

The Federation of Heathfield and St Francis Schools



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Wellbeing

We recognise that we are living through unprecedented times. Things are changing daily, at a local and national level, and the impact on day-to-day life is significant. This is, understandably, and worrying time for everyone. It is important that we are all looking finding ways to look after both our physical and mental health during this time of heightened stress and uncertainty.



In light of the current and developing situation and media coverage, it is likely that some children and young people may be concerned and anxious. This is reasonable, as it is probable that they have never experienced something like this before and do not have the experience to know what may happen.

This letter is intended to provide support and guidance to help young people and their families through this very difficult and unusual time.

(With thanks to our colleagues at Educational Psychology)

What can I do.....?

- Maintain normal routines as far as is possible. Routines and familiar experiences are very reassuring.
- Be aware that some children and young people may be more irritable, emotionally volatile or distracted than would usually be the case - and be prepared to allow them to talk and ask questions.
- Be aware that worries and concerns can show themselves in lots of different ways; for example, through play, through relationships with others etc.
- Provide opportunities for them to share their thoughts and to support each other.
- Choose a good time for a discussion with your child when they are happy to talk and when you are not having to immediately rush onto other things.
- Ask them to share what they know already. You will then know where to start the conversation.
- If they share worries or fears – show them that you understand how they are feeling. Don't try to dismiss or minimise their fears.
- Keep to the facts and keep the conversation positive. Tell them that doctors and scientists are working on the treatments, and talk about what they can do to have some control, for example focusing on good hand-washing, using tissues etc.
- Don't be afraid of saying you don't know if there is a question that you don't know the answer to.
- Make it clear that they can talk further with you if they have more questions or need more reassurance – and check in with them after a while to see how things are going.
- Try to end the conversations with a comment, topic or activity that is calming and reassuring.



Where can I find information and support?.....

There are lots of very useful website with resources to use with your child. Please see below a list of websites to visit.



CAMHS support

<https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/issue/coronavirus-help-support-and-advice/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Hampshirecamhs1/>

The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families is a children's mental health charity. They have a range of advice on their website, including advice for children and families about how to support during periods of disruption:

<https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/anna-freud-learning-network/coronavirus/>

Talking to children and young people about coronavirus / COVID-19 General information for adults talking to children:

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-information-for-children/>

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/blog/how-to-talk-to-children-about-covid-19/>

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

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-talk-your-child-about-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-offers-advice-schools-parents-and-carers-help-children-through-uncertainty>

Talking to children with autism – advice for adults:

<https://usevisualstrategies.com/autism-coronavirus-helping-students-understand/>

Stories and social stories to share with children:

<https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Childrens-story-about-coronavirus.pdf>

<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf>

<https://theautismeducator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-.pdf>

For young people to access directly

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/looking-after-your-mental-health-while-self-isolating/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51861089>

Information and support continued.....

Speaking space—videos and support for young people with special needs

<http://www.speakingspace.co.uk/covid-19-information/>

Having good mental health helps us relax more, achieve more and enjoy our lives more. This NHS website offers advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families is a national children's mental health charity which offers advice for supporting mental health and wellbeing:

<https://www.annafreud.org/selfcare/>

Support for mental health and wellbeing of children and young people:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

Information about supporting young people with anxiety

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/get-help/anxiety-information/young-people-and-anxiety/>

Apps

Calm is a worldwide app for guided relaxation and mindfulness. They have created free access to support guided relaxation in response to the coronavirus situation

https://www.calm.com/blog/take-a-deep-breath?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=715072-free-mindfulness-resources-from-calm&utm_source=lists%2F51225-Ultimate-LoveLife-Makeover-Summit&simplero_object_id=su_eWE1de2opeEQMZhT61XBFMVm

Headspace (mindfulness app) have launched a free section called Weathering the storm. This includes meditation, sleep and movement exercises.

https://www.headspace.com/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=917256451&utm_content=51529951612&utm_term=411021410531&headspace&gclid=Cj0KCQjw1v0BRDaARIsAGTWD1u3aafq2XCRSgwwzPYm0cuv1Q_m-09YLORDCIGoAGyOzXHLMWUZRNkaAmzIEALw_wcB

Smiling Mind – an app designed to support with meditation and mindfulness for children, families and schools. Their website provides lots of information and guidance and the app provides guided relaxation / mindfulness sessions.

<https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>

Looking after your own mental health in relation to covid-19

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/blog/covid-19-and-anxiety-part2/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51734855>

Information and support continued.....

Child-friendly explanation of Coronavirus for Primary age students

https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685_319c5acf38d34604b537ac9fae37fc80.pdf

Your wellbeing Coronavirus and your wellbeing, by Mind UK:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

5 ways to wellbeing, by Mindkit:

<https://www.mindkit.org.uk/5-ways-to-wellbeing/>

We hope that information in this letter is useful and will support our children and their families at this difficult time.

CORONAVIRUS LATEST NEWS AND INFORMATION

Latest News

[Coronavirus - Latest Update and Information](#)

Please also check our school websites and Facebook pages for more up to date information. You will also find ideas for home learning, if you wish to.



We will post a wellbeing tip each day. Why not give them a try?



There will be daily Makaton signs to learn and practice with your family.

Look out for the weekly newsletter with updates for you and your child. This will include a short letter to the children.



There is someone manning the phones at school all week, including over the holidays. Please give us a ring if you need a chat or some support.

You will get a phone call from your child's teacher weekly, to check in on your health and wellbeing.

Stay safe and look after each other. We are thinking of you all at this time.