

Telepractice Advice for Students and their Families

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board supports the [Ministerial Order](#) as an effort to contain the spread of COVID-19. Many of HWDSB's regulated health professionals, or staff working under their supervision, are starting to offer telepractice appointments to students. Special education services may also be provided by telepractice. Telepractice may include a videoconference or phone call between a staff member, parent/guardian, and student. **Parents/guardians and students who wish to continue receiving support while school facilities are closed will be asked to consent to services via telepractice.** Once consent is provided, staff will help you identify whether a videoconference or phone call is appropriate and schedule an appointment time by email or text message. The Privacy Office created this resource guide in collaboration with service managers to help families ensure students have positive, secure telepractice sessions.

MS Teams is our platform for videoconferencing!

Staff will send you a link by email to join a telepractice session using MS Teams.

Why can't I use another app? Free apps often trade privacy and information security for convenience and cost savings. These programs may sell contact information to advertisers, or worse, bad actors who create scams to try to trick victims into downloading malware, giving up passwords, or other fraudulent activities. Our team's professional regulations prevent us from using other applications.

Questions? Contact Christi Garneau, Privacy & Information Management Officer, at cgarneau@hwdsb.on.ca

Technical

Connections, Devices, and Privacy

- ⇒ Videoconferencing needs about the same amount of bandwidth as watching a YouTube video. If your internet connection does not support this, a phone call may be a better option for your family.
- ⇒ Be mindful of potential data overages or running out of minutes if using a cell phone.
- ⇒ Choose a secure device with updated software, connected to a password-protected wireless network to limit the risk of a privacy breach.



Setting Up

Rooms, Distractions, Resources

- ⇒ Staff will recommend the best place of a session depending on the service provided. For example, counselling should happen in a quiet, private room whereas working with a Speech Language Pathologist may be more effective around your kitchen table.
- ⇒ Staff will let you know if your student needs supplies like paper, pencil, textbook, etc. so these can be ready at the start of the session.
- ⇒ If possible, remove distractions such as toys, food, pets, and siblings from the immediate area to help your student focus.

Next Steps

Following Up, Asking Questions, Raising Concerns

- ⇒ We recognize these are exceptional circumstances and ask for families patience and understanding as we adapt our practices to support students. Please reach out to your service provider directly if you have questions or concerns about your student's supports during this time.