



Sisters School District

“Home of the Outlaws”

Curtiss Scholl
Superintendent

April 17, 2020

Dear Sisters Schools Community,

We are finishing our first full week of distance learning and we are encouraged by the work and the response from our staff, students, and families. We know that we are still learning a lot and I offer a reminder to communicate with your child's teacher or school to answer specific questions that come up. I know each of our principals has held a “coffee talk” to get feedback.

As a school district, we understand that our partnerships with our families and community is critical. We will continue to put our students first and work to support them through this crisis and beyond. Together, we will get through this and be a stronger community when it is over.

As we enter the weekend, I want to acknowledge the impact of the continued stress on everybody involved. I share our community's concern for all who are being negatively impacted by this crisis. From those who are experiencing the loss, or food and housing insecurity, or having anxiety about the unknown impact of this pandemic. We continue to be concerned about the impact of the stressors and how they are weighing on our community's mental health. Below are some regional mental health support Question and Answers that I shared in an earlier message.

Q: Can you provide some tips for maintaining mental and emotional health during this crisis?

A: Health officials acknowledge that feelings of anxiety and stress are normal during times like these. Social distancing is critical to physical health, both for individuals and to protect the health of our community and our frontline responders. But, mental health professionals suggest that it's important to continue to make safe social connections at this time. Safe connections might include: regular phone calls, group texts, FaceTime, email, going on walks with household family members, time with a family pet, and more.

Q: Who can I call for help?

A: If you or your children are in need of free mental health support, you can call the COVID-19 Info. line at 541-699-5109 to request to be connected with resources. Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. You can also call the Deschutes County Crisis Line at 541-322-7500 ext. 9 and / or visit the Deschutes County Walk-In Center at 2577 NE Courtney, Bend, Monday through Friday from 8:00 am. to 4:00 pm.

Q: Do you have tips for managing stress and anxiety?

A: Our partners at Deschutes County Behavioral Health offered the following tips:

- Take care of yourself: Get enough sleep, eat healthy, and exercise.
- Talk to others: Feelings of anxiety are normal in a situation like this. Reach out and talk to people in your community who can provide support.
- Avoid rumors and inaccurate information: Rely on official sources for information, including Deschutes County for countywide updates: www.deschutes.org/covid19; Oregon Health Authority for statewide updates: www.healthoregon.org/coronavirus; and Centers for Disease Control for nationwide updates: www.cdc.gov/covid19.
- Do what you can: Even when some things are out of our control, there are always things that we as individuals and communities can control:
 - Wash your hands often.
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
 - Stay home when you are sick.
 - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Ask for help: Local residents can reach out 24-hours-a-day to area crisis lines: Deschutes County at 800-875-7364; Crook County at 541-323-5530; and Jefferson County at 541- 475-4822.
- Seek help if you are struggling with persistent inability to sleep, increasing drug or alcohol use, an overwhelming sense of depression or panic, urges to harm yourself or others, or an inability to take care of yourself or those who depend on you. Please do not call 911 unless you are experiencing a medical emergency. Instead, call a crisis line or the non-emergency COVID-19 Info. Line at 541-699-5109.

- Reminder: Taking precautions is altruistic. When we remind ourselves that others are benefitting from our actions, it makes sacrifices easier to bear. By staying home and taking precautions, we are helping to keep vulnerable populations safe and supporting our frontline responders.

Q: How about tips for parents?

A: Our partners at Deschutes County Behavioral Health offered the following tips:

- Remain calm and reassuring: If true, emphasize to your children that they and your family are fine.
- Make yourself available: Let your children talk and give them plenty of time and attention.
- Talk to children in language they can understand: The CDC suggests telling children that, from what doctors have seen so far, most kids aren't getting very sick. In fact, most people who have gotten COVID-19 haven't gotten very sick. Only a small group have had serious problems. Keep the conversation going. Make time to check in regularly as the situation develops. Take cues from your child. If they become afraid or overwhelmed, offer comfort. If you need help, seek professional health.
- Avoid language that stigmatizes or assigns blame: Remind children that viruses can make anyone sick, regardless of a person's race, ethnicity, or national origin.
- Monitor television viewing and social media: Try to limit children's exposure to media and talk about what they are seeing. Use only reliable sources of information.
- Maintain healthy behaviors and household routines: Serve nutritious meals, encourage adequate sleep and exercise, and maintain household routines to the extent possible.
- Teach strategies to prevent infection: Remind children to wash 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.
- Find more info: <http://bit.ly/COVID19-TipsForParents>.

Access to accurate, timely information about COVID-19 is critical for all of us. Our [County Public Health](#) experts point to the [Oregon Health Authority](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) as good sources of information. www.coemergencyinfo.blogspot.com provides a collective resource for up-to-date information. Oregon Department of Education has an FAQ page at: <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/healthsafety/Pages/COVID-19-FAQ.aspx>

Stay Safe,

Curt Scholl
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