

Dear parents and legal guardians,

the situation caused by the corona virus affects all of us: the pupils are no longer allowed to go to school and for many parents, too, the usual way of their work is interrupted. For many families, this is a major challenge because they are no longer familiar with everyday routines and structures.

We don't know which measures will be taken in the coming days and weeks and how long this exceptional situation will last. Therefore we, have put together some helpful tips from a school psychological perspective.

Every child and every teenager reacts differently to stressful and unsettling situations: Some feel physical symptoms such as tiredness, headache, abdominal pain or loss of appetite. Some are anxious, unsettled or nervous and irritable. Others have trouble sleeping. But there are also many children and teenagers, who can adapt well to the new situation and experience little stress.

You can do a lot for yourself and your child. Show confidence, calmness and responsibility in your words and actions:

- Give your child a fixed daily structure with balanced activities (learning- media- and playing times), regular meals and bedtime. Teenagers also benefit from a solid structure. Plan the day or week together (e.g. with the help of an overview plan or calendar that you design together). A structured daily routine also gives them a parent's security in this situation and saves some discussions.
- Your child has received assignments from our schools or is sent to them on an ongoing basis. Try to anchor these learning opportunities firmly in the daily structure. For children and adolescents, part of their everyday reality is preserved. This gives stability. If your child overwhelms or cannot cope with the workload, please be patient and contact the appropriate teacher, who will be happy to answer any questions. Consider this as a new learning situation for your child and it may take some time to gradually learn and work better independently.
- Your child can learn from you to handle the difficult situation with prudence. Talk to your child about what helped you personally, even in stressful situations. As a family, you can collect what is good for every member of the family (e.g. individual sports, reading, petting the cat, music, phone calls etc.) and write this e.g. on a large sheet of paper. This gives you a colourful selection of behaviour options. As parents, you will also get in touch with your own strengths.
- Make it clear to your children, that by following the recommended measures they are making an important contribution to society. In this awareness, it will be easier for you and the children and teenagers to comply with the rules of conduct. So limit the total number of encounters, also among children and teenagers, and make contacts possible only by phone or using social media. Pay attention to the observance of the hygiene rules. Be a role model here, too. Explain the meaning of all measures in line with age. Talk to your children in a way they are able understand things.
- Inform yourself about the latest news only on reputable and trustworthy sites, e.g. on the website of the Robert-Koch-Institute (www.rki.de or <https://integrationskompass.hessen.de/informationen-des-hessischen-ministeriums-f%C3%BCr-soziales-und-integration-zum-coronavirus-verschiedenen>). In order not to unsettle them, do not discuss with your children everything that could possibly happen to them. Protect your children from unnecessarily disturbing images from television and the internet.

The current situation can lead to special burdens for you at home. Please use the school psychology advisory service at the state school authority in Fulda.

You can reach the school psychology counseling service on weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12 p.m. by phone: 0661 8390 - 113

I wish you a lot of strength and stamina in this situation. Stay healthy.

Sincerely yours

Stefan Schmitt
Senior government director
- as head of a state school authority