

Partnering to Keep Students Safe During Enforced Social Distancing

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) is committed to partnering with community members, emergency responders, and social service agencies to help FCPS students stay safe during this state of emergency when schools are closed and children have very limited opportunities to interact with supportive adults outside their own families. These are high-stress times for families, and opportunities to relieve the pressure, such as going to work and school, are limited. So right now it's extra-important that (1) adults take care to ask about the wellbeing of children and youth and (2) that our students are provided resources they can contact if they have concerns.

YOU can make a difference. The most effective way to make sure children stay safe from family violence, substance use, and mental health crises is to establish a supportive relationship, maintain consistent contact, and connect to help when needed. Teachers, neighbors, friends, and family members should all be aware of signs that a student needs support. For instance, never let a comment like "It doesn't matter anyway" or "I can't take this" go by without following up with "Tell me more" or "What do you mean?" If a student looks sad or anxious, is acting out in risky ways, or has trouble keeping up with assignments, make the effort to connect. Find out more about what is going on, including on social media. Cyber-bullying and sexual exploitation are on the rise as more students are on devices, for longer periods of time.

Ask about what is going on in the child's life. Listen carefully. Arrange for appropriate support. Be persistent. Let them know you are there for them. Getting connected with help can be life-saving.

Help Lines are available. The following resources are available 24/7, and are posted on Schoology during continuity of learning as well.

Need Help?

- Child Protective Services (CPS): 301-600-2464
 - To get help for physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.
- Crisis Services: Dial 211 or text your zip code to 898-211
 - To get help when you feel really anxious or really depressed and need someone to talk with so that you can stay safe.
 - You can also text the word HOME to 741741 and crisistextline.org will respond
- Maryland anonymous Tip Line: 1-833-632-7233 or text 240.674.8477 with your concern
 - To report threats or situations that put your safety, or others' safety, at risk.
- Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255 or go to suicidepreventionlifeline.org
 - To get help if you are thinking about suicide.