

Parent Information - Talking to Students about COVID-19.

Parents and carers play a vital role in sharing accurate information following a case of Covid19 in the community.

Sharing accurate information with your child will help reduce their fears and worries and support their ability to cope.

Remain calm and reassuring

- Listen to your child's questions and concerns.
- Provide accurate information in a way that suits your child.
- Use a calm, reassuring tone so they understand that the adults are coping with the situation
- Remind them that the adults at the school are following NSW Health guidelines and are working hard to prepare the school to be safe for the students to return.
- **Younger children:** need reassurance more than facts. They need to know that the adults are looking after them even when things are difficult
- **Older children** may have more questions and need assistance interpreting news reports and separating facts from rumours.
- **Adolescents** are able to discuss the issue in more depth and it may be useful to discuss in more detail the information they have heard or seen in the media, social media and from their friends or the community.

Talking about how your child is feeling

There may be lots of "what if" questions. There may be no clear answers and this uncertainty can cause distress. Share the accurate information you have and you may need to repeat the information a few times to help your child's understanding.

Discuss the different feelings your child may be experiencing and explain that these are typical reactions in these uncertain times.

These may include:

- being worried or scared for themselves and others,
- feeling unsettled and irritable
- feeling frustrated about the disruption
- concerns about their learning
- missing friends.

Continue with Learning

Communicate with your child's school and read the advice they give. Parents and teachers working together are a great source of confidence for your children

Follow the schools recommendations to access remote learning, if required.

Maintain normal routines at home such as meal times and bed time; predictability helps create a feeling of safety.

Practise positive wellbeing strategies e.g.: exercise, playing a game, mindfulness. Headspace have some useful tips: <https://headspace.org.au/young-people/get-in-to-life-to-keep-your-headspace-healthy/>

Seek support

Reinforce the NSW Health messages - wash hands; cough or sneeze into your elbow; physical distancing, stay home if you are feeling unwell.

If you have any concerns about your child's learning or wellbeing contact the school to discuss them.

Children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful situations, if you seem calm it will help settle their fears.

It is important for parents and carers to take some time for your own self-care.

Online support:

Kids helpline have information on a range of topics for ages 5 – 25 years and parents and provide phone and webchat support. Phone: 1800 55 1800

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/parents>

Headspace provides online and phone counselling, online chats, resources, tools and tips to support young people and their families.

<https://headspace.org.au/covid-19/>