

# Parent Safety Toolkit

## Coping With Post-COVID Stress for Parents

Fulton County Schools is committed to providing safe and secure learning environments for our students. Our Board of Education makes annual, ongoing investments that provide safety and security to our physical buildings as well as programs that focus on the social and emotional well-being of our students and staff. This commitment continues with educational updates to parents and the community about student safety issues.

### Coping With Post-COVID Stress

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on our lives. Many of us are facing challenges that can be stressful, overwhelming, and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19, but they can make us feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. **Learning to cope with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about, and those around you become more resilient.**

Stress can cause the following:

- Feelings of fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, or frustration
- Changes in appetite, energy, desires, and interests
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Worsening of mental health conditions
- Increased use of tobacco, alcohol, and other substances

It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are ways that you can help yourself, others, and your community manage stress.

### Healthy Ways to Cope with Stress

- **Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories**, including those on social media. It's good to be informed but hearing about the pandemic constantly can be upsetting. Consider limiting news to just a couple times a day and disconnecting from phone, tv, and computer screens for a while.
- **Take care of your body**
  - Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate
  - Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals
  - Exercise regularly
  - Get plenty of sleep
  - Avoid excessive alcohol, tobacco, and substance use
  - Continue with routine preventive measures (such as vaccinations, cancer screenings, etc.) as recommended by your healthcare provider
  - Get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine
- **Make time to unwind** — Try to do some other activities you enjoy
- **Connect with others** — Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling
- **Connect with your community- or faith-based organizations** — While social distancing measures are in place, try connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail