

## Managing Worry in Uncertain Times

### Common reactions:

It is normal to feel overwhelmed or stressed by news of the Coronavirus. Common responses to the outbreak of the Coronavirus include feeling anxious, worried, fearful, confused, sadness, anger and frustration (Headspace, 2020). These are common responses for our children and young people too.

It is important to understand that everyone responds differently to worry and stress and there are several support options available for children, young people and families during this uncertain time.

### How to support children and young people:

Creating opportunities to talk with children and young people about the coronavirus can help reduce any anxiety they may be experiencing (APS, 2020). You can do this by:

- Answering their questions in an honest and age appropriate way.
- Speak in a calm manner. Children will look to you for cues on how to respond and manage their own level of worry (APS, 2020)
- Reassure children they're safe.
- Provide space for children to talk about how they are feeling and help normalise any feelings of anxiety and worry. This will help regulate and validate their emotions (BeYou, 2020).
- Give them a sense of control by explaining what they can do to stay safe e.g. wash their hands regularly, practice good hygiene (APS, 2020).
- Provide opportunities for children to connect with others e.g. Facetime a relative, calling a friend. Social contact supports the wellbeing of students and young people. When this is not physically possible, staying connected online and in other ways can help bridge this gap (AISNSW, 2020).
- Monitor and limit children's exposure to media coverage. Try to be with your child when they are listening, watching or reading the news so you can address any concerns or questions they might have (APS, 2020).

### Supporting children and young people holistically:

- Encourage children to do things that make them feel safe and connected e.g. spending time together, Facetime a relative, write a letter or card to a loved on.
- Encourage children to engage in activities that promote a sense of calm and feeling grounded e.g. colouring in/drawing, having a bath, listening to music, playing (Headspace, 2020).
- Keep active e.g. go for a walk or bike ride, play in the backyard, play ball games.
- Eat well and make healthy choices!
- Ensure children and young people are getting enough sleep:
  - 5-8 years need about 10-11 hours sleep a night (Raising Children Network, 2020)
  - 9-11 years need around 9-11 hours sleep a night (Raising Children Network, 2020)
  - 12-18 years need around 8-10 hours of sleep each night (Raising Children Network, 2020)
- Notice changes in behaviour e.g. withdrawn, irritable, unmotivated, lose of appetite, changes in sleep patterns, feeling physically unwell (BeYou, 2020).
- Explore support/referral options.

## School support options:

If you are concerned about a child or young person in your care you, can contact the following support options at SCEGGS:

### Secondary School:

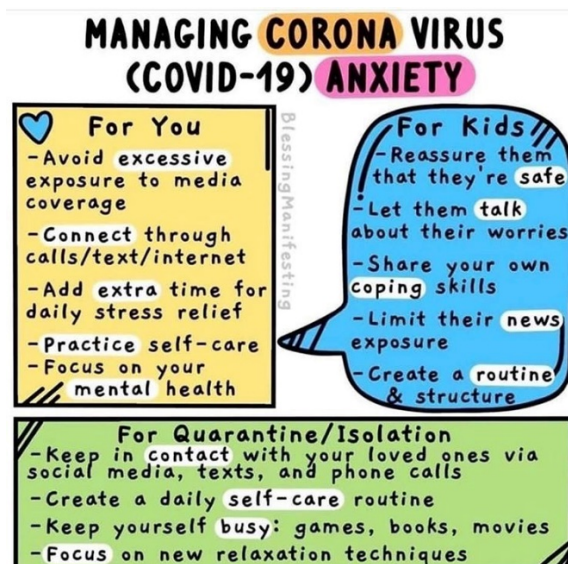
- Jenny Allum, Head of School
- Holly Gyton, Deputy Head
- Andrew Gallagher, Director of Curriculum
- Bethany Lord, Director of Pastoral Care
- Garry Lee-Lindsay, School Chaplin
- Janet McEwen, School Psychologist
- Philippa Gibson, School Counsellor

### Primary School:

- Helen Dempsey, Head of Primary
- Sarah Johnstone, Head of Student Wellbeing K-6
- Olivia Matthews, School Counsellor K-7

## External support options:

- If you are worried about your child, you can speak to your GP about your concerns and discuss the option of getting a Mental Health Care Plan
- Kids Help Line provide 24/7 telephone counselling support on 1800 55 1800
- Eheadspace provide online and telephone counselling for young people ages 12-25 years of age. They are available 9am – 1am every day by calling 1800 650 890 or [eheadspace.org.au](http://eheadspace.org.au)
- Beyond Blue Support Service provide 24/7 telephone counselling on 1300 224 636
- Parent Line provides telephone counselling support to Parents and Carers from 9am to 9pm on weekdays and 4pm to 9pm on weekends. You can contact them by calling 1300 1300 52 or visiting their <http://www.parentline.org.au/>



The above information is in line with recommendations from The Association of Independent Schools of New South Wales (AISNSW), Australian Psychological Society (APS), BeYou and Headspace. For more detailed discussions, tips and information please visit their websites:

<https://headspace.org.au/assets/Uploads/headspace-Fact-Sheet-Coping-with-COVID-19-Stress-v1.pdf>

<https://beyou.edu.au/resources/news/covid-19>

<https://www.psychology.org.au/COVID-19-Australians>

<https://www.aisnsw.edu.au/>

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/sleep>