

FAQs

1. How many times can the liaison reach out to a family?
 - a. With signed school SAP permission, the standard for all liaisons is that they attempt to contact the parent/guardian 3 times. If they are not successful, they mail a no contact letter home. In many circumstances the liaisons go above and beyond this 3-contact attempt standard however it is on a case-by-case basis and will vary by family. Extra support to contact the family may be requested by the liaison to facilitate that contact. We also must keep in mind SAP is a voluntary program and families who initially deny will still also receive a 30 day follow up phone call.
2. How is the family made aware that the liaison will be contacting them?
 - a. When the core team brings up a referral and it is decided that the liaison will assess the student, the SAP Team case manager or other district core team member will be responsible for contacting the family to get the signed SAP permission. That person should also explain SAP and that the liaison can contact them to discuss the assessment and SAP further. The liaison cannot contact a family without the signed SAP permission in hand however, a school can provide the family with the SAP Liaison's information for the family to reach out.
3. What can the liaison do for homeless students as identified by the district?
 - a. A signed SAP permission from parents/guardians must still be obtained in those situations for a liaison to assess in school. If a student is truly homeless and living in a shelter or on the street, the liaison can work with the county and or Westmoreland County Children's Bureau to determine if supports can be provided. Each case will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Keep in mind, liaisons can always provide resources to the counselor to assist if there is no parent/guardian to sign a SAP permission.
4. What about shared custody cases?
 - a. Best practice states there should be a signed SAP permission from each parent if they are separated or divorced and share legal custody. A copy of any PFA or custody documents should be provided to the liaison as well when possible. If there is shared legal custody it is best practice to try and engage both parents. In cases of foster families or

students in the custody of the children's bureau, the school should provide the caseworker information to the liaison and they will work with the WCCB caseworker to have them complete the assessment and all necessary paperwork. Any circumstances outside of these examples will be addressed on a case by case basis by their supervisor.

5. What can a liaison do for families who decline or do not want to sign a SAP permission?
 - a. First and foremost, we must recognize that SAP is a voluntary program. Even if a SAP referral is made to the team, the assessment piece and following through with recommendations is voluntary. Additionally, SAP Liaisons can still be utilized as a resource for their districts and the counselors even if the parent declines their assessment or the parent does not sign the SAP permission. Liaisons can provide their counselors with resources to provide to the family or can provide them if requested by the family.
6. What about families that do not have transportation?
 - a. There is an agency vehicle that is available to all SAP liaisons to transport families to the school or to a community site to complete the intake. Liaisons will accommodate meeting with families in the school or community but do not go into the home.
7. How does this model change for disciplinary action?
 - a. SAP Liaison assessments are not utilized for disciplinary matters. The liaisons cannot force the family to have an assessment nor can they force a family to follow through with recommendations. SAP and mental health services are all voluntary. If a district policy states a referral to SAP must be made, please remember a referral to the core team is different and can include in-school supports but the liaison piece cannot be mandatory. If it is a disciplinary D&A referral those are submitted directly to Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Case Management from the district.
8. What different types of services can the liaison refer to?
 - a. The liaison will refer to the appropriate level of care based on the information provided by the family during the assessment which alleviates the district from any misappropriated service referrals or litigation. This is why it is best practice to discuss and offer SAP to parents and not individual services by name. They will refer to and

complete the paperwork for any case referrals they can directly, and otherwise provide families resources or directories to obtain services they cannot. Liaisons will also refer parents to take students to the inpatient unit at the hospital when necessary. Liaisons also share a wealth of knowledge for food pantries, church community resources, support groups, utility assistance and other necessary resources. SAP Liaisons regularly work with providers in the community to have the most up-to-date information on resources and programming that may benefit families in the county.

9. How long does the process take?

- a. SAP is not a crisis resolution process. A student being discussed in a meeting and then referred with appropriate permission can take a few weeks depending on the frequency of SAP meetings and the family returning signed permission. Once the liaisons receive this permission, their initial 3 contact attempts must be within a 5-day period. If the family is willing to schedule, the liaisons makes all efforts to do so as soon as possible but must accommodate the families' schedules. The assessment itself can take anywhere from 45 minutes to two hours depending on the family and circumstances.

10. Can I have a copy of the assessment?

- a. Unfortunately no. The SAP assessment is not available to teams or detailed information. The best practice guidelines state that liaisons are to give recommendations only. If there is detailed information that would be beneficial for the school to know, liaisons ask parents if they can share with the team or encourage them to share themselves.