

# Check-in from the School Counselor

## Tuesday, March 24, 2020

Greetings, Parents / Guardians!

I wanted to let parents/guardians know that I have updated my page on the school website to include emergency numbers and resource information for any emergent social-emotional needs that may occur while we are out of the school building. Please utilize them if needed. My website is listed here: <https://www.stmargarets-rs.org/parents/guidance-counselor-services/>. As always, I am also available by e-mail for resources and referrals, Monday through Friday.

**If you sent me a message about your child, please make sure you received my reply (if it is not in your inbox, it may be in "spam" or "junk."). Please know I have been replying to all messages received from Monday - Friday within 24 hours (any messages received after 3 PM on Friday will be replied to on Monday morning). If you e-mailed me and did *not* receive a reply, please let me know.**

For this “check-in” from the School Counselor, I wanted to talk about resources and tips to support students who may be feeling anxious or worried with current events.

With anxious students, it is key to remember that children will respond as a reflection of your response / reaction to the news and changes in daily routine. Chances are good that if you are nervous, they will be, too. When talking with your child about current events and changing routines, keep the conversation age-appropriate. What a six-year-old understands will be different from what an eleven-year-old understands. Parents should also ask their child what they already know about a situation. In a world of social media, chances are good kids have heard about or seen something already about this topic.

It’s also important (as we discussed in last week’s e-mail check-in) to keep a sense of a routine for your child during remote learning. Children tend to thrive when life feels familiar, and a routine (at least for Monday through Friday) can help with that!

I encourage parents to have a daily “feelings check-in” with their child. Ask them “rose and thorn” questions (a “rose” is something in their life that is going well or “blooming”, a “thorn” is something that is going poorly or is a “sticking” point). Respond to your child with reassurance; even if you don’t have exact answers, providing words of comfort routinely can ease any worry a child may have. If you find your child is having a difficult time expressing their feelings (and their behavior is indicating that they are worried, angry, or upset) try encouraging them to draw or journal. Sometimes our quietest kiddos are the most expressive!

With this “check-in,” I am sending some great fact sheets I found on anxiety, as well as a fun “brain break” for families that can be a neat activity while we social distance (photo scavenger hunt, anyone?!). Additionally, I wanted to share a note I wrote for the students; please feel free to pass it along to them. I wanted to let the students know I have been thinking of them and praying for them over these last couple of weeks.

Take Care and Stay Safe!

Miss Sole  
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# PICTURE SCAVENGER HUNT

- something red
- something to eat
- something clean
- something sharp
- something hard
- something tiny
- something blue
- something that moves
- something noisy
- something wet
- something pink
- something soft
- something heavy
- something special
- something with hair
- something white
- something black
- something short
- smaller than a mouse
- something green
- something smooth
- something with wheels
- something alive
- something orange
- something tall
- something light
- something fluffy
- something purple
- something colorful
- something dirty
- something shiny
- something yellow
- something stinky
- something glittery
- something tasty
- something you love





March 24, 2020

Hello, My Wonderful Students!

As we start week 2 of remote learning, I wanted to take a moment to send a note to all of you. While I'm sure many of you are enjoying "casual clothes day every day" (I know I am!), I'm sure there are some of you who are feeling nervous or worried about all of these changes in your lives.

First and foremost, please know it is not unusual to feel nervous or worried when there are a lot of "what if's" in the world, however, it is important to remember to lean on our faith during this time. One of my favorite Bible verses that I want to share with you is from Joshua 1:9..." **Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.**" Remember that you each have your own inner strength...let it shine! If you do start to feel sad or nervous, do something that will help you feel better...you can talk to your family, draw, or write in a journal. Do something that will let you express how you're feeling!

Also remember that your teachers and I just want you to try your best while you complete your work from home. We know it is a lot different from being at your desk in school, but we know you all can do it! Take your time, and do not stress! 😊 I want to let each and every one of you know that I miss seeing and hearing you in the halls and being able to greet you each morning. Consider this letter a "virtual" high-five from me until we can give actual high-fives at school again! 😊 Until then, my prayer for all of you is for health and safety.

See you soon! 😊

Miss Sole

# All About Anxiety

Anxiety is worries or fears that are frequent and overwhelming. The feelings don't have to be caused by something specific. People facing anxiety can also have physical symptoms like sweating, dizziness and difficulty sleeping.

## QUICK INFORMATION:

- There are about 4.4 million children in the U.S. between the ages of 3-17 who have been diagnosed with anxiety.
- Anxiety can present itself in many ways. Children may feel stressed or panicked. They may have difficulty focusing or sleeping, and they may also feel physical effects like a stomachache or a headache.

## TIPS FOR PARENTS:

- Talk to your child about how they are feeling. Help your child develop ways to cope with their anxious feelings like deep breathing, exercising, and using positive self talk.
- Manage your own anxieties. Different life circumstances can leave us all feeling anxious. Our kids can pick up on this, so it is important to keep your conversations age-appropriate and reassuring.

## WHAT TO SAY:

- "I am here for you."
- "Let's work through this together. How can I help you?"
- "I know this is hard."
- "You are safe. I am here."
- "What is your worry telling you?"

## RESOURCES FOR PARENTS:

- [Anxious Kids, Anxious Parents](#) by Reid Wilson and Lynn Lyons
- [What To Do When You Worry Too Much](#) by Dawn Huebner
- [www.worrywisekids.org](http://www.worrywisekids.org)
- [Growing Up Brave](#) by Donna Pincus

## WHAT NOT TO SAY:

- "Stop worrying."
- "Get over it."
- "This isn't a big deal."
- "I don't understand what you're so worried about."
- "It's fine."

## PICTURE BOOKS FOR KIDS:

- [Wemberly Worried](#) by Kevin Henkes
- [Wilma Jean: The Worry Machine](#) by Julia Cook
- [The Huge Bag Of Worries](#) by Virginia Ironside
- [Silly Billy](#) by Anthony Brown

# TIPS FOR ANXIETY DURING TIMES OF CRISIS

## IDEAS FOR PARENTS:

- Explain the incident in age appropriate language. Start by asking what they already know about what is happening.
- Be available to support your child with their feelings and fears.
- Stick to the normal routine as much as possible.
- Limit your child's exposure to adult conversation about the topic. This includes the news if applicable.
- Allow your child to see you handling your own anxiety in a positive way.
- Talk to children about your plan to keep them safe.

## WHAT TO SAY:

- "How are you feeling?"
- "I know this is hard for you. How can I help?"
- "Here is what we are going to do to stay safe..."
- "Let's come up with a plan."
- "Would you like a hug?"
- "I'll keep you updated when I find out more information."
- "I'm here for you."

## WHAT NOT TO SAY:

- "This isn't a big deal."
- "We don't know how bad this will get."
- "I don't want to talk about this any more."
- "Nothing is going on. Everything's fine."
- "I don't understand why you are acting like that."
- "I don't know how we'll get through this."

## IDEAS FOR CHILDREN:

- Start a gratitude journal. Gratitude is a great way to combat anxiety.
- Practice deep breathing.
- Write or draw pictures about how you feel during this time.
- Remember that how you are feeling is okay!
- Find activities that help you feel calm like reading, drawing, exercising, or connecting with friends.
- Remind yourself that you are safe.