

**Escambia County School District
75 North Pace Blvd
Pensacola, FL 32505**

INFORMED CONSENT SCHOOL-BASED COUNSELING

COUNSELING is a confidential process designed to help your child address their concerns, come to a greater understanding of themselves, and learn effective personal and interpersonal coping strategies. It involves a relationship between your child and a trained therapist who has the desire and willingness to help your child accomplish their individual goals. Counseling involves sharing sensitive, personal, and private information that may at times be distressing. During the course of counseling, there may be periods of increased anxiety or confusion for your child. The outcome of counseling is often positive; however, the level of satisfaction for any individual is not predictable. ECSD mental health counselors encourage your participation in the counseling process as they support your child on the path to wellness. Please be aware that ECSD mental health counselors only work during the traditional 10-month academic year. All efforts will be made to bring your child's treatment to a close prior to the end of the school year. If continued therapeutic services are required, the appropriate mental health referral will be made.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All interactions with Escambia County Schools Counseling Services, including scheduling of or attendance at appointments, content of your sessions, progress in counseling, and your records are confidential. No record of counseling is contained in any academic, educational, or job placement file. You may request in writing that the counseling staff release specific information about your child's counseling to persons you designate. I am aware and agree to my child receiving services using telecounseling.

EXCEPTIONS TO CONFIDENTIALITY:

- The counseling staff works as a team. Your child's therapist may consult with other counseling staff to provide the best possible care. These consultations are for professional and training purposes.
- If there is evidence of clear and imminent danger of harm to self and/or others, a therapist is legally required to report this information to the authorities responsible for ensuring safety.
- Florida State Law requires staff of Escambia County Schools notify a student's parent or guardian if there is a change in the student's services or monitoring related to the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being and the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for the student.
- Florida State Law requires staff of Escambia County Schools who learn of, or strongly suspect, physical or sexual abuse or neglect of any person under 18 years of age must report this information to county child protection services.
- A court order, issued by a judge, may require the Escambia County Schools Counseling Services staff to release information contained in records and/or require a therapist to testify in a court hearing.

There is no fee for counseling services. If you are referred off campus to health, mental health, or substance abuse professionals you are responsible for their charges.

I have read and discussed any questions I may have about the above information with my child's therapist. I understand the risks and benefits of counseling, the nature and limits of confidentiality, and what is expected of my child for school-based counseling. Please refer to the ECSD Rights and Responsibilities Handbook located on the ECSD website for a listing of other local community-based behavioral health services providers.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Signature of Therapist

Date