

BUILDING BRIDGES

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM YOUR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS
CONNECTING HOME AND SCHOOL

FROM THE SOCIAL WORKER'S DESK

We're officially a month into the school year! By now, many of us are finding our routines, getting to know teachers and classmates, and settling into the rhythm of the school year. While some students may be feeling comfortable and confident, others may still be adjusting to new expectations, friendships, schedules, or routines—and that's okay. Every child settles in at their own pace.

As your school social worker, we're here to support students and families throughout the entire school year. Our role goes beyond helping when a student is having a difficult day. We work with students, families, and staff to strengthen connections, problem-solve challenges, support attendance and school engagement, and connect families with resources when circumstances outside of school create barriers to learning.

As the year gets underway, we look forward to continuing to build relationships with our students and families and working together to make this a positive and successful school year. If your family is navigating a challenge, looking for a resource, or simply isn't sure where to start, please reach out. You don't have to figure it out alone.

Here's to a great year ahead!

ADHD Awareness Month



ADHD, a neurodevelopment disorder, can affect attention, impulse control, activity level, organization, and everyday functioning.

Looking for reliable information?

- CDC: symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and resources for families and educators.
- CHADD: Educational resources, family support, webinars.

If you have questions about your child's attention, behavior, organization, or school experience, your child's healthcare provider and school team can help you determine what supports may be appropriate.

CONTACT YOUR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER

WAHS (GRADES 9-12)
MR. PHIL BAUGHMAN
570-220-1589

**WAMS (GRADES 7-8) &
ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENTS**
MS. CHRISTIE PECK
570-419-5876

**CURTIN & LYCOMING VALLEY
(GRADES 4-6)**
MS. KELSEY HOPE
570-980-8519

**COCHRAN, HEPBURN &
JACKSON (GRADES K-3)**
MS. SHANNON EVANS
570-772-0080

CRISIS HELP

Lycoming County Center for
Community Resources Crisis
Intervention Services:
Call: (844) 707-3224
Text: 63288

Walk-in Services available 24 hours
per day, 7 days per week:
800 W. 4th Street, Suite 104,
Williamsport, PA 17701

Suicide and Crisis Hotline:
Call or text 988



Important: Custody Orders, PFAs, and Legal Documentation

If your family has a custody order, Protection From Abuse (PFA) order, guardianship paperwork, or another court/legal document that affects your child or who is permitted to pick up or have contact with your child at school, please make sure the school has a current copy on file.

Legal circumstances can change, so please provide the school with updated documentation whenever an order is modified, renewed, or replaced. This helps school staff understand the current requirements and respond appropriately.

If you have questions about what documentation the school needs, contact the school office or school social worker.

Please don't rely on verbal communication alone. School staff need the official documentation to ensure that they are following the current legal requirements.

FAMILY RESOURCE CORNER: STAYING WARM THIS FALL

As temperatures begin to drop, heating costs can add extra stress to the family budget. If you're concerned about keeping your home warm this fall and winter, help may be available. Utility assistance programs and community resources may be able to help eligible families with heating and energy costs.

- **PPL OnTrack Program:** Works with households at or below 150% of Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG) on establishing a fixed, affordable monthly payment plan to pay for electrical usage. Sign in to your online account and click "Get help paying."
- **UGI Customer Assistance Program:** Offers income-based or usage-based payment agreement with potential for shortfall forgiveness to residential customers at or below 150% of the FPIG. Visit <https://www.ugi.com/assistance-programs/CAP/>
- **PPL's Operation Help:** Assists households at or below 200% of the FPIG who are experiencing unexpected hardships with paying utility bills. Sign in to your online account and click "Get help paying."
- **UGI's Operation Share:** Aids with paying heating bills to residential customers who are faced with hardship due to an unforeseen situation, and with incomes at or below 200% of the FPIG. Call 570-327-5485
- **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP):** Assists low-income families with paying their heating bills. Customers do not need to have an unpaid bill to qualify and do not need to be public assistance recipients. Hours of Operation: M-F 7:30 am-5:00 pm. Address: 400 Little League Boulevard, Williamsport. Contact: 570-327-3497

ATTENDANCE MATTERS: EVERY DAY COUNTS

Why attendance matters:

Coming to school regularly gives students more opportunities to learn, build relationships, participate in activities, and feel connected to their school community. Even a few missed days can add up quickly over the course of a school year.

But attendance is about more than a number.

When a student is missing school, there is usually a reason behind it. Transportation challenges, illness, family circumstances, anxiety, housing instability, difficulty with routines, or other concerns can all affect a student's ability to attend consistently.

As the school social worker, part of our role is to **understand the “why” behind absences and help families identify solutions.** If your child is having difficulty getting to school regularly, please reach out early. We can work together to identify barriers, connect you with resources, and create a plan to help your child feel successful and connected.

A few ways families can support attendance:

- Establish consistent bedtime and morning routines.
- Prepare clothes, backpacks, and lunches the night before.
- Talk with your child about any worries they may have about school.
- Celebrate the effort it takes to get back into a routine after an absence.
- Communicate with the school when your child will be absent.
- Reach out for support **before attendance becomes a bigger concern.**

If attendance has become difficult for your family, **you are not in trouble and you don't have to navigate it alone.** We're here to partner with you.

Received an Attendance Letter? Don't Panic.

If you receive an attendance letter from the school, please don't panic! An attendance letter is an opportunity to connect, communicate, and make a plan, not a reason to feel embarrassed or overwhelmed.

If your child's attendance has become a concern, please reach out to the school social worker. We can talk about what's been going on, identify any barriers that may be making it difficult for your child to attend regularly, and work together to find realistic solutions and supports.

Every family's circumstances are different, and sometimes getting to school consistently can be more complicated than it seems. Our goal is not to judge or blame, it's to understand, support, and partner with families.

If you receive an attendance letter, reach out. Let's talk about what's going on and figure out a plan together.