

Supporting School Staff and Pupil Emotional Wellbeing During COVID-19 Pandemic

Wellbeing tips for schools:

- Give some time to talk and process what is happening, with children/young people and as a staff group too. But also make sure that Coronavirus is not the *only* thing being talked about. Some people may wish to talk a lot about this, and others may not.
- Consider asking what children/young people have heard about the virus and the situation so that you can correct possible misconceptions and reassure them.
- Remember to keep things positive and give children hope. For example, tell children/young people that many people are working hard to make this situation better and that even though it is serious, everyone is doing their best to help people.
- Remember that people react differently to significant events. Some people – children/young people and staff – may feel worried, some excited, some nothing much at all. Reassure children/young people and staff that this is all normal and okay.
- Staff will need to model calmness, but it is also important to talk honestly and not pretend that things aren't different and worrying for some.
- Keep to daily school routines as much as possible. Well-known routines in everyday life provide security and stability. Routine during unrest can be therapeutic, and changes particularly unsettling for some. If there are changes to routine, consider which children/young people may need some extra help with this.
- Identify colleagues whose wellbeing may be more at risk. For example, there may be people who have experienced anxiety in the past.
- Identify children/young people whose wellbeing may be more at risk. For example, those who may have relatives with health conditions or recent bereavements, and some SEN groups such those prone to anxiety; those with learning difficulties; those with Autism; and those with tendency for obsessive or repetitive behaviours.
- Stay informed by sticking to trusted sources of information. Avoid being too immersed in media coverage. Be mindful of the amount of things you are reading and watching, including social media – as this may add to worry and anxiety. Consider a few updates every day from trusted sources.

- As an adult you may be concerned yourself. Take care of yourself and make sure you have breaks, time to relax, and ask for help from others if you need.

Some Useful links:

Talking to children about Coronavirus

There is currently a lot of uncertainty and worry around the coronavirus outbreak, and children/young people will be affected by the changes that are going on around them - regardless of their age or any additional needs. It is really important that adults explain what is happening to children/young people in an age appropriate way so they understand what is happening. Some useful links are:

Talking to children about Coronavirus (British Psychological Society):

<https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/talking-children-about-coronavirus>

Talking to Children (Childmind): <https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

How to talk to your child about coronavirus (Unicef):

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

Tips and guidance on supporting preschool children (Zero to Three);

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3210-tips-for-families-coronavirus>

Talking to children (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)

Stories about Coronavirus for children

Visual stories are a useful way of helping children to understand the Coronavirus. Here are some links to some good examples:

ELSA: Coronavirus Story for Children:

<https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/coronavirus-story-for-children/>

Hello! Story about Coronavirus for young children:

https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685_319c5acf38d34604b537ac9fae37fc80.pdf

A social story about pandemics (Carol Gray):

<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf?fbclid=IwAR23zxNlbEumpw4oKIM7Xy3VIKnA25b8Gi53N6YiFIeKB9Vx0LQypSPYzzg>

A Social Story about the coronavirus: <https://www.ppmmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-.pdf>

A comic exploring coronavirus to help young people understand: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus?t=1584464333506>

Information Videos for children about the Coronavirus

Information video on Coronavirus for Primary age children (KS2) (Brainpop): <https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/>

Information video on Coronavirus for older children/adults (WHO): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOV1aBVYKGA&feature=youtu.be>

Promoting Children's Wellbeing

Advice for young people who are feeling anxious about Coronavirus (Young Minds):

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

Helping children cope with stress (WHO):

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

Advice for older pupils and adults about looking after their emotional well-being.

<https://afsp.org/taking-care-of-your-mental-health-in-the-face-of-uncertainty/?fbclid=IwAR3ScDBfuhV5INKyutAG9IPNm4JnjjLOmHxv5w8SR9pBbD DU-8Hhy1QH-L8>

Apps for Mindfulness - Cosmic kids yoga (younger children)

<https://www.cosmickids.com/>

Cosmic Kids yoga youtube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/cosmickidsyoga>

Smiling Minds app to teach mindfulness (for all ages)

<https://www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app>

Special Needs and the Coronavirus

Parent/carer-focused ideas from Special Needs Jungle about how to support children/young people with anxiety around coronavirus, including an easy-read explanation for children/young people and adults with learning needs:

<https://www.specialneedsjungle.com/calming-coronavirus-anxiety-children-everyone-else/#Update>

National Autistic Society – guidance and helpline for parents/carers, children/young people and staff:
[https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/vanguard/news/2020/march/coronavirus-\(covid-19\)-advice.aspx](https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/vanguard/news/2020/march/coronavirus-(covid-19)-advice.aspx)
See social story in the appendix.

Looking after your own wellbeing

How to protect your mental health (BBC):
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799>

Coronavirus and your wellbeing (Mind UK):
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

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

Stop Breathe & Think app for mindfulness:
- <https://www.stopbreathethink.com/>

Headspace app for mindfulness:
<https://www.headspace.com/>

Health Advice

NHS advice:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Mental Health Considerations during COVID-19 Outbreak (WHO)
https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf?sfvrsn=6d3578af_2

Government advice about coronavirus for education settings

Guidance to educational setting:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

Note: as the situation and sources of information are developing, the above tips and links may be updated.

Further advice

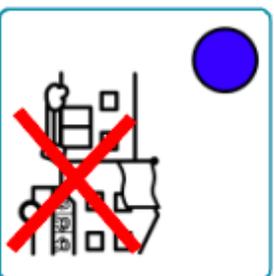
British Psychological Society Coronavirus and UK schools closures: Support and advice for schools and parents/carers:

<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Coronavirus%20and%20UK%20schools%20closures%20-%20support%20and%20advice.pdf>

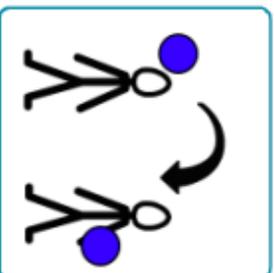
We would like to acknowledge the following Educational Psychology Services for information used in developing this resource: Harrow, West Sussex, Southend

Appendix. A Social Story about Coronavirus

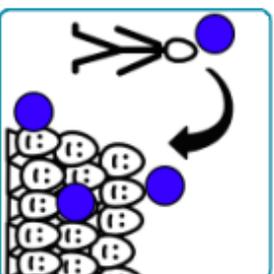
School is closed



School is closed because of the Coronavirus.



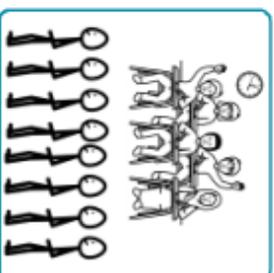
Coronavirus can pass from one person to another.



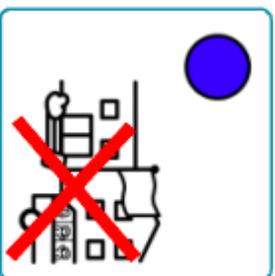
Coronavirus can pass more in big groups.



It is best to NOT be in a big group.



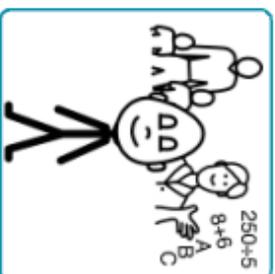
We have big groups at school.



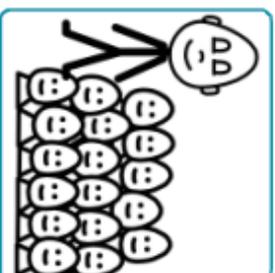
So school is closed.



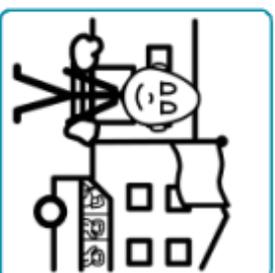
I will stay home for many days.



My family and my teachers want me to be safe.



When it is safe, I can be in big groups again.



When it is safe, school will be open again.