



TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT CORONAVIRUS (Adapted from DET's *Planning for Student Health & Wellbeing*)

The information included in this document is intended as a supportive guide for our parents and carers, when talking to young people about Coronavirus. We know that each of you is an expert in your own family and the information included below should be used in conjunction with your own knowledge of your child/ren.

Use age-appropriate honesty...

- Most children will have already heard about the virus and grownups shouldn't avoid talking about it.
- Not talking about something can make young people worry more. Help them feel informed by providing them with facts from trusted sources. This can be more reassuring than what they're hearing from friends or social media.
- Think about the age of your child/ren. Offer information using language they will understand.
- It's okay if you can't answer everything; being open to the discussion is what matters.
- Do your best to answer honestly and clearly. Don't share too much information all at once, as this may be overwhelming.
- Try to remain positive, for every sad story, there are multiple stories of kindness and creativity.
- If you don't know the answer, say so. Explore the answer together or explain that this is something we are all learning about together.
- Help your child find something they are in control of (eg. a routine surface cleaning task to help the whole family).

Be guided by your children...

- Ask your children to tell you what they know about Coronavirus. When messages appear mixed for the grownups of our community, it is expected that our children will have misunderstandings about Coronavirus. Hear from them to help understand their perspective of this pandemic and how it might impact them, your family or our school.
- Ask open-ended questions (where yes/no/maybe can't be an answer).
- Give them the opportunity to ask questions, particularly if you see/hear that it is impacting on their learning or wellbeing.
- [Here is a link](#) to a kids and Coronavirus Q&A episode of *Please Explain* where a 9-year old child asks the questions he has on Coronavirus. The answers are clear and a great example of talking with your children about this challenging subject (please note, there is an ad for the first 60 seconds that includes adult references).
- If your child is not interested in Coronavirus and/or is 'sick of talking about it', that's OK! Just let them know that you are happy to talk about it if/when they are.

Be reassuring...

- Be conscious of the language you use with your child and around your child. If your child hears language that might be considered negative or problem-focussed, don't ignore this. Ask them what they think of that opinion and share your own balanced view.
- Don't dismiss your child's fears. It is understandable for them to be concerned as we have never experienced anything like this before. Sometimes grownups have the best of intentions by saying "Don't worry!", when in actual fact this can isolate the child further, now with the idea that their feelings aren't valid.
- Inform your child that doctors and scientists around the world are working hard to learn more about COVID-19 and to keep us safe.
- Talk about the positive outcomes that might arise from these challenging times. For every sad story we are hearing many stories of kindness, compassion and creative thinking. Whilst this pandemic has already devastated many individuals, families and communities, humankind is remarkably adaptive and strong. Consider how each challenge may present a new opportunity either now or in the future (eg. significant improvements in our environment have already been observed, our families are spending more time together, we are reminded of the importance of caring for each other and how valuable human contact is).