



GEMS

Georgia Elementary and Middle School

Information From Your School Counselors

Concerns over the COVID-19 virus may make us (both adults and children) feel stressed, worried or scared. It is important to recognize that children look to adults for guidance on how we respond to stressful events. Here are some suggestions from the National Association of School Psychologists on what we as adults/parents/caregivers can do to support children:

- **Remain calm and reassuring:** Your child will react to and follow your verbal and nonverbal reactions. Let them talk about their feelings and, if need be, help reframe their concerns into the appropriate perspective.
- **Make yourself available:** They may need extra attention from you and time to talk about their feelings and ask questions.
- **Monitor and limit TV viewing and social media use:** As we know, there is a lot of talk about COVID-19 right now and some of the information or comments are not factual and just listening to all that is being said can increase anxiety - for both you and your child.
- **Maintain a normal routine to the extent possible:** With the temporary school dismissal, it is even more important for caregivers to set a daily routine that includes time for schoolwork, play and physical activity. See an example below. Please note this is an example and it is important to consider what will work best for you and your child(ren).
- **Be honest and accurate:** When children don't know the facts, they will imagine the worst. We have attached information on how you can have a conversation with your child about the facts regarding COVID-19.
- **Review and model basic hygiene and healthy lifestyle practices for protection:** Wash hands with soap and water often; try to avoid touching your face and cover your cough with your elbow or a tissue.
- **Communicate with your school or health care provider:** If your child is having social-emotional difficulties during this time away from school (ie stress, anxiety, fears), please reach out to either of us via email. Email will be regularly checked during normal school hours (8am-3pm). Students may also reach out to us.

Our contact information:

Mike Malinowski (prek-4 School Counselor) mmalinowski@fwsu.org or

Melissa Fisher (5-8 School Counselor) mfisher@fwsu.org

If your child is experiencing a mental health crisis/emergency, please contact Crisis at Northwestern Counseling and Support Services (NCSS) at 524-6554. This is a 24/7 emergency service.

SO YOU'VE GOT QUESTIONS ABOUT **Coronavirus**



What is Coronavirus?

Coronavirus or COVID-19 is a virus that affects the respiratory system (lungs, nose, mouth, throat, bronchi, and all other body parts involved in breathing). It is passed from person to person through droplets from sneezes, coughs, runny noses, and saliva. So if someone sneezes on their hand and touches a bathroom door handle, and then another person touches that same bathroom door handle and then touch their face, they can become infected with the virus. This is why it is so important to wash our hands and avoid touching our faces!

I'm a kid. Doesn't that mean I can't get Coronavirus?

No. Some people have been saying that kids aren't affected by Coronavirus. Scientists believe that Coronavirus may not make kids as sick as adults. But kids can still become infected with the virus.



Why are we staying home from school?

All of the adults at school want you and your family to be safe and healthy. Scientists are recommending that we stay home and avoid being in crowds or large gatherings (like a classroom full of friends!). We are staying home from school to slow the virus from spreading.

What should I do to stay safe?

1. Wash your hands often and before you eat. Wash them for at least 20 seconds and make sure you get the space in between your fingers and the backs of your hands clean!
2. Try to avoid touching your nose, mouth, eyes, and whole face with unwashed hands.
3. Practice healthy habits! Eat healthy foods, drink lots of water, get some exercise, and get plenty of sleep.
4. If you need to sneeze or cough, sneeze into a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
5. Follow directions from the trusted adults in your life. They want to take care of you!



WHAT CAN I DO IF I'M FEELING worried?

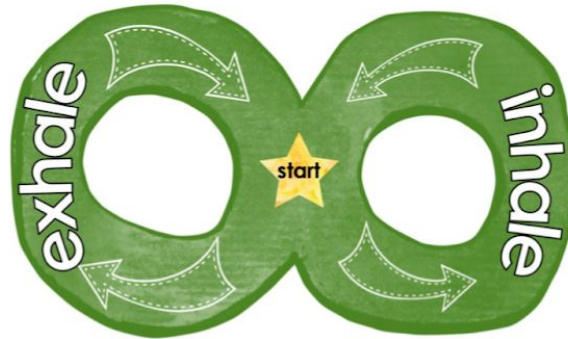
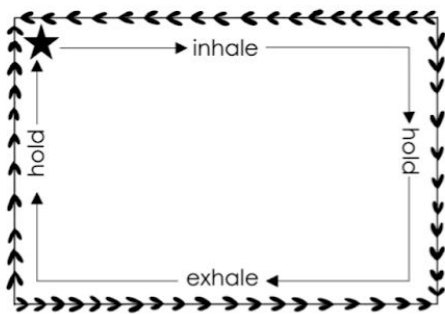


Circle of Support

1. Talk about how you are feeling with the people you trust at home.
2. If you have questions, ask the people you trust to help you understand.
3. Keep in touch with friends, even if you're not seeing them at school every day.
4. Video chat or call loved ones who don't live near you.

Breathe it Out

If your body is feeling restless or keyed up, take some time to sit and slow your breathing. Try these easy exercises by tracing your finger over the lines and breathing along with them. Repeat at least 5 times!



Set Small, Daily Goals

Keep your focus on real things you can do! Set small, daily goals for yourself and keep track of your goals. Set a goal about how much you will read each day, how long you'll practice your free throws each day, how many nice things you'll say to family members each day, or something else that's important to you!

Look for the Fun

Shift your focus away from the worries and do something fun!

1. Play a board game with your family.
2. Have a dance party.
3. Paint, draw, write, or create!



Let the Worries Go

Having trouble letting go of the worries? Try these strategies:

1. Set a 3-minute timer. During those 3 minutes, think about the worries all you want. When the timer goes off, worry time is over! Get up, move to a new space, and think of something else!
2. Write your worries on a piece of paper. Tear or wad it up and toss it in the trash can.



Remember, it's okay to have worries. Talk to someone you trust about how you are feeling!

Sample Daily Schedule/Routine

Please note this is an example and it is important to consider what will work best for you and your child(ren).

Before 9:00am	Wake up	Breakfast, get dressed, make your bed
9:00-10:00	Movement Activity	Walk, sports, yoga
10:00-11:00	Academic Time	Refer to academic resources provided by teacher
11:00-12:00	Creative Time	Legos, drawing, crafting, play music, cook or bake
12:00	Lunch	
12:30	Quiet Time	Reading
1:00-2:00	Academic Time	Refer to academic resources provided by teacher
2:00-3:00	Afternoon Fresh Air/Free time	