

CLAYMONT

201 N. Third St.

CITY

Dennison, OH 44621

SCHOOLS

(740) 922-5478

Fax (740) 922-7325

ADMINISTRATION

Brian Rentsch, Superintendent
Kim Beckley, Treasurer
Jodie Miles, Asst. Superintendent
Heather O'Connor, Special Services Dir.
Beth Lint, Director of Operations
Nino Pangrazio, School Psychologist



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March 11, 2020

Dear Claymont City Families,

The purpose of this letter is to communicate that Claymont City has been following the development and news reports regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). We acknowledge the concern all people share as we are in close communication with the Tuscarawas County Health Department, State Government officials and will continue to follow their guidance and recommendation regarding the COVID-19 outbreak.

We want to remind our school community that the best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are the same as preventing the spread of the common cold and flu. Those steps include:

- Frequently washing your hands with soap and water
- Covering your mouth when you sneeze or cough
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces and using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Remain fever free for 24 hours without medication before returning to school (Fever is defined as 100.4 Degrees Fahrenheit)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not recommend the use of facemasks for the general public.

Claymont City Schools respects the work and expertise of the public health officials at the CDC, the Ohio Department of Health and in particular the Tuscarawas County Health Department. We will continue to monitor the development of COVID-19 and plan accordingly in partnership with local, state and federal health and government officials.

If you would like to learn more about COVID-19, please visit the following websites:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at cdc.gov/coronavirus
- Tuscarawas County Health Department at tchdnow.org/apps/search?q=coronavirus

Thank you for your support and understanding.

Brian Rentsch
Superintendent of Schools



CHILD MIND[®]
INSTITUTE

Talking to Kids About the Coronavirus

Kids worry more when they're kept in the dark

Rachel Ehmke

News of the coronavirus COVID-19 is everywhere, from the front page of all the papers to the playground at school. Many parents are wondering how to bring up the epidemic in a way that will be reassuring and not make kids more worried than they already may be. Here is some advice from the experts at the Child Mind Institute.

- Don't be afraid to discuss the coronavirus. Most children will have already heard about the virus or seen people wearing face masks, so parents shouldn't avoid talking about it. Not talking about something can actually make kids worry more. Look at the conversation as an opportunity to convey the facts and set the emotional tone. "You take on the news and you're the person who filters the news to your kid," explains Janine Domingues, PhD, a child psychologist at the Child Mind Institute. Your goal is to help your children feel informed and get fact-based information that is likely more reassuring than whatever they're hearing from their friends or on the news.
- Be developmentally appropriate. Don't volunteer too much information, as this may be overwhelming. Instead, try to answer your child's questions. Do your best to answer honestly and clearly. It's okay if you can't answer everything; being available to your child is what matters.
- Take your cues from your child. Invite your child to tell you anything they may have heard about the coronavirus, and how they feel. Give them ample opportunity to ask questions. You want to be prepared to answer (but not prompt) questions. Your goal is to avoid encouraging frightening fantasies.
- Deal with your own anxiety. "When you're feeling most anxious or panicked, that isn't the time to talk to your kids about what's happening with the coronavirus," warns Dr. Domingues. If you notice that you are feeling anxious, take some time to calm down before trying to have a conversation or answer your child's questions.
- Be reassuring. Children are very egocentric, so hearing about the coronavirus on the news may be enough to make them seriously worry that they'll catch it. It's helpful to reassure your child about how rare the coronavirus actually is (the flu is much more common) and that kids actually seem to be less susceptible to it.
- Focus on what you're doing to stay safe. An important way to reassure kids is to emphasize the safety precautions that you are taking. Jamie Howard, PhD, a child psychologist at the Child Mind Institute, notes, "Kids feel empowered when they know what to do to keep themselves safe." We know that the coronavirus is transmitted mostly by coughing and touching surfaces. The CDC recommends thoroughly washing your hands as the primary means of staying healthy. So remind kids that they are taking care of themselves by washing their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds (or the length of two "Happy Birthday" songs) when they come in from outside, before they eat, and after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the bathroom. If kids ask about face masks, explain that the experts at the CDC say they aren't necessary for most people. If kids see people wearing face masks, explain that those people are being extra cautious.
- Stick to routine. "We don't like uncertainty, so staying rooted in routines and predictability is going to be helpful right now," advises Dr. Domingues. This is particularly important if your child's school or daycare shuts down. Make sure you are taking care of the basics just like you would during a spring break or summer vacation. Structured days with regular mealtimes and bedtimes are an essential part of keeping kids happy and healthy.
- Keep talking. Tell kids that you will continue to keep them updated as you learn more. "Let them know that the lines of communication are going to be open," says Dr. Domingues. "You can say, 'Even though we don't have the answers to everything right now, know that once we know more, mom or dad will let you know, too.'"