



Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information and resources for teachers and parents/carers

There is a lot of uncertainty around the current COVID-19 outbreak, particularly given that the situation is constantly developing and much information about the virus remains incomplete.

Understandably, this is causing a lot of worry and anxiety for children, families and staff living and working within Central Bedfordshire. Having children and young people at home, often when people are trying to work themselves, adds another layer of stress. It is therefore important to not only consider our physical health during such challenging times, but also to pay attention to our mental health. It is normal to feel worried, stressed and anxious when we are faced with uncertain situations, but the sooner we acknowledge and learn to take care of our mental health, the healthier and better equipped we'll be to cope with the situation we're having to face.

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Looking after yourself

Taking care of our mental health and checking in on others is something that we can all do, and we need to remember that by looking after our own mental health, we'll be best placed to look after our children. Remember when they tell you on aeroplanes that you need to put on your own oxygen mask before helping others, it's like that. Time is precious, especially when looking after children. However, try to plan your days or weeks to include something from each of the '5 ways to wellbeing' (developed by NEF)

BE ACTIVE

Try to make sure that you and your family get regular exercise every day. You Tube has lots of exercise videos for kids and adults. Get children involved in planning their own 'indoor PE'.

If current government advice permits, try to get outside once a day either into your garden if you have one or in a place where there are few people. If you can't go out, open the windows for some fresh air and take some time to look at the world outside.

TAKE NOTICE

Take a break from the news and social media and concentrate on what's happening in the here and now in your family. Notice and appreciate the small things. Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your wellbeing.

There's lots of good mindfulness apps to try, but if that's not for you, just getting into something you enjoy e.g. cooking, drawing etc and really focussing on it can be just as good.

CONNECT

Social connection is one of the most important ways that we can look after our mental wellbeing. Social distancing is going to make that trickier, but we're lucky enough to have technology to help us out. Think physical distancing, but social connections. Social media is great, but if you can, try to have phone calls or even video calls. Arrange to Facetime/Skype a friend for coffee, phone relatives more often than usual.

Whilst it can be helpful to share worries, try to find other things to talk about too.

GIVE

Research tells us that giving back to our community helps people to feel valuable and makes us happier. We might not be able to contribute to our community in our usual way, but many people will still be able to find ways to give back. Lots of community groups are setting up schemes that aim to help vulnerable people at this difficult time. If you want to get involved, check out local social media for ideas.

Many of us will not be in a position to offer practical support. We can still offer mutual support to friends and family by checking in with them regularly.

LEARN

Learning a new skill or honing an existing one gives us a sense of purpose and achievement. Whilst we're busy learning, we're less likely to experience anxious thoughts and worries. Social-distancing will bring new challenges, but it will give many of us the time to start a new hobby or learn about an area that we've always been interested in.

Credit: Wiltshire County Council and Mind Charity





Helping children manage in unsettling times – general advice for parents and carers

The novel Coronavirus outbreak has led to a high degree of worry, uncertainty and concern. The issue has been very present in the news, and all adults and children will have some degree of awareness of events so far, and may have had their lives disrupted. During these times both children and adults can potentially feel anxious and unsure.

For the most part, children will need what they've always needed; love, attention and opportunities to learn and play. However, children are also likely to need support to enable them to be resilient, process and manage their feelings about this novel situation we are faced with.

Alongside school, parents can help provide opportunities where feelings can be discussed within a safe context, as well as maintaining a sense of normality, routine and calm.

The following suggestions may be helpful:

1. **Reassure children that they are safe:** Children will need to be reassured regularly they are safe, and that adults will faithfully try to keep them safe.
 2. **Let children know that it is alright to be upset:** Tell children all feelings are OK, but it is important to still behave in a polite and respectful way to others.
 3. **Maintain a normal routine:** Set up a work/leisure/exercise routine at home. Make extra time to listen to what your children need to tell you. Try and keep to a structure and routine that suits you. Keep bedtime and morning routines close to existing ones to promote a sense of normality that children will find reassuring. Encouraging them to get up and dressed during the week will help maintain some difference between weekdays and weekends.
 4. **Keep boundaries firm** and make it clear that you expect the same standards of behaviour as usual. Boundaries show that adults are still in control and taking care of them, which helps children to feel safe.
 5. **Place an emphasis on resilience and strengths:** Focus on the child's skills, in terms of their daily life. Help them see they have many strengths to help them cope if feeling anxious or upset.
 6. **Look for opportunities to help others:** Acts of benevolence, charity and humanity help to restore positivity about the world.
 7. **Provide opportunities for children to be honest about their feelings:** Sharing worries or feelings of upset with other family members reduces a sense of vulnerability and isolation, raises optimism and self esteem. Checking in with your children to see if they have any worries can help them start these conversations.
 8. **Provide opportunities for physical exercise:** Exercise is valuable in developing natural chemicals in the brain to help us cope with feelings such as shock or worry. Make sure they get some time to burn off energy every day. Younger children will enjoy assault courses, discos etc. Older children and teens might respond better to fitness videos.
 9. **Expect children to do some learning every day.** In the longer-term schools are likely to provide opportunities for online learning. In the short term, or as extra activities there are a wealth of helpful websites, many of which they will be able to access independently. Continuing with their learning helps promote a sense of normality and purpose as well as keeping them up to date for when they are back at school.
 10. **Find opportunities for them to interact with their friends remotely.** For tweens and teens, contact with their peers is especially important. Technology provides lots of opportunities for older children to connect, chat and game together. But be wary of giving unsupervised access to platforms that you would not normally allow your child onto; the internet still poses the same risks as in normal times.
 11. **Give children opportunities to have a say in what will be happening.** They may have had a lot of their freedoms and choices removed for a while and may feel powerless or angry. Older children and teenagers will be more able to understand the risks in too much screen time, too little sleep, inactivity etc. They are more likely to 'buy in' to new rules and routines if they feel that they have a voice. Family meetings where children and adults problem-solve together can be helpful for this.
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12. **Communicate any concerns with school:** If you have any worries or concerns about your child's emotional behaviour please do let the school know. There will be things the school can do to help further.
13. **Look after yourself:** A time of stress can mean less energy and more potential for illness for you, as well as others. So please take care of yourself.

Credits: Tim Conroy-Stocker (Educational Psychologist practicing in Hong Kong) and Wiltshire Council

Later pages in this pack have links to websites with helpful ideas and activities covering a range of topics.





Guidance for teachers during the school closure due to Novel Coronavirus (most relevant to secondary teachers)

General

We have all been very unsettled by the current situation with the Novel coronavirus. Worry and concern has been very present in the news, and all adults and children will have some degree of awareness of events so far, and may have had their lives disrupted. It's normal that we would all feel anxious and upset by what is happening.

What's important is that we provide opportunities where students and adults feel safe, and if appropriate feelings can be discussed within a safe context, but at the same time maintaining a sense of normality, routine and calm.

In such times it is useful to:

- **Keep to normal routines as much as possible-** students will find the routines reassuring
- **Show Compassion for self and others-** Take time to look after yourself. Remember the guidance for oxygen masks on planes, self first then others
- **Model gratitude to others-** Make a special show of being thankful to others, for opportunities, for safety, for the people who care for us
- **Comment on strengths used-** This is definitely the time to notice and comment on the strengths used by others, and to notice our own
- **Highlight resilience in others-** Comment when someone has shown perseverance in the face of difficulty
- **Look out for others.** 4 simple letters are really important at the moment. If you notice someone is struggling, adult or child. Just ask R U O K? They may be fine, they may not, but asking makes sure we don't miss a chance to help

Specific resources for advisors/ tutors

- **Emphasising and developing resilience and inner resources.** Conveying to students that they have the power to manage difficult times and challenges can help to foster hope and positivity
 - (Yr 7-13) In any discussions of the current situations in Hong Kong a focus might be to identify the people who are helping. There are always those who give to others without question. This emphasises how many caring people there are in the world
 - (Yr 7-13) Suitcase of valuables exercise [1 2](#). This exercise helps students/ adults realise that there are positive resources they can call on when they feel anxious or upset.
 - (Yr 11-13) For older students and adults, this [5 minute wellbeing](#) resource is useful for identifying goals and sources of support for the year
 - **Mindful resets and relaxation.** Short meditations can be useful to reduce anxiety, and bring adults and students back to the present
 - (Yr 7-9) [The conveyor belt of worries](#) is a 5 minute meditation that helps students if they are ruminating over a current situation.
 - (Yr 7-9) [Sleep tight](#) is a great 6 minute meditation which can help students to go to sleep at night if they are having problems in this area.
 - (Yr 7-9) ["The spaghetti test"](#) is a 6 minute relaxation meditation where students need to be lying down. It involves tensing and relaxing muscles.
 - (Yr 11-13) [The Solid as a rock meditation](#) is a 9 minute file with a 1 minute introduction. It asks adults and students to visualise themselves as a rock in all 4 seasons emphasising the resilience of the rock remaining. A great one to boost strength and confidence.
 - (Yr 7-13) Drawing sketching and colouring can be relaxing activities for students. Drawing zentangles is a mindful drawing activity for students who don't like breathing meditation.
 - **Promotion of hope.** Hope is associated with higher academic success, good problem solving, creativity stronger friendships and lower levels of depression and anxiety. In times where hope seems challenged it's useful to create the conditions for more hope.
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- (Yr7-13) This [article](#) from the Greater Good organisation at the University of Berkeley has 5 suggestions for developing hope in students .
 - **Emphasising connectedness and relationships** Linking with others helps us to feel safe and secure and gives us the capacity to share thoughts and feelings.
 - (Yr 10-13)The 9 minute [Just like me meditation](#) emphasises connectedness and mutual respect for others. It's a paired activity that students may feel some self consciousness doing but it is also a very powerful exercise that helps develop empathy and connectedness with others. (*NB Listen to the meditation first to identify if you think it is suitable for your group*)
 - **Promoting safety.** In the current situation, adults and students might feel less safe in hong kong. School routines will feel very reassuring but there are some other activities that can make adults and students feel more secure
 - (Yr 7-9) [The safe place meditation](#) This 6 minute meditation asks students to visualise a safe place they can go to in their mind whenever they feel worried
 - **Sharing feelings** No one should be forced to talk about the current situation but it is good practice to offer the opportunity should someone want to.
 - (Yr 7-13) Sometimes it's useful to use visual resources such as blobs! [1 2 3](#) and ask students to colour in based on [certain questions](#): This can create an atmosphere where students are more able to share their feelings
 - **Promoting character strengths.** A focus on strengths, particularly strength spotting in others can help students develop problem solving skills and introduce a more positive outlook
 - Yr 10-13) Looking at students signature strengths from the VIA survey, and getting them to think about how they could leverage these strengths to cope with the current situation.
 - (Yr 10-13)Getting students to think of themselves at their best by producing a [best self story](#)
 - (Yr 10-13)Looking at the [strengths of inspirational people](#) to identify that there are caring and inspirational people in the world who adults and students may share strengths with.

Credit: Tim Conroy-Stocker, Educational Psychologist practicing in Hong Kong





Resources and ideas for home learning and wellbeing activities

This is intended to be a list of resources which may support short periods of learning and wellbeing activities. At this time of difficulty, it is important for parents to avoid feeling under pressure to over-structure and organise. We all need 'down time too.' Don't try to replicate a full school timetable –giving yourself and your children permission to accept this can be a big weight lifted.

General ideas:

- Writing emails to friends and family – particularly those in isolation
- Keeping a gratitude diary
- Daily exercise
- Arts and crafts

Resources (please note parents must review and monitor the appropriateness and suitability of resources):

Khan Academy

<https://www.khanacademy.org>

Maths and computing for all ages but other subjects at Secondary level. Note this uses the U.S. grade system but it's mostly common material.

BBC Learning

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/coursesearch/>

This site is old and no longer updated and yet there's so much still available, from language learning to BBC Bitesize for revision. No TV license required except for content on BBC iPlayer.

Futurelearn

<https://www.futurelearn.com>

Free to access 100s of courses, only pay to upgrade if you need a certificate in your name (own account from age 14+ but younger learners can use a parent account).

Seneca

<https://www.senecalearning.com>

For those revising at GCSE or A level. Tons of free revision content. Paid access to higher level material.

Openlearn

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/>

Free taster courses aimed at those considering Open University but everyone can access it. Adult level, but some e.g. nature and environment courses could well be of interest to young people.





Blockly

<https://blockly.games>

Learn computer programming skills - fun and free.

Scratch

<https://scratch.mit.edu/explore/projects/games/>

Creative computer programming

Ted Ed

<https://ed.ted.com>

All sorts of engaging educational videos

The Imagination Tree

<https://theimaginationtree.com>

Creative art and craft activities for the very youngest.

Cbeebies Radio

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/radio>

Listening activities for the younger ones.

Nature Detectives

<https://naturedetectives.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives/>

A lot of these can be done in a garden, or if you can get to a remote forest location!

Oxford Owl for Home

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home>

Lots of free resources for Primary age

Twinkl

www.twinkl.co.uk/offer and enter the code UKTWINKLHELPS

Educational resources website Twinkl has a special offer meaning their 'ultimate' membership (which is usually a paid subscription service) is currently available for free for one month's unlimited use.



TTS

<https://www.tts-group.co.uk/home+learning+activities.html>

Early Years and Primary free home learning packs created by teachers

Play Hooray

<https://playhooray.co.uk>

Free play prompts for little ones

World Books Online

<https://worldbook.kitaboo.com/reader/worldbook/#!/>

A collection of over 3000 ebooks free

Chatterpack

https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/resources-list-for-home-learning?utm_source=ChatterPack&utm_campaign=043ba2443c-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_11_22_10_30&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_ea92e30b7f-043ba2443c-47036471

A comprehensive list of FREE home learning resources, broken down into subjects and age phase, including resources for children with Special Educational Needs. The aim is for this list to be updated over time so keep checking back for new ideas.

Dropbox

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/x4zvtv7pj1rsq1hm4j3w5/Home-Learning-Websites-and-Resources.docx?dl=0&rlkey=qj213igmpp92433szlymoeq96> for a list of free home learning resources, broken down into subject areas. Some of the links may need you to set up an account to access the resources.

Weekly visual schedule resources for learners who need more structure <https://twitter.com/andyharley83/status/1238499262411026434>

Family Lockdown Tips & Ideas on facebook which has some nice activities and ideas on there. Health warning: as always, take care with social media. It can be fantastic for staying connected and sharing ideas. However it can be overwhelming too, for example social comparison can lead to feelings of anxiety, shame and self-negativity. The chances are that if you are struggling with sibling rivalry, 'cabin fever' and children's demands for screen time then others are too. Be kind to yourself.

National Trust have suspended car park charges but check before you go as some parks may close.

Mindfulness activities:

- <http://www.just-a-minute.org>
- <http://www.mindfulnessinfo.com>
- I phone/ pad apps – headspace, CALM
- Mindfulness- Finding Peace in a Frantic World by Mark Williams and Danny Penman (book).



Talking to children about Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Although it's tempting to try and protect children from difficult topics, they are more likely to worry when they're kept in the dark. Children and teenagers will be aware of what is happening but may not have all the facts they need to understand it.

These tips will help you communicate about Coronavirus with your child:

- Take time to talk and listen. Be clear that you are happy to answer any questions that they have. Be led by your child as they may not be that interested or want to know everything all at once. Try to answer any questions honestly but keep things in context e.g. "Sadly, some people do die, but the vast majority of people will recover, and children seem to be only mildly affected".
- Reassure them that their own risk is very low but that we all need to 'do our bit' to look after people who might be very unwell. Underline how helpful they are being by following the rules about hygiene and social-distancing. Knowing we're being altruistic helps us to bear the tough times.
- Give positive messages about everything you are doing as a family to keep yourselves safe. Talk about all the work people around the world are doing to find treatments and a vaccine.
- Keep explanations developmentally appropriate.

Young children up to about age seven will need very simple explanations that relate to their own experiences. Explain that, like other germs, Coronavirus can spread between people and make them ill. But because Coronavirus is a new germ that we don't know everything about, we need to take more care and so things might be a bit different for a while.

Older children and tweens will want to know more. They may have heard partial explanations and 'filled in the gaps' themselves with their own ideas, so check what they already think they know about it.

Teenagers will have a similar capacity to understand what's going on as adults. They will need calm, factual information and opportunities to talk through their worries and disappointments.

Give them an opportunity to talk about their feelings. Our instinct might be to 'make it all better', but it is normal to feel scared, sad and angry in the face of what's happening. Tell them that what is happening is not normal but that their feelings are.

Credit: Wiltshire County Council



Resources for talking to children about the COVID-19 virus

The following include child friendly resources and those to inform and assist adults in conversations with their children. Please ensure you check these resources before using with your children, as links can change and we must ensure internet safety.

Description	Weblink	Notes
Newspaper article 'How to Talk to Kids about Coronavirus'	https://parenting.nytimes.com/childrens-health/coronavirus-kids-talk	Aimed at parents
Talking to children about coronavirus – advice from the British Psychological Society	https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Talking%20to%20children%20about%20Coronavirus.pdf	Nice summary of key principles
National Association of School Psychologists	https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources	Many helpful links
Information from Young Minds	https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/	Aimed at adults
Psychologist presenting a short video with top tips for children who are worried	https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51896156	Aimed at children Scroll down the page for more information on each of the tips
Blog post from Young Minds	https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-youre-anxious-about-coronavirus/	Aimed at teenagers
BBC News article 'Coronavirus: how to protect your mental health'	https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799	Aimed at adults
BBC News video 'Coronavirus: how to manage anxiety and OCD'	https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-51909368/coronavirus-how-to-manage-anxiety-and-ocd-during-the-pandemic	Aimed at adults
Information from OCD UK	https://www.ocduk.org/ocd-and-coronavirus-survival-tips/	
Advice from adult mental health charity, Mind	https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/	Aimed at adults
Coping during COVID 19 resources for parents	https://childmind.org	
Article 'how to explain a global health crisis to children with autism'	https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/neuroscience-in-translation/202003/how-explain-global-health-crisis-children-autism	For parents. Includes some useful links.
Autism and coronavirus 20 tips	https://petervermeulenblog.wordpress.com/2020/03/16/autism-and-the-corona-virus-20-tips/	Preventing anxiety in children with autism
Informative video to explain the coronavirus to children	https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/	Suggested age range 7-14
The BBC Newsround site	https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround	This is updated regularly
Simple explanation of the virus with visuals – available in several languages	https://www.mindheart.co/descargables	Beware of the page before last – children who interpret language literally or who are anxious may blame themselves if someone



		near them gets the virus
Social story by Carol Gray *	https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf	
Simple social story about school closure *	https://twitter.com/DrJosieMaitland/status/1240047713510666241/photo/1	
Easy-read coronavirus information by Mencap	https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/Information%20about%20Coronavirus%20ER%20UPDATED%20130320%20SD%20editsAH.pdf	
Child-friendly information	https://theautismeducator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-.pdf	
Social story *	https://twitter.com/DrTinae/status/1239151826185961473	

* Social Stories are a simple and reassuring social learning tool. They were first developed by Carol Gray for children and young people on the autism spectrum who may have difficulty understanding the 'unwritten rules' of social communication, but are now used more widely. They provide short descriptions of situations and what to expect.





Books to share with children:

Something Bad Happened: A Kid's Guide to Coping with events in the News

Dawn Huebner.

How to process different world events (ages 6-12).

Draw on Your Emotions

Margot Sunderland.

A resource to help people express and communication their emotions.

What To Do When You're Scared & Worried: A Guide for Kids

James Crist.

A help guide to processing fears and worries (ages 9-13).

Have You Filled A Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids

Carol McCloud.

Encourages positive behaviour and expressing kindness and appreciation.

How are you Peeling: Foods with Moods

Saxton Freymann & Joost Elffers.

Explores how emotions look through pictures of Foods. A good way to talk about emotions with young children.

The Way I Feel

Janan Cain.

Explores feelings and a helpful way to talk about emotions with young children.

The Day the Sea Went Out and Never Came Back

Margot Sunderland.

A story for children who have lost someone they love (ages 4-12).

A Terrible Thing Happened

Margaret Holmes.

A story for children who have witnessed violence or trauma (ages 4-8)





Reputable sources of information and health advice for families

- NHS. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- NHS 111. <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>
- UK government <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>
- WHO <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Other sources of support

For parents

Samaritans

Call 116 123 <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>

Mind UK

<https://www.mind.org.uk/> <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/support-community-elefriends/>
UK Mental Health Charity with information and an online mutual support community

Family Action

Telephone: 0808 802 6666

Text message: 07537 404 282 <https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/familyline/>

The FamilyLine service supports people who are dealing with family pressures in a new and innovative way by using a network of volunteers from across the country to support family members over the age of 18 through telephone calls, email, web chat and text message.

For young people

www.kooth.com

www.youngminds.org.uk

www.keep-your-head.com





Reference documents:

The World Health Organisation

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/coping-with-stress.pdf?sfvrsn=9845bc3a_2
https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2

Mental Health UK

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

NEF – Five Ways to Wellbeing: The Evidence

<https://neweconomics.org/2008/10/five-ways-to-wellbeing-the-evidence>

Wang et al (2020) Mitigate the effects of home confinement on children during the COVID-19 outbreak. The Lancet; Correspondence.

[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30547-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30547-X)

National Association of School Psychologists

[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

Brooks et al (2020) The Psychological Effects of Quarantine and How to Reduce It: A rapid review of the evidence. In The Lancet Volume 395, ISSUE 10227.

[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30460-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30460-8)

The Child Mind Institute

<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

Mind Hong Kong

<https://www.mind.org.hk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ResponseCoronavirusENG6.2.2020-.pdf>

Wiltshire County Council – Looking After Yourself, Looking After Your Children

