



University Liggett School

The evolving and significant disruptions of our lives amid the COVID-19 pandemic may be creating or exacerbating wellness issues for students and families. Certainly, we understand this is a time in which anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues may appear or worsen. Further, students may experience new or increased academic challenges given the change in format and delivery of our program and the absence of familiar methods, structures and supports.

Please know that the School's experienced Student Support Services team remains available to assist students and families facing these new or growing challenges. Below, you'll find the profile of each team member along with specific information about her individual expertise and availability for support, and ways in which you can be in contact.

Meet Your Student Support Team

(6-12) Michele Ondersma, Ph.D. - Michele is a licensed clinical psychologist in her 17th year at Liggett. She is a classroom teacher in the History Department and ARP sequence. She is an advisor in the Upper School and provides social-emotional care for students in grades 6-12. For questions about beginning or maintaining a connection with a mental health professional in the community or for students needing a conversation with a school adult, connect with Michele via email at mondersma@uls.org, phone (313-884-4444 x303), or an individually arranged Zoom session.

(PreK-5) Dana Alpern, Ph.D. - Dana is a licensed clinical psychologist in her 27th year at Liggett. She provides social-emotional care for students in grades PreK-5. For questions or concerns about younger children during this period of remote learning and establishing new routines in the family, connect with Dana via email dalpern@uls.org, phone (313-884-4444 x104), or an individually arranged Zoom session.

(PreK-5) Elisa Cornell is the Lower School Literacy Specialist. Having taught Kindergarten for 20 years, Elisa currently supports staff with literacy curriculum as well as student reading and spelling intervention. Elisa is trained in Wilson Reading System and works 1:1 with students, differentiating instruction to fit their individual needs. For questions about reading, please reach out to Elisa at ecornell@uls.org to schedule a Zoom meeting to discuss your child's strengths and weaknesses as well as support options.

(PreK-12) Rachel Onderbeke, RN, BSN - Rachel is a registered nurse with 10 years of experience, predominately in inpatient pediatrics. This is her first year at Liggett. She provides care for physical ailments as well as emotional support for students PreK thru 12. Rachel is available at 313-884-4444 ext 102 or ronderbeke@uls.org to answer and discuss any medical questions or concerns. For questions or concerns that might be unworthy of a call to a personal medical care provider, please feel free to reach out to Rachel.

(6-8) Denielle Flynn, Ed. S. - Denielle is a teacher, intervention specialist, and teacher-consultant in her 10th year at Liggett and 23rd year in the education field. She currently teaches in the middle school and has taught classes and small groups PreK-11. Denielle is

a 6th-grade advisor and works with our learning support department to provide academic coaching and social-emotional support to students. For questions or concerns about your student during this period of remote learning, please email Denielle at dflynn@uls.org, phone (313-884-4444 x343), or an individually arranged Zoom session.

(9-12) Kirsten Hibbs - Kirsten obtained a B.S in Microbiology and Molecular Genetics from Michigan State University, her teaching certification from Northwestern University, and a Masters of Educational Leadership from Central Michigan University. She started off her professional career as an HIV research associate at Emory University and taught AP and honors biology for 5 years in the Chicago Public Schools. Currently, she is an ARP 9 classroom teacher, Dean of the Class of 2023, and is available to all students for academic coaching and social-emotional support. If you have any questions, concerns, or would like your student connected for extra help during this period of remote learning, please email Kirsten at khibbs@uls.org, phone (313-884-4444 x356), or an individually arranged Zoom session.