

## **Elementary School Counseling – Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How can the school counselor help my child?**

School counselors support students with social-emotional concerns such as grief, divorce, friendship challenges, and stress. They also assist with behavioral concerns and academic struggles. Counselors help students develop coping skills, self-regulation strategies, problem-solving skills, and emotional awareness.

### **How do students see the school counselor?**

All students work with the school counselor through classroom lessons and school-wide supports. For individual needs, students may be referred by teachers, administrators, or parents. Students may also request to see the counselor and often “check in” when they need support.

### **Is what my child says confidential?**

Conversations with the school counselor are private. However, confidentiality cannot be maintained if a student shares information about safety concerns, abuse, or neglect, as counselors are required to follow mandatory reporting laws. Counselors strive to build trust with students while also keeping parents informed of significant concerns.

### **Will I be notified if my child meets with the counselor?**

For brief, one-time check-ins, parents may not always be notified. However, if a student is participating in ongoing or frequent counseling sessions, parents will be contacted and consent will be obtained.

### **What topics are addressed in counseling groups?**

Small counseling groups may focus on topics such as social skills, friendship, positive behavior, anger management, study skills, and adjusting to family changes.

### **Is school counseling the same as therapy?**

No. School counseling is short-term, solution-focused, and educational in nature. If a student needs more intensive or long-term support, the school counselor can help families connect with community mental health providers or other supportive services.

### **Additional Supports Provided by our TASD School Counselors**

In addition to the services listed above, school counselors provide support in several other areas that contribute to students’ overall well-being and success in school. Counselors help students develop goal-setting and decision-making skills, build resilience, improve communication and conflict-resolution skills, and adjust to school transitions such as moving between grade levels or entering a new school. They may also assist students with organization and time-management strategies, peer relationship challenges, and building a positive school experience. School counselors collaborate with teachers, administrators, and families to ensure students receive the support they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

### **What is an elementary school counselor?**

Elementary school counselors are qualified to address all students' academic, career and social/emotional needs while serving to remove barriers for student success. Additionally, we work with all educational team members, including: administrators, teachers, parents, and community partners to ensure the success of students. The overall mission of a School Counselor is to provide a supportive and safe environment in which students can learn, succeed and flourish.

### **What do elementary counselors do?**

Elementary counselors deliver classroom lessons, individual counseling, provide small group counseling, responsive services, make referrals to outside agencies and crisis interventions. In addition, the school counselors work with parents, teachers, and students to help make their year successful.

### **How does counseling actually happen?**

Students can ask a teacher and request to speak to a counselor, if one is available. Oftentimes though, students are seen due to parent or teacher referral. Other times, students have questions or concerns that can be addressed easily by talking about what happened and brainstorm ways to handle similar situations in a more positive manner.

If the student starts being seen on a regular basis, parents will be notified. If it is determined that a student can benefit from outside counseling or alternative interventions, the counselor will notify parents and help support them with community resources.

### **My child is being bullied at school, what should I do?**

Listen to your child and praise them for telling a trusted adult. To communicate your concern, please contact your child's school directly. Each school will be able to assist in determining the cause, severity, and changes necessary so all students feel supported and safe. School counselors are available to provide support and strategies for dealing with bullying incidents within the school setting.

### **How do school counselors help with mental health?**

School counselors play an important role in supporting student mental health by providing both direct services and connecting students to additional resources when needed. They work with students individually and in groups to address concerns such as anxiety, depression, stress,

grief, peer conflict, and family challenges. Through these interactions, counselors help students develop coping strategies, improve emotional regulation, and build problem-solving skills.

They also take a proactive approach by delivering classroom lessons and school-wide programs that focus on social-emotional learning, resilience, and healthy decision-making. This helps prevent issues from escalating and promotes a positive school climate.

In addition, school counselors collaborate with teachers, administrators, and families to better understand student needs and create supportive plans. When a student requires more intensive or ongoing mental health support, counselors help connect families with outside providers such as therapists, community agencies, or school-based mental health services. They may also assist with crisis response and ensure students have a safety plan when needed.

Overall, school counselors serve as a key link between students, families, the school, and mental health resources—helping ensure students feel supported, understood, and equipped to succeed both academically and emotionally.

### **How do I get connected to community supports or services?**

If your child needs extra support—social, emotional, or mental health—here’s how to get connected:

1. Talk to the School Counselor -Share your concerns. Counselors can help guide you and make referrals to trusted providers.
2. Reach out to the Titusville Area School District Community Resource Coordinator, Courtney Master at 814-657-3226 or by email: [cmaster@gorockets.org](mailto:cmaster@gorockets.org) or [cmaster@fscas.org](mailto:cmaster@fscas.org)
3. Use School Partnerships-Our district works with local mental health clinics and family support agencies. Some services may be available on-site or at no cost.
4. Access Local Resources-Community organizations, health departments, and children’s services offer counseling, support groups, and programs for families.
5. Follow Up-Stay in touch with the counselor and providers to make sure your child is getting the support they need.

## How to Access School Counseling Services

Parents or guardians who have concerns about their child’s academic, social, or emotional well-being may contact the school counselor directly by phone or email to discuss available supports or request services.

Building(s)	School Counselor(s)	Phone: 814-827-2715
Early Childhood Learning Center (ECLC) & Hydetown Elementary School	Mrs. Tara Nichols tnichols@gorockets.org	ECLC Extension <b>7430</b>  Hydetown Extension <b>4430</b>
Main Street Elementary & Pleasantville Elementary School	Mr. Jeff Ledebur jledebur@gorockets.org	Main Street Extension <b>5314</b>  Pleasantville Extension <b>6430</b>
Elementary Social Worker	Mrs. Gretchen Howard	Main Street Elementary Extension <b>5400</b>  Hydetown Elementary Extension <b>4400</b>  Pleasantville Elementary Extension <b>6400</b>

### School Counseling Hot Topics

#### School Transitions in TASD

In the **Titusville Area School District**, two major school transitions can be exciting but sometimes stressful for young students:

1. Moving to a new building for **Grade 1**
2. Moving to **middle school in Grade 6**

Our school counseling department plans activities to support students during these transitions and help them feel confident and prepared.

## Transition to Grade 1

Kindergarten students are assigned to their elementary school building **before the end of the school year**. Students will be taken by school bus to visit their new school, where they can:

- Tour the building
- Meet the principal
- Meet the first grade teachers

These visits help students become familiar with their new environment and feel more comfortable before the school year begins.

## Transition to Middle School

Fifth grade students begin preparing for middle school in the **spring**, working closely with their school counselor. Activities include:

- Completing a survey about their interests and concerns
- Learning how to use a locker “lock”
- Having conversations about the changes ahead

Students will also attend a **“Move Up Day”**, where they will:

- Tour the middle school
- Meet the principals and counselors
- Participate in other transition activities

## How Parents Can Help

Parents and guardians play a key role in easing transition anxiety. You can support your child by:

- Talking openly about the upcoming changes
- Establishing routines at home
- Promoting independence in daily tasks
- Encouraging positive attitudes toward meeting new people

These steps help children feel more confident, excited, and ready for a smooth transition to their next school experience.

## Elementary Students and Social Media

Social media includes traditional platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, as well as video-based platforms like YouTube and TikTok. While social media can offer some benefits, research shows it can also increase the risk of mental health concerns for children. Every child is different, but general guidelines for social media use by age are:

- **Preschool:** Limit non-educational screen time, avoid exposure to social media, and co-watch any content your child views.
- **Elementary:** Keep social media use limited, begin discussions about online safety, and continue co-watching content.
- **Tweens:** Consider requests for social media access based on your child's maturity. Develop a family plan to set clear boundaries and rules, and monitor usage.

Talking openly as a family about responsible social media use is essential. Teaching children about the risks of posting, messaging, and interacting online helps them navigate these platforms safely as they grow.