

Dear Students and Families,

Many students have voiced feelings of worry as a result of what they have heard on the news, on social media, and other sources about COVID-19. It is important for families to speak to their students about COVID-19 in a way that is developmentally appropriate and maintain open lines of communication.

The Child Mind Institute recommends that parents and guardians watch or read the news themselves, and then convey the most important information to their children. While it is important to stay informed, many times students may be taking in too much information which can lead to increased feelings of anxiety, worry, hopelessness, and fear.

CMI also recommends sticking to regular daily routines as much as possible. This can provide a sense of comfort to students. Continuing to participate in education via HCSS Virtual School will help maintain some of the routines our students have gotten used to and provide structure to their day.

It is important to emphasize to students that measures taken in the state of Massachusetts, such as temporary school closures, have been largely for prevention purposes.

With much misinformation being spread online, it is important to consider the source of information. The World Health Organization (WHO, <https://www.who.int/>) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/>) websites are both resources that focus on facts.

Listed below are several additional links to resources for families, provided by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), about how to talk to young people about the current situation:

<https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4885.pdf>

<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

<https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/>

https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/02292020_NASP_NASN_COVID-19_parent_handout.pdf

I am available to students via Zoom for video counseling during regular school hours. Please feel free to reach out to me by email with any questions, concerns, or to set up a Zoom meeting.

Thank you and be well,

Ms. Tarris