



A GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS IN  
SUPPORTING PARENTS, CARERS,  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
DURING THE COVID-19  
PANDEMIC

**Sefton Educational Psychology Service**

**A guide for schools, parents, carers and children / young people**

**Understanding Coronavirus**

**Managing emotions related to Coronavirus**

**Supporting children at home**

**Supporting children if faced with loss**

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## Table of Contents

<b>Section 1 - Understanding Coronavirus</b> .....	2
Helping children to understand coronavirus.....	2
Key Questions and Possible Answers .....	4
External Resources .....	5
Coronavirus Information Sheet for Young People .....	6
What is Coronavirus? .....	6
Why do so many talk about this virus? .....	7
Will it pass? .....	7
<b>Section 2 -Managing emotions related to Coronavirus</b> .....	9
Anxiety and worry linked to Coronavirus.....	9
For older children and young people.....	9
External Resources .....	11
Supporting younger children .....	12
Managing your child’s anxieties .....	14
External Resources .....	15
<b>Section 3 - Supporting children at home – a guide for parents and carers</b> .....	17
Supporting children at home .....	17
Activity ideas.....	19
<b>Section 4 - Loss, bereavement and grief</b> .....	23
Guidance on bereavement during the COVID-19 pandemic .....	23
Grieving and isolation.....	23
How you can help another person .....	24
How children and young people can be supported at home .....	24
<b>A message of hope</b> ... ..	28

## **Section 1 - Understanding Coronavirus**

### *Helping children to understand coronavirus*

Coronavirus is something that all children will be aware of by now, but there should be a balance between providing information creating excessive worry.

The British Psychological Society (BPS) has issued the following guidelines on talking to children about the coronavirus:

- 1. It is good to talk:** Children will have heard about Coronavirus and likely noticed changes around them (such as people wearing face masks). It is important they feel comfortable talking to trusted adults about Coronavirus as they will be the best source of information and reassurance for them. It's also likely they will talk to their friends or other children, which can involve imagination and misinformation so having the chance to check-in with trusted adults is even more helpful.
- 2. Be truthful but remember the child's age:** It is better for children to take an honest and accurate approach – give them factual information but adjust the amount and detail to fit their age. For example, you might say 'we don't yet have a vaccination for Coronavirus, but doctors are working very hard on it' or 'a lot of people might get sick, but normally it is like a cold or flu and they get better'. Younger children might understand a cartoon or picture better. We also recommend that adults watch news programmes and then filter this information to their child in a developmentally appropriate way.
- 3. Allow children to ask questions:** It is natural that children will have questions, and likely worries, about Coronavirus. Giving them the space to ask these questions and have answers is a good way to alleviate anxiety. Again, try to be honest in your responses – it is ok to say you don't know. At the moment, there are questions we don't have answers to about Coronavirus – you can explain this to the child and add in information about what people are doing to try to answer these questions. Maybe the child has an idea too – let them tell you or draw them.
- 4. Try to manage your own worries:** Uncertainty can make all of us feel anxious or worried. Identify other adults you can talk to about your own worries and questions. What things usually help to make you feel a bit calmer? If you are at home, music, breathing and relaxation techniques, distraction (such as watching something funny), and time with family members or pets can all help. Talk to children when you feel calm – it will reassure them.

- 5. Give practical guidance:** Remind the child of the most important things they can do to stay healthy – washing their hands and the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ advice for coughs and sneezes. Help the child practise and increase their motivation for keeping going (maybe thinking of a song they want to sing while washing their hands).

An additional point we thought it was useful to address is access to information from the media. Whilst it is important for children to have an understanding about what is going on, there is so much information about coronavirus and constantly rising death toll and infection rates at the moment that it is overwhelming for even adults, never mind children. We need to monitor children’s access to online information and news and ensure that when they do access information, they are able to evaluate it and judge whether it is information they should listen to and/or share. This is especially important for older children and young people.

## *Key Questions and Possible Answers*

### **Why am I not in school?**

The virus spreads when lots of people are close together. In school, lots of children are close together. We are staying at home to stop the virus passing from person to person and to keep everyone safe.

### **Where are my friends?**

They are at home with their families and they are stopping the virus from being spread. By not being with other people we can stop the virus from being spread.

### **What are the teachers doing?**

Some teachers are in school looking after children whose parents can't be at home right now. Other teachers will be at home with their families. They are trying to keep safe just like you and stop the virus from being spread.

### **Will I get Coronavirus?**

Anyone can get Coronavirus, but more adults get the virus than children. We don't know whether we might get the virus, but we can make sure you are safe if you do.

### **When can I go back to school?**

We do not know right now when you will go back to school, but the government will tell schools when they can reopen, and schools will tell families.

### **What can I do to help?**

You can keep washing your hands. Make sure if you cough or sneeze, you cover it up and put any tissues in the bin.

### **Are people dying?**

Some people are dying but this is more very old people or people that have other health issues.

### **What about my learning/maths/English etc?**

When you go back to school, you will be able to learn but you can also learn at home too. What would you like to learn about?

## *External Resources*

There are some online resources which are useful either for children to look through on their own, or with the support of an adult. We have included some of these below:

### Resources for children in Primary School

- The Children's Commissioner has produced a [great workbook](#) to help children understand the Coronavirus and the changes because of it.
- [The BBC Newsround site](#) covers a range of issues related to Coronavirus including a child-friendly explanation of what the virus is and further information about issues such as school closure, the NHS and what terms like 'social distancing' mean.

### Resources for children in Secondary School

- Brain Pop has a great [animated video](#) around Coronavirus with quizzes
- The [Crisis Psychology Centre in Bergen, Norway](#) has some useful information for adolescents or older children. We have incorporated this into a factsheet below.

### Resources for Children or Young People with Additional Needs

- Mencap have produced an excellent [easy read information sheet about coronavirus](#). This is particularly useful for children, young people or adults whose understanding is improved with visuals and when information is given in bitesize chunks. It covers what coronavirus is, what to do if you think you have it, and how to help stop the spread.
- There are a range of social stories available about Coronavirus, such as [this one](#) by The Autism Educator or [the one](#) produced by Carol Gray, the creator of social stories.
- Sefton Council's Social Communication Team have created a [page](#) on Sefton's local offer specific to the needs of pupils with social communication needs and / or ASD, although this may be helpful for all children

## *Coronavirus Information Sheet for Young People*

### What is Coronavirus?

The news is filled with items about Coronavirus. I don't know how much you think about it but thought we could talk about it. First, let me say a little about what I know (your parent or carer might be able to direct you to some more up-to-date information).

It started in China where several people were infected with the disease. They think it was first transmitted from animals to humans, but we do not know how the first humans were infected. The disease transmits through contact between people and many did not know how it transmitted so more people got the disease. Then it spread to other countries - many people have received it from someone who has been abroad.

The disease spreads through contact from an ill person to a healthy person, through hand contact or through a healthy person coming into contact with body fluid from the ill person. Body fluids are saliva, sweat, blood, vomiting, urine, and stool (poop). If an ill person touches a handle, table or sink, the infection can stay there for hours. That is why it is so important that we keep at least two metres away from others and avoid touching surfaces with our bare hands. When we come into the house, we should wash our hands with soap and warm water, rubbing them together for at least 20 seconds. When you cough or sneeze, do it into a tissue and then put the tissue into a bin. Don't cough into your hand – use your elbow if you cannot get a tissue in time.

Many are working to find out more about the virus so that vaccines can be created to protect against it, but it takes many months to do this. Those who get ill get what is called a respiratory infection - they cough and can get pneumonia. Most get mild ailments, called symptoms, others severe. In the world, many have died, but very few of those who are infected die. This is a little difficult to understand. But imagine that everyone in a big city is gathered in one place, maybe as many as 100,000 people. If all these were infected, almost all would become well again, but some could become so ill that they died. If you have learned about percentages, the experts do not know how many percent die, but it is less than 5 percent. This means that over 95,000 of the city's inhabitants would get better. We know that the virus is most dangerous for those who already have a serious illness, especially those with lung disease and who are old with weaker bodies. It is the adults who are responsible for your contact with grandparents and other elderly or ill in your family.

### Is Coronavirus dangerous?

Yes, it is dangerous for those who are ill and old. For most of us it is not dangerous, but we can get ill when in contact with a sick person. All those who are going to help the ill know this and want to protect themselves. Now all of us protect ourselves by being careful and washing hands and keeping distance. Most people who get infected do not get serious symptoms, but we must say that the disease is dangerous because it is deadly to some people. But fortunately, they are very, very few. Healthcare professionals who meet ill patients can be infected, and some have. Now they have become even more careful to avoid infection from the ill. From previous outbreaks of infectious diseases, they have learned to be careful and protect themselves.

If you are wondering if the Coronavirus is dangerous for children, children do not normally get very ill from it, but they might do if they have a serious illness. Children are usually only slightly ill, and many are not infected at all. Most adults who are healthy have bodies that can handle the virus well.

### Why do so many talk about this virus?

Adults are so concerned about this because there are so many people infected in countries all over the world. Anything that is threatening to us and that we don't know much about is scary and gives us worry and uncertainty. Now that so much in our daily life is not as it used to be, it is something we talk about a lot. That is why there is a lot of reporting in the media and this makes both adults and young people more worried. It is the job of the leaders of our country to prepare us for the disease and so lots of information is shared through daily speeches by people from the government.

### Will it pass?

We do not know how long this will take. Even though your school might be closed, it will open again. We just don't know when, because the most important thing now is to slow the spread so that we can help those who get ill. In China, where many people were first infected, most are now healthy again. It shows that it is very important for us all to follow the rules about not having visitors to our house and not going out unless we really need to. This will mean things will get back to normal more quickly. As soon as we know more about this, we will be told about it, but it will probably take weeks and maybe months before we know exactly what is happening. For now, we have to live with the situation as it is and listen to what those who lead the country and the Health Service say.

### What can children do?

It is the adults who are responsible for working with diseases. It is in hospitals that the ill are taken care of and so you do not have to worry. If your parent or carer works in a hospital or in the health care system, then you should know that they are well prepared if they are going to treat any ill person where they work. Remember that your family are doing something to keep the virus from spreading to others. By following what you have been told about how to wash your hands and keep distance from others you are helping to prevent more people from getting ill.

Things you can do:

- Take care not to spread rumors or or sensational stories that you do not know are true, whether that is telling it directly to someone or online
- Try not to frighten younger brothers or sisters
- Play and have fun as much as you can and try to think as little as possible about what's happening.
- Keep busy; contact friends by phone; use the internet; do homework set by school if school is closed; keep in touch with grandparents by internet or phone
- Talk to adults and ask them to explain what is happening and what is new, if you are thinking about the disease. Having a fixed 'talk time' every day can be good.
- If you think about this very much, then ask your parents if they have good advice for thinking less. A good method is to set aside a time to think about your worries (worry time of, say, 10 minutes) and if any worries should appear in your mind outside the worry time, you always say to yourself, «I postpone this worry until my worry time». Doing this every time will make it happen automatically

## **Section 2 -Managing emotions related to Coronavirus**

### *Anxiety and worry linked to Coronavirus*

It is completely normal to feel anxious about the situation we are all facing at the moment. Nobody expected this and so we weren't able to prepare for it. Things that might usually make us feel better when we feel anxious under normal circumstances, for example, our normal routine, seeing friends, or going to the gym, we are not able to do at present due to government guidelines to stay at home.

If you are feeling anxious, please be reassured that *you are not alone in this feeling*. Feeling concerned by the news is understandable, especially if you are struggling with your own mental health or a physical illness. It might be that you are worried about your own health, the health of someone around you, or the impact the virus will have on your life.

### *For older children and young people...*

Young Minds have issued the following guidelines to help young people manage worries related to Coronavirus:

#### ***Talk to someone about how you are feeling***

While it is normal to feel worried, if you are starting to feel overwhelmed, it's important to acknowledge your feelings and speak to someone you trust, whether that's a friend, a family member, a teacher or a helpline.

#### ***Arm yourself with the facts***

There is a lot of information about the virus out there and false reports can fuel anxiety. Stay on top of what's happening by using the [government website](#); it is the most up-to-date and reliable source of information. The [NHS coronavirus page](#) can also be useful if you are worried about symptoms or family members.

You might see stories or posts on social media that makes you feel anxious. It can be very hard to know whether or not social media posts are true, so try not to rely on updates from there.

#### ***Know what you can do***

If you are feeling scared or panicked by coronavirus, remind yourself that there are practical things you can do. There is lots of advice about this on the [NHS website](#).

You might feel anxious about this advice because it might trigger compulsive thoughts and unhelpful behaviours to do with washing and hygiene. If this happens

to you, please talk to someone you trust about it. You could ask them to help you, and let people around you know what you find helpful and what you don't.

It can also help to have a few gentle and regular reminders up your sleeve if you start to feel anxious about washing or hygiene. Remember this advice is about caring for yourself and others, but there is a limit to what you can do – so whatever happens, try to be kind to yourself.

### ***Don't overexpose yourself to the news***

Staying informed can make you feel in control but the constant news reports could also become overwhelming. Try to get your information from reputable websites (like those we've mentioned above).

If you do want to read or watch the news, try to limit the amount of time you spend and stick to regular intervals in the days. If you are finding it hard not to think about the news, try to plan some activities that you enjoy and which will take your mind off things, whether that's texting or facetimeing a friend, watching a film, reading a book or going for a walk. You can find the latest government guidance on leaving your home [here](#).

Do take a break from social media if you feel like the updates are getting too much. Remember you are in control of what you see on your feed. Take breaks when you do feel like things are getting too much or mute and unfollow accounts that make you feel more worried. For more advice and tips on looking after your mental health on social media, check out this [#OwnYourFeed campaign](#).

### ***Plan your time***

It's likely that you've been asked by your school, college or workplace to stay at home for a period of time. If you are living at home, talk to your family about this and share your feelings with them, if you can. We understand that this could be quite a daunting prospect, but try to think of this as a chance to live in a different way for a while. Think about what you might want to do during this time, how you will stay connected and how you will prioritise your wellbeing. Planning might help reduce any anxiety or troubling thoughts. With so much uncertainty in the news, creating a routine you stick to can really help maintain a sense of structure and normality. Try to find time in your routine for activities that help you feel calm.

### ***Find things that help you feel calm***

Like at any other time, it's important that you are not only looking after your physical health, but your mental health too. Think about some activities that can help when you are feeling overwhelmed, like breathing techniques, writing down how you feel, playing music or talking to a friend. For some ideas, have a look at [how you can make a self-soothe box](#), or these [coping techniques](#).

## *External Resources*

### **Young Minds Crisis Messenger**

- Provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis
- If you need urgent help text YM to 85258
- All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors
- Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.

### **Childline**

- Comforts, advises and protects children 24 hours a day and offers free confidential counselling.
- Phone 0800 1111 (24 hours)
- [Chat 1-2-1 with a counsellor online](#)

### **The Mix**

- Information, support and listening for people under 25.
- Phone 0808 808 4994 (24 hours)
- [Get support online](#)

### **Samaritans**

- 24 hour confidential listening and support for anyone who needs it. (Adults included.)
- [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)
- Phone 116 123 (24 hours)

### **Kooth**

- Kooth provides online support for children and young people in Sefton. The site is staffed by fully trained and qualified counsellors and is available until 10pm each night, 365 days per year. It is free, safe, confidential and provides a way for young people to receive counselling, advice and support on-line

### **Every Mind Matters**

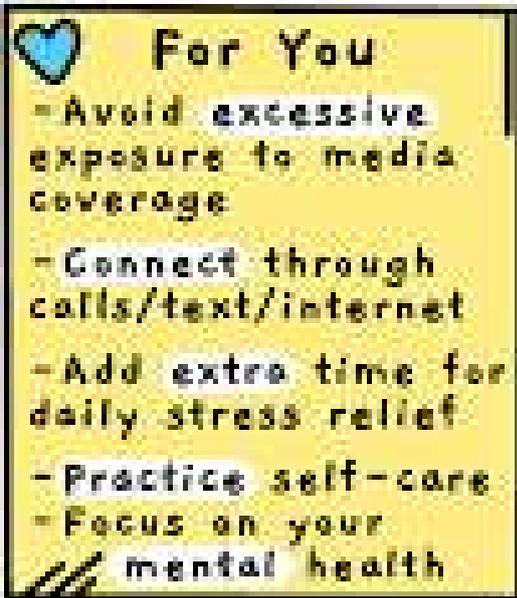
- A nationally available set of free resources and has some good advice regarding Covid-19 and mental health

## *Supporting younger children*

### *5 top tips for parents*

1. Allow children to ask questions. It is natural that children will have questions and worries about Coronavirus. Giving them the space to ask these questions and have answers is a good way to ease anxiety. It is also okay to say you don't know – at the moment, there are questions that we don't have the answers to about Coronavirus
2. Younger children might understand a cartoon or a picture better than an explanation. Maybe your child has an idea too – let them tell you or draw them
3. Give practical guidance: remind your child of the most important things that they can do to stay healthy and encourage them to engage with these through making them interesting, eg. Singing songs while washing your hands. Base your information on facts and not scaremongering. Try restricting yourself to key sources of information eg. NHS advice and the UK government response
4. Keep as much routine and structure to your child's day as possible. This will help your child gain a sense of safety and certainty. Try to keep daily routines as stable as possible during this break. As much as possible, try to stick to daily routines, with wake up times, meals, naps and bedtimes as usual. Children thrive on predictability and it's good for their caregivers, too
5. Try to manage your own worries and engage in self-care. Uncertainty can make all of us feel anxious and worried and your children will be receptive to how you are responding. Identify other adults you can talk to about your own worries. Use techniques that help you feel a bit calmer – if you are at home, music, breathing and relaxation techniques, distraction (such as watching something funny) and chatting to friends and family on the phone can all help.

# MANAGING CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) ANXIETY



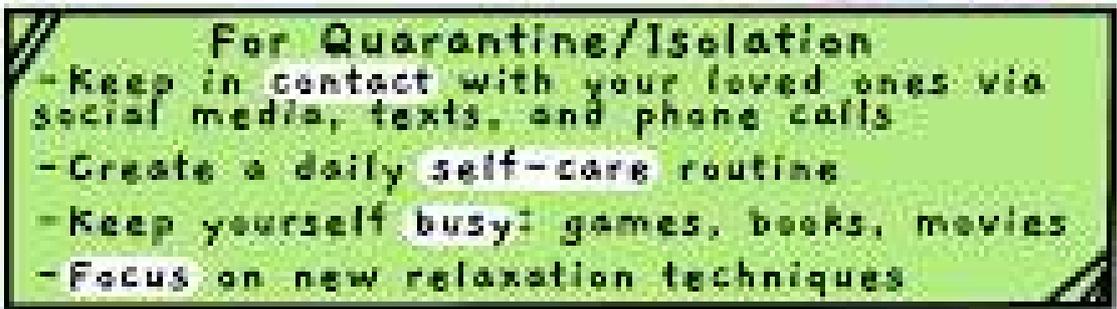
**For You**

- Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage
- Connect through calls/text/internet
- Add extra time for daily stress relief
- Practice self-care
- Focus on your mental health



**For Kids**

- Reassure them that they're safe
- Let them talk about their worries
- Share your own coping skills
- Limit their news exposure
- Create a routine & structure

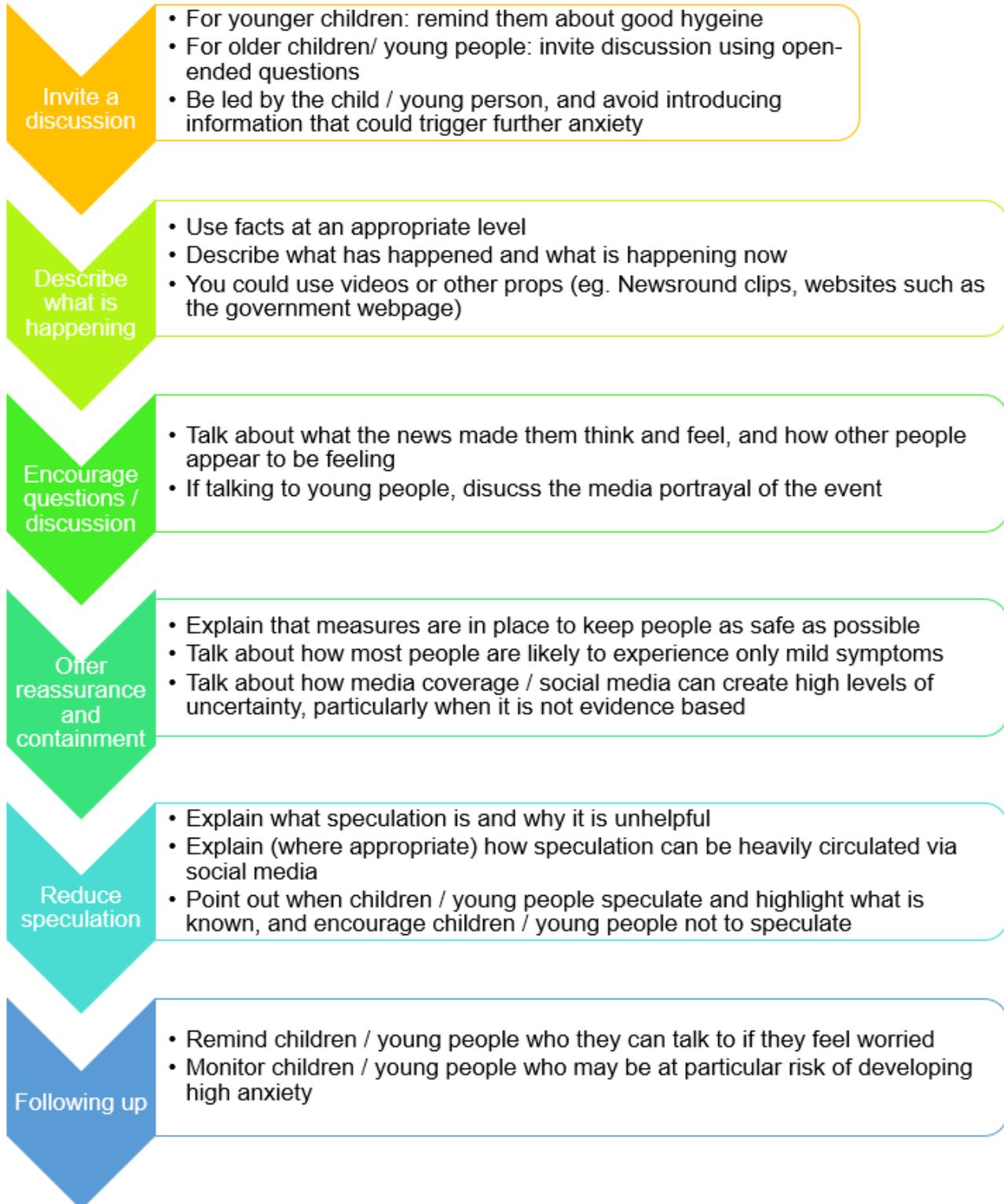


**For Quarantine/Isolation**

- Keep in contact with your loved ones via social media, texts, and phone calls
- Create a daily self-care routine
- Keep yourself busy: games, books, movies
- Focus on new relaxation techniques

## Managing your child's anxieties

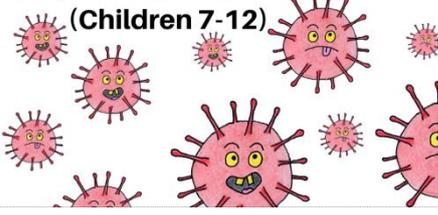
Below is a suggested model to help parents / carers manage their child's anxieties relating to Coronavirus through conversation.



## External Resources

### [Recovery College](#)

#### **Coping during the pandemic (Children 7-12)**



things to do at home and how to help yourself.

This course by the Recovery College has been written for children aged 7-12 as a way of learning about the global pandemic. You will learn helpful information about what the new virus is, how to stay healthy and do your best not to pass it on, how you might feel about it,

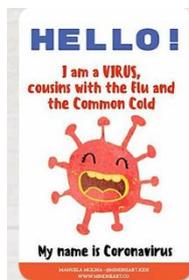
### [Sheffield's Children's NHS Foundation Trust](#)



Self Care Kit

This is a very helpful guide to self-care for families at home during the Coronavirus. There is further useful guidance available at the creditors link above.

### [Mind Heart](#)



This PDF download is a worksheet to help parents explain the virus to young children in a way that can help reduce the fear and worry it can cause in children.

<https://www.parentclub.scot/topics/health/coronavirus>



The Parent Club website has lots of useful information to help families who are in isolation at home with young children

The resource on the following page can be used as a reminder to young people to be kind to themselves.



## **Section 3 - Supporting children at home – a guide for parents and carers**

### *Supporting children at home*

It is important to recognise that this is an unsettled time in everybody's life, including children. During this period, we need to make sure we support our children to feel safe and loved, maintain routine where possible and perhaps use the opportunity for projects or activities that we wouldn't otherwise be able to. In this section, we make some suggestions for supporting your children at home.

#### **1. Maintain some form of routine**

This will be less strict than a normal schooltime routine, but it is probably beneficial to stick to a general bed-time, tea-time and some key activities throughout the day. It may be nice to start the day with a consistent activity – many children around the country have been taking part in [PE with Joe Wicks](#) on YouTube at 9am every day.

#### **2. Have Family Time**

Whilst this time is uneasy for everyone, it is not often we get the opportunity to spend so much time with our families. Make sure you allow yourself to play games together, watch TV together and generally have fun. Think about activities or games you played as a child and introduce your children to these. The most important thing for your child right now is to feel safe, secure and loved.

#### **3. Physical Distancing is not Social Distancing**

Staying away physically from people we do not live with is vitally important to protect everyone's health. However, that does not mean we have to stop having social contact with our friends. Make the most of any mobile devices you have in the house to use Skype, FaceTime or similar. Children can chat or play alongside their friends without being physically near them. This is also a good idea to stay in contact with family members. If you don't have mobile devices or access to the internet, sending letters or postcards is a great way to keep in contact with family and friends.

#### **4. Projects**

School may have set work for your child to access and this is great. It is also the perfect opportunity to work on some projects. A history project could mean phoning their Grandparents for information about what their school experience was like. You could start a craft project and work on a little bit each day. A good idea is to have a journal for children to write a line a day in during this period. This could be a record of an important period of history which could be passed through generations.

**5. Remember adults are the role model in the household**

It is important to remember that adults are a role model for children. Make sure that you follow the guidelines that the government has set out – washing your hands frequently, maintaining good hygiene and sticking to social distancing rules. Be sure to recognise any worries you may have at this time and how this may appear to your child. If they see adults being excessively worried, they will likely feel this too. Make sure you have time to discuss your worries with another adult.

**6. Make sure that any information children access is a) accurate and b) appropriate for their age**

This is covered elsewhere in the guide, but use child friendly sources of information to help children understand the coronavirus and limit access to news reports etc. It is important to make sure children have an understanding of what is going on, but that they aren't bombarded with a constant stream of information.

**7. Make time for yourself**

Practice self-care activities for you as well as your children. Whether this is having a bath, reading, chatting to your friends on the phone, or even online gaming, make sure you have some down-time too.

**8. Maintain a Healthy and Active Lifestyle**

Time at home provides extra time for creating home-cooked meals (if you can get the ingredients!) and also including your child in creating these. You could spend time looking through recipes and plan some meals to cook for the week. It's also important to keep active during this time. This could be by going outside for a 'distanced' walk, or in-house activities. There are plenty of YouTube workouts targeted towards children such [The Body Coach](#), [Cosmic Kids Yoga](#) or [Just Dance](#). Failing this, you could create your own workouts, obstacle courses or even make up dance routines to your favourite songs!

**9. Make Plans**

Things might be different at the moment, but there will be a time when things are back to normal. Every time someone in your family wishes they could do something, make a note of it and put it in a jar. When rules on isolation are relaxed, you can pick out an activity to do together.

**10. Reduce additional stress**

Sometimes letting your children play on an iPad is ok. Sometimes watching cartoons for an entire morning is ok. While everything else is stressful, we need to accept that sometimes we should make allowances in our expectations. While we need to try and maintain some semblance of routine, it is ok if some days do not go to plan.

## Activity ideas

We would like to provide some additional activities, resources, websites and documents to download.

We anticipate it may be quite hard for parents and carers to encourage their children to engage with learning at home, so we are trying to offer a range of activities to inspire and motivate children and adults to have fun and learn too.

### **Activities for school-aged children**

It's easy to forget how important play is for children. Here are some ideas for simple play activities from [Playful Childhood in Wales](#). You could make it a mission to complete at least one of these each day.

1. "Egg" and spoon races (no real eggs needed – a ping pong ball works fine).
2. Act out a story from a book, like *Fun in the Dungeon*
3. Blindfold (hoodies on back to front) pillow fights
4. Catch the fairy (use a torch and shine it in a dark room)
5. Clapping games
6. Drawing pictures and colouring in
7. Dressing up
8. Eye spy
9. Hide and seek
10. Hopscotch – made with tape
11. Junk modelling with smaller household items
12. Kitchen disco
13. Making cars, castles or spaceships with cardboard boxes
14. Making dens
15. Making paper planes
16. Making small worlds with dinosaurs, toy cars, toy animals
17. Musical chairs
18. Obstacle course – using sofa cushions, chairs
19. Ping pong or volleyball with a balloon
20. Playing school, café, offices, shops, hairdressers
21. Putting on a performance
22. Rock/paper/scissors
23. Saucepan drums
24. Simon says
25. Skipping or French skipping (elastics).
26. Sock puppets
27. Steppingstones with cushions
28. Tea party/indoor picnic
29. The floor is lava
30. Treasure hunt.

## Further ideas for activities for children...

- **Cosmic Kids** have many fantastic videos to calm or energise you  
<https://www.cosmickids.com/>
- **The Teen Yoga Foundation** exists to promote the wellbeing of teens through therapeutic yoga. Visit their YouTube channel  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCW56cm0SXozQzVH3GNn6t8A?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCW56cm0SXozQzVH3GNn6t8A?view_as=subscriber) or Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/TeenYogaMindfulness/>
- **Healthflix** - free online health and wellbeing classes. Live on Zoom or watch again on YouTube <https://www.healthflix.online/> [YouTube LINK](#)
- **Paper and pencil type activities** which develop problem-solving skills  
<https://www.playworks.org/resource/fun-paper-and-pencil-games-to-play/>
- **Sesame Street** have developed a site which provides content and resources you can use with your family to offer comfort and spark playful learning activities <https://www.sesamestreet.org/caring>
- **Bash the Trash** make your own instruments out of recyclable materials  
<https://www.retradeproject.co.za/bash-the-trash>
- **Vroom** activities for brain building moments <https://www.vroom.org/>
- **Create, Play, Move and Learn** facebook page with loads of ideas  
[https://www.facebook.com/pg/CreatePlayMoveandLearn/posts/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/CreatePlayMoveandLearn/posts/?ref=page_internal)
- **NASA kids' club** <https://www.nasa.gov/kidsclub/index.html>
- **Inky Happy Place** - with free creative resources  
<https://www.johannabasford.com/happyplace/>
- **Story line Online** has lots of fantastic free on-line stories read by actors and with animations <https://www.storylineonline.net/>
- **Lovely free mindfulness colouring** -  
<https://diaryofajournalplanner.com/free-mindfulness-colouring-sheets/>
- **Mindfulness games cards** - [Mindfulness Games Link](#)
- **Learn to knit handout** -  
<https://media.craftyarnCouncil.com/files/teach/WUA-PTG Bk web 5.pdf>
- **Cheap and easy home crafts** -  
[https://wvla.org/downloads/Annual\\_Conference\\_2013/craftbookletforwvla.pdf](https://wvla.org/downloads/Annual_Conference_2013/craftbookletforwvla.pdf)
- **Free e-book for arts and craft ideas**  
<https://www.vipmumsndads.co.uk/shop/ready-to-go-art-ebook-one-free/>
- **A wonderful and wide ranging selection of activities and links to other websites** <http://www.thesensoryprojects.co.uk/covid19-resources>
- **Free e-books, videos and resources for children and adults** [LINK](#)
- **Draw with Rob** - free online drawing lessons  
<http://www.robbiddulph.com/draw-with-rob>

- **24 best podcasts for kids of all ages** <https://www.timeout.com/new-york-kids/things-to-do/best-podcasts-for-kids-of-all-ages>
- **Escape Room online game** - <https://www.365escape.com/>
- **Make your own comics** for free [also useful for creating social stories] <https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>
- **Creative recipes (eg. slime recipes)** [Play Ideas - PlayBoard NI - Leading The Play Agenda](#)

### **Activities for Young Children**

The list from the website [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org) has a great list of activities for younger children included below:

#### **Outside time:**

For infants:

- Bring their pram outside for a walk or a story.
- Lay a blanket on the grass for tummy time.
- Enjoy bubbles, listen to music and sing together, talk about what you see outside.
- Park the pram or hold your baby so they can watch an older sibling or other children play.

For toddlers:

- Play 'I spy' (keep it simple, "I spy something blue", "I spy something that moves").
- Collect rocks or leaves, then sort them by size, color, and shape.
- Kick, roll, or toss a ball back and forth.
- Dig in the dirt (don't forget buckets, bowls, measuring cups, spoons, gardening tools, whatever you have!).
- Play with sidewalk chalk: draw pictures, trace one another's outline, and more.
- Paint with water. Fill a cup with water and give your child a brush to "paint" the sidewalk, door, etc.
- Blow bubbles.
- Play "I'm going to catch you."
- Pretend to be the different animals you might see in your neighborhood: Birds, squirrels, rabbits, deer, etc.

Most play that happens inside the house can also happen outside, so if the weather allows, bring some blocks outside, read together outdoors, color, or paint a cardboard box in the yard or garden.

**Physical Play:** Little ones need to move and work their bodies...and voices. They will need opportunities to be loud, run, climb, and jump. This may happen outside or inside. Here are some ideas:

- Turn on some music and have a dance party.
- Put couch cushions on the floor and crawl, walk, or jump from one to the next (don't touch the floor, it's hot lava!).
- Use a bedsheet as a parachute (open it wide and raise it up above your heads, then bring it down to the floor). For infants, raise and lower a light blanket over them while playing peek-a-boo.
- Build a fort with sheets, blankets, couch cushions, pillows, chairs, and more. You can even "camp-out" indoors!
- Create an obstacle course using furniture, pillows, and toys.

**Quiet Play:** Children (and you) will also need some quiet time each day. This is great for relaxing, recharging, and maybe even allowing you to get some work done.

- Read together or independently (toddlers can flip through books and talk about what they see in the illustrations)
- Coloring
- Puzzles
- Block building
- Sorting objects
- Pretend play with stuffed animals, dolls, trains, cars, or kitchen items for "playing house"
- Stickers on paper – you can draw large shapes, letters, or numbers on paper and your child can line the shape with stickers
- Tape on paper – you can cut short pieces of masking tape and your child can stick it to a piece of paper (sounds boring, but little ones love it).

Remember that one of the most favorite types of play for children is helping you with "real" work. Think about whether your toddler can help with meal preparation, setting the table, sorting or putting away laundry, cleaning up (for example, putting shoes in the closet) or putting new toilet paper rolls in a basket in the bathroom. These tasks may take a bit longer with our toddlers, but it's fun for them and also teaches the value of cooperation.

## **Section 4 - Loss, bereavement and grief**

### *Guidance on bereavement during the COVID-19 pandemic*

We sincerely hope that you will not need to use this part of the guidance, and that every member of your family and friends remains healthy. However, sadly, we do know that deaths are inevitable during this pandemic. This section advises how to manage bereavement and grief during the COVID-19 pandemic. It covers different situations and emotions bereaved people may have to deal with.

*Generally people deal with adversity in a sensible way. People don't usually panic. People cope. People are tougher than we sometimes give them credit for. People show great courage, resourcefulness, adaptability, resiliency, hopefulness and humanitarianism (Wessely S, 2005)*

### *Grieving and isolation*

Being bereaved can be an extremely lonely time. Talking with friends and family can be one of the most helpful ways to cope after someone close to us dies. Advice is usually to avoid isolating yourself, but we are in a situation with very strict social restrictions, where increasing numbers of people are being told to self-isolate and cut all but essential physical contact with others.

This can make feelings of loneliness and grief more intense. A bereaved family might be isolated together, and although this at times may be a support, at other times tensions and resentments could be magnified making it difficult for them to help each other. If children and teenagers are isolated it could be difficult for carers to keep them occupied and deal with their own emotions and fears. The impact of dealing with a bereavement, compounded with feelings of worry about external situations, can mean that feelings of grief aren't fully expressed.

Isolation can also make it harder to process grief. At times like this when there is a constant stream of new and distressing information, people can find themselves distracted from dealing with their grief.

Practical concerns and considerations may also come up. The person who died may have been a partner, parent or carer and the bereaved person may be left without practical or emotional support at a time they need it most. Friends and relatives who might otherwise have been able to provide practical support, e.g. help with meals and shopping may also be isolating or preoccupied with their own family's situation

### **How you can help yourself**

Although you may not be able to see people in person, you can **keep in regular contact with others** using the phone, text, or internet if it is available to you.

**Look after yourself and get rest.** You may find the following helpful:

- get some fresh air or sunlight each day - even opening a window can help
- do some exercise around the house if you are able
- keep to a regular routine of getting up and dressed and eating meals at the usual time, whether you are on your own or part of a family group.

At times when you have more energy, you might want to find some jobs to do around the house or garden (if you have one). It is normal to move between intense grieving and looking to the future after someone dies, and there may be some things you can achieve even if you cannot go out.

**Don't feel guilty if you are struggling.** Reach out to others who might be finding it difficult too, you may be able to help each other.

**Seek practical help from friends, family or neighbours.**

### **How you can help another person**

Try to stay in contact with bereaved friends and family even if you cannot visit. Find out if they can talk on the phone, or over the internet if they have the technology available. Let them talk about how they are feeling and about the person who has died – talking can be one of the most helpful things. Consider sending a letter, card or note to let them know you are thinking of them.

If you run or attend a regular social group or activity and this has been cancelled, consider keeping in touch with the members using other means, or perhaps even running the group using Skype or another video messaging service.

If you know someone might struggle practically, offer to help by delivering supplies. You should always follow the latest government guidelines about social contact.

### **How children and young people can be supported at home**

It is important to remember that all the evidence so far is that children are less likely to become infected or, if infected, show milder symptoms of the coronavirus than adults.

However, children and young people will be hugely affected by what is going on around them at this difficult time. Their lives are changing and they will have picked up worries and fears about the virus and the possibility that they or someone they

love and depend on may get ill. They may be particularly worried that grandparents, older relatives and family members with health conditions or disabilities might die. They will also pick up on other worries parents and carers may have about the situation.

For families in isolation, it may mean that activities usually available which help children and young people switch off, relax and cope with stress are not available. It is not unusual for tempers to fray when families are together for long periods, in close quarters.

Talk honestly with children about both facts and emotions. Ask what they know – they may be getting information from friends or social media which is incorrect or distorted. (<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/10-top-tips-remote-learning-for-children> is a good website for promoting online safety).

With a younger child you may need to give information in small chunks. Talking about the situation and about the possibility of death and dying is an ongoing conversation. It's OK to let them know if you don't know the answers to some of their questions.

Don't make promises ('Grandma will be fine') but reassure them that they are loved and supported. Parents/ carers should let them know about any plans for what might happen if one of the family gets ill.

Families need to keep to a routine and help children get some exercise even if they can't leave the house. Help them keep in contact with friends and relatives over the phone or internet.

Don't set unrealistic goals about what you can do under exceptional circumstances, especially if you are working at home and caring for young children.

If you are at home try to make sure you all get some time apart, and time to relax. Where possible, let children and young people make some choices about what they are doing, as this may help give them some sense of control over their lives.

### **If there is a death of someone close to the young person or child**

Supporting bereaved children will be very stressful for adults who may already be struggling with their own reactions and emotions.

- Use words that children understand and are age and developmentally appropriate

- Give the information a bit at a time, allowing them the opportunity for them to ask questions. Older children will want and be able to handle more information.
- Tell them that you are sorry such an event has occurred and you want to understand and help them
- Use pictures and storybooks. These are particularly helpful for younger children or children with special needs. Social Stories can be used for children with communication difficulties
- Encourage children to ask questions and answer their questions honestly and simply.
- Accept that some things can't be 'made better'
- Don't be afraid to show children how you are feeling
- Tell them that the reactions they are having are normal
- Pay extra attention, spend extra time with them, be more nurturing and comforting
- Reassure them that they are safe
- Don't take their anger or other feelings personally. Help them find safe ways to express their feelings e.g. by drawing, taking exercise or talking
- Do not be surprised by changes in behaviour or personality. They will return to their usual selves in time
- If they are feeling guilt or shame, emphasise that they did not choose for this to happen and that they are not to blame. Even if they were angry with the person who died, or had been mean to them, this did not make it happen
- As well as advising the child about appropriate use of social media, monitor their use, particularly during this vulnerable time

### **Activities to support children experiencing bereavement**

- Looking at photos
- A memory display using photos and paper flowers
- Stories about loss
- DVDs and videos
- Using Records of Achievement
- Lighting a candle
- Saying a prayer
- Listening to the children and checking their understanding

Children with special educational needs may need extra help with their understanding and ways to express feelings.

There are a number of charities and support networks who offer educational packs and guidance on helping pupils, including those with learning difficulties, to cope with bereavement

## Reintegration of a bereaved child into school if attending during the pandemic

- Talk to the family and child, if age appropriate, to see what s/he would like to happen when they return to school.
- Talk to the child's current peers attending school about how people are affected by grief and encourage them to share their own feelings. Ask about how they have coped with bereavement in their own lives and what has helped.
- Discuss how difficult it may be for the bereaved pupil to come back to school. Ask how they would like to be treated if they were returning to school after a death. Acknowledge that people will have different preferences as to how they are treated. Some people may want to discuss what has happened, while others may want to be left alone. In general bereaved students say that they would like others to treat them as before rather than being 'over-nice' to them. However, it is a delicate balance as they don't want people to behave as if nothing has happened at all.
- Allow them access to a 'quiet room' where he/she can go to be alone and agree a way to communicate this (e.g. signal or exit card).
- When they return, acknowledge their loss "I'm sorry that (name of deceased) died. I know that you are sad. It is ok to cry".

## Useful Websites

- Winston's Wish <https://www.winstonswish.org>
- Childhood Bereavement Trust UK <https://www.childbereavementuk.org>
- Candle Project <https://www.stchristophers.org.uk>
- NCSCB Guidelines for responding to the death of a student of school staff [LINK](#)
- Cruse dedicated content [here](#)
- General guidance [NHS.UK website](#)
- Age.UK [coping with bereavement](#) and [arranging a funeral](#)
- The Child Bereavement Network has published [information](#)
- Covid19 specific [LINK](#)

## A message of hope...

*“And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently. And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless and heartless ways, the earth began to heal. And when the danger passed, the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.”*

- Kitty O'Meara

**This is an incredibly stressful time for all of humanity. But never before has the world come together as one as it is doing now, to find a way forwards.**

**If you need help, please reach out. There are people to talk to and people who can help you. There are numerous links provided in this document for you to use if you need to.**

**If you need to contact the Educational Psychology Team, please email [SENIS@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:SENIS@sefton.gov.uk)**

**If you would like further information relating to anything in this pack, please email [SENIS@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:SENIS@sefton.gov.uk) FAO Dr Emma Downing and Dr Ellie Boylan**

External sources are shared throughout this pack. Special thanks goes to the following:

EdPsy [www.edpsy.org.uk](http://www.edpsy.org.uk)

Zero to Three [www.zerotothree.org.uk](http://www.zerotothree.org.uk)

Young Minds [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

British Psychological Society [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk)

Bergen Crisis Psychology Centre [www.krisepsykologi.no](http://www.krisepsykologi.no)

Long Creations [@LongCreations](https://www.instagram.com/LongCreations)

Southend Educational Psychology Service

Lewisham Educational Psychology Service

CAMHS