



To: School Superintendents, Charter School and Renaissance School Project
Lead Persons, Administrators of Nonpublic Schools

Route to: Elementary, Middle and High School Principals, Teachers, School Nurses,
School Counselors

From: Christine Norbut Beyer, Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Children and Families

Date: May 12, 2020

Last week, Governor Murphy and the Department of Education advised that schools will remain closed through the end of the 2019-2020 school year and that students will continue with distance learning.

While we understand that this difficult decision was made to ensure the continued safety and wellbeing of students and educators across the state, we know that for many youth, school provides a social connection and support system that includes friends, educators, social workers, coaches and mentors.

For them, [social distancing can create a feeling of social isolation](#). As the weeks and months of physical separation continue, children and youth may experience heightened anxiety and distress. This can be expected. But if certain behaviors escalate or last for an extended period, it may be time to recommend the family get some help.

If, during your remote learning interactions, or conversations with your students' families, you believe a child to be in crisis, please ask the parents to call the NJ [Children's System of Care](#) at 1-877-652-7624.

Signs of a behavioral health problem [may include](#) prolonged and/or recurring:

- opposition and aggression
- disrespect and property damage
- anxiety or depression
- lying and fighting
- stealing or substance use
- running away or self-harm

The NJ DCF thanks you for your continued vigilance and dedication to your students and to all children in New Jersey. For more resources relevant to children and families, please check the [DCF COVID-19 publications page](#).