April 6, 2020

Dear McKeesport Area School District Families,

We are writing in hopes that all is well. Our goal as school counselors is to support our students and their families. In light of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, we wanted to reach out and offer our support to all of you. We realize that this may be a very stressful time for our MASD students and their families. We also understand that it can be difficult to discuss these things with your children. Below please find some tips that may be helpful:

* **Listen and be supportive.** Being a good listener is key. Let them share their questions and concerns, and then validate their feelings.
* **Be honest, accurate, and age appropriate.** Use cues from your children. Ask them what they know so that you can understand their thoughts. This will give you an opportunity to correct any misunderstandings. Ask them what concerns they have, and answer their questions honestly and age appropriately. Talking honestly will help to relieve any anxiety.
* **Keep calm.** If you are anxious, your kids will pick up on that. Your own anxiety may cause more stress for them, so please do your best to remain calm.
* **Emphasize safety, and encourage healthy habits.** Reassure kids that they are safe, and focus on the caring adults that are there to help them. Remind them of the healthy habits that we are all using to stay safe.
* **Enjoy quality time together as a family.** Have fun and create special memories together!

Here are some additional resources:

A video “Talking to Your Child About the Corona Virus” <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.google.com/url?q%3Dhttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v%253DWhVad8ToCiU%2526feature%253Dyoutu.be%2526app%253Ddesktop%26amp;sa%3DD%26amp;ust%3D1585845027013000&sa=D&ust=1585845027088000&usg=AFQjCNFF0EwZKa2SJZcuxt5CmiCk4ZBsVQ>

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html>

We truly miss working in person with our students, but even though we are not in school, we are still here to support all of them and the families of MASD. Please feel free to contact us for any support you may need.

Sincerely,

MASD School Counseling Staff

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