

Fort Bend ISD Continuing the Conversation FAQ

The safety of our students is our top priority. Fort Bend ISD works each day to keep students and teachers safe so that they can build and maintain a thriving learning environment. This FAQ was developed based on questions received in the spring of 2018 and will continue to be updated.

Resources for Students and Staff

What tools are available for students who wish to report things that make them uncomfortable?

If students are not comfortable about speaking up about an issue in person with a counselor, teacher, or administrator, there are several tools for them to make reports. For bullying they can use our Let's Talk Bullying platform to make anonymous reports as the victim or bystander observing it with someone else. Students can also use the Student Crime Stoppers Hotline to report any suspicious or illegal activities that take place on school property. The number for the hotline is 281-491-8477 (TIPS). All calls remain anonymous. Finally, TalkLine is the District's confidential helpline dedicated to the needs of secondary students and elementary students in grades 3-5. Students can call TalkLine for a variety of reasons including: mental health concerns such as depression or suicidal thoughts and issues such as bullying, harassment, arguments, or family problems. The number for TalkLine is 281-240-8255 (TALK). Students can call this number 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Students often speak about the amount of pressure they face. What resources are available to reduce stress and pressure in students?

Students should see their school counselor if they are overwhelmed with stress or looking for strategies to reduce pressure and anxiety. If necessary, counselors can also work with parents to set up additional support and activities outside of school to help with stress. Counselors facilitate guidance lessons at all levels to equip students with stress management and conflict resolution skills. Finally, FBISD's Speak Up program is providing campuses with mental wellness activities next school year, 2018-19, due to the need of students to have additional mental wellness support at school.

Are teachers and administrators trained for ways to identify and deal with students' mental health issues?

Yes, teachers, campus administrators, nurses, counselors, and law enforcement officers participated in mental health awareness and suicide prevention training as part of the annual staff training. School counselors are available at campuses to support students in need, and the training assists teachers with the skills in understanding risk factors and warning signs so they are better equipped to know when to alert the school counselor. In addition, all

counselors and social workers participated in an eight-hour Mental Health First Aid-Youth training delivered through Texana. Each year, our counselors, social workers, and nurses receive training in our district mental health crisis response procedures.

What is the process for a student to see a counselor? How often can students see a counselor?

School counselors are specially trained educators who help all students in the areas of academic achievement, career development, and social/emotional development. School counselors serve a vital role in maximizing student success.

The process to see a counselor includes teacher referral, parent referral, administrator referral and student self-referral. Most students self-refer.

The self-referral process may vary slightly from campus to campus. Generally, elementary students make the request to see their counselor through their teacher. In middle school and high school, students may complete an appointment request online or complete a form in the counselors' office. Students may also come by the counselors' office to request a drop-in visit. This is especially important for students who are experiencing a crisis. In this case, it is critical for the student to communicate the need to see a counselor ASAP.

In addition to student-initiated visits, counselors schedule appointments with students to review a variety of items including, but not limited to, academic progress, career interests, and post-secondary plans. Counselors also present lessons to students in classrooms or deliver large group presentations on topics affecting all students.

How often can students see a counselor?

There is no specific limit to how many times a student may see a counselor. How often a student meets with a counselor depends on the issue. Some concerns may be taken care of in a one-time meeting, while others may require regular meetings over a period of time. If a student's present concerns are beyond the scope of services school counselors may provide, then the counselor may refer a student to an outside agency.

Building Security

Fort Bend ISD conducts safety drills for emergencies, during the school day. What happens when an emergency takes place during transitions, outclass periods, lunch and recess?

Each campus is responsible for conducting their safety drills. Campus administrators are encouraged to conduct drills at times during the school day to include transition periods and lunches. Should an emergency arise during a time when students are out of class, they should still hear one of the four Standard Response Protocol commands and react accordingly. If it is a

lock down situation, that will likely mean that they will go into a secure room that is not their regular classroom.

Vestibules are placed at the front of each school building. How are side and rear windows and doors kept secure?

Each Campus Emergency Operations Plan calls for all exterior doors to remain locked during the school day. The exception is at the secondary level where students may transition from the main building to an out building for class. During those times, an adult employee is expected to maintain visibility at the open door, monitoring those coming into the school to ensure that all visitors go through the front door at the security vestibule. If an unauthorized visitor approaches the door, the adult should call the front office via their school radio and call for a lock down, while giving a description of the person.

Are there any plans to install metal detectors in schools?

As the District seeks to develop and implement a safety plan, the Community Safety Advisory Committee will be discussing the use of metal detectors in detail and will decide if the addition is a good option for FBISD. As part of any plan to implement safety measures in FBISD, the need for consistency is vital. Should the option be implemented, the metal detectors would be spread across all 25 of the District's secondary campuses. In addition to the devices, additional staff and/or training would also be needed for proper utilization of the detectors.

Several campuses have portable buildings. How is security addressed for students in these buildings?

Students in portable buildings practice the same emergency drills as those inside the building. Like classroom doors inside of school buildings, doors for these buildings remain locked and windows have obstructed views.

Each middle and high school has a police officer on campus throughout the day. Are there plans to have officers at each of the elementary schools?

This is another topic being discussed by the Community Safety Advisory Committee. Though there is not currently a police officer stationed at each elementary school, assigned officers rotate between a set of campuses within a close proximity. The committee is working to determine whether staffing levels should be changed regarding how police officers serve elementary schools.

There is national conversation around proposals to arm teachers in school. Where does Fort Bend ISD stand on this issue?

Much attention has been given to this topic as it continues to make national news, and FBISD remains committed to considering all ideas in order to keep students safe. Like all suggestions

and ideas, the District's Community Safety Advisory Committee will be discussing this option. The committee will carefully examine and weigh each option so that whatever steps are taken reflect what is in the best interest of the students and staff as they continue the learning process.