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Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

The advent of online learning in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic will inevitably affect your child in non-academic ways. Please take a moment to read the below information, which will help you support your child's social and emotional needs while school is closed.

First, please don't hesitate to reach out to your child's School Counselor via email guidance@bboed.org at any time during the school closure for non-emergency situations. However, *if your child is experiencing a mental health emergency or crisis, please contact the police, 911, or take your child to the nearest emergency room.* The Counseling Department will not be available for crisis situations or consultations.

Change and uncertainty are difficult for all of us, but especially for children, who do not necessarily have (or need) a full understanding of the current pandemic and its implications. The National Association of School Psychologists has put together a parent resource, [Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#), that may be helpful to you and that can be adapted to children of any grade level. Generally speaking, though, keep the following in mind for children and teens:

- Remind them of the basics of personal hygiene, and, if necessary, explain both how viruses can be passed along... and prevented.
- Remember that students take their cue from adults. Although you may be worried, modeling a calm response will help them cope with their anxiety.
- Validating fears and concerns is important. Remember that they do not have as much world experience or as much ability to form perspective as you do. Letting them know that experiencing a range of emotions is usual in uncertain and frightening situations.
- Remind them that the COVID-19 can affect anyone regardless of age, race, nationality or ethnicity. Making comments, assumptions or jokes about those who are or might be affected goes against all of our community's values.

Online learning in the K-12 setting is new territory for us all, and it's understandable if students experience some anxiety about learning the content or the sudden lack of structure. Communication is key. Have them reach out to their teacher(s), or do so on their behalf at the elementary level, at the first sign of struggle. It's ok to ask questions! Some students may find that using a simple scheduling template might be helpful, even if they have never had to before. Help your child determine and implement what works best for him/her to keep organized and on-track.

Remember the airline metaphor-- put on your own oxygen mask before helping others-- in this scenario. Take care of yourself emotionally as well. If it's not already part of your routine, now might be a good time to try some mindfulness activities as a family. A quick Google search will result in many free resources, apps, and types of relaxation techniques. *Green Child Magazine* has an inventory of quick links for free [Guided Relaxation Scripts](#) for kids, and [Mindfulness for Teens](#) is a good starting point for older children.

In addition, the links below will provide helpful insight and information to assist your family in addressing behavioral concerns you may be experiencing with your child. Remember, you can reach out to your child's teacher anytime should you require further assistance. Our support staff is available to our families and students throughout the virtual school day.

7 Ways to Support Kids and Teens Through the Coronavirus Pandemic

<https://www.mghclaycenter.org/hot-topics/7-ways-to-support-kids-and-teens-through-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

Disruptive behavior problems: 12 evidence-based tips

<https://www.parentingscience.com/behavior-problems-disruptive.html>

8 Strategies for Dealing with a Defiant Child

<https://www.quickanddirtytips.com/parenting/behavior/8-strategies-for-dealing-with-a-defiant-child>

Tips for handling problematic temperament traits.

<https://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/tips-for-handling-problematic-temperament-traits/>

We are striving to provide the best approximation of support of your child's social, emotional, and academic needs through virtual means. Again, please don't hesitate to reach out via email with any questions or concerns. We are all in this together.

Sincerely,

Guidance Department
Bayonne Child Study Team