

Statement for Teachers to Read to Students – COVID-19

Please take a moment to read the guidelines and student statement below.

We would like you to read the statement to students shortly after arrival. Please allow some time for students who may be late to arrive at school.

Considerations for when you read the statement:

- *Be aware of students who have a chronic illness or family members with medical conditions.*
- *After you read the statement, give the students some time to ask questions and process the information they have just heard.*
- *Please contact an administrator or school counselor if a student appears to need individual attention.*

Secondary Statement to Read to Students

I'm sure that many of you have heard that it was announced that schools will be closed from March 16th through March 27th. The reason for the closure is to reduce the spread of COVID-19, also called Coronavirus. This and other public safety actions were taken to ensure you are kept safe while individuals who need medical attention are able to get the help they need.

While there is a lot of concern surrounding the virus, there are actually very few cases involving children and teens across the world. Children and teens who have been sick with the virus usually have had mild cases, which means they get better quickly.

There are several things we should all do to protect ourselves, friends, and family from getting sick. For example, you should:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water for 20 seconds
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash (or cough/sneeze into your sleeve or elbow)
- Only touch your face if needed and wash your hands before and after touching your face, especially if you touch your mouth, nose, or eyes

During these next two weeks we hope you and your families will:

- Maintain a daily routine that includes healthy eating and sleep habits.
- Spend at least 20-30 minutes reading a preferred book or magazine.
- If you are sick, stay at home and avoid contact with others.
- Keep objects and surfaces clean in your room and house.
- Follow the "Supporting Students at Home" guidance that will be distributed today.

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If you are worried about what you have heard, here are some good steps you can take:

- Talk to an adult you trust, such as your parents, a relative, teachers, or school counselor.
- News of COVID-19 is being talked about frequently on TV and social media. Too much information can be upsetting. If you are feeling anxious or worried, limit your time on social media and watching TV.
- Remember, not everything you see and hear on TV, radio and social media is true.
- If you are seeking additional information, reliable websites include the HCPSS Coronavirus web page, the Howard County Health Department, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

We are looking forward to our return to school. Please check the HCPSS website regularly for any updates.