents about the interconnectedness of each student's academic, social/emotional, and extracurricular life.