

School Dismissal and Mental Health Statement

Parents:

We are all experiencing an unprecedented situation for public school and our entire community. When faced with unique situations like this, many of our children will experience some anxiety and fear. This reaction is normal.

Because your children will not be attending school until, at least, March 30, 2020, it is important to talk to them and give them explanations of why this is happening. These conversations need to be customized to the age of your child, so please consider the age ranges of your own children and maybe speak to them separately.

Below are some things to consider:

- Be calm in front of your children.
 - Your emotions will guide theirs.
 - Do not share your fears with your children, but do not overly minimize the seriousness of the situation.
- Accurate and developmentally appropriate information helps reduce fear.
 - The most current information for our state and district is found at the following websites:
 - <https://coronavirus.utah.gov/>
 - <https://www.graniteschools.org/>
- Tell them how they can reduce the chances of getting the virus.
- Tell them that if they happen to get the virus, they are likely to experience symptoms like the cold or flu.
- The school dismissal is to prevent the spread of this illness and for the health of them and our community.
 - It is not because they have been exposed or are necessarily at high risk of exposure.
- The school dismissal is temporary, and they will return to school when the risk of spreading the virus has been reduced.
- Find ways to meaningfully fill their time during school dismissal.
 - Support them in completing the activities and assignments provided by their teachers.
 - While screen time is not all bad, it should be allowed in moderation.
 - Unless they have been put in isolation or quarantine, encourage them to go outside and be active (maintaining social distance and other precautions).

- Encourage other appropriate activities that will stimulate and occupy them.
- Limit access to media reports, especially for younger children who may not fully understand what is being reported.

If your child is experiencing an unusual amount of anxiety or distress, please reassure them and access the family and community supports that are available. Also, school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors will be working throughout the school dismissal period and will be able to consult by phone. Contact your school's main office to access them.

Sincerely,

Alison Milne
Interim Director, Special Education

Judy Petersen
Director, College and Career Readiness

Gerry Trelease
School Psychology Coordinator

Andrea Miller
School Social Work Coordinator

Kaye Poulton-Timm
School Counseling Coordinator