

PROCEDURES FOR PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

1. The following procedures apply for determining whether a parental notification is required by [Va. Code § 23.1-1303\(B\)\(5\)](#) when a student seeks mental health treatment at the [University Student Health Services \(SHS\)](#) or [Counseling and Psychological Services Center \(CAPS\)](#).
 - a. CAPS or SHS professional staff providing treatment to the student are responsible for determining whether there exists a substantial likelihood that, as a result of mental illness, the student will, in the near future, (1) cause serious harm to themselves or others as evidenced by recent behavior or other relevant information or (2) suffer serious harm due to a lack of capacity to protect themselves or to provide for basic human needs. They are also responsible for determining whether an exception to required parental notification applies (see (i)).
 - b. In making the assessment, CAPS or SHS professional staff shall consider the totality of the circumstances including recent behavior and other relevant information.
 - c. If CAPS or SHS professional staff determine that a student meets the criteria for a required parental notification, and assuming the student is able to accurately understand communication from CAPS and/or SHS staff, the student will be informed that their behavior is consistent with criteria outlined by law for parental notification and that such notification will be made by university officials. The student will also be informed that the university's standard parental notification procedure entails communication with parents by the Dean of Students (or the Dean's designee).
 - d. Although a release is not required, CAPS and/or SHS may seek to obtain one in order to aid in preserving the helping relationship.
 - e. If the student is not able to accurately comprehend communication due to their mental condition, then the CAPS or SHS professional staff shall proceed with the process for parental notification without providing the information to the student listed in (c).
 - f. CAPS and/or SHS staff will inform the Dean of Students (or the Dean's designee) about the specific behaviors which meet criteria for required parental notification. The Dean of Students (or the Dean's designee) will proceed accordingly by providing the required parental notification.
 - g. The standard content conveyed to a student's parents shall reflect 1) a description of student's behaviors that meet criteria for parental notification and 2) a description of actions that the university is taking to address risks posed by the student's behaviors.
 - h. CAPS and/or SHS staff will make notations in the student's counseling and/or medical record reflecting 1) specific behaviors which meet criteria for parental notification, 2) the specific process of parental notification that has been selected, 3) the rationale for the selection of said process and 4) the date and time that such responsibility for notification has been discharged to the Dean of Students.
 - i. If the CAPS and/or SHS professional staff treating the student have made a part of the student's record a written statement that, in the exercise of their professional judgment, the notification would be reasonably likely to cause substantial harm to the student or another person, parental notification is not required. If such a

determination is made as to a student, such determination shall be noted in the student's medical and/or psychological record with clear indication of the anticipated harm that would be caused as a result of parental notification.

- j. With any instances of exception to the parental notification requirement, the Dean of Students (or the Dean's designee) shall be informed by CAPS and/or SHS staff of the student's identity, the specific behaviors that meet criteria for parental notification and the determination of the exception to the notification requirement.
2. The Dean of Students (or designee) also has the discretion to make parental notifications even if not required by [Va. Code § 23.1-1303\(B\)\(5\)](#), if such notifications are otherwise permitted by FERPA.
 - a. The Dean of Students (or designee) has the discretion to make parental notifications pursuant to [34 C.F.R. § 99.31\(10\)](#) and [§ 99.36](#) in cases of health and safety emergencies. In making a determination regarding parental notification pertaining to a threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals, the University may take into account the totality of the circumstances. If the University determines that there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals, it may disclose information from education records to any person (including, but not limited to an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or a guardian) whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.
 - b. Parental notification will be made if the student is being transported to a hospital from a George Mason University campus by University Police/emergency health professionals for a medical concern and is unconscious or unable to remain conscious at the time of transport.
 - c. As permitted by [34 C.F.R. § 99.31\(15\)](#), parental notifications may also be made according to the following procedure when a student is determined to have committed a disciplinary violation regarding the possession or use of alcohol or a controlled substance (AOD) and the student is under the age of 21 at the time of the disclosure to the parent.
 - i. The Assistant Dean/Director of the Office of Student Conduct (or designee) is responsible for parental notifications in these circumstances.
 - ii. Parental notification will typically be made for second or subsequent AOD violations, and/or if the next student conduct outcome for an AOD violation would likely be a separation from the University or from University Housing and/or if the first referral is of a serious nature.
 - iii. Parental notification will be made by sending a copy of the decision letter with a message that shares university resources at the completion of the student's conduct process. The notification will occur following the student conduct hearing, including any appeal process.
 - iv. As part of the hearing process, the student conduct hearing officer will engage in conversation with the student about parental notification.
 - v. This notification to parents/guardians is designed to create an awareness for the family related to the student's alcohol and/or other drug violation, provide opportunities for connection to health and/or safety resources, and serve as a preventive measure so the student is potentially not separated from housing or the university in subsequent violations.

- vi. The hearing officer may exercise their professional judgment to not make a parental notification if they feel that the notification would be reasonably likely to cause substantial harm to the student or another person.
- vii. Medical amnesty parameters may apply at the hearing officer's discretion.
- viii. The hearing officer would consult with the Assistant Dean/Director of the Office of Student Conduct, or designee, related to exceptions. The hearing officer will note this exception, along with an explanation, within the student's conduct file.