

Dear Parents and AISZ Community,

This afternoon the Croatian Ministry of Health has recommended that anyone arriving from Italy as of today will be required to self quarantine for 14 days. These are the same restrictions as for traveling from China and South Korea.

In practical terms this means:

The Ministry of Health has recommended that travelers to the affected regions in Italy of Veneto and Lombardy who arrive in Croatia today and onwards, self-quarantine for 14 days even if they do not have symptoms. (Please be aware that other regions *may* be designated in the future.)

If you arrived from the Italian regions of Veneto and Lombardy prior to today, 24th Feb, you are exempt from self quarantine restrictions.

The same Health Advisory is applicable to travellers from South Korea after February 16.

As you are aware, we have developed a leveled response matrix which we will release tomorrow through our website. We have also constructed the ability to deliver education through a Virtual Learning Platform if the situation escalates.

Outlined below I have included information which will help reduce anxiety and help you talk with your children and families. This advice is derived from the International Schools' Counselors' Association.

The coronavirus (now officially named COVID-19) has been declared a public health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO) and uncertainty around this can bring about fear and worry with our students.

It is important to remember our children are looking towards us for reassurance and cues on how to react and respond. As you know, we have a structure to guide our response here at school and strategies to build resilience and to have reassuring conversations with kids at home can be helpful at these times:

1. Stay Positive : *Remember to keep calm. Children will pick up on the anxiety or fear that we, as adults, may feel or express causing them to also feel nervous and afraid. Comments made, reactions to news or changes to the environment and routines can create unease. Check-in on how your child is feeling and acknowledge and address their worries rather than ignore them. Having calm, panic-free discussions can offer a chance to share emotions and ask questions about what is happening around them. Helpful advice from [Psychology Today](#).*

2. Stick to the facts: *As you discuss, remember to look at the facts. Consider your child's age, processing, and emotions to determine how to frame these conversations. Let them know that there are no cases to date in Croatia and that the European governments are working together to do everything they can. If your child has additional questions you can look to find the answers. Here are two recognized sites to refer to for the facts, patterns and developments with respect to the virus:*

The World Health Organisation ([WHO](#))

European Centre for Disease Control ([ECDC](#))

It can also be comforting to be reminded that doctors around the world are looking for ways to address the coronavirus and highlight positive news as well (eg. There are tests for the virus and many patients recover and have been released from hospital already)

3. Consider Media Consumption: *When looking online, be mindful of how much media you are checking and how often. Think before and how you share what you read and hear. Take time to discuss that not everything they hear or see is real, consider the source of information and remember to fact-check to prevent fake news.*

4. Eliminate stigma: *Be mindful of how the coronavirus is explained to your children to avoid any person/group being blamed. Be sure to explain that if someone has a fever or cough, that does not mean a person automatically has the coronavirus.*

5. Boost Your Coping Strategies: *Use positive coping strategies to manage emotions and worries that may arise. Practice positive strategies to calm down or modify thinking to improve outlook and overall well-being. Coping strategies can include: positive self-talk, singing, dancing, reading, drawing, music, Netflix/movies, create a gratitude list, meditation, yoga, coloring, exercise, cooking/baking, talking to a friend or family member, or doing other activities that are fun or give you joy and make you feel good.*

[Psych Central](#) - Four ways to cope with fear

[Australian Psychological Society](#) - Advice for positive mental health.

If you notice your child is still worried or anxious, be assured that this is a normal reaction, and continue the conversations and providing care for your child. If you find that additional support is needed, please reach out to talk with your child's teacher or Counselor to plan on how to support them during this time.

Thank you for your support and assistance in complying with these Ministry recommendations and School Expectations. I will inform you with regular updates as we navigate these changing times.

Yours sincerely

Paul Buckley

Director AISZ