

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The coronavirus pandemic is an epidemiological and psychological crisis. The enormity of living in isolation, changes in our daily lives, job loss, financial hardship and grief over the death of loved ones has the potential to affect the mental health and well-being of many. Even in this time of physical distancing, it's critical to seek social support and connection with others. It's also important to know the signs of anxiety, panic attacks, depression and suicide so you can easily identify them, not just among your family, friends and neighbors, but for yourself. Social isolation has long been thought of as a contributor to depressive feelings. The Centers for Disease Control have warned that as "student engagement with schools and peers diminishes, this could increase anxiety and other mental health/emotional problems."

1. Warning Signs to look for:

- a. Risk factors for more intense emotional reactions include pre-existing mental health problems, prior traumatic experiences/abuse, family instability, or the loss of a loved one. Parents/guardians should contact a professional if significant changes in behavior or any of the following symptoms are observed for more than 2 weeks

([NASPonline.org](https://www.nasponline.org)):

- i. **Preschoolers**—thumb sucking, bedwetting, clinging to parents, sleep disturbances, loss of appetite, fear of the dark, regression in behavior, and withdrawal.
- ii. **Elementary aged children**—irritability, aggressiveness, clinginess, nightmares, school avoidance, poor concentration, and withdrawal from activities and friends.
- iii. **Adolescents**—sleeping and eating disturbances, agitation, increase in conflicts, physical complaints, delinquent behavior, and poor concentration.

2. Community Resources for help:

If you suspect your child is in immediate danger of hurting themselves please call 911

- a. Mobile Crisis (518)-943-5555
 - i. Over the phone support 8am-10pm daily for anyone needing services
 - ii. They provide Safety Assessments, Functioning Assessments, Welfare Checks, De-escalation and additional resources for COVID-19
- b. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 (TALK)
 - i. Español 1-888-628-9454
- c. Crisis Text Line: Text **HOME** to 741741
 - i. Crisis Text Line is here for any crisis. A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds, all from a secure online platform. The volunteer Crisis Counselor will help you move from a hot moment to a cool moment.
- d. If you have any general questions or concerns regarding your child, or if you feel they would benefit from emailing or speaking with one of our School Psychologists or School Counselors, their emails are listed below. **(Please note, if you have any *immediate* concerns about your child's safety or well-being, please use one of the contacts previously listed)**
 - i. Erin Mitchell: EMitchell@ichabodcrane.org (School Psychologist)
 - ii. Laura Sarno: LSarno@ichabodcrane.org (School Psychologist)

- iii. Kasey Conklin: KConklin@ichabodcrane.org (School Counselor)
- iv. Dale Tuczinski: DTuczinski@ichabodcrane.org (School Counselor)

Although these are certainly challenging times, please remember that we are all in this together!

Sincerely,

Your Grade 4-8 Counseling Staff