

## **What Schools and Districts Should Do If They Are Unable to Make Contact with a Student for Over a Week**

The health and wellness of students is our top priority and that includes their social, emotional, and physical health. It is critical that teachers have frequent contact with every student during the COVID-19 suspension of in-person instruction to ensure someone is checking in on them. Teachers can contact students through a variety of means – Zoom™, email, phone calls, text messages, and the mail. If a teacher is unable to make contact with a student for over a week, they should attempt to make contact with their parent or guardian. If the wellbeing of a student is still unknown, schools and districts should do everything possible to conduct a wellness check visit. Before and during this visit, the following steps should be taken:

- Attempt to contact student, as well as parent or guardian to notify them of the visit. When possible, the individual(s) contacting the student, parent, or guardian should do so in the native language of the family. If contact is made with the family, it must be stressed to the family that the purpose of the visit is to ensure the physical and mental wellbeing of the student and is not regarding immigration status or other legal issues.
- Any individual(s) making a home visit should wear face coverings while visiting. Face coverings may include masks, bandanas, or any other object that covers the nose and mouth. Individuals who are ill may not conduct wellness visits.
- Illinois Department of Public Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations on social distancing must be followed.
- If contact is made, the individual(s) making contact should inquire about why the student has not been in contact and determine what resources and supports they may need i.e. technology, food, mental health resources, etc.
- The individual(s) making a wellness check should verify the best contact information for the student, as well as parent or guardian to set up a follow up call to help get student back on track.
- Prior to leaving, the individual(s) making a wellness check should reassure the student and/or parent or guardian that they are there to support and assist them during these unprecedented times.

We must recognize that student wellbeing extends beyond learning and nutrition; we must also focus on the mental/emotional wellbeing of our students. For more information about the resources available, please visit [www.isbe.net/mentalhealth](http://www.isbe.net/mentalhealth). Additionally, all educators are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. If child abuse or neglect is suspected, state law requires that teachers, school personnel, child care workers, educational advocates assigned to a child pursuant to the School Code, and truancy officers, among others, report immediately to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services child abuse hotline: 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-

800- 252-2873). More information about what constitutes suspicions of child abuse and neglect can be found in the manual for mandated reporters:

[www2.illinois.gov/dcf/safekids/reporting/Documents/cfs\\_1050-21\\_mandated\\_reporter\\_manual.pdf](http://www2.illinois.gov/dcf/safekids/reporting/Documents/cfs_1050-21_mandated_reporter_manual.pdf).

If there is any reason to be concerned about the imminent safety of a student, the local police department should be contacted.