

March 18, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Our administration and school staff have come together to help each of our students during this tough time. Teachers are busy putting together school-work for students to work on at home. When students are at home instead of school, they follow a different set of routines than they are used to. They are also separated from their peers. This can lead to anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues. Children can be inundated by the newscasts, like most of us are, and become fearful of getting the virus or of someone close to them dying.

**Here are some ideas for parents to use at home that can be helpful:**

1. **Keep them busy.** Try to work with your children to do the work their teachers are providing them. Do play and art activities with them and encourage them to get outside and play (weather permitting). Setting up a designated "recess" time may be helpful. Teach them card games or play with board games if you have them. Try to resist the urge to allow them to watch television or videos all day.
2. **Talk to them about the virus.** Be honest about it. Ask them if they have questions and listen to them. Many students are frightened. Explain to them that we are all doing our part by staying home. We are slowing the virus down so we will all be safer.

Here are some resources to help:

- a. Julia Cook- The Yucky Bug: <http://bit.ly/yuckybug>
  - b. Tips for parents: <https://www.juliacookonline.com/assets/uploads/2020/03/Yucky-Bug.pdf>
  - c. Talking to Children about COVID-19: <http://bit.ly/parentresource1>
3. **Watch for signs of depression or suicidal thoughts.** During times like this, students are more vulnerable to depression and suicidal thoughts. Be sure to monitor them and keep open communication. If your child has dealt with mental health issues in the past, please be extra watchful of them. Continue their outside therapy if able.

If you are concerned, here are a few resources:

- a. SAMHSA: Coping with Stress: <http://bit.ly/coping12>
- b. Message for Parents: <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/covid-19-behavioral-health>
- c. FirstLink: <https://myfirstlink.org/get-help-now/>

**If they express suicidal thoughts,  
please call the National Suicide Hotline  
1-800-273-8255 or call 911.**

If students would like to talk to me or Miss Vanyo, email one of us and we will get back to you as soon as possible. We can set up a phone conversation, skype, or other video chat if needed. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns. We are here for you.

Sincerely,

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