

Haile Families,

As we enter this time of uncertainty, we also know that many of your children may be asking questions, maybe about why they cannot go to school and why they cannot play with friends. We want to keep them informed, but of course there is a delicate balance we must keep. If your child feels anxious, nervous, scared or just needs someone else to talk to you, please know that we are there for them. You can contact, our Student Services and we will schedule a time to speak with your child. We miss them and want them to feel as secure as they can throughout this time.

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In addition, here are some tips from the Child Mind Institute and the National Association of School Psychology:

- **Keep kids informed and talk about how they are feeling:** “Talking to children in a clear, reasonable way about what’s going on is the best way to help them understand,” says Dr. Busman, PsyD, clinical psychologist. “But remember kids don’t need to know every little thing.” Unless your child is asking specific questions, there is no reason to volunteer information that might be upsetting or cause additional anxiety. Also, make sure that the facts about the virus are developmentally appropriate, using phrases and words that children will easily understand and disclosure of information that you think they will be able to process appropriately. Set aside some time every day to check in with your child’s feelings.
- **Their reactions depends on you:** Children look to adults for direction on how to react during stressful situations. Children’s anxiety may increase, if they observe their parents worried. We should reassure children that health officials are working to make sure that everyone stays healthy. Maybe go over what preventive measures your home is taking (washing hands, staying home, etc.). Keep it positive, (listen to some of the songs that are 20 seconds long while washing your hands, or make up your own), and reassure your children that your family is fine, and staying healthy is the main priority.
- **Monitor and limit media coverage:** This will be good for all of our own mental health well-being, but most importantly try to limit the amount of information that children are hearing. Several news reports can be false, and will only add more anxiety to an already stressful situation.
- **Stick to routines and make plans:** I don’t know about you, but I love predictability. It is comforting knowing what to expect, especially in times of uncertainty. Consistency and structure are calming during times of stress. Specific bedtimes and wake up times should still be in place, as well as meal times. Easier said than done, I’m sure, but having that predictability can allow kids to have a sense of control in regards to their environment. Plan fun activities throughout the day, maybe make up a dance to show grandma via facetime after dinner. Make it a point to call grandpa, aunt, cousin, friend, etc. at a certain time each day just to check in. Go outside and play in your yard! Use chalk to write inspiring messages, jokes, or pictures on the sidewalk for those taking a walk.

Stay healthy and be positive! We will get through this together!

Haile Middle School Student Services Team