



March 24, 2020

+ Dear High School Parents/Guardians,

You have received information regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19), and the steps our school is taking to prevent the spread of illness, we would also like to share with you, additional information to keep our students healthy.

The Archdiocesan High Schools have the following in place using their own Guidance Counselors:

- In all high schools Guidance Counselors have set up daily office hours to meet with students. These “meetings” take place in the form of email exchanges and video meetings (Google Hangouts, Google Meet, Zoom, etc.).
- Guidance Counselors have also prepared resource information for students regarding things such as college applications, Naviance, study tips, stress reduction tips, etc.

Not all teens respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch for include

- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Irritability and “acting out” behaviors
- Difficulty with attention and concentration
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past
- Unexplained headaches or body pain
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

There are many things you can do to support your child to reduce their fears and help them feel safe:

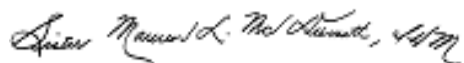
- Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.
- Offer reassurance. Let them know it is ok if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you. Let children also know doctors and researchers are studying and learning as much as they can, as quickly as possible, to help keep people safe.
- Watch for signs of anxiety. Continue to reassure them and maintain normal routines. With schools being closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.
- Monitor media consumption. Talk to teens about what they are hearing on the news and correct any misinformation or rumors you may hear.

- Give them control. This is a great time to remind teens of what they can do to help — wash hands often, cough and sneeze into their elbow, and get enough sleep.
- Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members.
- Ways to take care of yourself include:
 - Reading the news from reliable sources (like the Pennsylvania Department of Health) and taking breaks from the news.
 - Recognizing the things, you can control, like having good hygiene.
 - Taking measures only if recommended by the CDC.
 - Practicing self-care.
- Help is available. If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, contact the crisis text line by texting PA to 741-741. Your child's pediatrician/family practice office is also a great first line of defense.

Helpful Resources:

- The National Association of School Psychologists also has great resources:
[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
<https://store.samhsa.gov/>
- American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/copy_of_home.aspx?hkey=f100857b-fb1c-42fa-8aad-5b7b15027acd&WebsiteKey=a2785385-0ccf-4047-b76a-64b4094ae07f

Teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents/guardians deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents/guardians can be more reassuring to others around them, if they are better prepared. If there is any additional assistance needed, please contact your principal. In times like this, we are particularly grateful for the strength and togetherness of this faith filled community.



Sincerely,
 Sister Maureen L. McDermott, IHM, PhD
 Superintendent for Secondary Schools

