

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education
Upper Marlboro, Maryland

5159
Policy No.

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

STUDENTS

Telehealth

I. POLICY STATEMENT

- A. The Prince George's County Board of Education (Board) believes that all students can reach full potential and succeed in school, regardless of personal characteristics, including race, color, national origin, citizenship status, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or age.
- B. The Board is committed to providing equitable access for secondary school students to participate in telehealth appointments in the school setting. Offering the opportunity for telehealth appointments in the school setting is intended to improve access by ensuring students can receive timely medical consultations without leaving school, thus reducing absenteeism and supporting mental health by providing easier access to mental health services.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide the framework for providing secondary school students with access to telehealth appointments within the school setting.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Eligible student* – A student who has the same capacity as an adult to consent to medical or dental treatment if the student is:
 - 1. Married;
 - 2. The parent of a child; or
 - 3. Is living separate and apart from the student's parent (s) whether with or without consent of the student's parent(s); and
 - 4. Is self-supporting, regardless of the source of the student's income.

B. *Parent* – Any one of the following individuals who are legally responsible for a student:

1. Biological parent – a natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated.
2. Adoptive parent – a person who has legally adopted the student and whose parental rights have not been terminated.
3. Custodian – a person or agency appointed by a court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and privileges.
4. Guardian – a person who has been placed by a court in charge of the affairs of the student and granted parental rights and privileges.
5. Caregiver – an adult resident of Prince George's County who exercises care, custody or control over the student, but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian.
6. Foster parent – an adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in their home by a State agency or a licensed child placement as provided by Section 5-507 of the Family Law Article.

C. *School/practitioner-initiated telehealth* – Telehealth services between a eligible student and a health care practitioner external to a school when the school system has a formal agreement with the health care practitioner to provide health care services to its students.

D. *Telehealth* – A mode of delivering health care services through the use of telecommunications technologies by a health care practitioner to a patient at a different physical location than the health care practitioner.

IV. STANDARDS

A. Equity and Prioritization of Access to Telehealth Appointments

1. The Superintendent/designee shall collaborate with the Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) nursing staff representatives in the development of a plan which includes the following:
 - a. Outline a process for how middle and high school students may register to participate in telehealth appointments in the school.
 - b. Identify how each middle and high school will provide students with access to appointment times, space, and scheduling for school/practitioner-initiated telehealth appointments. Additionally, parameters shall be provided limiting the number of appointment times per student to ensure equitable access by all students.

- c. Offer same access to telehealth appointments for all students regardless of disability status and provide modifications to the process where needed, to ensure that students with disabilities have the same access to telehealth appointments as other students.
- d. Develop strategies to address the impact of acute and ongoing appointments on educational outcomes, school culture and classroom instruction.

B. Confidentiality

- 1. The location chosen and technology utilized in the schools for students to participate in telehealth sessions shall provide privacy and allow, to the greatest extent possible, for a confidential and secure conversation between a health care provider and a student.
- 2. The provision of telehealth services shall comply with all HIPAA and FERPA requirements and patient information shall only be shared with PGCPS staff upon written informed consent from the parent or eligible student.

C. Parental and Eligible Student Informed Consent

- 1. Except as otherwise permitted by §20-104 of the Health General Article, Annotated Code of Maryland regarding minor consent for specific health services, written informed consent from the parent will be obtained prior to the initiation of any telehealth services for students.
- 2. The consent shall include an understanding of the services being provided, the purpose of telehealth, the technology used, and potential risks and benefits.

D. Communication and Coordination of Services

- 1. The Superintendent/designee shall develop a communication plan between the parents, students and staff regarding the process for scheduling, advance notice of appointments, and compliance with applicable PGCPS administrative procedures.
- 2. The Superintendent/designee shall include in the communication plan procedures for communicating regularly with parents about the services being provided, the student's progress, and any recommendations made by the telehealth providers. (This includes informing parents of changes to services or follow-up actions.)

E. In-Person Support Protocols

- 1. The Superintendent/designee shall develop protocols related to transitions from the telehealth appointment that support student needs and minimize classroom disruptions, and a plan for students who are unable to transition independently or who

face challenges returning to the classroom.

2. The Superintendent/designee shall ensure that each school develops a plan for flexible scheduling, identifying any time limits or ranges of time for telehealth appointments, strategies addressing make-up work that are in alignment with Board Policy 5113, and parent involvement in helping to ensure that students are caught up on missed instruction.

F. Provision of Services

1. The Superintendent/designee should consider the feasibility of designating a space in each middle and high school that is quiet, private and confidential, has internet access, provides a seating option, a nearby electrical outlet and a flat surface to accommodate placement of a laptop or similar device, and is not a bathroom or closet.
2. The Superintendent/designee shall ensure all school devices used for telehealth services comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the school's network infrastructure is equipped with robust firewall protections and secure, encrypted connections.
3. The Superintendent/designee shall ensure that each middle and high school's identified telehealth space is accessible to all students, including those with a disability.

V. IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The Superintendent is directed to develop an administrative procedure to implement this policy. The administrative procedure shall include:
 1. provisions on how PGCPS staff, parents, and students are made aware of this telehealth policy and its objectives and requirements; and
 2. a requirement that this telehealth policy be published in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.

VI. REFERENCES

A. Legal

20 USC § 1232g (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA))
Pub. L. 104-191 (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA))
MD. CODE ANN., EDUC. § 4-143
MD. CODE ANN., Health General Article §20-104

B. Other Board Policies

BP 0116 – Wellness, Nutrition, and Physical Activity
BP 5113 – Student Attendance, Absence, and Truancy

C. Superintendent's Administrative Procedures

AP 0116 – Health and Wellness
AP 5113 – Student Attendance, Absence, and Truancy

D. Other

Guidelines for the Availability for Student Participation in Telehealth Appointment in Secondary Schools, State Superintendent Guidance, December 2024, Maryland State Department of Education and Maryland Department of Health

VII. HISTORY

Policy Adopted – 12/18/25