



Dear **Ivy Hill Prep Families**,

Concern over this COVID-19 can make children and families anxious. While we don't know where and to what extent the disease may spread here in the United States, we do know that it is contagious, that the severity of illness can vary from individual to individual, and that there are steps we can take to prevent the spread of infection. Acknowledging some level of concern, without panicking, is appropriate and can result in taking actions that reduce the risk of illness. Helping children manage anxiety requires providing accurate prevention information and facts without causing undue alarm.

Tips for speaking with children about the Corona Virus

- Remain calm and reassuring. It is very important to create an environment where children feel comfortable asking questions.
- Always answer a child's questions truthfully with developmentally appropriate, simple answers. You don't need to go into more detail than necessary, but lying to children, or making up facts will ultimately confuse them.
- Focus on what you and your child are doing to stay safe. Remind children they can be part of the solution, by washing hands, using tissues when coughing or sneezing, using fist or elbow bumps instead of handshakes, and not sharing food or drinks.
- Promote positive coping and problem-solving skills. Remember – YOU are your child's coping instructor. Your children will mirror how you respond to local and national events. They may also be listening to every word you say when you discuss these events with other adults.
- Acknowledge and normalize your child's thoughts, feelings and reactions. Help children understand why they feel the way they do. "I can only imagine how scared you must be feeling. I'm scared too."
- Stick to a predictable daily routine as much as possible. Click [HERE](#) for a list of functional routine that your child can count on.

Remember: If your child asks you a question that you do not know the answer to, it's ok to say, "I don't know." Take care of your own needs, in order to be there for others. Self-care is essential. If your child is preoccupied with questions and concerns about safety, or suffers from sleep disturbances, anxiety, recurring fears about death or severe separation anxiety, contact your pediatrician or school Social Worker. Refer to the attachment for Mental Health service providers in your area available to children and adults.

Emergency Phone Numbers

NYC Service Hotline: 1-800-NYC-WELL

National Suicide Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

Mandated Reporter Hotline: 1-800-635-1522

Emergencies: 911