



COTTING SCHOOL

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Talking with Students About School Closure Due to the Coronavirus: Language and Resources

March 13, 2020

Dear Cotting Parents,

Since the decision to close school had to be made quickly, we anticipate that students may have questions about this change. We have put together the following information in the form of these anticipated questions, with suggested language for responding, as well as related resources for parents. We hope this will be helpful to you for your own information and to use with your children if it feels useful and appropriate. We will continue to be available via email to respond to you and your children throughout the closure. We are all in this together.

Warmly,

Pam Varrin pvarrin@cotting.org

Rachel Vorkink rvorkink@cotting.org

Anticipated frequently asked questions from students:

1) **Why did Cotting close school?**

We are working to make everyone as safe as possible.

Many schools decided to close for a while to keep people healthy and safe.

Cotting School is doing the same. There are no diagnosed cases of coronavirus at Cotting School.

For parents:

Rachel Howard from the Child Mind Institute suggests that parents can explain that measures like closing schools are preventative and temporary. You can take a page from Mister Rogers, who taught kids to “focus on the helpers” — what doctors, teachers, parents and scientists are doing to keep them safe.

<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

2) **How long will Copping be closed? When will we go back to school?**

School will be closed through March 27th, but we all need to be prepared for school to be closed longer if this will help people stay safe. When we come back to school, your teachers and therapists will be ready to welcome you back.

3) **Can my friend come and visit? Can we set up a playdate or outing?**

Doctors are suggesting that we should stay home as much as possible right now. We can talk to our friends using emails, texts, Facetime, etc.

4) **Is it safe to get close to other people?**

Doctors are suggesting we stay 6 feet away from other people. My parents/caregivers can show me what 6 feet looks like. Right now, we are going to stay home when we can, and not go to crowded places with other people. We are washing our hands regularly, and covering our coughs and sneezes.

For parents:

CDC recommendations for individuals at [higher risk](#) of getting very sick from COVID-19

- *Take [everyday precautions](#) to keep space between yourself and others (about 6 feet).*
- *When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often.*
- *[Avoid crowds](#) as much as possible.*
- *Avoid non-essential air travel.*
- *During a COVID-19 outbreak in your community, [stay home](#) as much as possible to further reduce your risk of being exposed.*

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>:

If your child wants to connect with friends by phone (chat, text, facetime), email Pam Varrin if you need assistance with contact information.

5) **If I feel nervous, worried or scared, will it be OK?**

Everyone is feeling nervous right now. However, we are doing all we can to stay safe and healthy. If you are feeling nervous or worried, remember you can use calming strategies (ex. doing some deep breathing, listening to music) and do things that make you feel relaxed and happy at home. Sometimes it might make us feel more nervous to watch or read the news, so spend time doing things that make you feel most calm.

You can ask your parents/caregivers to help you think of ideas.

For parents: 5 Ways to Help Teens Manage Anxiety about the Coronavirus
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/11/well/family/coronavirus-teenagers-anxiety.html>

From NESCA News and Notes: Making the most of COVID-19 School Closures
[Making the Most of COVID-19 School Closures](#)

Calming resources we typically use with students at Cotting School:

<https://www.calm.com/>

<https://www.gonoodle.com/>

6) **What if I have more questions about Cotting?**

You can ask your parent/caregiver to email the right person to answer your question.

To review all communications from Cotting regarding Coronavirus, please visit the Coronavirus Update page on the Cotting website at <https://www.cotting.org/coronavirus/>

781-862-7323

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