

WALES PRIMARY



Wales Primary School

"A Great Place to Learn and Play"

Mrs. Kimberly Morrison, Principal
(716) 652-3000 ext 4000

March 16, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As these extended school closures proceed due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) you may find yourself wondering how to talk with your young children about what is happening without scaring them or adding to the stress of all these sudden lifestyle changes they are experiencing.

Here are few suggestions if you are looking for some guidelines:

- **Children will have a variety of reactions to these conversations based on their age and personality.** Let them take the lead in helping you decide what they need to know. Some children will need very little discussion, some will ask intense questions and then run off and play- that is ok, others may want to talk a lot and need factual information and more reassurance and guidance on how to handle their concerns/questions.
- **It is important to check in with your children to see what they know and if they have questions at a time when you can actively listen and give them your attention.** An example of how to begin the conversation at this point for our young students may be ... "Do you know why schools are closed?" Or ... "Have you heard about the virus that is going around? What do you know about it?"
- **Try to present accurate information to children calmly and concisely when speaking with them.** It is also ok to say you don't know the answer at this time and will let them know as you find out the facts.
- **This is new territory for all of us...give yourself time when you need it to calm down and think about how you want to present the information you need to give to your children.** They pick up on your emotions and will react accordingly.
- **Keep the conversation going throughout the next few months.** Let your children know they can come talk to you about any questions they have about the virus, school, socialization, and worries.
- **Reassure your children that they are safe, and if true, so are their loved ones. Based on your child's concerns,** it may be helpful to share that the medical professionals and scientists are doing an incredible job keeping us safe. We are all helping by staying home right now instead of being at school with so many people.
- **Help your children feel like they have some control to reassure them.** (Many of them need this as much as we do.)
 - Teach them what they need to do to stay healthy: Thorough hand washing techniques, healthy eating habits, exercise, and getting enough sleep.
 - Have children help you define how to keep busy and mentally stimulated for the next several weeks. (Ex. Voting on activities to do daily, making charts of things you would like to accomplish, listing new things they would like to learn about while they are home)
 - Discuss and plan together how they can stay connected socially- Scheduling phone calls, emails, face time, writing letters, group chats, etc.

As a final thought ... Try to be conscious of the phone calls and adult conversations around your own fears and what is happening due to the virus that your children may be able to hear. Also be aware of the emotional toll the amount of information out there on the internet and 24/7 news sources can have on your children. It is healthy to limit and control this as it is overwhelming enough for us adults.

Stay well and keep in touch if your family needs help as we move through this process together in the Iroquois Community.

Most Sincerely,

Lauren Measer, School Counselor
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