



Norris Road State School

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Dear Parents/Carers,

During these unprecedented times our students are participating in remote learning. As a result, we need to ensure a greater emphasis on social and emotional wellbeing. We understand that a change in routine for some students, or feelings of isolation, may cause them stress or anxiety. We would like to provide some updates and resources to ensure that students are still able to achieve their best and STRIVE.

It is of utmost importance, that we attempt to focus on the positive. Research tells us that positivity helps us see the big picture, we understand we need to be more creative and solution focused in order to manage the challenges we face. It also helps boost our immune functioning which is crucial right now. On the flip-side, there's a strong and long research base for the negative impact that fear can have on us - in particular leading to reduced immune functioning.

When times are tough, recognising our character strengths becomes integral to our wellbeing. We encourage you to choose to see the love, kindness, teamwork and bravery around you. Focusing on your greatest qualities, and those of others, can help you feel more in control and centred during major life changes. All parents and carers are encouraged to engage in conversations with your child(ren) about their personal strengths they see in themselves as well as the strengths they are seeing in others.

The following is an excerpt from the Australian Psychological Society and can be a useful guide when talking to your child(ren). Tips for talking with children about the coronavirus.

Children will inevitably pick up on the concerns and anxiety of others, whether this be through listening and observing what is happening at home or at school. It is important that they can speak to you about their own concerns. Answer their questions. Do not be afraid to talk about the coronavirus with children. Given the extensive media coverage and the increasing number of people wearing face masks in public, it is not surprising that some children are already aware of the virus. Providing opportunities to answer their questions in an honest and age appropriate way can help reduce any anxiety they may be experiencing. You can do this by:

- speaking to them about coronavirus in a calm manner
- asking them what they already know about the virus so you can clarify any misunderstandings they may have
- letting them know that it is normal to experience some anxiety when new and stressful situations arise
- giving them a sense of control by explaining what they can do to stay safe (e.g., wash their hands regularly, stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing, adhere to social distancing recommendations)
- not overwhelming them with unnecessary information (e.g., infection rates) as this can increase their anxiety
- allowing regular contact (e.g., by phone) with people they may worry about, such as grandparents, to reassure them that they are okay.
- Talk about how they are feeling. Explain to your child that it is normal to feel worried about getting sick. Listen to your child's concerns and reassure them that you are there to help them with whatever may arise in the future. It is important to model calmness when discussing the coronavirus with children and not alarm them with any concerns you may have about it. Children will look to you for cues on how to manage their own worries so it is important to stay calm and manage your own anxieties before bringing up the subject with them and answering their questions.
- Limit media exposure. It is important to monitor children's exposure to media reports about the coronavirus as frequent exposure can increase their level of fear and anxiety. Try to be with your child when they are



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watching, listening or reading the news so you are able to address any questions or concerns they may have.

- As always, we encourage all students to maintain a connection with their teachers. This can be done through emails or contact the office.

Please find below some organisations that have amazing resources both on line and through phone.

- headspace - 1800 650 890, 9am-1am AEST, 7 days a week. / <https://headspace.org.au>
- Kids Helpline - 1800 55 1800 / <https://kidshelpline.com.au>
- Lifeline - 13 11 14 <https://www.lifeline.org.au>

(Remember support lines and websites are continuing through lockdown!)

The school is committed to the social, emotional and academic wellbeing of our students. If you have any concerns please reach out and contact your teacher either through email or contact the office and leave a message and your teacher will return the call.

We will be progressively adding wellbeing resources to our website for parents to access. A *Wellbeing Learning Activities for Home* document will soon be available on the NRSS website.

Keep safe!

Yours sincerely,

The staff from Norris Road State School.