STRATEGIES TO ENSURE YOUR CHILD’S SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION BACK TO SCHOOL AFTER HOSPITALIZATION

It can be very important to communicate information about your child’s hospitalization with the school so that they can help you meet your child’s needs once they are back at school. Your school and this hospital are committed to helping your child in this transition. In order to best meet your child’s needs post-hospitalization, your schools, hospitals, and mental health center have collaborated to provide you with a few strategies to ensure that your child’s transition back into their school community is as successful as possible.

Your child’s privacy and confidentiality is important to us. Rest assured that your child’s mental health care information will be kept confidential and shared only with parties with whom you give permission. You will be the one to determine who at the school this information would best be shared with in order to assist in your child’s transition back to school.

STRATEGIES:

- Contact your school social worker or counselor when your child is hospitalized to let them know that your child will be absent. Communicating that your child is in the hospital will ensure that the absences are excused versus unexcused.

- Sign a release of information giving the hospital permission to contact the person of your choice at the school to help coordinate care while the child is in the hospital and to assist with any discharge planning.

- By notifying your school of your child’s hospitalization, the social worker or counselor will help to coordinate your child’s schoolwork or homework so that the child receives credit for the time spent on schoolwork while they are in the hospital. The school can also help to determine if other arrangements or modifications need to be made for the work they are missing due to being in the hospital.

- Your child’s school social worker or counselor may be able to help your child feel more comfortable in returning to school once they are discharged from the hospital. It can be very helpful for your child to have a planned contact at the school upon
returning to school so that they have someone to check in with if they are in need of support and to problem-solve any issues that may arise due to the hospitalization (missing homework, talking to peers about their absence, etc.). The school would also be able to report to you if your child is experiencing any problems in adjusting to being back at school.

- It can be very beneficial for you, your child, and the school to have information about what medications your child may be taking post hospitalization or any medication changes that may have occurred during the hospitalization and the possible side-effects your child may experience. The school would then be able to report to you any unusual behaviors that your child may be exhibiting so that you can report this to your mental health treatment providers. The school social worker or counselor may also be able to assist you in finding resources for lower cost medications.

- It may be possible that the hospital can help you and your child in developing some strategies that would help your child become more successful at school. You may want to share these strategies with the school yourself, or you can give the hospital permission to share them with the person of your choice at the school.

- Based on your child’s needs, extra resources may be suggested to assist in supporting your child in the school community. Contact your school social worker or counselor for more information on your school’s process for obtaining an evaluation to determine if your child qualifies for more resources.

These strategies were developed by representatives of Johnson County Mental Health Center, KVC Behavioral HealthCare, and Gardner School District in response to a meeting about how to improve student transition between school and hospitals. The meeting was facilitated by United Community Services of Johnson County (www.ucjoco.org).